



# City of Santa Barbara

## VISUAL AID SUBMITTAL PACKET

- Visual Aid Requirements for Development Applications
- Story Pole Certification

**Note:** *Please complete a Planning Commission & Staff Hearing Officer Submittal Cover Sheet (**tilac**) and submit it with your required documentation (if this is related to a project that requires Planning Commission or Staff Hearing Officer review).*

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# City of Santa Barbara

## VISUAL AID REQUIREMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

The City of Santa Barbara has set forth requirements for visual aids as part of development application consideration and approval.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of visual aids is to assist the Council, Boards and Commissions, staff, applicants and the public in the review process to determine consistency with the General Plan Land Use and Conservation Elements and the Local Coastal Plan. They will also be used to make the findings necessary to approve Coastal Development Permits, Development Plans, many Tentative Subdivision Maps, Conditional Use Permits and other land use entitlements. Architectural Board of Review, Historic Landmarks Commission, and Single Family Design Board approvals may also require visual aids above and beyond the required photographs. All of these approvals require findings regarding appropriate size, bulk and scale, neighborhood compatibility and/or minimizing impacts on important public scenic views. In addition to making findings for project approval, these visual aids may be needed to make a determination on whether the project will result in significant environmental impacts on important public scenic views for environmental review purposes.

**DEFINITION:** “Visual aids” may include, but not be limited to, story poles, photo simulations and other means, such as models, to assist in understanding a project’s size, bulk and scale in relation to the neighborhood and/or its effects on important public scenic views. In most cases, story poles are the primary visual aid used.

**WHEN REQUIRED:** Story poles and story pole plans will be required whenever any portion of a new nonresidential or multiple-family building or substantial addition (except architectural features such as chimneys and towers) exceeds 17 feet in height from existing grade and requires Planning Commission or Staff Hearing Officer review. Story poles and story pole plans will be required for new single family residential buildings or substantial additions when the floor: lot area ratio exceeds 0.40, the height of the building substantially exceeds that of surrounding buildings, the building will block or reduce important public scenic views, is very visible to the public or is proposed on or to project above a topographic ridgeline, as determined by the Planning Division or the Board or Commission. Story poles will not usually be required for minor modifications subject to approval by the Staff Hearing, unless appealed to the Planning Commission or specifically requested by the Staff Hearing Officer. Story poles may also be required for new buildings and substantial additions that are subject only to review by the Architectural Board of Review, Historic Landmarks Commission, or Single Family Design Board, based on a request by the Board or Commission. The Planning Division will determine the adequacy of the proposed story pole plan, based on the requirements below. The Planning Division may consider exceptions to the requirements for story poles, based on the criteria below, prior to determining application completeness. The Planning Division may also request other visual aids, such as Photo Simulations, Three-Dimensional Massing Models, Perspective Drawings, Rendered Streetscape Elevations and/or Comparative Building Studies, on a case-by-case basis.

**MINIMUM STORY POLE REQUIREMENTS:** The following shall be required:

1. **Story Pole Plan.** Using a Project Site Plan:
  - a. Show location and height of each pole.
  - b. Show location of major plate heights and ridgelines to be identified in the field. Focus on major ridgelines and wall plate lines along the building edges. The goal is to show a simple “box” that outlines the mass of the building. It is not necessary or appropriate to

include all of the articulations. Do not forget to account for proposed changes in grade with depictions of proposed finished height and elevation notations.

- c. Show location of any stakes or chalk/string lines used to outline the building footprint.
- d. A legend shall be included on the Story Pole Plan that shows the location of each story pole with a symbol for each story pole that includes its number, location and height. In addition, all stake locations and all chalk/string line locations shall be noted.

2. **Story Pole Installation.**

- a. **Materials:** Story poles should be made of 2x lumber, PVC piping or other sturdy material and should be properly braced for safety purposes. The connections used to show ridgelines and plate heights should be made of bright construction tape or netting. Other materials may be acceptable, subject to approval by the Planning Division.
- b. **Placement:** The major building corners, outer plate heights (not the outer edge of the eaves) and ridgelines should be shown. In addition, stake and string or chalk the property lines where they are not clear and outline the building footprint(s) with stakes and strings or chalk lines. Also, mark all trees to be removed. If there is substantial grading that will result in tall and/or long retaining walls, the Planning Division may request that their location and height be marked on the property. The number and placement of story poles may be reduced in order to reduce costs, subject to consultation with the Planning Division, Staff Hearing Officer or Board or Commission to assure that there will be sufficient story poles to illustrate the end product. Please note that a licensed professional, such as a surveyor, engineer, architect, landscape architect or contractor, must either carry out or certify installation.
- c. **Post Hearing Notice:** Post a copy of the hearing notice, if there is a notice, along the street frontage of the property visible to passers-by 10 days before the hearing.
- d. **Timing:** The story pole installation shall be complete prior to the Friday prior to the Planning Commission, Staff Hearing Officer or design review board hearing and shall stay in place until the Planning Commission, Staff Hearing Officer or design review site visit, unless story pole placement will result in substantial obstructions to the existing use of the property. For major projects, longer installation periods may be required. The Planning Division will determine whether they will be installed prior to the environmental hearing or for the project consideration hearing. In certain circumstances, re-installation of the story poles may be required for Council appeals. The applicant may choose to leave the installation in place until the appeal period is over.
- e. **Adequacy:** In the event required story poles are not installed, or are inadequate, the applicant will be requested to install or improve the story poles and the project hearing will then be continued to a future date to allow the decision-making board or commission to make an additional site visit.
- f. **Photographic Record:** Once the story poles are in place, the applicant shall photograph the story pole installation, including any angles from which it is visible to the public. Polaroid photos are not acceptable. Where the project has the potential to affect important public scenic views, additional photos from more distant points may be required. Include a plan or map showing the locations from which the photos were taken and the direction of the photos (i.e., with an arrow), keyed to the photos. The record shall be submitted to the Planning Division at least one (1) day prior to removal of the story poles or earlier, if possible. It is recommended that at least one of the photos include a person next to a story pole to provide scale. In addition, prior to issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy for the

project, the applicant will be required to submit photographs of the completed building from the same locations as the photographs taken of the story pole installation for recordation purposes.

- g. Certification: Story pole installation shall be certified by the licensed professional (surveyor, engineer, architect, landscape architect or contractor) who installs the story poles or by the licensed professional who prepares the story pole plan. The certification shall be submitted to staff after installation of the story poles, and before their removal. See attached certification form.
- h. Examples: As records of story pole installations become more available, a notebook containing examples will be available at the Planning and Zoning Counter at 630 Garden Street.

**CRITERIA FOR EXCEPTIONS FROM THE REQUIREMENT FOR STORY POLES:** One or more of the following criteria will be used by the Planning Division to determine if an exception from the story pole requirement will be granted:

1. The proposed structures are clearly consistent in terms of size, bulk and scale with other buildings in the surrounding neighborhood.
2. The proposed structure is the same height as or smaller than other existing buildings in the neighborhood.
3. The proposed structure(s) will not involve blockage or substantial reduction of an important public scenic view.
4. The proposed structures will not be on or project above a topographic ridgeline.
5. The existing condition of the site (dense vegetation, existing buildings, etc.) does not allow for adequate story pole installation. If this is the case, one or more of the other types of visual aids will be required.

NOTE: See the Design Review Board Submittal Requirements for basic photograph requirements for all submittals.

**OTHER VISUAL AIDS**

In some cases, additional visual aids may be required or recommended. The requirements for these are outlined below.

1. Photo Simulations. These may be required on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the Planning Division.
  - a. Photo simulations shall be completed using either panoramic photographs or several photographs put together. Polaroid photographs are not acceptable. A computer simulation may be used. Photo simulations shall be mounted and be able to be folded to 8½” x 11” size.
  - b. At a minimum, the proposed project shall be shown as an overlay over the existing property, showing the existing buildings on either side of the proposed project for a minimum of one parcel in either direction. The photographs should be taken at eye level (approximately 5 feet above grade). Reduce proposed building elevations to match the scale of the photographs and overlay on the site photograph. Color the elevation to match the proposed materials. If landscaping is shown, it shall be shown at no more than five (5) years growth unless it is included as a separate overlay. It is important to verify the accurate depiction of plate height, overall roof height and other measurements.

- c. Include a map or plan showing the locations from which the photos were taken and the direction of the photos (i.e., with an arrow), keyed to the photos.
2. **Three-Dimensional Massing Model:** In some cases, a massing model showing both the project and structures in the immediate neighborhood may be required, as determined by the Planning Division. Design details are not required; however, all roofing variations, wall articulation and eave lines (including plate heights) must be shown. Major trees should also be included as part of the model. Changes in topography in the area covered by the model must be shown accurately.
3. **Perspective Drawings:** In some cases, perspective drawings from one or more prominent viewpoints may be required, as determined by the Planning Division. All roofing variations, wall articulation and eave lines (including plate heights) must be shown. Major trees should also be shown. These drawings must be drawn from the viewpoint of a person (approximately 5 feet above grade).
4. **Rendered Streetscape Elevations:** In some cases, a rendered streetscape elevation may be required. The elevation may need to show all of the buildings on the block, including the proposed new building. This elevation should be no less than 1/8" scale and should be in color. An additional plan sheet might include building elevations that are color-coordinated to show the setback from the street (0 to 5 feet, 5 to 10 feet, etc.).
5. **Comparative Building Study:** In some cases, a comparison to existing buildings will be required. This will assist in visualizing the size of a building in comparison to other well-known buildings of a similar size in the City. The City will soon have scale drawings of several well-known buildings available for use at design review board, Planning Commission, Staff Hearing Officer, and City Council meetings.

**FOR PROJECTS THAT DO NOT INCLUDE BUILDINGS:** Tentative Subdivision Maps often do not include future buildings to be constructed on the new parcels. Where Tentative Subdivision Maps include new buildings (such as condominiums or the construction of the new homes concurrently with the subdivision), story pole requirements will be the same as those for other residential projects. In addition, there are other projects that will not require placement of story poles. In order to provide information necessary to evaluate the project, the following information shall be provided on site for the Planning Commission or Staff Hearing Officer site visit:

1. Mark all trees to be removed.
2. Stake all building envelopes or footprints and driveway locations.
3. Stake or otherwise mark all existing and proposed property and parcel corners.
4. In some cases, where impacts on important public scenic views are potentially significant, story poles may be required to delineate a reasonable worst-case scenario for environmental review. The Planning Division will determine if they are required.
5. In some cases, Planning Division may request story poles to show retaining walls that are more than 42 inches in height. Story poles should be installed at the ends of the retaining walls, as well as at various points in-between sufficient to indicate the length and height of the retaining wall(s).



# City of Santa Barbara

## STORY POLE CERTIFICATION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Master Application No: MST \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor's Parcel No. \_\_\_\_\_

Site Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that on \_\_\_\_\_ (date), the story poles located on the above-referenced site were installed or inspected by the undersigned, and found to be in conformance (within six inches, plus or minus) with the design, height and location shown on the plans, elevations and the attached story pole plan.

For additional information, please contact me at: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Phone No.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (printed or typed)

Professional License  
Stamp Here

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title