

SECTION 4.06

FREEWAY CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

4.06.010

Stockton is bisected by two major north/south freeways (I-5 and SR-99) and the Crosstown Freeway. The I-5 and SR-99 freeways serve as major entry points to the City and provide visitors and residents alike with a good overview of City due to their elevated heights, especially I-5 and the Crosstown Freeway.

From their elevated vantage point, motorists are afforded views of the City that help frame their overall understanding and impression of the area. To many people their first, and perhaps last, visual image of the City is created by these first impressions. It is important to the City that its main regional entry points and view corridors present a good overall visual impression. The corridors and the land uses and structures along them should be well designed and should include features that help eliminate or substantially reduce any negative visual impacts.

This section provides general design guidelines for land uses adjacent to freeways and their associated interchanges and on/off ramps with the intent of creating a positive visual environment within these important image-making corridors.

APPLICABILITY

4.06.020

The design guidelines in this section are applicable to all projects throughout the City that are visible from any of the City's three freeways and their associated interchange and on/off ramps.

GENERAL DESIGN OBJECTIVES

4.06.030

The design guidelines for freeway corridors are based on the following objectives.

- **Freeways as City Gateways** – Ensure that Stockton’s regional entry points provide motorists with pleasing vistas of the City, especially at its key gateways. Encourage “landmark” architectural statements along freeway entries to the City.
- **Protect Significant Views** – Protect views of the channel area and downtown from adjacent freeways.
- **Enhance Views** – Eliminate or substantially reduce any potentially negative visual impacts of development adjacent to freeways through appropriate mitigation measures.
- **Quality Development** – Achieve a high level of quality development by ensuring that development fits within the context of its surroundings, does not negatively impact adjacent uses, provides superior architectural detailing, incorporates appropriate high quality/durable materials, includes significant landscape improvements, and achieves an efficient/aesthetic arrangement of onsite facilities.
- **Architectural Character** – Maintain a high level of architectural design through appropriate detailing, use of quality/durable materials, and the avoidance of blank, uninteresting wall planes. Provide high quality and visually interesting roof designs consistent with the overall design of the building and surrounding quality development.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

4.06.040

Issues

The elevated portions of freeways, interchanges, and on/off ramps afford motorists many views of the City. Some are inspiring, such as views of the Channel area and downtown’s tall, prestigious buildings, while other views, such as disorganized storage and equipment areas, and dilapidated structures offer a less appealing view of the City. The main issues related to views from the City’s freeway corridors include:

- Ensuring that potentially negative visual impacts are mitigated through appropriate design techniques.
- Ensuring that development adjacent to freeways, including on/off ramps is of the highest quality.
- Ensuring that views to the Channel area and downtown are protected and enhanced where possible.
- Ensuring that developments along freeways at regional entry gateways to the City achieve exemplary design quality.

Objectives Supported

- Freeways as gateways
- Protect significant views
- Enhance views
- Quality development
- Architectural character

A. City Gateways

Stockton's two major freeways (I-5 and SR-99) serve as regional entry points to the City. As visitors enter the City, their first impressions of what lies ahead are often formed at these important gateways. The City considers the visual impressions created by the physical appearance of these gateway areas to be very important in providing an appropriate positive image for Stockton. For this reason, the City's expectations for its gateway areas are one of high quality design and for buildings that create landmark architectural statements.

The City's freeway corridor gateways are considered to be those areas within one-quarter mile of the following intersections:

- I-5 and Eight Mile Road
- SR99 and Eight Mile Road
- I-5 and French Camp Road
- SR99 and Arch Road

Additionally, the intersections of I-5 and SR99 with SR4 are also considered gateways to the City.

Within these areas, the City encourages and expects superior quality architectural design that establishes a strong entry statement and a positive image for the City.

- Developments within gateway areas should exhibit the following characteristics:
- Well-articulated buildings with a high degree of architectural detail on the freeway frontage. Buildings should not turn their backs to the freeways
- Vertical elements (e.g., clock tower) that create points of visual interest when viewed from the freeways
- Roof designs that are visually interesting and designed to completely screen all roof-top equipment from freeway views
- Use of high quality materials

- Extensive use of landscaping and open space
- Well-designed site layouts that place uses with potentially negative visual impacts away from the freeway frontage

B. Site Organization and Screening

1. The overall site design of a project should consider the project's visibility from nearby freeways, including on/off ramps, and should arrange areas with potentially negative visual impacts, such as outside storage and service or loading areas so that they are screened from view by buildings.
2. In areas where outdoor storage is allowed, including residential areas, the storage of materials should be organized in a neat, orderly manner and screened from view to the greatest extent feasible.
3. When it is necessary to turn the backs of buildings toward an adjacent freeway or on/off ramp, areas provided for storage, trash enclosures storage, utilities, and loading should be adequately screened with walls, overhead structures, and significant landscaping to screen their view from the freeway or on/off ramp.
4. Outdoor sales/storage areas such as those associated with warehouse-type commercial businesses should be screened from view from adjacent freeways and ramps.
5. Roof mounted equipment is required to be screened from public view in compliance with requirements of the Development Code (Screening and Buffering). In cases where buildings are located near elevated freeways and roof mounted equipment may, therefore, be more visible, such equipment should be relocated or provided with appropriate screening so that it is not visible from the freeway. The design of screening devices should consider the following:
 - a. Architectural screens should be an extension of the development's architectural character.
 - b. Screen walls should be constructed of low maintenance and durable materials, which are consistent with the main building's materials.

C. Building Design

When buildings back up to and are visible from freeways or on/off ramps, extra care should be taken to provide wall and roofline articulation and architectural detailing so that all sides of the building create visual interest.

D. Landscaping

Extensive landscaping should be provided at the perimeter of the project, adjacent to the freeway or on/off ramps to effectively screen nonpublic portions of the project. The use of tall, evergreen trees is encouraged.

E. Blockage of Significant Views

Stockton's elevated freeways afford motorists significant views of the Channel Area, port, and downtown. When new buildings are proposed that may potentially impact these views, consideration should be given to alternative ways of developing the project that will protect or enhance existing views.

This may be accomplished by:

- Reducing the height of buildings;
- Dividing a project into multiple, smaller buildings; and/or
- Providing view corridors through the project.