



Community Development Planning and Building Division Handout

1000 Gateway Ave., San Pablo, CA 94806 • (510) 215-3030 • www.sanpabloca.gov

CITY OF SAN PABLO
City of New Directions

Fences, Walls, Gates and Screening

Purpose

The purpose of this handout is to establish development standards and regulations for fences, walls, gates, and screening. The intent of these regulations is to provide for adequate air and light permeability and visibility onto lots, for adequate buffering between and screening of uses and activities, for the mitigation of noise, for the attractiveness of the public realm, and for the safety of the pedestrian realm. *Please view Section 17.45 of the San Pablo Zoning Ordinance for the codified language on Fences, Walls, Gates and Screening.*

1. FENCES AND WALLS

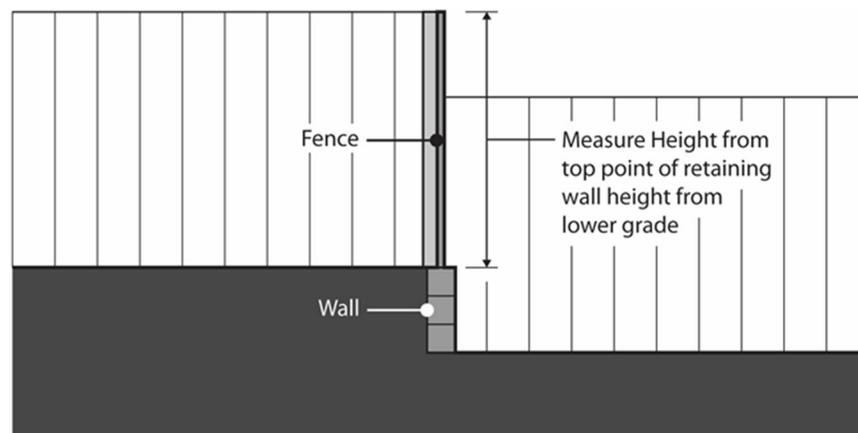
How do I Measure a Fence or Wall Height?

Fence and wall heights are the vertical distance between the lowest finished grade at the base of the fence and the top edge of the fence.

Landscape Walls. When a fence or wall is placed atop a landscape wall, the height of the landscape wall shall be considered as part of the fence or wall for purposes of determining the height of the fence or wall.

Retaining Walls. When a fence or wall is placed atop a retaining wall, the height shall be measured from the base of the retaining wall (see Figure 17.44-A).

Figure 17.44-A



For walls greater than 2 feet in height, ask the Building Department if you will need to submit plans.

Where can I put a fence on my single-family residential lot?

A fence on a residential parcel may be located anywhere within the parcel, however, the height is limited. See Table 17.44-A for the allowable fence heights. Figure 17.44-B, Fence Locations, illustrates the locations on a parcel where different fence heights are allowed.

Table 17.44-A, Residential Fence Standards

Table 44-A Residential Fence Standards		
Location of Fence, Hedge, or Wall	Maximum Height	Minimum Transparency
Front Yard	3 feet ^{1,2}	0%
Rear or Interior Side Yard	6 feet ⁴	0% ⁵
Corner Side Yard	6 feet ³	0%
Corner Lot Vision Triangle ⁵	3 feet	50%

1. Fences permitted to be solid (not open view up to 3 feet in height).
2. Gated archways over front yard walkways may exceed height limit, but not to exceed a height of 6 feet.
3. Fences may be permitted above 6 feet with administrative approval, not to exceed a total height of 8 feet. Only permitted where needed to block storage, recycling, or other service areas on neighboring properties or when needed to address privacy concerns.
4. See Figure 17-44-B
5. Between commercial and residential zoned properties, see non-residential requirements

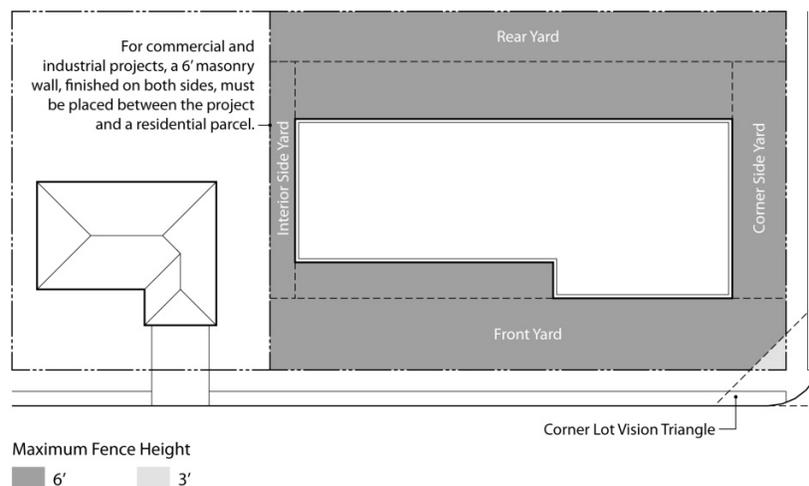
Figure 17.44-B, Fence Location



Please review the Municipal Code Section for a Minor Adjustment, Section 17.18.070, of the City of San Pablo Zoning Ordinance for the language and process for an increase in the fence height. This request for a Minor Adjustment requires submission of an application, related Planning fee, plans, and requires review by the Zoning Administrator.

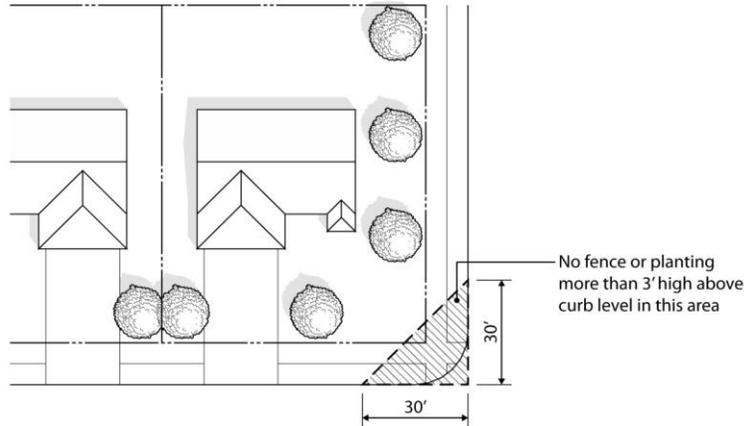
Where can I put a fence on my multi-family or non-residential lot?

The graphic below illustrates where a fence can be built for a multi-family or non-residential lot.



What is a Corner Lot Vision Triangle? Section 17.46.070 of the San Pablo Zoning Ordinance.

Vision triangles apply only to corner lots. The boundaries of a vision triangle are formed by drawing lines from the point of intersection of a lot's street corner property lines to points thirty feet along the two property lines and then connecting the two points with a straight line.



What are the regulations for a Corner Lot Vision Triangle?

Residential Districts. No wall, fence, gate, or hedge higher than three feet shall be erected or maintained on a corner lot in any residential district within the area called the vision triangle.

Other Districts. In any district other than a residential district, no wall, fence, gate, hedge, or other obstruction to view shall be erected or maintained between three feet and eight feet above grade on any corner lot within the area called the vision triangle.

Planting and Landscape Materials. Planting and landscape materials (except for street trees) shall not exceed three feet in height within the vision triangle area.

What Materials can I use for my fence?

The following table lists the materials for fences that are acceptable, allowed with administrative approval or prohibited. These materials are for either residential or non-residential properties.

Table 44-C, Fence, Wall and Gate Materials

Table 44-C Fence, Wall, and Gate Materials		
Acceptable (unless otherwise prohibited)	Allowed only by an administrative approval	Prohibited
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masonry walls, plaster, or smooth stucco both sides Decorative masonry Finished reinforced concrete and concrete block Gated and walled residential communities and gated single-family houses with wrought iron or tube-steel picket rolling gates Pressure-treated wood and timber Wood latticework above solid wood fence White wooden pickets for single-family and duplex residential Low fences and walls set into berms in commercial and industrial development Wrought iron or tube-steel pickets for gates and infill between masonry columns Wrought iron or tube-steel pickets with 1-inch pickets up to 6 inches apart Stone Hedges and other screening vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chain-link with slats around commercial and industrial projects where the fence is visible from public areas Chain link with vinyl coating Synthetic stone Bare concrete masonry walls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chain link in residential zones Razor or concertina wire, electrical wire, or other security wire Barbed wire Plywood or other opaque wooden panels Fabric and/or plastic sheeting, as mounted on chain-link fencing Other fencing deemed inappropriate by the Zoning Administrator

General Provisions

- Landscaping shall not grow over the heights of the fences or wall, or reduce the required transparency.
- Fences and walls shall be structurally sound and built with quality, durable materials, maintained in a vertical position, and kept in good repair.
- The design of residential fences and wall should take into account the residential, commercial, and industrial design guideline, as maintained by the Development Services Department.
- The entire surface of the fence in any one direction shall be consistent in its use of materials and styles.
- A fence over seven (7) feet in height or a concrete masonry unit (CMU) wall requires a building permit pursuant to the California Building Code.

2. GATES

All gates for vehicular access to areas used for parking or storage for residential, commercial, or industrial uses shall slide sideways or swing inwardly. If the gates serve commercial or industrial uses, they shall be closed when the premises are not open for business. Folding security gates must be 70 percent transparent and located to the interior of doors and windows.

3. SCREENING

What needs to be screened?

Trash, recycling, food waste, outdoor storage, and utility and service equipment, including satellite receiving dishes, must be located to the side or rear of buildings, or on rooftops, and away from primary pedestrian areas.

Outdoor storage areas shall be surrounded on all sides by a substantial solid and opaque fence or wall 6 feet in height, unless a higher fence is required or approved by the Planning Commission. The wall or fence shall be kept in a clean, neat, and painted condition, free of graffiti.

Utility and service equipment, including satellite receiving dishes, must be located away from streets and enclosed or screened by landscaping, fencing, or other architectural means. Rooftop equipment must be screened on all sides and must be integrated architecturally.

Refuse and recycling areas shall be screened as set forth in Chapter 17.58 (Refuse Disposal and Recycling).

How do I design the screening?

Screening design shall use the most appropriate materials, including solid wood fencing, masonry walls, and landscaping, to block unattractive items from view. The method of screening shall be architecturally integrated with the primary structure in terms of material, color, shape, and size. The design of screening should take into account the residential, commercial, and industrial design guidelines, as maintained by the Development Services Department.

What is the allowed height of screening?

Fences, hedges, berms, and walls intended to screen service areas and parked vehicles in commercial, industrial, and multifamily housing projects shall not exceed 3 feet in height. At service and parking areas, where commercial development is sited adjacent to residential buildings, attractive screen fencing or walls must be provided along the property line(s). A 5-foot planting area must be established adjacent to the screening fence or wall, with trees at a maximum spacing of 20 feet on center.