

Design Guidance for Subsurface Clearance Land Use Review

Last updated: August 2024

The following provides design guidance on subsurface clearance to be used during the land use review process for proposed improvements within (1) any existing sidewalk and utility easement area, and (2) any new sidewalk and utility easement area required to be dedicated to the City as part of a project. In providing the below design guidance, the City does not waive its permitting or regulatory authority. The final review and approval of any proposed subsurface improvements will occur during clearing and grading permit review. An applicant's compliance with the below design guidance does not ensure that a particular proposed subsurface improvement will be approved.

1. Existing City-Owned Sidewalk and Utility Easement Area.

- a. Clearly show in the project plans, profiles, and sections the location of any existing sidewalk and utility easements or similar encumbrances.
- b. Designs shall maintain a minimum of 12 feet of vertical clearance between the top of any permanent underground structure (e.g., a parking garage) and the top of any finished grade.
 - i. Additional clearance depths may be required at intersection corners or other locations where signal pole bases or other deeper utilities are or may be located.
 - ii. The top of the grade of any permanent underground structure must include all features of the structure (i.e., garage protection, foam, etc.)

2. Sidewalk and Utility Easement Area to Be Dedicated.

- a. **Minimum Requirements Satisfied.** Designs shall maintain a minimum of 12 feet of vertical clearance between the top of any permanent underground structure (e.g., a parking garage) and the top of any finished grade.
 - i. Show in the project plans, profiles, and sections the location of any new sidewalk and utility easements.
 - ii. Additional clearance depths may be required at intersection corners or other locations where signal pole bases or other deeper utilities are or may be located.

- iii. The top of the grade of any permanent underground structure must include all features of the structure (i.e., garage protection, foam, etc.)
- b. **Minimum Requirements Not Satisfied.** For projects that propose less than 12 feet of vertical clearance as set forth in Section 2(a), the following shall apply:
- i. Developer shall provide civil plans with plan, profile, and section views of any required new limited-depth sidewalk and utility easements showing all existing and proposed public and franchise utilities and other facilities or requirements such as street trees, lighting etc. Show all dimensions to scale for all clearances between any proposed permanent underground structure (e.g., a parking garage) and the utilities or other facilities within the easement area. See **Appendix A** (attached) for detailed design requirements.
 - ii. Developer shall contact all franchise and city utility providers that currently exist or are anticipated on the proposed frontages so each utility provider can:
 - 1. Verify that the clearances shown on the plans between other utilities and the proposed permanent underground structure are adequate for the utility to operate within the proposed limited depth easement, or that the utility is choosing to not provide or maintain facilities in connection with or relating to the proposed development;
 - 2. Verify that any existing above-grade utility lines fronting the project site will be undergrounded; and
 - 3. Verify that no new above-grade utilities or cabinets are proposed within the planter strip or sidewalk. Transformers and utility vaults to serve the development shall be placed on private property, inside the building or behind the sidewalk.
 - iii. Developer shall provide a written acknowledgement from every franchise and city utility provider that the utility provider can sufficiently operate (including maintenance, reconstruction, and replacement) within the limited-depth easement according to the plans, or that the utility provider is choosing to not provide or maintain facilities in connection with or relating to the proposed development project. This written acknowledgement will be included in the project file.
 - iv. The City will present the project at a scheduled Utility Coordination Meeting so utility providers that currently do not have facilities on

the site frontage have an opportunity to assess whether they want or need to install facilities in conjunction with the proposed development's construction. The developer will provide adequate project information to the city review engineer for presentation at the meeting. The city review engineer will document when the project was presented at the Utility Coordination Meeting and place comments from the utility providers in the project file.

- v. Additional requirements for as-builts and sidewalk and utilities easement documentation may be required in connection with the clearing and grading permit review.

Appendix A

Detailed Design Requirements

(Applicable only to sidewalk and utility areas to be dedicated to the city as part of a proposed project)

- a. Maintain the following minimum clearances between utilities and any permanent underground structure (e.g., a parking garage) and the top of any finished grade in the design:
 - i. A minimum of 2 feet of clearance (measured from the bottom/lowest elevation of any facility to the top of any permanent underground structure) below all underground utilities is required to allow for replacement and maintenance, unless more space is required by any utility provider or by law.
 - ii. A minimum of 3 feet of clearance (measured from the top/highest elevation of any facility to the top of any finished grade) is required above any underground utility, unless more space is required by any utility provider or by law.
 - iii. For areas with no utilities, provide a minimum of 4 feet of clearance from the top of any permanent underground structure to the top of any finished grade.
- b. Provide minimum clearances between the various utilities as required by the utility providers, code, or law.
- c. Provide all utilities information and subsurface landscaping requirements, including for City-owned, franchise-owned, wet and dry utilities:
 - i. Pothole any existing utilities that are not proposed to be relocated or are otherwise remaining in place to verify location.
 - ii. Draw the utilities to scale. For example, vaults and cabinets should be drawn to scale on the plan view; and conduits, vaults, and cabinets should be drawn to scale on the profile and section views.
 - iii. Identify all utility facilities (e.g., City street light, City fiber optic, PSE, Comcast, etc.) on the plan, profile and section views.
 - iv. Label the size and number of all conduits.

- v. Label the minimum clearance depth from the top of any finished grade to the top of any conduit.
- vi. Label the minimum clearance below the bottom of any conduit or duct bank to the top of any permanent underground structure.
- vii. Show and label the minimum horizontal and vertical clearance requirements between all City and franchise utilities and other utilities (i.e., show a scaled utility conduit, pipe, or vault with an additional dashed circle around the utility delineating, by square footage, the clearance requirements applicable to that utility).
- viii. Depict and label all street tree root balls and the boundary of the area provided to meet required soil volume.