



Introduction:

The purpose of this guide is to assist business owners in complying with the City of Fremont Storefront Review requirements. The guide provides an overview of the City's ordinance and identifies areas where it is applicable. The guide also provides examples of compliant and non-compliant storefronts and provides ideas for storefront design review permits in instances where up to 50% of a storefront windows may be obscured.

A storefront functions to attract visual attention to a business and its merchandise or activities. A storefront also serves to support pedestrian activity and experiences along designated streets.

Applicable Locations:

Storefront reviews are required for certain businesses that are located on the ground floor of a building that has frontage within 100 feet of a main or urban street corridor place type as defined in the general plan. Storefronts typically include one or more display windows and are typically located within a commercial or mixed-use zoning district.

The figure on the opposite page illustrates the locations where Main Street and Urban Corridor place types are located within the City.

Main Streets (shown in brown) are located in:

- Centerville along Fremont Boulevard between Thornton and Central,
- Irvington along Bay and Main Streets,
- Mission San Jose along Mission between Monticello Terrace and Pine Street,
- Niles along Niles Boulevard between "F" Street and the Niles Boulevard Railroad undercrossing.

Urban Corridors (shown in blue) are located along major thoroughfares and in the City Center, Downtown, and the Warm Springs Innovation Districts.



Fremont Community Development Department- Planning Division
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General Plan Community Character Corridor Place Types

City Boundary



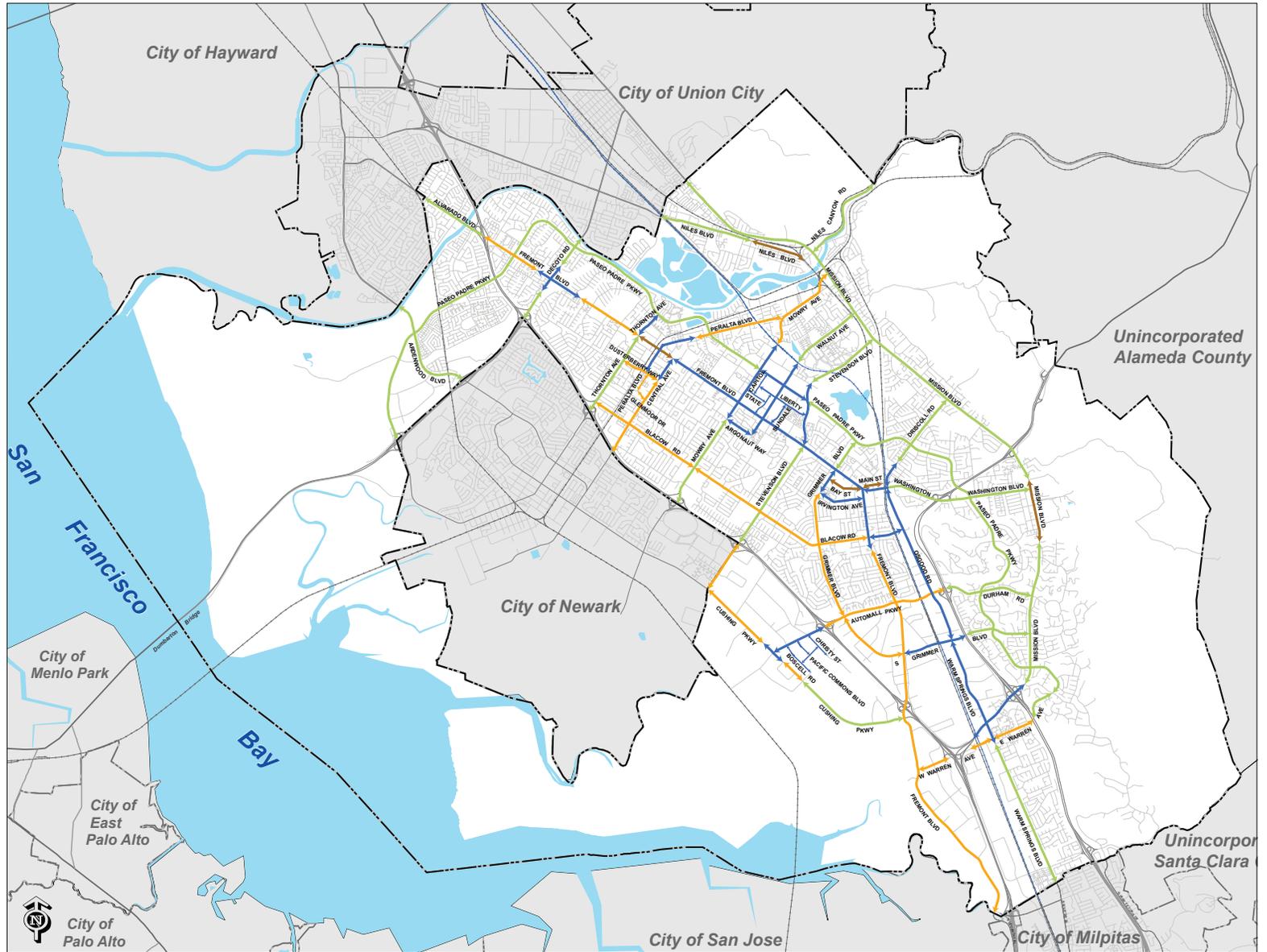
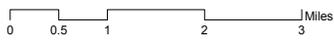
Corridor Place Types

- Urban
- Suburban
- Landscape
- Main Street

Corridor Place Types are illustrated on this Diagram. Refer to the General Plan text, Concept Plans, Specific Plans, and/or Design Guidelines for relevant policies and provisions.

The information conveyed on this map is dynamic and may have changed after this map was printed. Please consult the Planning Division or other appropriate agency for the most recent information or status.

Users should verify designations, policies, regulations, and restrictions before making project commitments.



To view this graphic at larger scale [click here](#)

Exemptions:

Certain properties may abut a main street or urban corridor place type but the location of the actual tenant space may not have frontage along these streets. In other instances the existing building design does not incorporate a storefront. If the proposed use is not located on a pedestrian frontage or the existing building does not have a storefront you may be exempt.

Storefront Reviews/Compliance Certificate:

For those businesses that do have storefronts, the city can issue a Storefront Compliance Certificate if the business agrees to meet all of the following criteria:

- (1) Maintain windows in a transparent condition during normal business hours, except that any blinds, curtains and other non-transparent window coverings will only be closed during times when sun or glare presents an observable problem for the users.
- (2) No window covering materials (e.g., paint, paper, films, wood or metal panels, etc.) will be installed or added that block more than 20 percent of the storefront window area.
- (3) No windows shall be removed nor shall windows be replaced with new panels containing spandrel glass, or any non-transparent or reflective materials.
- (4) Use of any window display area may be for merchandise wherein displayed merchandise shall not block more than 50 percent of the transparency of the business activities as viewed by an adult person on the walkway in front of the business.
- (5) Window signage shall be limited to 20 percent of the window area as provided by Fremont Municipal Code (FMC) Section 18.193.490(g)(2). Total building signage (which includes window signage) is also limited by land use designation and building frontage under FMC Section 18.193.550.

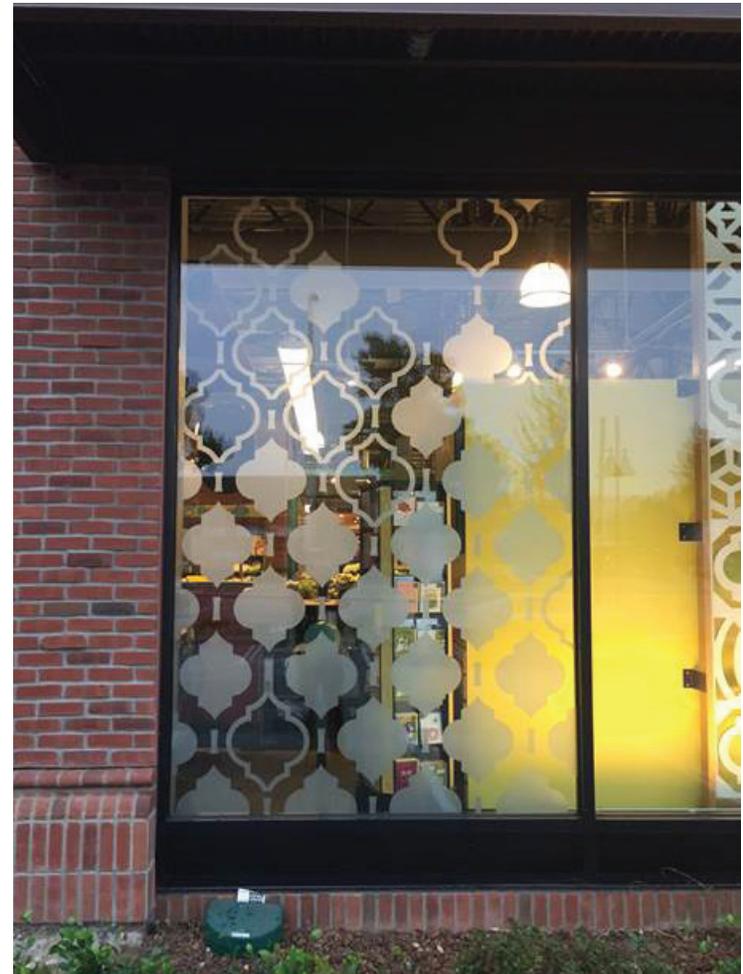


The figure above illustrates where storefront review may be required (yellow highlighted areas) and where it is generally not required (blue highlighted areas more than 100 feet away from an Urban Corridor or Main Street frontage).

These photos illustrate a compliant storefronts:



Compliant because the windows are unobscured and provide good visual interest.



Compliant because a minimum 50% transparency is provided.

These photos illustrate a compliant storefront adjacent a non-compliant storefront in the same building.



Compliant because the windows are 80% unobscured and signage covers less than 20% of window area.



Non-compliant because the windows are not maintained in transparent condition during normal business hours.

These photos illustrate subtleties of compliance.



Compliant because the windows in shadows are left open and transparent while the windows in the sun are allowed to have blinds drawn.



Compliant because the business is closed and they are allowed to have blinds drawn. When open the curtains remain to screen undersides of tables in this restaurant but the blinds are raised and open.

The following photos depict non-compliant storefronts.
Basically these are things you cannot do.



Compliant because the windows are 80% unobscured and signage covers less than 20% of window area.



Non-compliant because the windows are not maintained in transparent condition during normal business hours.

These photos illustrate additional non-compliant storefronts.
More examples of things you cannot do.



Non-compliant because the windows are not maintained in transparent condition during normal business hours.



Non-compliant because the windows are not maintained in transparent condition during normal business hours.

Alternative Design Solutions:

For businesses that are not eligible for exemption or can not meet the requirements for a Storefront Compliance Certificate, the City may consider alternatives where up to 50 percent of the existing window area may be obscured through use of decorative window treatments, including but not limited to etched glass, art glass, decorative spandrel glass where such treatments provide sufficient visual interest and can be reversed or restored to a more transparent condition by subsequent users of the tenant space. The treatment may also include art displays or window display boxes. Complete elimination of window transparency is not allowed through this process and any signage must still comply with signage limitations. Such considerations shall be made through a discretionary design review permit. Such permits require notice to properties and tenants within 300 feet of the business property location and the City Zoning Administrator will conduct a public hearing to receive input and comments before rendering a decision on the request. The Zoning Administrator may approve, conditionally approve or deny requests and the decision is appealable to the Planning Commission or Historic Architectural Review Board (in instances where the building is a historic overlay district or a potential or listed historic resource.)



These photos illustrate possible design solutions that could be approved through a design review permit wherein up to 50% of the window area may be blocked out.



Compliant because window frosting could effectively screen out some portion of the window area while maintaining a minimum 50% transparency.



This technically isn't a storefront as there are no windows. The white wall area(s) with the camel relief could, however, be window areas. If this were true, this would be a compliant solution. It also provides an excellent example of how to treat a large blank wall in a pedestrian oriented area.

These following photos illustrate possible design treatments that could be applied to windows if at least 50% of the window area is left transparent.



Possibly compliant if the areas that appear black are actually transparent. This type of treatment could be applied to some windows in a storefront so long as at least 50% of the windows appeared transparent.



Possibly compliant if this were applied to less than 50% of the windows in the total storefront.

These photos illustrate possible design solutions that could be approved through a design review permit wherein up to 50% of the window area may be blocked out.



Compliant because window etching (or film applique) could effectively screen out some portion of the window area while maintaining a minimum 50% transparency.



Compliant this partially transparent silk screen-style print provides enough transparency but also provides an interesting view for pedestrians.