



Outside Jurisdiction – Tall Building Standards

City of Spokane Planning & Development

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Pursuant to a request by some members of the Spokane Plan Commission and to help inform decision makers as to similar discussions elsewhere, Staff undertook a review and comparison of several Cities' tall building standards, specifically as they apply to the following topics:

- Pedestal Height;
- Glazing and Windows;
- Street Level Retail Uses;
- First Floor Height;
- Tower Floor Plates;
- Tower Setbacks and Separation; and,
- Mitigation of Shading Impacts.

The various regulations of each of the seven surveyed Cities are listed in the following table. Not all Cities had regulations concerning all topics. Similarly, those regulations that were too lengthy or complex to include verbatim in this report have been summarized here.

TOPIC	Seattle	Toronto	Calgary	Vancouver	Boston	New York	San Francisco
Pedestal Height	15-35 feet depending on street type.	80% the width of the facing street.		70 feet is "ideal."	90 feet	150% the width of the facing street.	150% the width of the facing street.
Glazing at Street Level	60% of frontage must be glazed and transparent.	60% of frontage must be glazed and transparent.	2/3 of frontage must be transparent.	Not specific, calls for "display windows, lighting, outdoor displays."	All street facing walls must be "glazed and transparent."	50% of street facing wall must be glazed and transparent.	Use of clear, un-tinted glass is "encouraged."
Street Retail		60% must be "active street related retail;" lobbies should be limited in width.	Wider buildings require multiple entrances. Simulate a series of narrow frontages rather than one large one.	Individual retail must be no more than 26 feet wide. (Discourages single, large retailers on street frontage.)	Promotes active street level uses. Lobbies limited to 40 feet in width.	Designated retail streets must have continuous retail frontage. Lobbies limited to 40 feet or 25% of the façade length, whichever is shorter.	Designated retail streets must have street-level retail. Large lobbies are discouraged.
First Floor Height		15 feet minimum.				13 feet minimum.	13 feet minimum.

TOPIC	Seattle	Toronto	Calgary	Vancouver	Boston	New York	San Francisco
Tower Floor Plate	8,800 sq. ft. max. or 50% of lot size.	8,000 sq. ft. max.	7,000 sq. ft. max.	6,500 sq. ft. max. Some areas are max. 5,000 sq. ft.	Case by case analysis. Cannot exceed 22,500 sq. ft.	40% of site area or less. Exceptions allow up to 50% on small lots.	11,900 sq. ft. max in towers. Base cannot exceed 17,300 sq. ft.
Tower Setbacks and Separation	Towers setback 20-40 feet from property line, depending on height. Towers must be at least 55 feet apart.	Min. 33 feet setback from property line. Multiple towers on one property must be 66 feet apart.	Min. 8 feet tower setback from face of pedestal. Min 6.5 feet from property line. Towers must be min. 79 feet apart. ¹	82 feet between towers.	Elements above 155 feet in height must be separated by at least 125 feet.	Min. 60 feet window to window or 40 feet wall to wall.	Minimum separation of 115 feet. ¹
Shading	Projects may be required to submit shading study depending on conditions.	All shading must be minimized. No new shadows on Tier I parks between 10AM and 4PM on Sept 21 st . No new shadows on Tier II parks between 12PM and 2PM on same day.	No additional shadows as measured on Sept 21 st . Process to transfer development potential lost due to shading impacts to other property(ies). ²			Multi-level shading analysis required for tall buildings. Mitigation may require reduction in mass or height or even relocation of a proposed building.	No new shadows on parks allowed.

Note: These topics are complex and are often regulated by multiple, interdependent parts of a City's municipal code. Likewise, all of these regulations are subject to change at any time. As such, this table should be considered a "rule of thumb" comparison and not representative of the whole of law or regulation applied to this topic by these Cities.

¹ These standards only apply in designated neighborhoods.

² The development potential lost due to shading protection can be transferred to another property without shading issues, effectively allowing great Floor Area Ratio on the receiving property.