



Department of Planning  
and Building

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# ZONING CODE BULLETIN

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**DATE EFFECTIVE:** April 27, 2018

**ZONING TOPICS:** This bulletin clarifies the definition of rooftop as it relates to group usable open space.

**PERTINENT CODE SECTION:** Section 17.126.030.

Subsection 17.126.030(B) states the following (italics added):

17.126.030 - Group usable open space.

B. Location. The space may be located anywhere on the lot within twenty (20) feet of the living units served, *except that not more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the required area shall be located on the roof of any building* other than an attached garage or carport; with the exception of property located within the S-15 Zone where the space may be located anywhere on the lot and may be located entirely on the roof of any building on the site.

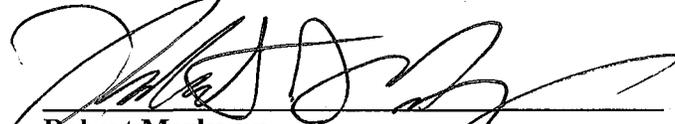
### Determination

The intent of this subsection is to preserve the quality of required group open space. In general, the quality of group open space located on the uppermost roof of a building may be negatively affected by wind, due to its height and openness, and lack of convenient access by all residents of a building.

In the case of the Subsection 17.126.030, "roof" shall mean the area covering the uppermost story of a building, not including penthouses and other small structures. An area located on other parts of a building, such as on top of a podium, a courtyard, and lower-story terraces over living space shall not be considered a roof. Therefore, the limitation allowing a maximum of 25 percent group usable open space being located on a roof, described in 17.126.030(B), above, only applies to the uppermost roof of a building.

This determination is consistent with the intent of the regulation by allowing the required group open space in areas accessible to residents, such as terraces and courtyards, and where wind is less prevalent and can be easily blocked by the building mass. It is also consistent with the dictionary definition of roof as "the external *upper* covering of a building, including the frame for supporting a building."<sup>1</sup> (Italics added for emphasis).

**REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:**



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<sup>1</sup> This definition is from A Visual Dictionary of Architecture by Francis D.K.Ching (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), which is a common reference book for architects.