



## 2018 SRC Code Interpretation

**SRC R302.2**  
**Townhouse Unit Separation**  
Release Date: March 15, 2021  
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*The following interpretation, policy or code alternate is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation, policy or code alternate to specific projects may vary.*

### **Code Issue:**

SRC R302.2 requires townhouse units be separated by one of the methods described in SRC R302.2.1 and SRC R302.2.2.

SRC R302.2.3 requires the fire-resistance-rated wall assembly separating townhouse units to be continuous from foundation to the underside of the roof sheathing, deck or slab and the full length of the wall or assembly.

Because the Chapter 2 definition for floor area includes all unenclosed areas that are under the horizontal projection of the roof, canopy, balcony, deck, or floor above, the wall separating the townhouse units needs to be continuous, both vertically and horizontally, through all enclosed and unenclosed floor area, and to the edge of all projections.

How does SDCI enforce townhouse unit separations when adjacent townhouse units have floor area or projections that are not directly adjacent to each other? Does SDCI accept any alternatives to the townhouse separation wall to provide the required townhouse separation?

Note that the following interpretation only applies to townhouse units that are not located above shared parking spaces, driveways, and/or other common space.

### **Code Interpretation:**

#### **Item 1: Imaginary Line**

Where the townhouse units have unenclosed floor area or projections that are directly adjacent to each other or where townhouse units have enclosed floor area or projections that are not directly adjacent to each other, provide one of the following (refer to Figure 1):

- Option 1: extend the wall separating the townhouse units to the edge of any floor area or projection; or
- Option 2: Locate an imaginary line separating the townhouse units. Then apply SRC Table R302.1(2) provisions for wall protection, opening limitations, and projection protection relative to the imaginary line. See Item 2 below for guidance on when strict compliance with SRC Table R302.1(2) is not required relative to the imaginary line.

The location of the imaginary line shall be as follows:

- Where the floor area or projections are not directly adjacent to each other, the line may be located anywhere between the townhouse units or at the exterior wall of one unit and may jog horizontally but not vertically.
- Where the townhouse units have unenclosed floor area or projections that are directly adjacent to each other, the line must be contiguous with the fire-resistance rated wall or assembly separating the townhouse units both horizontally and vertically.

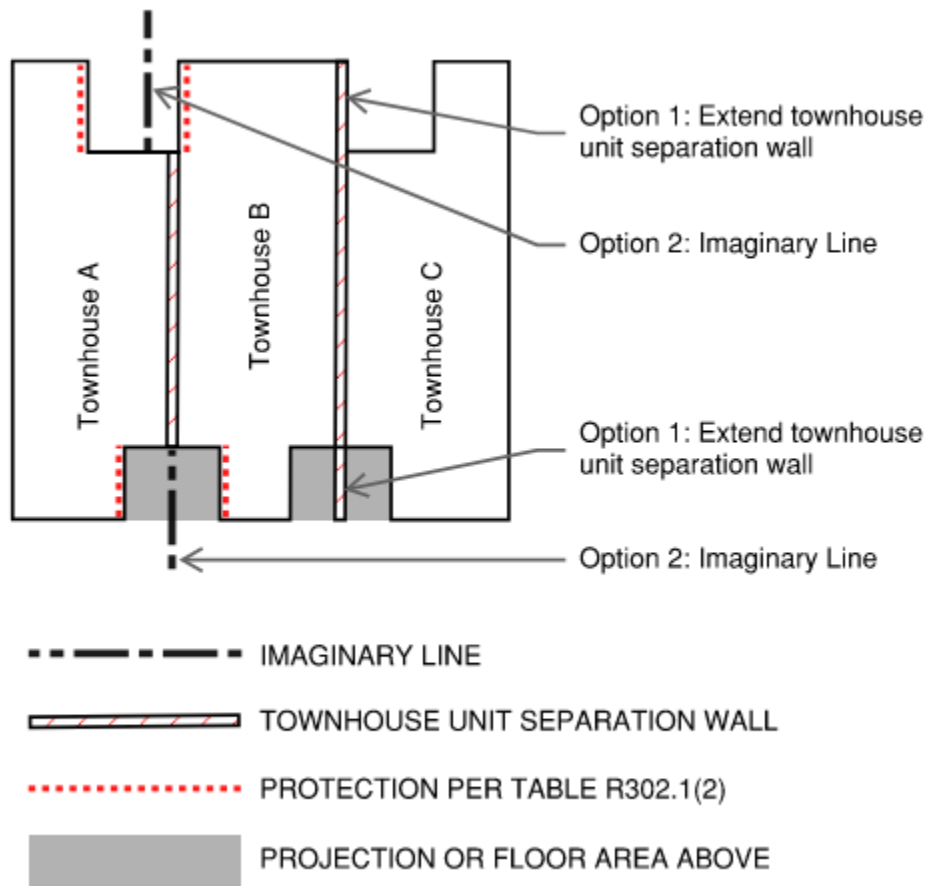


Figure 1: Plan

### Item 2: Where Strict Compliance with SRC Table R302.1(2) is Not Required Relative to the Imaginary Line

There are three locations where strict compliance with SRC Table R302.1(2) is not required relative to the imaginary line. They are described in more detail below, but are as follows:

- Unenclosed floor area
- Projections
- Noncombustible Projections

**Unenclosed Floor Area:**

All floor area, whether provided with exterior walls or not, is required to meet the exterior wall protection and limited openings per SRC Table R302.1(2) to both the line used to determine fire separation distance and to the imaginary line separating townhouse units.

However, when the unenclosed floor area is a maximum of 6 feet deep, SDCI allows a reduction in the required protection for unenclosed floor area (such as covered balconies, covered decks, and covered alcoves) relative to the imaginary line between townhouse units. At these locations, a rated wall is not required at the imaginary line and the underside of the projection above shall be protected as required for projections in SRC Table R302.1(2) and as described in this code solution. Refer to Figure 2. Any walls surrounding enclosed floor area still need to comply with SRC Table R302.1(2) relative to the imaginary line.

This reduced protection does not apply to unenclosed floor area relative to the line used to determine fire separation distance.

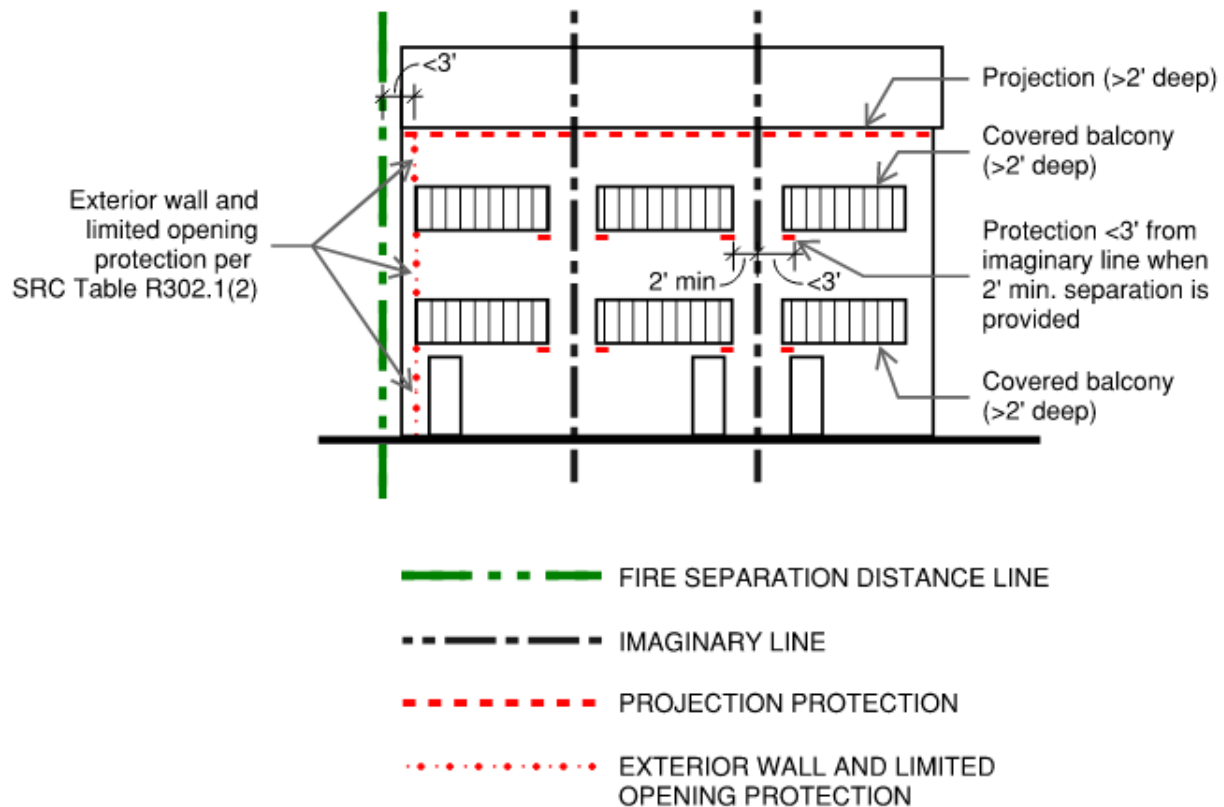


Figure 2: Elevation

**Projections:**

SRC Table R302.1(2) does not allow projections with less than 2 feet of fire separation distance.

However, SDCI allows projections to extend to the imaginary line separating townhouse units when they comply with one of the following (refer to Figure 3):

- Eaves that are no more than 2 feet deep that are provided with ½" gypsum sheathing applied to the underside for 3 feet on each side of the imaginary line; or
- All other projections that are provided with 1-hour projection protection applied to the entire underside of the projection.

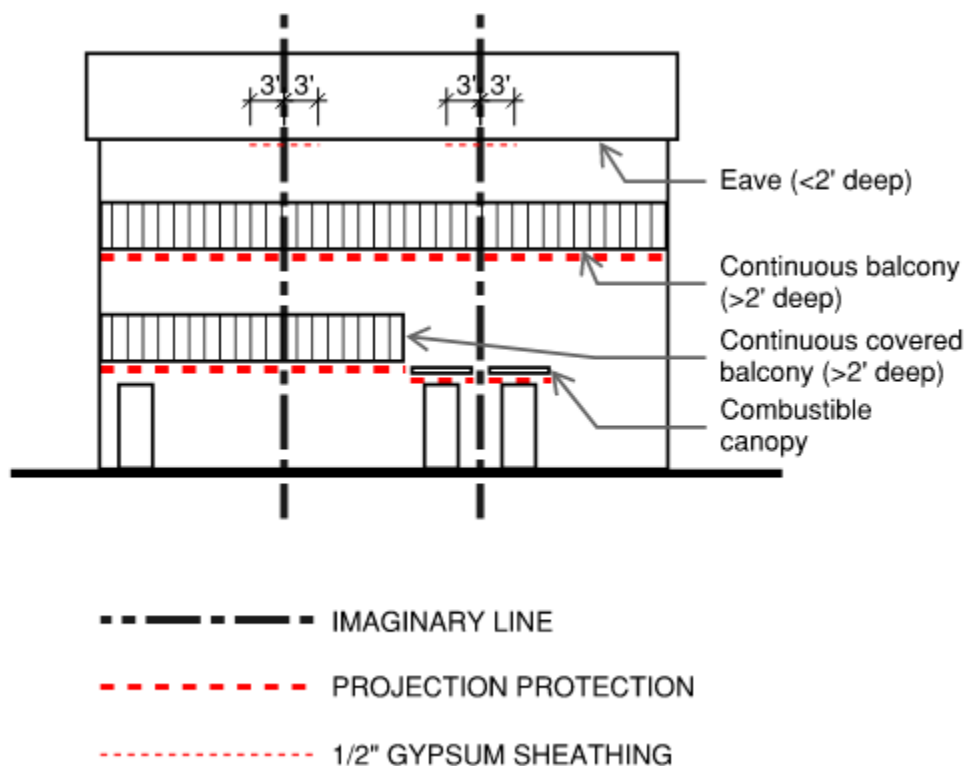


Figure 3: Elevation

**Noncombustible Projections:**

Where projection protection is required in relation to the imaginary line between townhouse units, SDCI will waive the required projection protection at any of the following locations:

- Non-combustible projection located 2 feet or more from the imaginary line.
- Non-combustible canopy located anywhere up to the imaginary line.
  - The maximum canopy size is one 3'x5' canopy per townhouse unit.
  - The maximum number of adjacent canopies is two

- Non-combustible projection (<2' deep) located anywhere up to the imaginary line.
- Non-combustible projections that meet SBC CA705.2 located anywhere up to the imaginary line.

For questions about whether this code solution applies to your project:

- *If you have submitted a permit application, contact the Building Code plan reviewer assigned to your application*
- *If you have not submitted an application, send us a question through the SDCI website <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/toolsresources/sendusaquestion/default.htm> or in person at the Applicant Services Center. Visit the Applicant Services Center website for more information about hours and location <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoweare/applicantservicescenter/default.htm>*