County of Sacramento

Countywide Design Guidelines

Public Review Draft

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This document will be replaced with a complete document with graphics, photos, page numbers and appendixes after review by the Board of Supervisors.

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

Sacramento County is made up of nearly 1,000 square miles encompassing a diverse mix of landscapes from the very western portion of the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the scenic and biologically diverse lowlands of the Sacramento River Delta. In total, approximately 1.45 million people call Sacramento County "home" with a significant number of those residents residing within one of the many established communities of the unincorporated area. The established communities that make up the unincorporated County offer distinguished housing for every lifestyle –urban lofts, suburban family homes, executive housing and rural farms and ranches – along with a wide variety of parks, open space and recreational, commercial, industrial and institutional uses. With its ideal climate, astounding tree canopy, and expansive outdoor recreational amenities – including the 32-mile American River Parkway – Sacramento County provides a quality of life that is highly desirable. The robust economy in the unincorporated Sacramento County is expected to grow significantly, attracting notable companies and a related workforce. With our existing communities and the anticipated growth, Sacramento County recognizes the importance to plan and develop land use regulations that reflect our value for high quality, sustainable and healthy community design. The three main objectives are to: achieve high standards for the quality of the built environment; advance sustainable development and provide business and user friendly practices. The expectation for these guidelines, in conjunction with our Design Review Program, is to foster more sustainable and healthy communities that improve the overall quality of life for all County residents. These guidelines, and the community discussion that guided their preparation, demonstrate this commitment.

1.1 Purpose of Countywide Design Guidelines

These Countywide Design Guidelines provide consistent design principles to implement the County General Plan. They have been developed to encourage high quality development that strengthens the economic vitality of all areas of the County. The purpose of these guidelines is to create design recommendations and standards for review of projects that are easy to understand and will result in well-designed and sustainable projects that raise the overall design quality of development occurring within the County. They encourage active transportation and transit supportive development in appropriate locations and anticipate new types of opportunities where commercial and residential uses could be developed into new village centers that provide social and economic focus to the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Guidelines emphasize projects that contribute to the health of our residents and the beauty of our established communities within the unincorporated area. Further, they ensure that new development compliments the character of the surrounding area. In other words, the objective is to require new projects to contribute and enhance the existing and future surrounding community. This shall be done while accommodating the future vision of pedestrian friendliness, where pedestrians and bicyclists feel safe and comfortable, particularly in commercial and business districts. These guidelines inform development and redevelopment in ways that are environmentally conscious, economically sound, and which provide community-wide benefits. When these guidelines are properly applied to projects, we achieve quality design, while also improving the individual and community's health, safety and livability.

These guidelines integrate development approaches to design and build healthy, sustainable, and inclusive neighborhoods. They promote a clean and safe environment, a strong economy, and good quality of life for all residents. They integrate Urban Greening, which is a systems approach to plan, plant, care, and manage flora, structures and spaces, which lead to increased forest canopy, reduced storm water runoff, improved air and water quality, energy conservation, open space and ultimately, more sustainable communities. The guidelines incorporate a broad spectrum of sustainability practices that include: 1) green building and construction which can facilitate sustainability by generating jobs, 2) increasing energy efficiency, water conservation, air quality and waste reduction, and 3) improving housing quality and the physical environment. Sustainable design guidelines promote use of solar, cool roofs, tree shading, green streets, urban greening, low impact development storm water features using River Friendly Landscaping, and more.

Promoting active transportation, including walkability and bike ability, along with improving access to transit lowers household transportation costs, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, decreases traffic congestion and encourages development of jobs, housing, services and other amenities in close proximity to each other. Sustainable practices also accommodate the changing weather patterns and provide relief on the increasing hotter and drier days, while also capturing and infiltrating storm water from storm events. These sustainable practices contribute to building healthy communities. The most important part of building sustainable communities is creating neighborhoods that are healthy. That is why the County is calling out "Active Design" with this icon in the design guidelines.

Throughout the Guidelines, standards and policies that incorporate active transportation and contribute to a built environment that supports public health have been highlighted with the walking person icon. The purpose of this icon is to identify "Active Design." Active Design shall be incorporated into all projects in order to reinforce the community's and County's goal to create a built environment that is healthy, sustainable, livable and promotes active transportation choices such as walking, bicycling, and accessing transit. There are many factors of the built environment that influence healthy choices and no single aspect of design can achieve this goal; however, by incorporating Active Design strategies into the built environment, physical activity and improved health can be achieved. More information about the synergies of the guidelines that support active design can be found in Appendix D.

The guidelines and standards outlined in the following sections have been based on national best practices in implementing design solutions and successful examples of guidelines from other jurisdictions. The Guidelines facilitate design review by helping applicants and County staff to identify major design issues and devise solutions early in the application process. In summary, the design guidelines are provided to:

1. Implement the objectives, policies and tools of the County General Plan and Housing Element;
2. Supplement and implement the contents of the County Zoning Code on matters of design and aesthetics;
3. Enhance, protect and maintain the value of property;
4. Enhance, maintain, and preserve community identity and quality of life;
5. Promote compatibility between new and existing development;

6. Promote a positive physical image for all types of development;
7. Promote a high quality of development that stimulates investment in and strengthening of the economic vitality of all areas of Sacramento County;
8. Improve community planning and design to promote healthy living and to balance integration of social, economic, and environmental concerns.
9. Utilize sustainable strategies in site design, building design, and landscaping;
10. Facilitate a clear and efficient design review process;
11. Provide guidance to the development community, architects/designers, property owners, and County staff; and
12. Provide for and maintain the health, safety, livability and welfare of all citizens of the County.

1.2 Application

The Countywide Design Guidelines are a part of a structure of policy documents that guide development in Sacramento County. The Sacramento County General Plan defines the community vision and establishes a fundamental framework to guide decision-making about development, land use, resource management, public safety, public services, and general community well-being. Both the Sacramento County Zoning Code and Countywide Design Guidelines are implementing tools of the General Plan and Housing Element, and apply to all properties in unincorporated Sacramento County. The Zoning Code presents development regulations specifically applicable to new projects or substantial improvements to existing projects. The Guidelines are intended to supplement the Zoning Regulations with design criteria that supports and implements the goals and policies of the County. Design Guidelines adopted as part of Specific Plans and Master Plans generally supersede the Countywide Design Guidelines when they provide more robust direction.

When it has been determined that a project is subject to design review, the design review process begins with either an application for one or more entitlement to the Department of Community Development, Planning and Environmental Review (discretionary projects), or can occur prior to building permit with a Design Review Application (non-discretionary projects). In either case, project proponents are encouraged to meet with the Design Review Administrator (DRA) for a pre-application conference and review of project context. This early review can inform the process and allows project proponents direct access to the DRA and associated design review process early on.

Once an application has been made, depending on whether it is a discretionary or non-discretionary project, the overall process could vary. For discretionary projects, design review will coincide with and be woven into the normal development process, which includes: review by the Project Review Committee (or PRC: a technical advisory-body that provides conditions of approval, review regarding technical requirements of projects, and/or troubleshooting various issues), environmental review, potential design review with input from the Design Review Advisory Committee (or DRAC: an advisory body made up of three members intended to make recommendations on a projects' overall design), and ultimately review by the appropriate hearing authority. The design review process for discretionary or non-discretionary projects is further defined as follows:

Discretionary projects are those projects that would require one or more entitlements or approvals, such as a rezone, conditional use permit or a special development permit. Prior to submittal, project applicants with discretionary projects are highly encouraged to meet with the Design Review Administrator (DRA) for a pre-application conference and context review. After the applicant submits their application, it is reviewed for consistency with the Design Review Guidelines by the DRA. During this review it is submitted to the Project Review Committee (PRC) for comment and review. Once PRC has been completed and initial review by the DRA is completed, the project is submitted for review before the Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC). The DRA and DRAC prepare Design Review Guidelines conformance recommendations to be included in the project staff report to the reviewing authority. The reviewing authority may use the DRAC recommendations to apply conditions of approval to the project.

Non-discretionary projects are those projects that require only a building permit. These include projects that are consistent with the applicable zoning district in planned use and development standards and propose new construction, or exterior remodeling. Non-discretionary project applicants are highly encouraged to meet with the DRA in a pre-application conference to determine what is expected of their project and to receive a preliminary determination of Design Review Guidelines conformance. The project's Design Review Application should include required preliminary plans and a design review checklist. It is advisable that the design review process occur before the filing of a building permit application with the Building Permit Division. The project is reviewed approved by the DRA for conformance with the Design Review Guidelines, acting under the authority of the Planning Director. For major projects, review by the PRC may be required during the review and approval process. Design Review Approval is required before issuance of building permits.

The design review process rewards projects that meet the criteria outlined in these Guidelines. These projects will move faster through the process, requiring fewer review meetings. As noted, the design review process runs concurrently with the development review process and is not intended make the process lengthier unless the project does not meet the Guidelines.

The Design Review Guidelines operate at three levels of development: **New Community Design, District Design, and Project Design**. The New Community level of development is described in Section 7.0 and deals with comprehensive development of more than 50 acres. District level of development deals with comprehensive development areas containing multiple development sites. Project Design level of development deals with individual building design. At each of these levels of development elements of Sections 2.0; 3.0; 4.0; 5.0; and 6.0 are applicable to satisfy Design Review compliance.

1.3 Organization

The Guidelines are organized in chapters according to major land use categories. Each chapter is organized into topic areas structured with a design principle, rationale, and guidelines and standards supporting each principle. Design guidelines reflect the County's design objectives and are general rules to be incorporated into design solutions. . A glossary of terms used within the document is included, as well as a summarized design review checklist to help track the overall success of a given project in meeting the intent of the guidelines, and various case studies. Accompanying drawings, illustrations and photographs are intended as examples to a

range of design solutions. These examples should not be looked upon as the only design solution. Creativity and innovation in design is encouraged.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 Single-Family Design Guidelines

The primary goals of the Single-Family Guidelines are to ensure that new single-family development is a positive addition to the community and achieves the highest resident quality of life, whether in new or established neighborhoods.

Design Review Approval shall be applicable as follows:

1. **For Subdivisions of 20 lots or more (new and previously approved tentative subdivision maps) and Subdivisions at a density of 8 dwelling units per net acre or less.** Neighborhood Site Design Guidelines (Section 2.2) will be reviewed with the tentative subdivision map. Design Review of Building Design and Landscaping (Sections 2.3 and 2.4) is required, and may occur after the approval of the tentative map, but must occur prior to submittal for a building permit. Design Review of Building Design and Landscaping may be based on conceptual or illustrative drawings.
2. **For Subdivisions at a density of 8 dwelling units per acre or more.** Design review for Site Design, Building Design, and Landscaping (Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) is required concurrent with consideration of the tentative subdivision map.
3. **For Subdivisions of less than 20 lots and less than 8 dwelling units per acre and for tentative parcel maps.** Neighborhood Site Design Guidelines (Section 2.2) will be reviewed with the tentative subdivision or parcel map. Design review for Building Design and Landscaping (Sections 2.3 and 2.4) may be required as a condition of approval in order to achieve General Plan objectives. The conditions of approval may specify the design objectives particular to the project (e.g. privacy to adjoining properties) to be evaluated prior to issuance of a building permit.

The process for using these design guidelines is to:

A. Review the Community Context / Neighborhood Compatibility Type (2.1)

B. Respond to Neighborhood Site Design Standards (2.2)

C. Apply the Building Design Standards (2.3)

D. Apply the Landscape / Site Elements Design standards (2.4)

Design Review Submittals for Building Design shall include the following exhibits:

1. Conceptual Building Elevations of proposed homes, and any accessory structures, including elevations of all sides.
2. Illustrative Landscaping Plans for the front and side street yard areas, including irrigation plans. Landscaping Plans may be submitted concurrent with Water Conservation Plans.
3. Illustrative Fencing Details for the front and side street yard areas.
4. Landscaping and Fence Details for public areas.

5. Streetscape Drawings, showing a continuous portion of typical street frontage elevations and a three-dimensional streetscape view showing relationship to adjoining properties.

2.1 Community Context

The County General Plan encourages infill of existing communities consistent with existing Community Plan and zoning designations, while striking a balance with the need to design new residential development that is compatible within the context of the project's surroundings. The County General Plan and these Guidelines encourage continued investment in existing communities and recognize that new investment must often respond to market needs that may not be the same style and design as the existing neighborhood. These Guidelines seek design strategies to ensure new projects blend in with and complement their surroundings, and simultaneously enable property owners to develop at zoned densities. Innovation and creativity are encouraged to achieve highly livable neighborhoods.

An analysis of the appropriate community context within which a given project occurs is the first step in assessing appropriate design strategies for residential neighborhoods that meet the compatibility and livability goals of the Sacramento County General Plan.

2.2 Neighborhood Site Design

Design Principles

The land use planning for tentative maps involve decisions affecting street layouts, lot configurations, connectivity, and parks/green spaces. This section identifies design guidelines for creating livable communities and at the same time reducing potential land use conflicts.

Rationale

Subdivision design deals with neighborhood compatibility, the public and private realm interface and meeting the livability goals of the county general plan at both the community scale and internal subdivision scale.

Good Site Design is an inherent part of good neighborhood design. Site Design addresses street and block patterns, lot configurations, a home's orientation and massing, and the overall layout with regard to its lot. For infill in existing neighborhoods the Site Design should respect the existing context where preservation of this context is a community goal.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Each project that proposes to divide land should result in lots that are consistent with and well suited to the land use designations and policies set forth in the General Plan and in any adopted community plans, including both maps and text. Potential population densities of residential lots should not exceed the densities set forth in the General Plan or community plans, unless otherwise specified in the Zoning Code.
- In areas with topography, the design of the project should preserve natural contours where the natural topography is the predominant character of the area. .

To achieve this purpose, grading restrictions or building location restrictions may be placed on the final map.

- Where heritage and other healthy large canopy trees exist, steps should be taken to preserve and plan around them consistent with General Plan policies on tree preservation.
- Smaller lot sizes than that allowed in the underlying zoning district may be permitted so long as the average of all the lot sizes remain equal to or above the minimum zoned lot size.

2.2.1 Subdivision Street and Block Patterns

Design Principle

Street and block patterns of new subdivisions should closely resemble the surrounding context in most cases, but poor design should not be repeated. Connections should be provided between new subdivisions and adjacent neighborhoods by streets as well as parks, open space systems and pedestrian/bike paths. Lot and block patterns should consider constraints such as topography and existing mature trees.

Rationale

Street and block patterns, and lot configurations are key contributors to the neighborhood fabric and character. Appropriate small-lot single-family subdivision design that fits the context and surrounding neighborhood helps maintain property values, increases the safety and security of all residents, promotes a "sense of place" and neighborly interaction, and improves mobility and quality of life for the community.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Streets layout should reflect a street hierarchy consistent with the subdivisions location and internal needs. Streets shall be tree lined "complete streets" designed for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular use consistent with the Improvement Standards for the street's hierarchical designation. As separated sidewalks provide a safer and healthier environment for pedestrians, they are especially important where the residential street is a connection to schools, parks, or otherr civic amenities. The County Improvement Standards contain standards on separated and attached sidewalks. .
- All street widths must meet County standards for both public and private road classifications, except where a Specific Plan or Master Plan provides for alternative street design. Alternatives to the street standards may be justified in infill situations due to topography, neighborhood compatibility or similar reasons.
- The circulation system should be logical, predictable, and designed to promote safety for all transportation modes, particularly pedestrians and bicyclists. Streets should connect to adjacent neighborhoods and provide direct access to schools, parks, community centers, and nearby retail for pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, transit and emergency vehicles.

- A grid or modified grid pattern to provide connectivity and walkability is the preferred street and block pattern. Modifications may be approved to match existing neighborhood context.
- Where residential subdivisions are located adjacent to an open space preserve, street and block patterns should achieve visual and physical access to open space areas.
- Street patterns that create long uninterrupted sound walls should be avoided.
- Residential streets within the subdivision design should be slower and pedestrian-oriented. Incorporate traffic calming measures such as traffic circles, chokers, enhanced crosswalks, and narrower streets.
- Block lengths should be no more than 500 feet, especially for smaller lot developments (RD-5 and higher). For blocks that exceed 500 feet in length, mid-block paseos or pedestrian paths connecting to walking paths, bicycle lanes, schools and parks should be provided to ensure the walkability within the community. Larger lot subdivisions may have longer block lengths up to 750 feet.
- Street layout shall allow for adequate fire protection of all housing.
- Existing healthy mature trees should be preserved and incorporated into site design to add to the neighborhood character.
- Cul-de-sacs that side on to through streets or greenbelts should provide pedestrian access to connect to the adjacent through street. "Live-end" cul-de-sac design should be used to complement these areas and can include landscaping and benches.
- Access walkways and/or off-street trails should be provided to community destinations such as open spaces, parks and schools, and commercial centers from the neighborhood, to enhance the pedestrian and bike movement and safety.
- Each parcel of land should front on a public street or be served by a private road approved pursuant to the Zoning Code which is a component of an approved local street pattern. Lots with homes that back onto a street are only allowed where traffic volumes render lots with homes that front onto a street as unsafe.
- Gated communities are allowed when consistent with community goals.
- Blocks should be laid out in a pattern that enables individual lots to maximize solar access so that such features as solar panels and daylighting can be incorporated into the design of the home. Layout for solar access needs to be balanced with preservation of existing mature trees and planting of new trees for shade.
- Where possible, residential streets should incorporate gently sloped swales or bio-retention areas that contain native vegetation to capture and treat stormwater. Green street practices and cool pavements shall be utilized whenever possible. Front yards, parkways, planter strips, and cul-de-sac islands are good candidates for these facilities.

- Tree planting provides many health and sustainability benefits while contributing to community design and should be designed into new neighborhoods. Tree shading will help keep neighborhoods cooler during seasonally warm days, improve air quality, conserve water and provide health benefits to the residents.

2.2.2 Lot Size and Configurations

Design Principles

Each project that proposes to divide land should result in lots that are consistent with and well suited to the land use designations and policies set forth in the General Plan and in any adopted community plans, including both maps and texts. Potential population densities of residential lots should not exceed the densities set forth in the General Plan or community plans, or unless otherwise specified in the Zoning Code.

Rationale

The size and configuration of building lots affects the community character and residential livability.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Each lot should maintain a relative consistency with the predominant neighborhood development character. Lots that are found to be significantly out of character, either in area, frontage, shape, or access provisions, may be denied if it is found that such character differences may result in detrimental impacts on adjacent properties.
- Lot frontage requirements, as set forth in the County Zoning Code, may be satisfied in the case of lots on a curved street, the rounded end of a cul-de-sac, or on a bulb corner if the resulting lot frontage results in a streetscape and pedestrian access that meets other requirements of these design guidelines.
- Refer to Zoning Code Section 5.4.2 for lot size and width standards.
- Different interior lot widths on the same block may be acceptable along the street to create visual diversity.
- Street corners are better suited for larger and wider lots with structures that reduce the appearance of bulk and mass along the streetscape.
- Significant grade changes between lots should be gradually stepped or terraced in order to preserve natural topography to keep with community character. Grading at the property line shall be in conformance with the County Improvement Standards, with deviations from the maximum grading approved by the Planning Commission.
- Lots that back onto an arterial roadway or are adjacent to a land use with a higher intensity non-residential zoning classification should incorporate landscaped buffer areas and deeper rear yards to mitigate potential noise, air quality, aesthetics, and land use compatibility impacts.

2.2.3 Subdivision Entry Treatments

Design Principle

Entry features should be well thought out as to the purpose they are intended to serve and provide for visitors and residents of the particular neighborhood. Entrances to individual neighborhood segments should help establish a hierarchy to circulation within the larger development, and provide individual identity for each segment while adhering to an overarching theme for the community. Signage, monumentation and landscaping also provide individual identity and branding for neighborhoods. These features provide a distinctive "gateway" to neighborhoods that can identify the unique characteristics of the area, help to create a "sense of place" and identity, while slowing traffic and enhancing the pedestrian experience.

Rationale

Entry features can establish a hierarchy to circulation that helps orient visitors and residents to communities and neighborhoods.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Common lots intended for entry features should include sufficient space to accommodate an organized landscape theme and other improvements such as theme walls, signage, water features, public art, pedestrian amenities such as seating or enhanced walkways/trellis features, and lighting.
- Entry features should be reflective and proportional to the size of the project.
- Entry features should be treated with complementary materials, colors, and forms to contribute to a consistent and recognizable community character.
- Entry signs should include the name of the community and other appropriate identifiers.
- Entry features should be designed to establish a hierarchy to the overall circulation within the larger development.
- Vertical elements should be used to define each entry by making them clearly visible.
- Lighting should be energy efficient and integrated into entry signage and monumentation elements.
- Facilitation of ongoing maintenance of entry features should be considered when designing these spaces.
- Entry walls should include a trim cap and should incorporate pillars, openings, or recesses/changes in direction intermittently to avoid long, uninterrupted flat wall planes.
- Landscaping shall be included adjacent to a wall when open to public view and shall be used to soften and screen the hard edge appearance of the wall, consistent with Zoning Code requirements.

- Landscape trees, plants and materials should represent local vegetation and natural materials, and should be drought-tolerant (Refer to Table 2.3 and Figure 2.9 for a list of suggested native plant species).
- Entry monument walls, signage, and landscaping must comply with the required sight lines at corners for vehicles and pedestrians as set forth in the County Improvement Standards.
- Gated subdivisions shall have a controlled pedestrian access gate in addition to the vehicle entry gate. The vehicle entry and any gatehouse structure shall be located a sufficient distance from the cross street to accommodate vehicle stacking and provide adequate space for vehicle turn-around.
- Enhanced pavement is encouraged at intersections and at transitions between the public and private areas, and should reflect circulation needs and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles.
- Use of cool pavement and permeable materials is recommended, especially in pedestrian areas, walkways, driveways, patios, plazas, etc.

2.3 Building Design

Building design addresses the built form of the home, along with its detailing. Infill homes should respect the architectural style of established homes on the block.

New infill homes may continue the trend of diversity in the existing neighborhood by bringing fresh new styles while still respecting the overall scale of the neighborhood.

Homes in new subdivisions shall have design variety but utilize a consistent design vocabulary to provide a sense of a unified neighborhood.

2.3.1 Building Setbacks and Orientation

Design Principle

Setbacks of single-family residential buildings should be compatible with the character and setback of the homes along the street and adjacent blocks. Single-family buildings should address the streetscape by creating an interactive relationship with the public streets, sidewalks and open spaces; thereby promoting a sense of community and safety. Variable setbacks to create interest and creativity are encouraged.

Rationale

Building setbacks and orientation help establish the continuity and character of a neighborhood and help protect the privacy of neighbors. Appropriate setbacks provide a transition between public and private areas, allow for social interaction, provide functional spaces for outdoor activities, allow for light, fresh air circulation within buildings, and provide spaces for landscaping, trees, ground cover, and shrubs.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- For single-family subdivisions, front yard setbacks along a street may vary by up to 25 percent from the required setback to create interest, but should contribute to the visual continuity of the block. Garage setbacks need to maintain a minimum 19 foot setback. Greater deviations would require a Special Development Permit.

- The front setback of infill homes within an existing block should generally be an average of the setbacks of the other homes on the block
- Infill structures should reinforce the existing rhythm of building widths and side setbacks.
- Homes should be oriented toward adjacent public streets by providing features such as entryways, windows, porches, stoops, and balconies along street frontages where views are generally not obstructed. Active spaces oriented to the street encourages social interaction by providing for access, surveillance, engagement with passers-by, and control over the public realm, increasing safety and security for the users (Figure 2.5).
- Solar access for daylighting and solar panels should be considered when orienting buildings. Glazing should be located so as to maximize energy efficiency.
- Placement of windows should also consider the cooling benefits of Sacramento's delta breezes.
- Vary the design and elevation of front porches to accommodate outdoor furniture and active uses by occupants while maintaining private yard areas.

2.3.2 Building Scale and Massing

Design Principle

A single-family residential project should be compatible with the overall scale and mass of adjacent neighborhoods. Small-lot single-family housing should conform to applicable design guidelines in the Multi Family Design Guidelines 3.0. Infill homes should respect the overall scale and mass of other homes in the neighborhood.

Rationale

Scale and mass are important characteristics of buildings within single-family neighborhoods. New infill homes and additions to existing homes should respect earlier, established building forms by minimizing the appearance of bulk and mass through site layout and architectural design. Homes in new subdivisions should be part of an overall consistent scale and mass to create a sense of unity to their neighborhood.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- For single-family subdivisions, provide variation in the streetscape with different heights, setbacks, and roof shapes of buildings.
- To maintain a compatible scale and massing of streetscape, provide that the rhythm, size, and proportions of openings (windows, doors) be compatible with each other.
- The mass of a larger structure should be broken down into smaller components that are similar in scale to other buildings in the neighborhood.
- Reduce the appearance of mass of the upper stories on two and three story homes.
- Facades should be articulated to break up the surface, add interest, and reduce the appearance of mass.

- Roof style and articulation should be compatible and in context with that of the subdivision or the existing neighborhood.

2.3.3 Design for Privacy

Design Principle

Ensure that new infill single-family residential buildings or additions and those in new residential subdivisions are designed and constructed to protect the privacy of adjacent residential properties. This principle recognizes that adjacent residential properties have the ability to construct two-story structures consistent with zoning standards.

Rationale

Building height, the placement of windows and entries, setbacks, and landscaping all contribute to the level of privacy between adjacent properties. New two-story buildings with windows directly facing an adjacent residential home and private yard may adversely affect the privacy of adjacent units and shall be avoided.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- For new two-story residential buildings directly adjacent to one-story residential buildings, respect the privacy of adjacent one-story buildings (Figure 2.4).
- The direct line-of-sight between dwelling units, specifically bedrooms and bathrooms, should be avoided by orienting windows, balconies, and entryways so they do not directly face into adjacent property windows or private open space.
- Landscaping should be used as screening to enhance residential privacy.

2.3.4 Architectural Styles

Design Principle

Building design should respect, enhance, and contribute positively to the predominant characteristic developments in the neighborhood. An infill home should be designed in a cohesive architectural style that complements the best examples of existing residential development on the block. If there is a mixture of styles on the block, then the design of infill construction may be more flexibly interpreted.

Rationale

Quality in detail and design contributes positively to the neighborhood. The use of cohesive, but different architectural "styles" and materials is intended to add variety to the buildings as is often found in neighborhoods that have evolved over time.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- For single-family subdivisions, the building styles along the same street should be complementary and coordinated yet diverse. Variation of architectural styles along the same street is appropriate if the overall massing, form and setbacks of the homes is compatible.
- Production home development projects should provide a minimum of four different housing product types.

- New stylistic interpretations of traditional architecture are encouraged while maintaining fundamental design principles such as proportions, scale, shapes and rhythm.
- Architectural features and detailing should be proportional to the scale of the home, as well as to other homes of a similar architectural style in the surroundings.
- Individual elements of a structure should be consistent with that structure's overall design or style.

2.3.5 Architectural Details

Design Principle

Buildings should be well articulated through building elements such as the roof, entryway, windows, porches, balconies and decorative trim, which should be stylistically cohesive and proportional to the overall structure. Color, materials, and texture should convey a high-quality appearance and shall be complementary to the surrounding area. Products shall be of a quality that is durable and does not readily show signs of weathering and aging.

Rationale

Use of stylistically cohesive, character defining elements enhances visual compatibility and attractiveness of the building. Use of appropriate details maintains the authenticity of the building style, and can help to create a well-articulated building facade and scale.

2.3.5.a. Elevations and Facades

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Attractive, well-articulated building facades should be created. Articulation can be achieved with windows, setbacks, entries, porches, and/or balconies. All elevations should be given design treatment with particular emphasis on those seen from the street or public way.
- Variety in use of materials is desirable. For infill projects, the materials should complement existing neighborhood context.
- No building facade shall consist of an unarticulated blank wall or an unbroken series of garage doors.
- The structure should have appropriate finishes on all sides to provide continuity. Materials should appear substantial and integral to the structure; and shall be durable so as not to readily succumb to weathering and aging. Material changes not accompanied by changes in plane appear "tacked-on" and are strongly discouraged.
- For most architectural styles, exterior colors should be in context or compatible with those in its neighborhood.
- Corner lots should present attractive facades to both adjoining streets through elements such as wrap-around porches, bays, entries, window treatments, and use of alternative materials such as brick and stone.

- Provide windows with views onto outdoor spaces for additional security and visual interest. Active uses, such as kitchens and living rooms, are encouraged to the front of the building for more "eyes on the street."
- Energy conservation strategies should be employed including window shading devices, selection of colors to reduce heat gain, cool roofs, whole house energy systems, and use of high-quality insulation materials and radiant barriers to reduce energy consumption (especially the use of air conditioning during hot summer months), to the greatest extent possible.
- Inclusion of rain gardens and rain barrels to capture roof runoff is highly recommended.
- Use of recycled paint and other quality recycled materials is encouraged.

2.3.5.b. Roof Styles

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Roof forms should be an integral part of the architectural design of the building. There should be a consistent relationship of slopes and pitches used on each building.
- The design of a roof on an infill home should fit in with designs of roofs on homes in the established neighborhood.
- Infill homes should respect the primary roof pitch of the majority of existing homes on the block to allow for coherence of design, while displaying variety in details such as dormers and gable orientation.
- Flat roofs should be used only if it can be demonstrated that they fit in the overall design character of the neighborhood.
- The roof forms and slopes of additions should be similar to those of the original structure.
- Appropriate roof overhangs are encouraged to promote window shading and building longevity when appropriate to the architectural design of the home.
- Photovoltaic solar panels or solar shingles such as "solar slate" are encouraged to reduce the home's use of energy from the grid.
- Homeowners are encouraged to consider roofing options that include recycled content.
- The use of "cool roof" options, including lighter colored, high albedo coatings and other "cool roofing" materials and applications are encouraged to achieve energy efficiency inside homes and reduce the heat island effect.
- The use of rooftop solar or wind turbine installations (where allowable) should be integrated into the overall home image and be non-obtrusive on the neighborhood imagery.
- Installation of radiant heat barriers and insulation in attic and rafters is encouraged to increase energy efficiency and interior livability.

2.3.5.c. Entry Features

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Entry features are encouraged on all new homes.
- Entry features should be built to a minimum depth of six (6) feet; however, shallower entry features will be considered with justification.
- The scale and style of porch, entry and portico elements should be consistent with the scale and style of the home and incorporate CPTED principles.
- Porch columns and railings should be constructed of high-quality materials that complement the materials used in the overall exterior of the home.

2.3.5.d. Doors

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Exterior doors should be constructed of appropriate materials that complement the style of the home and provide security to the occupants.
- Exterior doors should include raised panels, glass, or some other form of detailing and articulation.
- Horizontal sliding doors on main entries are highly discouraged.

2.3.5.e. Windows

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Windows should be designed to complement the style of the home.
- Accent features such as sills, shutters, and canopies should be used at windows. Recessed windows should also be used where appropriate.
- A consistent window treatment should be used on all sides of the building.
- Reflective or tinted glass and opaque plastic skylights are discouraged.
- Provide overhangs or other shading devices, and select glazing that provides the greatest reduction in solar heat gain during the summer, when the sun is high overhead.
- Major glazing areas should generally face south to collect solar heat during the winter.
- Incorporate daylighting strategies such as: providing light shelves, glare control, courtyards, solar-tubes and skylights.
- Placement of windows should also consider the cooling benefits of Sacramento's Delta breezes.

2.3.5.f. Siding

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Use durable siding consistent with the style and character of the home. , Siding materials for infill homes should complement the siding materials used on other homes on the block.
- Use high quality stucco application and appearance. The use of two materials, with one employed as wainscoting, can often add to the interest of the home, and lend a durable appearance.
- Highly reflective materials such as metals or glass should be avoided.
- Non-durable materials such as plastic, tin, and vinyl should be avoided.
- The color, texture, and bonding pattern of brick should be similar to established uses of brick in the neighborhood.

2.3.5.g. Lighting and Addresses

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Exterior lighting contributes to the security of the home and should be pedestrian-oriented. Lighting fixtures shall provide adequate illumination of the front entry and building addresses so that both are clearly visible from the street, following CPTED guidelines. Recessed entryways should be clearly lit.
- The preferred location to display the address is affixed to the front of the home, clearly visible from the street.
- Exterior lighting should minimize light pollution caused by glare or spillage onto neighboring properties.
- In addition to the standards set forth in this section and 2.4.1 site and street lighting shall comply with Section 5 (Street Light Design) of the Sacramento County Improvement Standards.
- Energy efficient lighting strategies, including placing lights on timers or sensors, should be applied.
- Nighttime pollution of the sky is discouraged by following illumination levels required for safety per Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA).

2.3.6 Garages

Design Principle

The garage should be placed in a way that minimizes its prominence on the public street. A range of different placement options is encouraged within the same block to create visual interest along the street. Garages on alleys are encouraged.

Rationale

De-emphasizing the appearance of the garage from the public street or open space and place higher emphasis on the active spaces such as the front entryway and porch enhances the streetscape and the pedestrian experience.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Varied planes and setbacks should be used for three or more adjacent garage doors.
- A variety of garage placements should be created on the same block in order to de-emphasize garage doors and avoid garages from dominating the streetscape and the front of the house. Recessed garages, and garages placed at the side or rear of the home, are encouraged.

2.4 Landscaping / Site Elements

The landscaping of a neighborhood has a major impact on establishing its character, sense of place, property values and livability. The landscaping of both the public and private spaces along a street contribute to how a neighborhood feels and how the street is used by its residents. People will walk more on safe and attractive tree lined streets. The trees' natural canopies will also keep neighborhoods cooler during Sacramento's seasonally hot days. Use of river friendly/drought-tolerant landscaping conserves water while remaining attractive year round. Site elements such as walls, fencing, sideyards, utilities, and storage enclosures, are an important ingredient of these landscapes and must be well designed as an integral part of the overall neighborhood. Placement of street furniture or a small corner plaza in key parts of the streetscape provides elements of public spaces to be enjoyed.

2.4.1 Planting and Landscaping

Design Principle

Residential subdivisions shall have a coherent overall landscape strategy including street trees as part of a "complete streets" design. Large common areas in the public realm should be considered for special landscape design treatment with public art as a consideration. Additionally, on-going maintenance of landscapes is essential to ensure long term neighborhood sustainability and success.

Individual residential lots should be designed to maximize opportunities for usable, attractive, and well-landscaped open spaces. Landscaping should complement the architectural design. The design and placement of driveways and walkways should allow for a maximum amount of "meaningful" landscaping to be incorporated into the site design. A variety of plantings should be selected and provided appropriately for their intended use. Special consideration should be given to creating environmental benefits, such as providing shade, using native drought tolerant planting, treating and/or reducing stormwater runoff, and providing habitat for the local species. All landscaping plans shall be coordinated with requirements of the Water Conservation Ordinance.

Rationale

Treatment of the landscape in the public and private areas is a major component of neighborhood creation, character, and compatibility**.** Landscaping can be used as a strong complement to buildings and to make a positive contribution to the aesthetics and function of the specific lot, building, and area. Landscaping of the individual lot can also provide for a smooth transition between the public and the private area and improve the safety along the streets. Landscaping and landscape maintenance are critical components of any successful residential project and shall be considered an essential part of the design and construction process, particularly for single-family residential developments.

2.4.1.a. Planting

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Incorporate trees, shrubs, plants, groundcover, and grass areas within single-family development projects to create a well-designed landscaped environment for residents and those viewing from public areas.
- Front yard areas should be designed using landscape elements pertaining to form, horizontal and vertical lines, hardscape and softscape, and ornate qualities that are compatible to the primary structure.
- Visual openness should be maintained in front yards to provide for visual surveillance of the street and sidewalks.
- Visual focal points such as sculpture and public art are strongly encouraged to be integrated into subdivision common area landscaping.
- To the extent feasible, existing mature trees and shrubs that represent existing significant landscaping shall be preserved.
- All plants should be given enough space to grow to their natural size.
- Provide street trees in the front and side street yards of residential lots, consistent with Section 5.2.4.C of the Zoning Code.
- Air conditioning/mechanical equipment and trash enclosures should be placed out of view from the public right-of-way and should be screened with landscaping. Shading air conditioning equipment helps conserve energy.
- Unpaved areas should be planted with irrigated plant materials, and mulched where landscaping would be challenging to minimize weed growth and improve appearance.
- For subdivisions, planting strips located between the sidewalk and street should be at a minimum six (6) feet wide to allow for a mature tree to grow. Planting strips less than six (6) feet wide must be consistent with the improvement standards and still provide for the planting of smaller canopy trees.
- Provide sidewalk shading with the planting of street trees in the public realm, consistent with the County Improvement Standards.

- For subdivisions, marked entries should incorporate landscaped open space areas. Enhanced parkways and tree lined medians can create an attractive entrance and are encouraged.
- Various water conservation measures and systems to capture and treat stormwater should be employed through landscaping to the extent feasible, in accordance with the Water Conservation Ordinance and the River Friendly Landscape Design Toolkit.
- Primary selection of trees and plant species should be from the California native palette and other drought tolerant species. Invasive species are strongly discouraged (Refer to Table 2.3 for a list of suggested native plants selection).
- Hydrozoning-grouping plants by water needs for irrigation water efficiency should be implemented.
- Low water use groundcovers or plants should be planted. Use of high input water consuming decorative lawns is discouraged.
- Deciduous trees and shrubs that shade the west and south sides of the home are encouraged to minimize solar heat gain of the building.
- Shade trees should be strategically planted to shade pavement areas and air conditioners.
- Trees that become diseased, die or require removal, should be replaced in order to sustain the tree canopy and benefits provided by the landscape palette.
- Bare soils should be planted or mulched with bark, stone, or other suitable materials to avoid unnecessary runoff.
- Bio-retention areas or "rain gardens" are encouraged in the front and rear yard, where feasible.
- Utilize the River Friendly Landscape Design Toolkit for the new California landscape.
- Reduce yard waste by utilizing River-Friendly landscaping practices such as carefully selecting the right size plants for the yard, mulching, and providing for composting.
- For new subdivisions, street-side landscaping areas should be depressed and planted with native vegetation. Open curbs or curb cuts should be provided to allow for stormwater collection into these areas for filtration/infiltration.
- Garden or raised beds for growing vegetables are encouraged.
- Use of known high allergen plantings is discouraged.

2.4.1.b. Irrigation

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- An automatic irrigation system that includes a controller with weather station, rain shut-off valves and sensors shall be installed and properly programmed in the front yard to provide consistent coverage of all planted areas consistent with the

Water Conservation Ordinance. A home on a corner lot should have an automatic irrigation system that covers the yard fronting both streets.

- Turf and groundcover are more effectively irrigated with a conventional spray system. Head-to-head spray coverage is recommended. Avoid overspray onto sidewalks and adjacent properties.
- A drip irrigation system is recommended for vegetable beds, shrubs and trees to provide deeper, more even watering. Drip irrigation also permits greater water conservation than a conventional spray system.
- Irrigation controls must be screened from view by landscaping or other attractive site materials.
- Installation of rainbarrels, as an additional irrigation source, is highly encouraged.

2.4.1.c. Paving/Hardscape Surfaces

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- The paving materials selected should contribute to the overall appearance of the home.
- Alternative paving surfaces, such as concrete pavers, brick, or stone are encouraged for driveway and walkway surfaces to reduce the appearance or large, paved areas. Use of pervious paving materials is encouraged.
- Alternative driveway and paving treatments (such as Ribbon or Hollywood driveways) are common in older neighborhoods and can provide guidance for new infill homes. Ribbon driveways are made up of two parallel strips of paving, with a strip of grass or pervious pavers between the paving strips to allow the rain water to soak in. This type of design minimizes impervious surfaces by only using conventional pavement on the area where a vehicle will be driving or parking, and not the surfaces between the wheels.
- Impervious surfaces should be minimized to the greatest extent possible to reduce stormwater runoff and urban heat island effect. Alternative paving surfaces such as permeable paver blocks and permeable concrete should be considered for driveways, walkways, and patios.
- Porous streets and sidewalks that allow stormwater to seep into the ground and adjacent drainage swales are recommended.
- Utilize cool pavement whenever possible to reduce urban heat island impacts.
- Integrate a variety of paving/hardscape treatments to reduce runoff and obtain the greatest benefits in cooling, groundwater infiltration and aesthetics.

2.4.2 Parks, Open Space and Drainage/Flood Facilities

- Parks and open space should be integrated into neighborhoods to encourage outdoor recreation and preserve natural habitats. Size, type and location shall be sized and located as to support the community master plan goals.

- Parks and open space should be strategically located in residential areas and be accessible via roadways, transit routes, and off-road pedestrian and bicycle trails and paseos (walkways) wherever possible.
- Parks and open space areas should be used as methods to connect communities and neighborhoods and provide alternative modes of travel via sidewalks and trails.
- Open space areas could be used to delineate community or neighborhood boundaries.
- Neighborhood parks are encouraged to be centers of neighborhood activity and could be combined with schools, community recreation centers, libraries and other civic uses.
- Parks and open space areas should include linear parkways with off-street trails integrated with the transportation system. Public Safety is a high priority and CPTED principles should be applied to the design of off-street trails.
- Flood protection and drainage facilities shall be designed to provide multiple public benefits wherever possible. Facilities shall include multi-purpose improvements consisting of recreation, the environment, storm water runoff, water reclamation, infiltration, groundwater recharge, flood control, etc. Attractive land use basins, such as parks (in addition to Quimby land dedication requirements) or parkways with trails that also convey water to water quality basins or similar facilities and provide some water quality treatment are examples of desired multiple public benefit facilities.
- Open space should be connected to provide habitat corridors through urban environments.

2.4.3 Walls and Fences

Design Principle

Fencing must be of high-quality and durable materials that will enhance the overall character of the home and contribute to the positive appearance of the neighborhood.

Rationale

Well selected fencing adds to the overall character of the neighborhood while providing for privacy, security, and also visual surveillance of the public realm.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Fencing shall be located and constructed in conformance with the Zoning Code, Title III, Chapter 1, Article 5 “Regulations Pertaining to Walls and Fences”.
- Fencing must allow unobstructed visibility of the front entrance, and in the case of homes on corner lots, the front and any side entrances.
- The style, materials, and color of the fencing should complement the style, materials, and color of the home.
- High-quality materials, including wood, metal, stucco, and some forms of vinyl fencing, are acceptable fencing materials.

- Chain link fencing is highly discouraged for use as a front yard feature.
- Front yard fencing for infill homes is discouraged on blocks where the majority of the homes do not have front yard fencing.
- Landscaping shall be included as part of the design for any fence or wall and should be used to soften and screen large masses of blank walls.
- Combination walls and fences using decorative fence elements such as tubular steel are permitted.
- Solid block walls shall use decorative block, pilasters and capping where visible to the public, consistent with the Zoning Code.
- Landscaping shall be included adjacent to a wall when open to public view and should be used to soften and screen the hard edge appearance of the wall, consistent with the Zoning Code.
- Use of materials that are consistent with the style of the home is encouraged.

2.4.4 Utilities and Storage

Design Principle

The visibility of utilities and storage facilities should be minimized by placing them at the side or rear of the home and screening them from view from the public street or open space.

Rationale

Utilities and service features are less attractive but necessary parts of a home. By placing these features away from public view and screening them, using fences and landscaping, the aesthetics of the neighborhood can be improved.

General Design Standards and Guidelines

- Trash receptacles should be placed in the side or rear yard and adequately screened by landscaping or side yard fence. Trash areas should be designed to accommodate recycle bins. If trash receptacles are to be stored in the garage the garage must be able to allow user access to them.
- Storage sheds should be located in the rear yard and shall comply with setback requirements. Placement in the side yard is acceptable if the shed is adequately screened by landscaping or a side yard fence, when proposed with the initial home construction.
- Accessory structures should be similar in character and materials to the main building, but subordinate in massing, scale, and height when proposed with initial home construction.
- Antennae should be mounted at the rear of the home. Satellite dishes should be mounted on the home to minimize their visibility.
- Heating and cooling units should not be roof-mounted or placed at the front of the home. Heating and cooling units should be placed in the attic or at the side or rear

of the home and screened by a side yard fence or landscaping. Solar panels do not need to be screened.

- Wherever possible utilities should be undergrounded.
- Where feasible, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units should be placed on the north side of the primary structure or garage (if not the street side) to shade the units and minimize energy consumption.
- All new HVAC equipment shall meet SMUD's latest guidelines for energy efficiency.
- Installation of building integrated solar panels and micro wind-turbines on the roof are encouraged and not precluded by any of the guidelines in this document.
- All new homes are subject to the State of California's Building requirements. Efforts should be made to advance energy reductions and enhance conservation efforts to achieve the zero-net energy 2020 goals for new homes.
- Home electric vehicle charging stations are encouraged. At a minimum, providing conduit from the electric panel to garage is highly desirable.
- Plumbing systems that provide outdoor plumbing connection for use in greywater irrigation are encouraged, consistent with health requirements.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 Multifamily Development

The purpose of this chapter is to provide planning and design guidelines for multifamily development that supports those goals and objectives of the County General Plan and Housing Element that provide for residential development that is a positive addition to providing healthy and sustainable communities and resident quality of life.

The multifamily design guidelines and standards apply to all residential projects of eight dwelling units per acre and greater. This wide range of attached and detached housing products, include apartments, townhomes, and small lot single-family projects. The small-lot single-family guidelines are supplemented by the standards in Chapter 2.0.

The process for using these design guidelines is to:

A. Determine the Community Context and Housing Category Type (3.1)

B. Respond to Site Design standards (3.2)

C. Apply the Building Design Standards (3.3)

D. Apply the Landscape/Site Elements Design standards (3.4)

3.1 Context and Housing Types

It is the intent of these multi-family design guidelines to support multi-family development that is consistent with the applicable provisions of the Sacramento County General Plan and Housing Element. A major goal of these design guidelines is to help new multifamily development be context sensitive and fit within the surrounding community, both existing and proposed. The following sections illustrate the process to be used to determine the Community Context that applies to a development site and the appropriate Housing Type for use on it. It is important to recognize that the County of Sacramento contains diverse communities and undeveloped areas that vary in character from rural to urban.

3.1.1 Community Context Types

Knowing the existing zoning of the surrounding community is a simple step in determining the community context type of the site. This section outlines the process of determining the community context type and the eventual multifamily development category that may be appropriate within each predominant community context.

Step 1: Identify the Community Context Type

Three major community context types for purposes of evaluating multifamily projects have been identified in Sacramento County.

Community Context Type A consists of small agricultural communities of predominantly large and small rural residential lots, agricultural parcels, and some smaller scale agricultural related retail uses.

Community Context Type B consists predominantly of single-family residential subdivisions, along with larger estate lots, and supporting neighborhood retail centers.

Community Context Type C consists of a range of existing neighborhoods with predominantly multifamily housing types, small lot single-family, and surrounding commercial and industrial activities in a more urban setting.

Representative zoning districts for this context type are shown in Table 3.1

These Multi-Family Design Guidelines complement the Zoning Code for the districts described for each context type by providing urban design and architectural direction not contained within the Zoning Code and that are consistent with County planning policies. (See Appendix A.)

An analysis of the appropriate community context within which a given project occurs is the first step in assessing appropriate design strategies for residential neighborhoods that meet the compatibility and livability goals of the Sacramento County General Plan and Housing Element.

Step 2: Determine the Predominant Adjacent Context Type

The second step is to identify and measure the predominant adjacent context type. The methodology for this determination follows the calculation below:

1. Calculate the linear feet of the site perimeter that is shared with each context type group, excluding street frontages.
2. Refer to Table 3.1 for guidance on appropriate context type determination.
3. Divide the total number of linear feet for each context type group by the total shared site perimeter of the property.
4. The category that shares at least 60 percent of the total shared perimeter will determine the community context type of the project. In cases where the project site is adjacent to two or more context types, the project site category will be determined to be the lower of the adjacent context type group.

An example of the calculation appears in Figure 3.1.

Calculations to determine the category for the multifamily development project will be as follows:

1. West - Adjacent to RD-7 (Context Type B) = 150 feet
   North - Adjacent to RD-7 (Context Type B) = 180 feet
   East - Adjacent to RD-5 (Context Type A) = 150 feet
   South - Adjacent to street - not included in the calculation
2. Perimeter of the property = 480 feet
   Total linear feet for Context Type A = 150 feet
   Total linear feet for Context Type B = 330 feet
3. Total linear feet for Context Type A ÷ Perimeter = 150 ÷ 480 = 0.30 = 30%
4. Total linear feet for Context Type B ÷ Perimeter = 330 ÷ 480 = 0.70 = 70%

Since Context Type B is more than 60 percent of the project site shared perimeter, and Context Type A is 30 percent of the project site shared perimeter, Property X would be classified as a Context B Type site.

Step 3: Determine the Appropriate Multi-Family Category

Some multifamily housing designs are more suitable than others for each community context type in Sacramento County. Development guidelines and standards have been organized to locate the appropriate building scale, setbacks and building heights to reflect each community.

Thus, multifamily development projects have been organized into three categories to correspond to each context type.

- Category I multifamily projects are suitable for a site that shares at least 60% of its perimeter with Context Type A properties.
- Category II multifamily projects are suitable for a site that shares at least 60% of its perimeter with Context Type B properties.
- Category III multifamily projects are suitable for those sites that share at least 60% of its perimeter with Context Type C properties.

The development standards also take into account the characteristics of adjacent collector and arterial streets, and roadway corridors. Multifamily sites which are adjacent to collector streets, arterial streets or highways may increase their building massing, heights, and densities as outlined in this document.

The dimension of the site adjacent to a future planned street widening for collector, arterial, highway or a similar major street will be excluded from the calculation.

3.1.2 Multifamily Category Types

These interim design guidelines establish three categories of multifamily design criteria consistent with the context type of adjacent existing communities.

Category I Multifamily Projects

Category I projects will be located in areas with mostly very low- and low-density residential uses, rural residential areas, and large single-family estate lots with adjacent agricultural lands (five units per acre or less). This category of multifamily projects would likely occur along or next to major transportation corridors where multifamily residential and commercial uses are typically found. Projects developed as Category I sites should locate buildings further from property lines, with an emphasis on landscaping to buffer buildings and surface parking lots. Buildings should be no more than two stories in height. Sidewalks, if present, should have landscaped parkways between the curb and sidewalk.

Category II Multifamily Projects

Category II projects will be located in areas with mostly low-density and medium-density residential uses (seven to 15 units per acre). Multifamily projects often occur along major transportation corridors where existing multifamily residential and commercial uses are found. Category II projects should be set back from surrounding properties so that their greater mass will not overwhelm adjacent properties. Landscaping should be provided along property lines to soften the transitions between the multifamily units and adjacent single-family development. Buildings may be as tall as four stories interior to the lot and closer to the streets, but should be designed to maintain privacy for any

adjacent single-family properties. Wherever possible, sidewalks should provide a landscape buffer between the sidewalks and curb.

Category III Multifamily Projects

Category III multifamily projects will be located in areas mostly urban in character with surrounding high-density residential uses (more than 15 units per acre) as well as commercial, mixed use or industrial uses. Sidewalks are usually present, in some cases buildings are built to property lines. Category III projects may have four or more stories closer to the street. The most intensely developed Category III projects may provide structured or podium-style parking. Category III projects may also be mixed use projects, with commercial uses on the first floor, and residential units above. Mixed use projects shall comply with guidelines and standards outlined in the County of Sacramento Commercial and Mixed Use Guidelines.

Category I and II projects may be allowed to step up to the next higher multifamily category along major transit-oriented corridors, transit priority areas, or major arterial and collector roadways. These include projects in Corridor Plans, Transit-Oriented Districts, Special Planning Areas, and non-residential Neighborhood Preservation Areas (special overlay) subject to the approval of the Planning Commission through the Conditional Use Permit and design review process. The application of these Housing Category Types is found in individual sections below.

3.1.3 Multifamily Housing Types

A range of housing types can be provided within multifamily districts. These building types may include: garden apartments, two- and three-story walk-up apartments; row houses or town-houses; small-lot single-family homes; four-, six-, and eight-unit apartment buildings; clustered buildings; podium apartments; mid-rise and high-rise towers; duets and duplex buildings; and “pull” apart town house designs (Refer to Figure 3.3).

All the described multi-family housing types shall adhere to the applicable standards of the Zoning Code unless alternatives can be justified by provisions of these Design Guidelines.

It is the intent of these Design Guidelines to allow for maximum design flexibility to achieve a quality residential environment. The development standards are intended as a general guide, and creative and innovative designs are highly encouraged.

These design standards provide the minimum requirements to maintain compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods, increase safety and security for the residents, promote health and active design and create a high quality environment with a strong sense of place in Sacramento’s communities. Creative, imaginative and sustainable design solutions for multifamily designs are encouraged. The use of green and sustainable development standards and practices in planning, design, construction, and renovation of new and existing buildings should be used wherever possible.

The guidelines and standards cannot address all specific conditions or possible solutions to site and building design. Architects and building designers are continually creating new and imaginative solutions to multifamily housing design that would also be applicable to multifamily housing zones. The guidelines and standards are intended to be

flexible in their application. Alternative design solutions that meet the intent of the goals and principles of the design guidelines may be acceptable, upon review through the Design Review process.

It is the intent of these design guidelines to allow for maximum design flexibility to achieve a quality residential living environment.

3.2 Site Design

3.2.1 Neighborhood Compatibility

Design Principle

Multifamily developments should be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods while providing a quality living environment. Good site planning and project design should minimize impacts on existing and planned adjacent uses. Project design should address traffic, relationship or access to transit, parking, circulation and safety issues, particularly for pedestrians, control of light and glare, noise, odors, dust, air quality and security. Site layout and design should create a clear definition and relationship between the public and private realm. Neighborhood compatibility can be achieved through control of semi-public and semi-private spaces, landscape, lighting, access and building details to improve the safety and security of residents.

Rationale

Sustainable multifamily design that fits the context and surrounding neighborhood maintains and contributes to property values, increases the safety and security of all residents, promotes a "sense of place," increases social and neighborly interaction, and improves the overall health and quality of life for the community.

Building Orientation

Design Guidelines

- Harmonize with surrounding uses and improve the overall appearance and character of the neighborhood through building massing, scale, heights, and style.
- Long expanses of windowless, blank walls are avoided. All building facades are treated aesthetically with changes in materials, colors, artwork, use of pilasters, building lines, ornamentation, and/or other aesthetic treatments; and, contain durable quality materials.
- Orient buildings to adjacent public streets by providing entryways, windows, porches, stoops, balconies, and other active spaces along street frontages. Active spaces oriented to the street provides for visual access, surveillance, and control over public realm, increasing safety and security for the users.
- Locate surface parking lots to the sides and rear of the lot with building massing oriented to the street, to the greatest extent possible. Provide parking lots with adequate auto and pedestrian scale lighting and security as a safety feature.
- Arrange multifamily residential buildings to provide functional, public and private outdoors spaces for the use of residents. Centrally locate active common open spaces such that they are easily accessible to all residents.

- Design and landscape street setbacks to create an attractive and varied streetscape. Include landscaping elements such as shade-trees, shrubbery, and ground cover. Avoid large expanses of hard surfaces, paving, rock and bark cover.
- Design building orientation to access and use solar energy and maximize wind direction for natural ventilation.

Connectivity

Design Guidelines

- Provide connections between new projects and adjacent neighborhood streets and pedestrian and bicycle paths. Connecting streets should be designed to discourage overloading traffic on existing streets, and support walking and bicycling. Provide for future connections to currently underdeveloped properties.
- Provide for future connections to currently underdeveloped properties. Gated communities are discouraged in locations where there is good opportunity for connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods. Gated communities may be appropriate for some projects.
- Promote access to new development by providing multiple points of entry and exit. Separate entry/exit access should be provided for pedestrians to promote safety and avoid auto/pedestrian conflicts.
- Create slower, pedestrian-oriented residential streets within the project site and its surrounding neighborhood through traffic calming measures such as traffic circles, chokers, reduced speed limits and narrower streets, to the greatest extent possible.
- Design connectivity with adjacent developments via internal drives and biking or walking trails.
- Allow pedestrian movement to and along sidewalks to be clear and unobstructed. Use of separated sidewalks is encouraged.
- Design pedestrian paths, access points and signage to be clearly visible during the day and well lit after dark.
- Spatially define and activate streets and common open space areas with building entries, storefronts and outdoor furnishings (if a mixed-use project). Front pedestrian routes with commercial storefront uses onto public spaces and street edges.
- Define major connectivity routes with hierarchical landscaping treatment.

Street Elevation

Design Guidelines

- Design the building elevation along public streets with respect to its surrounding context. The design should foster an appearance of a residential neighborhood, with articulation and scale, particularly at street level, reflecting the character, rhythm, height, and massing of nearby residential buildings.

- Provide entries that allow residents to "see and be seen." Integrate entries with second floor elements such as balconies and decks. Building entries, including doors, porches, and stoops should be the predominant feature of street fronting buildings.
- Discourage long expanses of windowless, blank walls. Allow direct views to the street from active spaces within dwelling units through windows facing the street.
- Discourage garages and on-site parking dominating building facades along streets.

"Good Neighbor" Design

Design Guidelines

- Projects should be mindful of adjacent developments through use of "good neighbor" design strategies such as massing and building orientation.
- Consider shade impacts on adjacent properties in site design.
- Consider the existing grade and topography of the site in building layout, height, scale, and massing to maintain compatibility with adjoining lower intensity residential uses. Taller buildings on hillsides should be stepped back or reduced in height when adjacent to lower intensity residential uses to maintain the privacy of rear yards, patios, and private outdoor spaces.
- Improve the visual quality of the streetscape with projects that complement, rather than replicate, the architectural style and character of the surrounding area.
- Minimize the potential for the disruption of privacy of adjacent neighbors/buildings through building design and landscaping that restricts views directly into adjoining buildings, private open spaces, yards, and patios.

Corner Lots

Design Guidelines

- Create a strong relationship between corner lots and adjoining streets through elements such as wrap-around porches, bays, and entries.
- Create attractive building facades facing both streets through massing and design of corner lots.
- Create attractive building facades through well-articulated sides of buildings. Achieve articulation with windows, setbacks, entries, porches, and/or balconies. Provide windows with views onto outdoor and green spaces for additional security and visual interest.

3.2.2 Setbacks

Design Principle

Setbacks of multifamily residential structures should be compatible with the character and setback along the street and surrounding neighborhood. Multifamily developments constructed adjacent to single-family residences should reflect the larger setbacks of the neighborhood, whereas reduced setback may be appropriate in more urban areas.

Rationale

Building setbacks help establish the continuity and character of a neighborhood and help protect the privacy of neighbors. Appropriate setbacks provide a transition between public and private spaces, provide functional spaces for outdoor activities, allow for light, fresh air circulation within buildings, and provide spaces for landscaping, trees, ground cover, and shrubs.

Design Guidelines

- Provide building setbacks that reflect the surrounding context.
- Design site plans with variation in both the street patterns and the siting structures so the appearance of the streetscape does not become overly repetitive and monotonous. Avoid continuous rows of buildings with the same setback. Modulate and vary building setbacks to avoid monotonous streetscapes, create small outdoor places and courtyards along the street frontage, and better define entries and front yards.
- Design the primary facade of buildings with varied setbacks to create an interesting and attractive street edge, while maintaining minimum average setbacks consistent with surrounding properties and these Guidelines.
- Extend porches, stairs, and stoops into the front setback to articulate the building façade and promote use of stairs over elevators.
- Design setbacks between buildings so that spaces are usable or are part of the overall pedestrian scheme.
- Based on the Housing Category Type, setbacks that differ from the Zoning Code standards may be used as outlined in Table 3.2, measured from the street right-of-ways, providing that they can be justified as being in accordance to overall provisions of these design guidelines. Setbacks shall allow enough room for utilities, if greater than those outlined. Front setbacks shall be measured from the front property line or future front property line if street dedication is required for future rights-of-way. The intent is to provide for lesser setbacks in more urban, commercial settings (Category III projects). These alternative setbacks do not apply when located adjacent to single-family residential homes.

Setback from Existing Single-Family Residential

Design Guidelines

Multifamily housing development design should complement adjacent single-family homes, and should reflect larger setbacks through variation of building heights and stepping back building heights from adjacent single-story structures.

Rationale

Existing single-family residents are often adversely impacted by adjoining multifamily projects due to increased noise, traffic, increased shading, light and glare, and unwanted visual intrusions into both indoor and outdoor private spaces and yards. Good design can

resolve many compatibility problems between single-family homes and adjacent multifamily residents through the use of appropriate setbacks, screening, landscaping, and control of scale and massing of multifamily buildings, particularly near the property line between single family and multifamily properties.

Proper side yard and rear yard setbacks are critical to creating compatibility of scale and building massing. Use of open or green spaces can provide an attractive transition between projects while providing needed separation.

Generally, single-family homes allow for minimum five-foot side yards, and minimum 20-foot rear yards. Multifamily dwellings should provide additional setbacks, landscaped screening along property lines, and limit the building lengths along property lines to reduce potential impacts on adjacent sites. Street widths provide sufficient distances and setbacks from existing single-family residences across the street.

Design Guidelines

- Consider the scale, character and location of the multifamily project and the type and width of the street in locating building massing on the site (i.e., portions of buildings with two or more stories and long building facades).
- Design building heights of new multifamily projects to be compatible with adjoining building heights to minimize potential impacts on adjacent single-family residences.
- Step back multi-story structures to reduce the bulk and mass adjacent to single family homes.
- Orient windows on multi-story structures away from single family homes to the extent possible.
- Multifamily buildings adjacent to existing single-family zoned parcels shall provide a minimum setback from the adjacent single-family lot line consistent with the standards outlined in Table 3.6. Setback requirements shall be measured from the property line.
- Required setbacks adjacent to existing single-family residences shall not apply to front yard setbacks of sites with single-family residences across a street.

On-Site Building Separation

Design Guidelines

Multifamily buildings should be separated by a sufficient distance to maintain and protect the privacy of units facing one another, reduce unwanted noise, and provide for light, ventilation, and air circulation to the buildings and windows opening into common open spaces.

Rationale

Multifamily residential design often involves the organization on one site of several buildings separated by open spaces, paseos, parking lots, drive isles, and yards interior to the project. Buildings too close to one another can impact the livability of residences due to reduced privacy, intrusions of noise, and/or reduced light, air, and ventilation to

individual units. Good building design and thoughtful placement of buildings and landscaping can help to create an attractive and more livable environment for residents.

This distance will maintain a sense of enclosure while providing sufficient separation for ventilation, light, air, and privacy of interior units. Buildings can be closer together at corners, or at ends of the buildings where windows, private outdoor spaces, and balconies are not directly facing one another. Small narrow interior yards (less than 5' in width) often become left over unsupervised, unusable nuisance spaces that collect trash, garbage, and are seldom maintained. In some cases, however, tighter spaces, if relatively short in distance, can create attractive pedestrian alleyways leading to larger common open spaces, courtyards, and pedestrian plazas or leading to parking areas.

Design Guidelines

- Maintain separation between residential buildings sufficient to provide privacy between units and outdoor private open spaces and balconies.
- Orient windows, private balconies, patios, and courtyards between buildings to protect the privacy of users and reduce unwanted noise between units.
- Use fencing, landscape screening, and the orientation private outdoor spaces of units to protect the privacy of units facing one another in adjoining buildings.
- Eaves, balconies, porches, and other architectural elements can project into interior side yards and open spaces between buildings if the privacy of units is maintained.
- Staggering and offsetting of window, entries, balconies, and private patios is recommended to provide for greater privacy where buildings are closer together.
- Buildings can be located closer together where windows, entries, balconies, and private outdoor spaces are not facing one another.
- Staggering building facades along interior spaces creates additional variety and interest to the site and building design.
- Avoid small, narrow interior side yards with no functional purpose that can become unsafe or nuisance areas.

3.2.3 Open Space, Common Outdoor Amenities and Drainage/Flood Facilities

Design Principle

Utilizing sustainable design elements, multifamily developments should provide easily accessible and functional open spaces and common outdoor amenities for residents. Landscaped storm water quality design measures shall provide multiple public benefits and be integrated into open space areas to provide storm water quality benefits and landscaping benefits. Open spaces may include all landscaped yards, planters, planted buffers and common recreation areas such as playgrounds, pools, gardens, picnic areas, tot lots, and community patio areas. Common open spaces should be provided as appropriate for the ages and number of residents living within the project.

Rationale

Well-designed and accessible common open spaces foster a sense of community within a multifamily project. Attractive open and outdoor spaces promote mental and emotional wellness and encourage physical activities that are key to creating active and healthy communities. By making open spaces more accessible from adjacent livable spaces, a wide range of activities are generated within and around open spaces throughout the day. Visual surveillance of open spaces provides for safety and security of users. Open spaces and common amenities within multifamily projects offer the types of private and semi-private spaces associated with single-family residences.

Design Guidelines

- Provide pools, recreation facilities, tennis courts, spas, hot tubs, seating, water fountains, tot lots, walking paths through the project and similar features as common open space amenities to serve different age groups, as appropriate.
- Flood protection and drainage facilities shall be designed to provide multiple public benefits wherever possible. Facilities shall include multi-purpose improvements consisting of recreation, the environment, storm water runoff, water reclamation, infiltration, groundwater recharge, flood control, etc. Attractive land use basins, such as parks (in addition to Quimby land dedication requirements) or parkways with trails that also convey water to water quality basins or similar facilities and provide some water quality treatment are examples of desired multiple public benefit facilities.

Parks and open space areas should be used as methods to connect communities and neighborhoods and provide alternative modes of travel via sidewalks and trails.

Open space areas could be used to delineate community or neighborhood boundaries.

Parks and open space should be integrated into projects to encourage outdoor recreation and preserve natural habitats.

Public safety is a high priority and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be applied.

- Locate and organize common open spaces such as parks, plazas and gardens as large meaningful areas, and not unusable fragments. Emphasize doors, entries, windows and private open spaces opening onto these common areas to the greatest extent possible.
- Design open spaces connected by a comprehensive, on-site pedestrian circulation system to maximize accessibility and use by residents from all buildings.
- Locate and landscape open spaces, recreation areas, plazas and courtyards to take advantage of solar orientation, provide protection from wind, afford shade and reduce heat island impacts during hot summer months.
- Provide recreation areas for children, unless a multifamily project is identified as an “adults only” or “senior” project. Provide appropriate amenities to serve

anticipated residents (such as on-site child care and play lots for projects with families and children, less parking and more walking paths for senior housing).

- Incorporate common open spaces such as tot lots, children's play areas, picnic facilities, pools and similar amenities to allow maximum visibility from surrounding residences and streets.
- Locate common open spaces such as tot lots, children's play areas, picnic facilities, pools, and similar amenities to allow maximum visibility from surrounding residences and streets.
- Locate common facilities such as laundry rooms, mailboxes, and community areas adjacent to common open spaces to maximize their visibility and activity. Consider providing compact clothes washers/dryers in each unit to better utilize common spaces and increase safety.
- The Zoning Code requires that a minimum of 30 percent of the total project site area shall be provided as landscaped open space including walkways, drive aisles, parking areas, etc. Utilize sustainable landscape practices when selecting and locating trees and plant materials.
- For all multifamily projects of 25 units or more, a portion of all common open space shall include outdoor amenities such as, but not be limited to, picnic tables and outdoor seating, pools, common patios, tot lots and play equipment, tennis courts, barbecue areas, walking paths with distance markers, outdoor fitness equipment, hot-tub, community garden or other similar active recreation spaces for the residents.
- All small-lot developments shall provide a common open space with amenities if there is no neighborhood park or other available open space with recreational amenities within a half-mile walking distance of residential units.
- All on-site outdoor amenities shall be preserved and maintained for the life of the project, unless otherwise approved by the Planning Director.
- Active recreational facilities may be replaced with similar amenities, subject to the approval of the Planning Director.
- Public and common use areas shall be accessible to and usable by people with disabilities.
- Private balconies are not included in the percentage of landscaped open space.
- For townhomes and small lot developments, private yard areas may be counted towards total open space.

3.2.4 Private Open Space

Design Principle

Multifamily developments should provide easily accessible private open space to all dwelling units. There should be an emphasis on dwelling units opening onto private open spaces.

Rationale

Private open spaces provide for a pleasant and functional living environment for residents. Private open spaces act as transitional areas between public open spaces and the private and semi-private spaces of the dwelling unit. Private outdoor open spaces provide residents with an attractive outdoor place that can be used for outdoor eating, barbeques, small private gardens and flower beds, sunbathing, or simply enjoying the environment.

Design Guidelines

- Design usable open spaces such as porches, front yards, patios, decks, and balconies to qualify as private open spaces. Consider safety within the design.
- Provide each dwelling unit with a private open space such as an at-grade patio, stoop, porch, or balcony for upper stories for the exclusive use of that unit.
- Provide private open spaces of a reasonable size to afford functional and comfortable outdoor living opportunities. Provide balconies and porches at a width deep enough to allow for a chair or small table to be used.
- Do not place amenities such as air conditioning and other mechanical equipment in private open spaces such that it may render the space unusable or fragmented.
- Locate private open spaces to take advantage of solar orientation, view of common and open spaces, shade in the summer, and breezes to the greatest extent possible.
- Integrate decks and patios into the overall design of the building, such that it does not appear to be applied to the building facade.
- Personal storage spaces (storage closets) may be designed as extensions of private open spaces, decks, or porches, or placed within garages and carports.
- Encourage raised front porches or front stoops for ground floor units. The first floor level, if raised above the grade of the sidewalk directly in front of the front entrance, provides for greater privacy at the entry and improves surveillance of the public street.
- Private open space shall be a minimum of 40 sq. ft. per dwelling unit.
- The Zoning Code requires a minimum of 40 sq. ft. per dwelling unit of private open space, such as balconies and patios.
- Ground floor private patio spaces may be counted as a subset of the overall 30 percent landscaped open space requirement.

3.2.5 Scale and Mass

Design Principle

The scale and mass of multifamily residential structures should be compatible with the adjacent neighborhood and vary based on character, scale, and edge conditions of surrounding existing developments.

Rationale

Stepping building heights, breaking up the mass of the building and shifting building placement can help mitigate the impact of differing building scales and intensities.

Design Guidelines

- Step down buildings at upper levels in neighborhoods with relatively smaller scale, particularly single-story, buildings on adjacent lots.
- Allow a scale transition between larger-scale buildings and smaller-scale buildings on adjoining lots.
- Use varied roof forms, mass, shape, and materials to create variations in building facades.
- Encourage variation in the number and mix of unit sizes to the greatest extent possible.
- Create varying front setbacks, staggered roof planes, and variety in orientation for units clustered into one structure. Avoid a monotonous or monolithic institutional appearance in favor of an appearance of distinct and articulated smaller attached buildings.
- Design buildings with a street facade which is complementary in scale and massing to its surrounding.
- Provide a sense of pedestrian scale at the ground level for buildings facing public streets and spaces through appropriate use of building materials, and details such as posts, wainscoting, decorative tiles, shutters, and window boxes.

Massing and Scale on Major Streets

Design Guidelines

Building massing and scale should be intensified along major streets and at intersections to define the street edge.

Rationale

Many multifamily housing projects are often located near or adjacent to major collector and arterial streets. These streets are four to six lanes wide and most often provide sufficient capacity to handle traffic generated by multifamily housing developments. Greater building massing along wider streets helps visually define the street edge and create a sense of place and street enclosure. In combination with appropriate pedestrian improvements and design features, such massing can help create a more interesting, pleasant, and safe street environment. It is also important to note that the location of multifamily housing along major streets raises several issues, which can be addressed through good design, such as controlling street noise, air quality impacts, and the quality of the street environment for pedestrians.

Design Guidelines

- Help define the street edge through the location of building massing and heights. Increase building mass and height proportional to the street width, with higher

massing on wider streets and decreased massing on narrower streets. Housing Category III projects should have a greater massing along major streets with decreased setbacks and greater heights.

- Reinforce the pedestrian scale along the street edge through orientation of building entries, windows, stoops, front porches, and decks.
- Define the street corner and create a strong visual statement at intersections with taller buildings, design elements and massing on corners.
- Design building massing and height to be greater along the street edges and at corners of wider arterial and collector streets and stepped down in scale to be compatible with the scale and massing of lower intensity buildings on adjacent lots.
- On major collector and arterial streets with widths of 80 feet or more, building heights may increase along the street front by an additional one story or 15 feet (whichever is greater) above the existing height limit, provided the setback standards adjacent to existing single-family residential lots are maintained in accordance with Table 3.6.
- On major arterial and collector streets with widths of 80 feet or greater, front yard setbacks from the street, front property lines, or back of sidewalks shall conform to the existing setback standard.

Height Limits

Design Guidelines

- Relate building heights closest to property lines to the height and scale of adjacent buildings.
- Allow buildings to have greater height in more intensely built areas. Greater heights (no height limit) are allowed and encouraged for Housing Category III projects.
- Require site specific design reviews based on sightlines to determine whether taller building design fits within the context of its surrounding.

Density

Design Guidelines

- Multifamily developments should be within the ranges per existing zoning, except that Multifamily developments in Category III locations have no upper limit on density over the base zoning with the issuance of a Special Development Permit. For such higher density projects, overall community compatibility should be closely evaluated.
- Density requirements should also comply with other requirements, particularly with infill lots in existing neighborhoods.

3.2.6 Circulation

Design Principle

The visual prominence of vehicles should be minimized by siting parking areas to the rear or side of the property rather than along street fronts, and by providing underground or partially underground parking. Surface parking areas should be screened from views exterior to the site. Parking shall be designed to minimize potential pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Parking areas should incorporate good designs that include: trees, lighting, landscaped stormwater features, cool and pervious pavement and pavers. A larger number of smaller parking areas are preferred to a smaller number of large parking areas. Parking should be configured to reduce the distance between a resident's parking space and dwelling unit.

The location and design of driveways should minimize the impact of automobile circulation on the pedestrian environment and adjacent properties.

Paseos can supplement the role of streets and drives in the pedestrian circulation network. An accessible and appropriately lit pedestrian paseo network may provide front door access to units and allow for higher overall densities. Paseos should be designed as pedestrian streets and allow for clear and comfortable access to common site amenities, the public street, and visitor parking.

Rationale

Planning for safer and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians can result in an aesthetically appealing site, increased pedestrian safety and activity, improved overall mobility, reduced amount of impervious surface, and increased open space on site. Well-designed vehicle and pedestrian circulation within the development helps clarify the relationship between private and public spaces and areas intended primarily for vehicles versus pedestrians. Smaller driveways, curb cuts and parking areas can reduce barriers to pedestrian movement, improve the aesthetics of the site, and reduce development costs.

Design Guidelines

- Organize street patterns and signage in multifamily site designs to be clear and understandable, supporting wayfinding (methods by which individuals orient themselves and navigate through an area) by users.
- Organize the circulation system of larger multifamily projects (80 units or more) as a simple hierarchy of streets, driveways, landscaping, parking areas and alleys with at least two points of access to public streets where feasible.
- Encourage well-connected pedestrian routes within the project site and to the surrounding neighborhood, with an emphasis on relationships to open space networks.
- Provide access for persons with disabilities and consider the age of residents when designing facilities.

Entrances, Exits and Connections

Design Guidelines

- Create internal circulation and connections between the project and the street to address the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. If located along a transit route, provide convenient route and schedule information along with access to transit stops from multifamily projects.
- Design new projects that provide connections to adjacent development and allow for connections to future developments.
- Minimize total impervious surface resulting from pavement, sidewalks, and parking through use of landscaping and landscaped open spaces.
- Locate vehicular entrances and exits to provide for safe sightlines and distances from street corners and intersections.
- Provide adequate and well landscaped pedestrian ingress and egress from the development to public rights-of-way, bus stops, and public transit to reduce long walking distances.
- Connections through public and common use areas must be accessible to people of all ages and those with disabilities.

Public Streets

Design Guidelines

- Allow new projects to provide for as many on-street parking spaces as safely as possible.
- Design a planter strip between the curb and sidewalk as an additional buffer between the streets and pedestrians on the sidewalk, thereby increasing safety and allowing for street tree planting and as a stormwater quality benefit to help slow, filter and reduce the amount of runoff to the street gutters.
- Multifamily developments in Category II and III should provide a minimum 5-foot wide planter strip between the pavement edge and sidewalk. In infill areas, sidewalks and planters may match the existing pedestrian environment, with the intent to separate sidewalks from the street wherever possible.

Internal Streets

Design Guidelines

- Design internal streets to connect to local landmarks or amenity features such as parks or community buildings, tot lots, or stands of large trees, if present adjacent to or near the project.
- Design internal streets to include landscaping and provide spaces and pedestrian amenities for social interaction such as small gathering areas, “gang” mail boxes, benches and seating, water features, and shaded areas.
- Provide traffic calming measures such as roundabouts, narrower roadways, on-street parking, chokers, and speed bumps along internal streets. Provide signage,

flashing beacons, well-marked crosswalks and other areas where pedestrians and bicyclists are present.

- Design internal streets with sidewalks, signage and well-marked crossings to promote pedestrian activity within the development. Walking paths with a route map that notes distance will encourage internal walking for health and physical activity.
- On larger projects, provide loop circulation on internal streets to the greatest extent possible and minimize segregation of common open spaces.
- Develop projects that face internal streets to enhance the general livability, visual quality, and safety of the street.
- Design internal streets, parking lots, and driveways as parking courts that provide for additional outdoor hard surface play spaces by controlling traffic speed and movements. Such joint use of parking areas provides opportunities for additional social interaction between residents and can also provide the space for large special events.
- Consider designing narrower street sections where fire access is not required to reduce the amount of impervious area and enhance the appearance of driveways.
- For internal streets, include a minimum 5-foot wide landscaped buffer along roadways
  adjacent to property lines.

Driveways and Internal Circulation

Design Guidelines

- Minimize the number and width of driveways and curb cuts. Design shared driveways to the greatest extent possible.
- Create textures, patterns, and colors in the design of paved parking areas or entries to create visual interest and to distinguish them from other paved areas. Do not design large monolithic areas of single color untextured paving.
- Use accent paving such as textured paving and paving blocks in driveways. Use of permeable concrete, cool pavements and pavers is desirable.
- Design driveways to be well-lighted and distinct from building and pedestrian lighting, common housing lighting, or appropriate scaled street lighting.
- When designing streets with cul-de-sacs, “live-end” cul-de-sacs are preferred. “Live-end” cul-de-sacs provide for pedestrian access at the ends to adjoining streets, open spaces, parks, and trail systems while still permitting the cul-de-sac to be used as a common outdoor space. “Live-ends” should be landscaped and can include benches, providing nice areas for sitting and socializing.
- For driveway access with ten or fewer units, consider a T-shaped turnaround. A dimension of 20 feet by 80 feet will accommodate most vehicles.

- Consider using Hollywood driveways to reduce the amount of impervious area and enhance the appearance of driveways (refer to the County's stormwater quality design standards).
- Design traffic islands with attractive, low-maintenance, drought tolerant shrubs or perennials, appropriate for the soil and moisture conditions. In many cases, shade trees are desirable to improve air quality, reduce heat island impacts and extend the life of pavement.
- Dead end driveways should be less than 150 feet long, and have appropriate turnarounds as needed.
- Design circular cul-de-sacs with a radius of 40 feet or less to the greatest extent possible.
- Minimum widths for internal streets or driveways, per Fire Department Standards:
  - ✓ Uncurbed driveway with no parallel parking when fire lane is not necessary – 16'
  - ✓ Curbed internal street with no parallel parking – 20'
  - ✓ Curbed internal street with parallel parking on one side – 28'
  - ✓ Curbed internal street with parallel parking on both sides - 36'
- Street design and width should be confirmed with the Fire Department.

Paseos/Pedestrian Paths

Paseos provide common outdoor spaces and allow for pedestrian access through the development, and connection to adjacent developments (where possible). Front door access to units may be provided via paseos, with these spaces acting as both public and semi-private spaces. These spaces could be further enhanced to be user-friendly through the use of appropriate pedestrian amenities such as seating, lighting, fountains, and landscaping. Paseos can also function as outdoor gathering places for residents and provide additional recreational amenities such as game tables, small children play areas, picnic tables, outdoor gazebos, community gardens, barbeque areas and other smaller community amenities.

Paseos that terminate on a public street should be attractively landscaped and identified with an entry gateway.

Design Guidelines

- Locate paseos where vehicular connections are infeasible due to project or site constraints.
- Visually identify paseos by special paving, landscaping and pedestrian-scale lighting.
- On pedestrian pathways, include amenities such as trellises, trees, seating, lighting and landscaping that visually extend the open spaces for safe pedestrian use. Provide lighting for safety and visual access.

- Front buildings onto paseos with windows, entries, and balconies to increase the visual surveillance of the area for safety and security.
- Limit the length of the paseo walkway and provide perpendicular connections from the paseo between buildings to parking areas, public streets, and open spaces.
- Design paseos to provide sunlight during the day, whenever feasible.
- Allow a paseo to be named as a special place with buildings lining the paseos taking their addresses from the paseo.
- Direct roof runoff to bioretention planters and landscaping strips in the paseos for treatment, whenever possible.

Parking

Design Guidelines

Parking is critical to the success of a multifamily residential project. Parking needs to be convenient, accessible, safe, screened from street views, and well landscaped to reduce summer heat gain, and controlled stormwater runoff. With the exception of higher intensity urban areas, mixed use villages, and town centers where apartment buildings are more common, most new apartment designs are two- to three-story walk-up structures. These are often referred to as garden-style apartments with a mix of unit types serving singles, couples, and young families.

Two basic strategies can be applied to the site layout of multifamily apartments:

1. Internalized parking lots with good configuration layouts and buildings that ring the site and allow for casual surveillance. These layouts should be encouraged.
2. Externalized parking with buildings that cluster around a central common open space with parking oriented to the exterior.

In most developments, both approaches are utilized to conform to site conditions. As part of a larger project, integration of attached multi-family units with small-lot detached single-family units is highly desirable and can be a very complementary and integrated project.

External parking increases building setbacks from adjacent properties, and provides more direct access to on-site community recreational facilities. However, external parking lots become more exposed to the surrounding community.

Design Guidelines

The minimum number of parking spaces is regulated by the Zoning Code. Reductions to the minimum standards can be made for Category III projects. The Zoning Code further requires that a portion of the parking be covered.

- Locate parking and vehicle access away from street corners.
- Screen parking areas visible from the street right-of-way with landscaping, berms, or decorative visual barriers. Discourage use of fences or walls as the preferred method of screening parking from the street.

- Buffer parking areas from adjacent residential properties. Provide landscaping adjacent to and within parking areas to screen vehicles from view.
- Parking areas should incorporate good designs that include: trees, lighting, landscaped stormwater features, cool and pervious pavement and pavers. Plant trees and shrubs to soften the overall impact of parking areas and to provide shade, heat island cooling, noise reduction and improved air quality.
- Multiple smaller parking lots are preferred over single, large lots to minimize the expansive appearance of parking areas. However, the parking lot design should not negatively impact the design of the project.
- If large parking areas are needed, design a clearly defined pedestrian path inside the parking area that provides safe, well-marked and easy access to and from buildings and sidewalks.
- Locate secure bicycle parking close to, and with direct access to, residential buildings and entries. Bike lockers are preferred for overnight security. Consider providing a bike share program for residents.
- Set back parking adjacent to dwelling units to provide a buffer between the parking area and living areas and to reduce the potential impacts of noise and light on adjacent residences. Provide appropriate buffers through a combination of landscaping, walkways, private outdoor patios and/or low walls.
- Do not allow parking and paving to directly touch against residential buildings.
- Incorporate stormwater quality measures into the parking areas to treat the storm runoff and enhance the parking areas by providing shade and reducing the amount of paving. Vehicle wash areas shall be designed to the latest stormwater quality design standards, and ideally capture the brown water for use in landscape irrigation.
- Consider subterranean parking for Category III projects located along three and four lane roads, with paseos or similar public spaces as entrances to the complex, and allowing better utilization of site area.
- Paved surface parking areas should be separated from the primary residential building by a minimum four foot wide walkway and/or a minimum seven foot wide landscape strip.
- Residential parking spaces shall be clearly marked and located closest to the residential unit, to the greatest extent possible.
- For affordable housing projects, parking requirements may be lowered to 90% of the County parking requirements subject to on-site management to avoid multiple persons and families occupying individual units that cannot accommodate their parking needs. Consider providing car share programs for residents.
- On-site parking spaces should be assigned to individual units.
- Additional visitor parking equal to 0.5 spaces per unit shall be provided with spaces clearly signed and labeled and managed to avoid misuse by residents.

- Meet County of Sacramento ADA requirements and standards.
- For resident parking, the following minimum spaces per category shall be provided in Table 3.10.
- Meet County standards for parking lot shading.

Condominiums, townhouses, or similarly owned units where certain parking spaces are deeded, granted by easement, or otherwise permanent assigned spaces shall be located to be visible from a window(s) of the unit to which it is assigned, whenever possible, unless such spaces are contained within a garage. The location and regulation of unassigned spaces shall be placed under the control of the project homeowners' association.

Tuck under and subterranean parking may be permitted for projects in the RD-20 or higher density zoning districts, located along three and four lane roads, with paseos or other public spaces as entrances to the complex to better utilize the site.

Bike Parking

Design Guidelines

- For Categories II and III, a minimum of one bike parking space per unit shall be provided with guest bike parking at one space per 10 units provided on site. Private storage areas in units may qualify for bike parking. Bike parking for guests should be clustered in common areas for easy convenience.
- Bike racks shall be designed with the most current designs that provide secure locking features and are attractive. Many bike racks double as public art to add interest.

3.3 Site Details

3.3.1 Building Design

Design Principle

Building design elements shall respect, enhance, and contribute positively to the predominant characteristic of existing developments in the neighborhood. Variety and distinctiveness in design is desirable.

Rationale

Quality in detail design and materials contributes not only to the long-term value of a project, but to the neighborhood as well. The use of different "styles" and materials is intended to add variety to the buildings just as is often found in neighborhoods that have evolved over time.

Building Articulation and Design for Privacy

Design Guidelines

- Design large projects (greater than 50 units) to contain a variety of building elevations. Avoid excessive repetition of elevations throughout a neighborhood or project with little or no differentiation.

- Minimize upper story views into adjacent private yards. Multifamily projects should be designed to respect the privacy of surrounding uses.

Design Guidelines

- Utilize sustainable design strategies in building design and reflect this practice in the site design, building orientation, on-site stormwater management, and material selection.
- Employ energy conservation strategies including shading devices and use of trees to reduce the heat gain of buildings and parking lots including the selection of colors to reduce heat gain and the use of high-quality insulation and radiant barrier materials to reduce energy consumption (especially the use of air conditioning during hot summer months) and increase resident comfort, to the greatest extent possible.
- Use water conserving features in irrigation systems and drought-tolerant plants in landscaping.
- Design and use heat sinks and geothermal systems as an alternative to typical heat and cooling systems.
- Employ energy and water efficiency practices when selecting appliances, fixtures and lighting consistent with the state of California's Green Building Code and the goals to achieve zero net energy buildings.

Entry Features

Design Guidelines

- Design entry features such as porches, stoops, balconies, and porticos to add visual interest to buildings.
- Design entry features that are clearly visible and distinguishable as the primary entrance.
- Design the depths of decks, stoops, and porches at a width deep enough for a chair and table.
- Provide at least one building entry on an accessible route to accommodate people with disabilities and mobility issues.

Windows and Openings

Design Guidelines

- Design windows and doors to add variety and interest to the building design. Avoid grids of repeated windows.
- Use energy star rated double glazed windows, glass block, roof top sky lights, and opaque window glass to reduce noise and visual intrusion into adjoining units.
- For stepped up units, use high and translucent windows for the upper stories.
- For developments facing the street, provide large window openings to maximize natural ventilation and sunlight and allow visual surveillance of the street.

- Provide overhangs or other shading devices, and select glazing that provides the greatest reduction in solar heat gain during the summer, when the sun is high overhead.
- Major glazing areas should generally face south to collect solar heat during the winter.

- Incorporate daylighting strategies such as: providing light shelves, glare control, courtyards, solar-tubes and skylights.
- Placement of windows should also consider the cooling benefits of Sacramento's Delta breezes.

Garages and Carports

Design Guidelines

- Minimize garage doors along street fronts to appear less dominant in the street-facing building facades. To reduce the visual dominance of garages along the street, garage doors can be recessed within the building design, turned perpendicular to the street, and divided into smaller individual one car entries.
- Locate garages and carports to the side and rear of developments. Garage carports and accessory buildings should not be located on front yards or front and side yards facing a public street.
- Vary the locations of garages to avoid the appearance of garage door rows. Detached garages or alley loaded garages are other desirable alternatives.
- Design carport roofs in a consistent style and character as the main building, except as needed to provide for solar panels or other sustainable design.
- Choose materials and colors of garages and carports to be compatible with the main building design.
- Provide lighting in carport areas.
- Electric vehicle charging stations are encouraged.
- Fully enclose storage for boats, recreational vehicles and trailers, as well as storage sheds, when visible from the street or active adjacent uses.
- Design additional private storage spaces for individual units within carports.
- Provide solar panels integrated within carport roofs as a sustainable design strategy to conserve energy where possible.

Rooflines

Design Guidelines

- Vary roof elements to minimize the appearance of mass and bulk of buildings.
- Correspond rooflines to variations in building massing and articulation with bays, gables, dormers and strong eave elements.

- Design roofs (form, style, and pitch) to further enhance and articulate the architectural vocabulary used in the facades and to be compatible with the style and character of the neighborhood. Generally, sloping roofs are more rural in character; flat roofs are more appropriate in urban situations.

Materials/Colors/Textures

Design Guidelines

- Use sustainable building materials that are high quality, durable, provide energy efficiency benefits, require low maintenance, and complement the design of the building. Use of quality recycled products is encouraged.
- Use a combination of varied materials, textures, and colors. It is generally preferred that the number of materials used on the exterior be such that a clean, uncluttered design is the result.
- Consider use of "Permanent" roof materials such as concrete and clay tile with reflective surfaces because of their fire resistance, low maintenance, energy conservation and insulation values, and consistent appearance over time. Wood shake or shingle roofing meeting fire safety standards is also acceptable. Composition shingles should be of the heavy laminated dimensional type, and of at least a 25-year quality.
- Use material textures and colors to help articulate the building design.
- Use color variations to unify various building elements, and harmonize with the overall neighborhood design.
- Use color differentiation within the same multifamily project to reduce monotony, blandness, and repetitiveness within the building facades. Accentuate individual units with varying color schemes, materials, and textures to achieve greater variety, visual interest, and richness in the character of the neighborhood.
- The use of "cool roof" options, including lighter colored, high albedo coatings and other "cool roofing" materials and applications are encouraged to achieve energy efficiency inside homes and reduce the heat island effect.
- The use of rooftop solar or wind turbine installations (where allowable) should be integrated into the overall building design and be non-obtrusive on the neighborhood imagery.
- Installation of radiant heat barriers is encouraged to increase energy efficiency and interior livability.

Personal Storage

Design Guidelines

- Provide a minimum of 80 cu. ft. enclosed storage area for each residential unit.
- Locate personal storage spaces within each unit, in common storage areas or design them as an integral part of carports and garages. Personal storage can also be designed adjacent to decks and ground floor private patio areas.

Lighting

Design Guidelines

- Design site lighting to have a scale, design, and color that best complements the character and design of the multifamily development. Internal street and pedestrian lighting should be compatible with site lighting throughout, creating a cohesive aesthetic for the area.
- Provide energy efficient lighting in all common areas and facilities, including pedestrian and vehicular routes. The emphasis should be on personal safety, with lighting landscape or building surfaces secondary.
- Use attractive and pedestrian-scaled lighting.
- Provide adequate lighting in open spaces.
- Provide lighting at even illumination levels, adequate to provide safe visibility. If light fixtures are visible, they should be of low intensity or have adequate diffusing lenses to minimize their brightness. Use landscaping lighting that is glare free or glare minimized.
- Lighting should be accomplished in a manner that it does not create glare for pedestrians or adjacent properties. Do not allow spillover and glare from lighting fixtures onto interior spaces of buildings and adjacent properties.
- Use lighting fixtures of high quality and durable materials.
- Limit night lighting, visible from the exterior of a building, from the project's boundaries and from public streets and sidewalks to that necessary for security, safety, and identification. Screen night lighting from adjacent residential areas and direct in a downward manner or beyond the boundaries of the parcel on which the building is located or beyond the public right-of-way that the lighting intends to illuminate.
- Employ Energy Star appliances and energy efficient lighting in construction, to the extent feasible, consistent with the adopted Green Building Policy.

The Zoning Code provides minimum lighting illumination standards.

- In all cases, use fully shielded fixtures for street lights.
- For street lights, use Sacramento Department of Transportation approved LED lights or other acceptable high energy efficiency lights.
- Locate street lights between 9 and 20 feet above grade with a maximum average spacing (per block face) of 100 feet on center, aligned with the street trees on each side of the street.
- Pedestrian lighting in common areas should be between 8 and 12 feet in height.
- Lighting in parking areas should be between 10 and 14 feet in height.
- Ground level pedestrian lighting, such as bollards, should not exceed 4 feet in height.

- Use under canopy and entry lighting to illuminate the pedestrian walkway which may be shaded from streetlights. These fixtures may be recessed down lights or pendant fixtures set in the soffit or other wall mounted shaded fixtures.
- In addition to the standards set forth in this section, site and street lighting shall comply with Section 5 (Street Light Design) of the Sacramento County Improvement Standards or as otherwise determined by the Director of Transportation.

3.3.2 Signage

Design Principle

Attractive entry signage should be provided at primary locations to assist residents, visitors, and emergency vehicles in wayfinding.

Rationale

Well-designed and well-lit signage provides easy wayfinding, and can contribute to the design and character of the development.

Design Guidelines

- Integrate signs of quality consistent within the design of the project.
- Design entry signs in keeping with the character of the surrounding community.
- Design monument signs in keeping with the style and character of the main building design, and locate within a landscaped area.
- Clearly mark and light vehicular and pedestrian signage for residents, visitors, and emergency vehicles.
- Design all primary entry and exit signage to the development to be clearly visible from a distance, and be well illuminated at dark.
- Provide clearly visible and lit building address signage.
- Building address should be designed with letters that are four to eight inches high since they are visible from a distance of 20 feet.

3.4 Landscape Design

3.4.1 Landscaping

Design Principle

Residential projects should be designed to maximize opportunities for usable, attractive, and well landscaped open spaces. Landscaping includes trees, shrubbery, and ground cover. Landscaping can also include “hardscape” elements such as outdoor pedestrian amenities, play areas and play structures, walkways, walking paths, plazas and gathering places, pools, sport courts, and decorative pavers.

Rationale

Landscaping can be used to complement buildings and to make a positive contribution to the aesthetics and function of the specific site and area. These aesthetics contribute to the

mental and emotional well-being of residents, and help to reduce stress. Landscaping helps reduce stormwater runoff, filters water and captures carbon and air particulates to improve air and water quality, provides shade during summer months, and lowers temperatures reducing heat island impacts. Landscaping also provides additional habitat to local animals and birds.

Design Guidelines

- Design open space networks as a hierarchy of visual and physical movement, both within the project site and through the neighborhood. Street trees should be larger shade trees per the County's street tree list.
- Use planted areas to enhance the appearance of structures, define site functions of outdoor spaces, and screen undesirable views of parking areas and utilities. This standard does not apply to small lot and cluster projects, as circumstances vary.
- Design exterior site design and landscaping as functional recreational spaces and/or community site amenities.
- Integrate natural attributes and topography into the multifamily development, designed as a neighborhood feature or focal point to the greatest extent possible.
- Incorporate appropriate landscaping that includes a variety of trees, shrubs, and other plantings. Utilize Sacramento County's River Friendly Landscape (RFL) Guidelines for plant material selection, placement and maintenance. The sustainable RFL guidelines are water and energy efficient, reduce maintenance, improve air quality and divert green waste from landfills.
- Plant unpaved areas with irrigated plant materials, and mulch unpaved areas where landscaping would be challenging to minimize weed growth and improve appearance. Use of mulch created from development's green waste is desirable.
- Provide on-going maintenance to identify and ensure the timely replacement of any dead or diseased vegetation.
- Design landscaping to be compatible with building design. Use trellises, arbors, cascading landscaping, vines and perimeter garden walls wherever suitable.
- Consider security issues in the landscape design of the site, including creation of barriers and screening.
- Do not allow landscaping to impede fire access to hydrant connections.
- Plant street trees at least every 25 feet on average, not exceeding 40 feet.
- Limit surface paving, driveways, parking, and hardscape materials in landscape front yards to 25% of the total front yard area. Use permeable or cool pavements to the greatest extent possible.
- Landscaped areas shall be properly and regularly maintained.
- Plants, shrubs, and trees shall be selected that are appropriate for the local climate and site conditions. Use drought tolerant planting material to the greatest extent possible in the selection of landscape materials.

- Along streets with greater than 50,000 vehicles ADT, plant trees conducive to absorbing particulates including deodor cedar, valley oak, and redwoods. Utilize canopy trees for pedestrian areas to increase shading, cool the pavement and support walking.
- Use of known high allergen plantings is discouraged.

Grades and Grading

Design Guidelines

- To minimize grading, follow natural contours to the greatest extent possible.
- Round and contour grading to blend with the natural terrain.
- Design the use of slopes based on aesthetic ease of landscaping considerations.
- Incorporate natural vegetation within the design to the greatest extent possible.

Tree Preservation

Design Guidelines

- Preserve and incorporate existing and native trees within the project site design to the greatest extent possible.
- Retain existing mature trees in landscape and building location plans to the greatest extent possible. Where existing trees must be removed, trees shall be replaced in accordance with General Plan policies.

Irrigation

Design Guidelines

- Provide all landscaped areas with irrigation systems as needed to sustain the landscape. Head-to-head spray irrigation is recommended for turf and groundcover, and drip irrigation is recommended for shrubs and trees to provide deeper, more even watering. Certain plants and trees only need irrigation to get established, then irrigation is on an as-needed basis.
- Avoid overspray onto sidewalks, streets, impermeable surfaces and adjacent properties. Consider conducting water audits from time to time to ensure overwatering is not occurring.
- Use automatic controllers with weather station, sensors and rain shut-off valves for water conservation.
- Screen irrigation systems from public view by aesthetic landscaping.
- Flood protection and drainage facilities shall be designed to provide multiple public benefits wherever possible. Facilities shall include multi-purpose improvements consisting of recreation, the environment, storm water runoff, water reclamation, flood control, etc. Attractive joint use basins, such as parks (in addition to Quimby land dedication requirements) or parkways with trails that

also convey water to water quality basins or similar facilities and provide some water quality treatment are examples of desired multiple public benefit facilities.

- All landscaped features designed as stormwater quality measures shall be maintained for the life of the project. Proper maintenance of these features will be ensured by the local agency through a maintenance covenant that the property owners sign before the approval of the project.

Maintenance of Landscaping

All landscaping required to be installed as part of a development project shall be maintained for the life span of the project. Maintenance of landscaping shall consist of regular watering, pruning, fertilizing, clearing of debris and weeds, removal and replacement of dead plants, and repair and replacement of irrigation systems, fencing and integrated architectural features on site.

Installation of Required Landscaping

All landscaping required as part of a development project shall be installed prior to final inspection. In the event that weather conditions prevent effective installation of required landscaping, a performance bond or other security in the amount equal to the value of the landscaping may be permitted, subject to the approval of the Planning Director.

3.4.2 Fencing and Walls

Design Principle

Fencing and walls in multifamily developments should complement the design of buildings and help define boundaries, without being visually and physically obtrusive.

Rationale

The design of fencing and walls can enhance the appearance and character of the development. Fencing helps control unwanted intrusions into private and common open spaces, increases safety, and helps define, frame, and control private, public, and semi-public spaces. These can also serve as signs, lighting, outdoor seating, and places for public art.

Design Guidelines

- Design sound walls, masonry walls or fences to minimize visual monotony through changes in plane, height, material, texture or significant landscape massing where appropriate.
- Design fencing as an integral part of the site design. Use attractive fencing designs and materials, such as wrought iron, brick mix, or shortened walls with fencing. Fencing should be attractive from both sides of the property line.
- Use landscaping as screen fences to the greatest extent possible.
- Set back fencing on street sides as much as possible and soften with landscaping to minimize a “fortress” appearance.

- Solid fencing, walls, large hedges, or other similar barriers exceeding four feet in height are discouraged within street-side setback areas.
- "Live-ends" can also be used in breaks between fencing and walls to provide access and improve mobility through the site to adjacent areas.
- Provide solid fencing between multifamily developments and single-family developments, except where pedestrian connections are needed and where "live-ends" are used.

3.4.3 Paving and Hardscaping

Design Principle

Multifamily developments should incorporate pervious, cool and decorative paving treatments that permit infiltration of stormwater which reduces run-off and heat island impacts.

Rationale

Quality paving treatment in areas such as parking lots, common areas, and pedestrian walkways can enhance the visual appearance of a project and promote walkability and activity that contributes to healthy residents while also providing environmental benefits.

Design Guidelines

- Use alternative paving material such as brick, modular pavers, stamped, and integral colored permeable concrete for walkways, patios, common areas and in the parking spaces in the parking lot.
- To reduce stormwater runoff in parking lots, use permeable materials such as porous asphalt-concrete (AC), grasscrete, or interlocking modular pavers in those areas with traffic volumes and soil conditions that can support such materials, and where consistent with fire apparatus equipment needs.
- Create well designed planting strips to direct drainage and increase percolation of water runoff. Planting strips designed as vegetated swales and bio-retention facilities can be used for stormwater quality treatment.
- Use decorative paving at crosswalks, at primary intersections, and common spaces.

3.4.4 Services and Utilities

Design Principle

Multifamily developments should provide easily accessible service facilities to all dwelling units that should not be visible from the street to the greatest extent possible.

Rationale

Location and design of common service facilities should be easy for residents to find and use. Good location and design minimize auto and pedestrian hazards.

Mechanical and HVAC

Design Guidelines

- Incorporate mechanical equipment into the design of the building to the greatest extent possible.
- Locate mechanical equipment on building roofs to the greatest extent possible, screened from view. Screening should be either a solid wall/fence or landscaping.
- Locate all mechanical equipment in areas with the least amount of auto and pedestrian traffic.
- Use low-sound emitting mechanical equipment, with consideration of sound impacts from mechanical equipment on surrounding environments.
- Design and use heat sinks and geothermal systems as an alternative to typical heat and cooling systems.

Accessory Structures

Design Guidelines

- Design materials and colors of accessory structures, such as mailboxes and laundry rooms, to be consistent with the main buildings.
- Design roof pitch of accessory structures to be consistent with the predominant roof slope of the main buildings.

Trash and Recycling

Design Guidelines

- Screen all trash and recycling enclosures from public view by landscaping and locate enclosures to minimize visual conflicts with units, common open spaces, or adjacent properties.
- Provide easy access to trash removal enclosures, with curbs and other traffic restraints avoided in these areas.
- Consider composting facilities to support on-site gardens, soil amendments and to divert waste from the landfills.
- Consider utilizing commercial waste haulers that support food waste to fuel/energy projects and programs and who utilize clean fuels in their waste trucks.
- Use durable materials for trash and recycling structures and enclosures, and complement colors of trash and recycling structures to be consistent with the main buildings.
- Provide trash and recycling education information near enclosures, with the enclosures located in a safe and secure location and kept clean and odor-free.
- Locate trash collection areas and facilities so as to minimize noise intrusion on on-site and adjacent off-site living areas.
- For small lot single-family residences with individual trash and recycling receptacles, trash and recycling storage should be provided to the side or rear yard

of the residence and/or screened from public view. Site plans shall indicate how trash collection is managed.

- All trash and recycling enclosures shall be a minimum of 10 feet from all residential property lines and street yards.
- Trash enclosure areas shall be designed to the County's latest stormwater quality source control design standards.
- The Zoning Code provides setback standards for the location of trash enclosures.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 Commercial Design Guidelines

The purpose of this chapter is to provide overall planning and sustainable design principles and guidelines for commercial projects. Commercial projects are divided into three forms: commercial districts, commercial corridors, and commercial centers. Commercial districts occur as major centers of commercial activity. Commercial corridors contain commercial activity and bisect many neighborhoods and often are public transit corridors. Commercial centers are smaller in scale and serve the commercial needs of the neighborhoods nearby. Projects within these three types are subject to the Commercial Design Guidelines which have the goal of providing commercial projects that are well designed to meet the community design goals of the Sacramento General Plan.

Many existing commercial districts, corridors, and centers are characterized by their auto-oriented commercial past, individually developed projects and sites, and franchise architecture. Many of these older commercial developments require revitalization. These Commercial Design Guidelines are to be used to guide this revitalization and to provide standards for new commercial development in the County.

4.1 Understanding Context: Commercial Development

Projects in commercial districts should further the economic and image objectives for the district and advance healthy and sustainable communities in the County. Each project should contribute to the streetscape, pedestrian and auto access objectives, architectural and signage design objectives for the site and surrounding area. To do this, projects will need to be planned and designed to complement both existing and anticipated future investment. Project applicants need to consider the following questions.

- Site connections: How can driveway, sidewalk and other perimeter areas provide connections to increase the connectivity and accessibility to the site from adjacent neighborhoods and development?
- Building alignments: What are the typical building and landscape setbacks along public streets?
- Streetscape and landscape design: What type trees exist along public streets? Is there a landscape plan for the corridor or district? What landscaping needs replacement? How can the landscape plan be enhanced to attract pedestrians and promote walking? How can the landscape help to improve the environment?
- Roadway and parking lot design: How can parking lots and driveways be designed to increase pedestrian, disabled and bicycle connections and safety in the district? How can trees be used to reduce heat generated by parking lots?
- Architectural context: What are the strongest architectural features in the district or area and how can the project complement these themes or ideas?
- Signage design: How can an overall signage concept contribute to the graphic identity of the project and the district?

It is the intent that the response to these issues shall be based on these Commercial Design Guidelines and that they be evaluated on a community life cycle basis to maximize community benefit over time and encourage projects that serve as a catalyst for positive change.

4.2 Commercial Site Design Principles and Guidelines

Commercial projects of all sizes should be planned and well designed as distinctive and competitive addresses with an emphasis on connections to the surrounding community. Their design should emphasize health and sustainability principles with strong provisions for pedestrian, disabled, and bicycle access.

4.2.1 Commercial Design Objectives

Renovated and new development should reflect the implementation of community design principles and concepts for commercial districts, corridors, and projects.

Design Guidelines

- Renovated and new commercial projects should be designed to reinforce sustainable planning and design objectives for the surrounding district and neighborhood. This could include creation of gateways, tree-shaded parkways, open spaces, an interconnected system of pedestrian ways, or other design features.
- Renovated and new commercial projects should be planned and designed so that the siting and shape of buildings contribute to the district's identity and urban design concepts. This could include orientation and siting of buildings, composition of roof forms, and architectural treatments.
- The frontage of primary commercial roadways and connecting side streets should be enhanced by the design of commercial buildings and centers. They should improve streetscape, building edge and land use continuity. Service areas should be located so as not to disturb pedestrian circulation or land use continuity.
- Providing openings to fences and sound walls can provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjacent neighborhoods and should include "live-end" features. Also used in cul-de-sacs, "live-ends" provide for pedestrian access at the ends to adjoining streets, open spaces, parking lots while permitting the access point to be used as a common outdoor space. "Live-ends" should be landscaped and can include benches, providing nice areas for sitting and socializing.
- Paseos should be utilized to provide common outdoor spaces and allow for pedestrian access through the development, and connection to adjacent developments.
- Building and parking setbacks should be designed as an extension of the urban design concept for the district and neighborhood. This includes the depth, edge treatment, pedestrian facility and landscaping of setback areas.
- Renovated and new projects should support urban design concepts with open spaces that create gateways, act as collectors for pedestrian systems, or provide a social focal point for a project and the surrounding district.

- Renovated and new commercial buildings and centers should have signage and graphic identity concepts that support both project and district planning and economic objectives.

4.2.2 Roadway Design and Streetscape

Landscape, lighting and signage for every project should contribute to the implementation of streetscape principles and concepts for commercial corridors or districts. Streetscape and landscaping should promote pedestrian activity and provide for pedestrian safety, access, comfort and connections while contributing to overall placemaking and objectives for commercial districts. Landscaping and trees can be used to complement buildings and to make a positive contribution to the aesthetics and function of the specific site and area. These aesthetics contribute to the mental and emotional well-being of customers, and support economic activity. Landscaping helps reduce storm water runoff, filters water and captures carbon and air particulates to improve air and water quality, provides shade during summer months and lowers temperatures reducing heat island impacts.

Design Guidelines

- Renovated and new commercial projects should have an inter-connected system of roadways, pedestrian walks and sidewalks. This system should connect to the district and neighborhood and should be safe and attractive to pedestrians and invite walking activity.
- Commercial projects should possess an overall landscape and streetscape concept plan. The plan should reinforce the placemaking, connections, and shopping environment objectives for the project and surrounding district.
- Projects should provide an overall street lighting and furniture concept plan. The plan should identify the types and location of lighting fixtures and furniture. The lighting and furniture should be a coordinated "family" with color and style that complements site and architectural concepts and invites shoppers to use it. The lighting plan should use fixtures that are energy efficient, contribute to a safe environment and reduce impacts on dark skies.
- Roadway and street design should incorporate various methods of traffic calming to support pedestrian circulation and active transportation objectives. This could include changing paving materials in crosswalks, undulations, reduced speeds, flashing beacons, etc.
- Use accent paving such as textured paving and paving blocks in driveways. Use of permeable concrete, cool pavements and pavers is desirable. Minimize and share driveways wherever possible.
- Along streets with greater than 50,000 vehicles ADT, plant trees conducive to absorbing particulates including deodar cedar, valley oak, and redwoods. Utilize canopy trees for pedestrian areas to increase shading, cool the pavement and support walking.

4.2.3 Building Setbacks and Alignments

Buildings in established commercial districts should have setbacks that support streetscape, circulation and image objectives for the district.

Design Guidelines

- Buildings should be sited and designed to reinforce the pedestrian experience. Building edges should be transparent and provide a visually interesting shopping experience at a pedestrian's pace.
- Buildings and centers should align and design building edges with adjacent projects so that they support overall urban design objectives for the district and shape and activate spaces and streetscape, and are compatible with adjacent projects yet balanced against the Design Guidelines.
- Building setbacks should contribute to overall streetscaping concepts for the district. The setbacks should be sized to support the size and spacing of trees and visual continuity of the district.
- When a project is located within a district with a design plan, or within an urban context including suburban locations in transition, shopping centers should define public street frontage with building edges and storefronts.
- In non-urban locations, some public street frontage should be defined by building edges and storefronts as necessary to create and promote the pedestrian experience.
- Urban and Suburban areas in transition are generally the commercial corridors in existing communities. Shopping Centers and Commercial areas in new growth areas should be guided by design principles in Specific Plans, New Community Design Guidelines and other planning entitlements, and with use of these Design Guidelines to ensure that the built environment enhances and supports active design, the pedestrian experience, and healthy communities.
- When necessary, setbacks should provide for landscape screening of parking and loading areas. This could include tall evergreen trees, shrubs, trellis, and/or berming.
- The corners of intersections should feature design components such as storefronts and landscaping and should deemphasize parking lots.
- All landscaping and paving shall consider the needs and safety of the disabled.

4.2.4 Building Edges and Storefronts

Building edges and storefronts should be planned and designed to be an integral part of a district's pedestrian system.

Design Guidelines

- Building edges should contribute to a safe, comfortable and interesting pedestrian shopping experience. At least eight (8) feet of unobstructed sidewalk should be provided along storefront edges.
- Display windows should comprise at least 33percent of the width of the facade that faces a public street. When large blank walls are unavoidable, they shall be articulated with three-dimensional elements, such as building façade elements and planters.
- New and renovated commercial projects should have a clearly understood system of connected storefronts and entries. Sidewalks, streetscaping and building edges should be designed in a coordinated fashion.
- Building edges and storefronts should be designed to reflect both auto-oriented and pedestrian-oriented merchandising needs of the tenants and district. Pedestrian safety, access and comfort take priority over an auto-oriented design approach.
- Corner and mid-block pad buildings should be oriented toward and have some transparency to the street. Drive-thru windows should minimize their visual and functional impact on the sidewalk, safe pedestrian circulation routes, and community design objectives.

4.2.5 Parking Lots and Driveways

Parking lots and driveways should be planned to reduce the number of curb cuts; provide interconnectivity between sites; and designed to support pedestrian activity, safety, connections and comfort.

Design Guidelines

- Parking for commercial uses should be located next to or behind buildings. These parking areas should be divided up into smaller, landscaped lots with defined pedestrian connections.
- New and renovated commercial projects should be planned to reduce the number of curb cuts and driveways. Where possible, projects should share driveways and parking access with adjacent sites to provide an interconnected system of auto and service access points.
- Projects should have a hierarchy of primary and secondary drives and roads. Primary driveways should be designed as streets. This includes designing raised pedestrian sidewalks, streetscape and lighting to improve wayfinding, reinforcing site design and pedestrian connection concepts.
- Parking lots and driveways should provide pedestrian connections to storefronts. Dedicated walkways through parking lots and sidewalks should be included in the design of access roadways.
- Traffic calming techniques should be employed in parking and driveway areas to support pedestrian circulation concepts.

- Parking lots shall include trees to provide shade and reduce temperature. There should be a minimum of one tree per eight parking spaces. Tree selection, planting approach and irrigation should provide for rapid growth and sustained health of shade trees. Small ornamental trees are appropriate for accent planting but should not be used as shade trees.
- Trees and landscaping elements shall be used to organize large parking areas into recognizable smaller segments that reflect pedestrian circulation and site organization and scale.
- Parking areas should incorporate good designs that include: trees, lighting, landscaped storm water features, cool and pervious pavement and pavers. Plant trees and shrubs to soften the overall impact of parking areas and to provide shade and noise reduction, heat island cooling and improved air quality.
- Lighting in parking areas should be LED lights or other acceptable high energy efficiency light, with automatic controls to dim lights after certain hours or when no one is present. Lighting shall be adequate to provide for a safe environment.
- Create textures, patterns, and colors in the design of paved parking areas or entries to create visual interest and to distinguish them from other paved areas. Do not design large monolithic areas of single color untextured paving.
- Use accent paving such as textured paving and paving blocks in driveways. Use of permeable concrete, cool pavements and pavers is desirable.
- Incorporate storm water quality measures into the parking areas to treat the storm runoff and enhance the parking areas by providing shade and reducing the amount of paving.
- Where feasible, provide for electric vehicle fast-charging stations, car and bike share locations, and other alternatives such as zip car.
- Bike racks shall be designed with the most current designs that provide secure locking features and are attractive. Many bike racks double as public art to add interest.

4.2.6 Drive-Through Businesses

Drive-through businesses should minimize their impact on site pedestrian usage and public realm landscaping image. Distinguish walkways from driving surfaces by using varied paving treatments and by raising walkways to curb level.

- Service windows and stacking lanes for drive-through businesses should have minimized impact on public streets, particularly at corner sites.
- Drive-through elements should be architecturally integrated into the building rather than appearing to be applied or appear as an appendage to the building.
- In cases where site constraints require the location of the drive-through lanes between the street and the building, the view of the lanes should be minimized with the use of screening, landscaping, and other design elements.

- Make the majority of the pedestrian level façade facing the street highly transparent with clear glass windows and doors that animate public streets and maximize views in and out of the building.

  Locate required bicycle parking close to the building entrance in a manner that does not impede pedestrian movement.

- Provide weather protection at the main building entrance, for areas close to public transit stops, bicycle parking, walkways, and in places with pedestrian amenities.
- Provide customer entrance doors clearly visible from public streets and directly accessible from the public sidewalk. Provide customer entrance doors that are close to parking areas.

4.2.7 Integrated Transit

New commercial development and renovation of existing centers and buildings should be planned and designed to facilitate access to transit.

Design Guidelines

- New and renovated commercial projects should be clearly connected to transit services. Sidewalks should provide direct access to transit stops. Special considerations for patrons should be taken into account, such as shopping cart storage and bike racks.
- Transit stops should be conveniently and centrally located in commercial districts. They should be easy to find and collocated with commercial services and amenities. Their location and design should be coordinated with Regional Transit.
- Transit stops/shelters and connecting pedestrian routes should be well lit, visible and facilitate access by the disabled.
- Provide convenient route and schedule information.
- Bicycle facilities should be designed into the site plan in a way that supports use of bicycles.

4.2.8 Transition to Residential Areas

New and renovated projects should be designed to enhance adjacent residential neighborhoods and promote active transportation from these neighborhoods rather than autos for short trips. Projects should be designed to reduce the visual, noise and use impacts on adjacent residential areas.

Design Guidelines

- New and renovated commercial projects should enhance the connections to shopping streets. They should provide streetscape, sidewalks, building setback and storefront design that link residential streets to main commercial and transit streets. Residents should be able to walk a direct route from their homes to commercial center stores without traversing parking lots and having to walk out of their way around perimeter fencing and walls.

- New and renovated commercial projects should provide a landscape plan that supports the design and pedestrian access objectives for contiguous residential streets.
- New projects should acknowledge the scale and proximity of adjacent residential neighborhoods by stepping down in height, increasing setbacks, and providing a more friendly building orientation.
- Paseos should be utilized to provide common outdoor spaces and allow for pedestrian access through the development, and connection to adjacent developments.
- Unnecessary tall concrete block sound walls should not separate commercial uses from residential uses. Where sounds walls exist or are necessary, breaks in the sound walls shall be provided for access from adjacent neighborhoods and designed as "live-ends."
- Placing loading and service areas adjacent to residential areas is discouraged. Site circulation and placement of loading areas should be incorporated into the project so that it is screened and held back from residential areas. Where screening walls are required, they shall be designed as a natural extension of the architectural and landscaping concepts for the project. Evergreen trees should be used for screening and to help with noise reduction.
- Automotive and service bays should orient away from residential development and public streets. Service bays should not dominate the public street frontage.

4.3 Landscaping / Site Elements

Landscape design should be a defining feature for every project that contributes to the community's health, sustainability, image, and pedestrian activity, safety, access and comfort. Landscaping should promote pedestrian activity and provide for pedestrian safety, access, comfort and connections while contributing to overall placemaking and image objectives for village districts. Landscaping and trees can be used to complement buildings and to make a positive contribution to the aesthetics and function of the specific site and area. These aesthetics contribute to the mental and emotional well-being of customers, and support economic activity. Landscaping helps reduce storm water runoff, filters water and captures carbon and air particulates to improve air and water quality, provides shade during summer months and lowers temperatures reducing heat island impacts.

Design Guidelines

- The design of landscaping for commercial projects should reduce the creation of heat islands and filter harmful greenhouse gas and smog. Landscaping should provide softscape areas in place of paving and create shade. All site areas not covered by structures, walkways, driveways and parking should be landscaped.
- Site landscaping should include stormwater quality treatment features, such as vegetated swales, to attenuate flows and remove pollutants from runoff before it leaves the site, consistent with the County's stormwater quality control measures.

- New and renovated commercial projects should use landscaping to reinforce overall site and architectural design concepts for the project and surrounding neighborhood. This includes a hierarchy of canopy trees, accent/flowering trees, shrubs and groundcover. Drought tolerant planting should be used consistent with the County Water Conservation Ordinances. Special hardscape, such as pavers, stained concrete, and stone, should be used to identify pathways and gathering places in projects. Ungrouted pavers and permeable pavements are encouraged to reduce runoff.
- Incorporate appropriate landscaping that includes a variety of trees, shrubs, and other plantings. Utilize Sacramento County's River Friendly Landscape (RFL) Guidelines for plant material selection, placement and maintenance. The sustainable RFL guidelines are water and energy efficient, reduces maintenance, improves air quality and diverts green waste from the landfills.
- Landscaped storm water quality design measures shall provide multiple public benefits and be integrated into open space areas to provide storm water quality benefits and landscaping benefits.
- Provide on-going maintenance to identify and ensure the timely replacement of any dead or diseased vegetation.
- Design landscaping to be compatible with building design. Use trellises, arbors, cascading landscaping, vines and perimeter garden walls wherever suitable.
- Consider security issues in the landscape design of the site, including creation of barriers and screening.
- Do not allow landscaping to impede fire access to hydrant connections.
- Provide on-going and regular maintenance to identify and ensure the timely replacement of any dead or diseased vegetation.
- Preserve and incorporate existing and native trees within the project site design to the greatest extent possible.
- Retain existing mature trees in landscape and building location plans to the greatest extent possible. Where existing trees must be removed, trees shall be replaced on-site or in another location, acceptable to the Planning Director, to compensate for the loss in canopy and environmental benefits. Participation in the County's Tree Mitigation program to compensate for canopy loss is also acceptable.
- Provide all landscaped areas with irrigation systems as needed to sustain the landscape. Comply with the County's Landscape Ordinance.
- Landscaping should be used to enhance and soften screening of loading and parking areas. It should also be used to help frame views and edges.
- Artwork and other amenities, such as benches, murals, sculptures and fountains, are encouraged in public areas of projects. The landscape plan should identify locations and infrastructure support (i.e., lighting, power, water, etc.). Placement

of amenities should not adversely impact disabled access by encroaching into walkways.

- The design of any non-building structures such as entry gateways, pavilions, or walkway trellises shall complement their related commercial center or building design and/or theme.
- Tree plantings used to satisfy the county parking shade requirements should be located in an ordered pattern that enhances the overall site image, reduces the visual impact of large parking areas, and reflects the pedestrian movement from car to buildings and communal open spaces.
- Mature trees, rock outcrops, creeks and other desirable natural site features should be preserved and incorporated into the landscape plan. Projects located adjacent to open space, creeks or wetlands should include a landscape interface that is coordinated and consistent with natural areas. A vegetative buffer should be included to treat runoff before it reaches the natural area.
- Use of known high allergen plantings is discouraged.

Drainage/Flood Facilities:

- Size, type, and location shall be sized and located as to support the community master plan goals.
- To encourage sufficient usage, parks and open space should be strategically located in or near residential areas and commercial districts and be accessible via roadways, transit routes, and off-road pedestrian and bicycle trails and paseos (walkways).
- Neighborhood parks are encouraged to be centers of neighborhood activity and could be combined with schools, community recreation centers, libraries and other civic uses.
- Public safety is a high priority and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be applied.
- Flood protection and drainage facilities shall be designed to provide multiple public benefits wherever possible. Facilities shall include multi-purpose improvements consisting of recreation, the environment, storm water runoff, water reclamation, infiltration, groundwater recharge, flood control, etc. Attractive joint use basins, such as parks (in addition to Quimby land dedication requirements) or parkways with trails that also convey water to water quality basins or similar facilities and provide some water quality treatment are examples of desired multiple public benefit facilities.
- Open space should be connected to provide habitat corridors through urban environments

4.4 Commercial Architectural Design Principles and Guidelines

New projects and renovation of existing buildings should contribute to the design and placemaking objectives for their commercial district.

4.4.1 Architectural Design Concepts

Projects in specific plan or other special planning districts should support existing architectural design policies and concepts. Every renovation and new commercial project should pursue architectural concepts that are compatible and further image and economic goals for the district and adjacent neighborhoods. Consult with the Division of Planning and Environmental Review for projects in these areas.

Design Guidelines

- For freeway and arterial-oriented big box centers, design themes should tie together all the tenants in the center. When multiple centers are located in the same district, they each should provide design concepts that enhance the continuity of the street as a single business address.
- In aging strip districts, new and renovated commercial projects should strive to introduce new design themes and concepts emphasizing pedestrian activity, safety, access, comfort and interconnectivity.
- New or renovated freestanding commercial pad buildings should be designed to meet both the merchandising needs of the tenant and image objectives and design themes for the district.
- For renovated or new commercial projects in a residential context, they should reflect the architectural traditions, scale and character of the adjacent neighborhood.
- The use of green and sustainable development standards and practices in planning, design, construction and renovation of new and existing buildings should be used wherever possible. Sustainable green infrastructure should be utilized wherever possible.

4.4.2 Building Form and Massing

Building massing and orientation should result in a pleasing and coherent composition of building elements and spaces.

Design Guidelines

- The placement and shape of buildings should support placemaking objectives for projects. Buildings should shape, enclose and define pedestrian edges and spaces and streets.
- Freestanding “big box” stores are discouraged. Large stores should be integrated into in-line shops or wrapped in storefront buildings.
- A coherent family of roof forms should support urban design and site concepts. This could include creating gateway elements, reducing the scale of large buildings to better fit a fine-grained commercial or residential context, or support placemaking objectives.
- Roof forms or parapets should be continuous, not superficial forms limited to the most visible areas.

- The massing of a commercial center should result in well-proportioned buildings. Bay spacing, horizontal and vertical rhythms should have a pleasing composition.
- Long, unbroken blank walls are discouraged. Each side of buildings should have a uniform approach to design and detail. Any non-pedestrian focused façade shall have articulation related to the overall building design.
- Corner bay articulations, stepping and varying wall planes, raising and lowering parapet walls, and trellises can be used to reduce the visual monotony of large buildings. Varying building height with one, two or and three-story forms is strongly encouraged as a way to increase visual interest.
- Canopies, arcades and other architectural treatments, such as reveals, recesses, projections and cornices can be added to buildings to give tall walls a pedestrian-friendly scale.

4.4.3 Architectural Design and Features

The architectural design of commercial projects should have a vocabulary of design elements that contribute to overall design and image concepts at a district and pedestrian scale.

Design Guidelines

- Franchise architecture should be minimized and dealt with in the context of the surrounding area. Franchise architecture includes pseudo-historic styles or "trademark" roof shapes, which sacrifice the integrity of a project or district to promote a single tenant.
- The composition of building elevations should elaborate on massing and urban design objectives for commercial projects and their districts.
- The design of renovated and new commercial projects should employ architectural concepts that have a unifying vocabulary of forms, design elements, details and materials. All facades of buildings should draw on the same vocabulary of forms, detail and materials.
- Integrated base wainscoting, cornices, canopies, awnings, brackets and other design features that add a finer grain of detail and design are encouraged.
- Building entrances should be designed as prominent features. Canopies, porticos, recessed entries, added ornamentation and other design elements should enhance the design of entries.
- Service station pump island canopies and ancillary buildings should be architecturally compatible with each other and the primary service building in terms of color, materials, and building design.

4.4.4 Materials and Colors

Selection of materials and finishes for new and commercial renovation projects should be of high quality and reinforce overall image and massing concepts.

Design Guidelines

- Architectural materials should convey an image of quality and durability. Certain materials have an inherently inexpensive, insubstantial, or garish quality, and are discouraged. These include:
    1. Roofs of composite shingles, painted tiles, metal or other sheet material.
    2. Walls of vinyl, metal, plywood or other sheet materials.
- Use sustainable building materials that are high quality, durable, provide energy efficiency benefits, require low maintenance, and complement the design of the building. Use of quality recycled products is encouraged.
- Use of "Permanent" and/or cool roof products and materials with reflective surfaces are desirable because of their low maintenance, energy conservation and insulation values.
- Employ Energy Star appliances and energy efficient lighting in construction, to the extent feasible, consistent with the adopted Green Building Policies and requirements.
- Maintain windows free of obstructions and signs to promote maximum visibility of merchandise, and visibility by Sheriff patrols consistent with CPTED strategies.
- Materials and their use should reinforce and enhance architectural concepts.
- Visible roofs should be designed as an integral part of the building design, and clad in clay, concrete tile, or the similar high quality materials.
- Walls should be clad in substantial materials and be well detailed. Storefront design shall have a quality image.
- Accent materials shall be of high quality materials that do not appear as an appendage.
- Faux-styles are discouraged. When buildings are designed with obvious references to a period style, materials shall be consistent with that period or style. Honest interpretations of historic styles are acceptable.
- The use of color is encouraged; however, garish colors and materials are discouraged.
- Ground floor storefront display windows should be transparent clear glass. Awnings and canopies should be used for sun protection. Windows on upper floors may be lightly tinted, but should not be reflective.
- Exterior cart storage areas adjacent to buildings shall have an enclosure with a design consistent with that building.
- Any fenced or screened outdoor seating or vending areas next to a building shall have the enclosure designed to be consistent with the building design.

4.4.5 Lighting

Lighting should be an integral part of the planning and design of commercial projects, anticipating the needs of the shopping experience, businesses and adjacent residential areas.

Design Guidelines

- Lighting in service areas should be the minimum required for operation, and be designed to minimize visibility of those areas.
- Low, pedestrian-scaled lighting fixtures are encouraged to help identify and light pedestrian routes.
- Lighting should provide for business interest even afterhours, when business is closed, to contribute to pedestrian presence and sense of safety.
- Provide energy efficient lighting in all common areas and buildings, including pedestrian and vehicular routes. The emphasis should be on personal safety, with lighting landscape or building surfaces secondary.
- Light fixtures should face downward or employ shielding to reduce light sources and visibility from outside the site
- Lighting in parking areas should be LED lights or other acceptable high energy efficiency light, with automatic controls to dim lights after certain hours or when no one is present. Lighting shall be adequate to provide for a safe environment.
- All lighting fixtures visible to pedestrians shall be designed to minimize glare.

4.4.6 Service Areas

Service facilities should be concealed from public view

Design Guidelines

- Trash bins and compactors, utility meters, transformers, and other service elements should be enclosed or otherwise completely concealed from view. Service elements should be designed as an integral element of the commercial project's architecture.
- Services and equipment should be enclosed or buried, or otherwise concealed from view.
- Roof-mounted equipment should be concealed by enclosures that are consistent in design with the building design.
- Consider utilizing commercial waste haulers that support food waste to fuel/energy projects and programs and who utilize clean fuels in their waste trucks.
- Provide trash and recycling education information near enclosures. Enclosures shall be in a safe and secure location and shall be kept clean and odor-free.
- Trash enclosure areas shall be designed to the County's latest storm water quality source control design standards, and shall provide trash and recycling education information.

4.5 Commercial Signage

Signage should contribute to the graphic identity and wayfinding objectives for the commercial district, center, or project while reinforcing the project's architectural and site planning concepts. New free-standing and monument signs require design review.

4.5.1 District Signage

Development and public works projects in specific plan or special planning areas should support signage policies and design concepts. Signage identifying shopping and commercial districts should support both wayfinding and graphic identity objectives both day and night. The signage plan should provide consistency throughout the district.

Design Guidelines

- District image themes and design concepts should be reflected in districtwide signage.
- Median, monument, and other district identity and wayfinding signage should be designed and located as part of an overall district signage plan. Signage must comply with ADA requirements.
- Placement and maintenance of district signage must be coordinated with the County Department of Transportation.

4.5.2 Signage for Multi-Tenant Centers

For commercial development with multiple tenants, monument, entry, wayfinding, tenant and other signage should be designed as a "family".

- Commercial centers should have an overall "Master Signage Criteria". They should express a "family" of signage that supports the merchandising needs of tenants, wayfinding, and graphic identity objectives for the project, district, and adjacent neighborhood. Signage must comply with ADA requirements.
- Commercial projects' signage plan should have designs for known tenants and future unknown tenants.
- Large garish signs unnecessary to the commercial use of a commercial center are discouraged.
- Monument signs are preferred and encouraged rather than pole signs unless pole signs are authorized within a designated district with specific guidelines and architectural intent.
- Affixed individual characters for signs are encouraged.

4.5.3 Signage for Single Tenant Buildings and Pads

Signage for single tenant buildings should be developed to reflect landscape and architectural concepts for the project.

- Signage for single tenant commercial buildings and pad buildings should be designed to complement the architectural design. The sign location, shape, letters and lighting should "fit" the building's facade.

- All the building's signs should be designed as a one graphic idea. An unrelated and uncoordinated building, window and entry signage is discouraged.
- Monument signs are preferred and encouraged. Cabinet signs are discouraged.
- Affixed signs with individual characters are encouraged
- Affixed signs should be placed only on vertical surfaces below the eaves or parapet line.
- Signage must comply with ADA requirements.
- These guidelines are intended to apply to a new sign proposed in conjunction with the construction of a new commercial building, remodel, or tenant improvements where a new sign is proposed, and are not intended to apply to the replacement of existing signage

4.5.4 Temporary Signage

- Temporary signs permitted by the County for commercial projects should be designed to a similar standard as permanent signage reflecting the same overall objectives.

4.6 Operational Elements

In many cases, the proposed use of a building or the operational characteristics of the use may influence site design. Public and private spaces often have different screening and safety needs, and the intended hours or anticipated noise levels may influence the entryways, lighting, access, and orientation of the building, particularly when located close to a residential neighborhood.

The following guidelines should be considered in the site design for all new or substantially renovated commercial, mixed-use and employment projects, and also incorporated into future business practices.

Design Guidelines

- Business hours should generally be confined to between 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., and may be further reduced depending on proximity to nearby residential uses.
- Security lighting should be coordinated with the Sheriff, and should be dimmed during late-night hours or equipped with motion detection features. Use of cameras for security is recommended.
- Improve and/or increase access to fresh and healthy foods, such as partnering with the Health Education Council on Healthy Stores and Healthy Restaurants Initiatives. In partnership with the Health Education Council and others: make healthy foods, local fruits and vegetables, and other staple items more visible, accessible, affordable and attractive to neighborhood residents, and increase retailer sales and resident consumption of healthy foods.
- Encourage the use of healthy food menu choices for drive-through and sit down fast food restaurants. Participation with the Health Education Council and Healthy Restaurant Initiative is suggested in order to support business owners in the success of this program.

- Promote access to and provide incentives for the use of public transportation.
- Promote the use of bicycles, walking, and other healthy alternatives to vehicular travel.
- Noise generating activities, such as loading and unloading, should be confined to normal business hours, and should be minimized during the early and late hours, especially when located near residential uses. Compliance with the County Noise Ordinance is required.
- Provide appropriate setbacks and areas for outdoor use by customers (e.g., outdoor gathering places for smoking, talking or waiting to enter the business) so as not to obstruct the sidewalk or access to other businesses within the commercial center. Provide outdoor seating and shade for customers to socialize as space allows.
- On-site security should be used during special events or sales to control access, parking, and to discourage loitering outside of the business.
- Wheel stops or similar measures should be used to prevent shopping carts or utility carts from leaving the perimeter of the property or commercial center.
- Maintain landscaped areas, lighting and security features consistent with CPTED strategies and in a manner to provide a safe environment for customers and employees.
- Maintain windows free of obstructions and signs to promote maximum visibility of merchandise, and visibility by Sheriff patrols consistent with CPTED strategies.
- Commercial Centers should attract a wide range of commercial and retail businesses. Providing healthy food sources and choices; such as full-service grocery stores, ethnic food markets, farm stands or farmers' markets, and food establishments that provide fresh food supporting sustainable local food systems is desirable.
- Incorporate co-location of other facilities or services that supports the needs of residents (i.e. health care center, recreation center, farmer's market, drug or corner store, deli, bank, etc.).

CHAPTER 5

5.0 Employment Districts

The purpose of this chapter is to provide overall planning and sustainable design principles and guidelines for employment districts. Employment districts may include office, institutional, business, and industrial uses

The Guidelines are to be used to review district design as well as individual project design within the district while advancing healthy and sustainable communities in the county. Office, institutional and business complexes are often planned as campuses with common vehicular access and a need for a system of pedestrian connections. Other employment district areas are more industrial in nature and are comprised of individual sites in a non-campus setting. Pedestrian connections need to be addressed in all districts.

5.1 Understanding Context: Employment Districts

Projects in employment districts should be planned and designed to reflect both the needs of the tenant and the identity and quality of the district. Each project should contribute to the streetscape, sustainable site planning, pedestrian connectivity and architectural quality objectives for the district and surrounding area. To do this, every business district, industrial park and building needs to be planned and designed, with sustainability in mind, which complements existing development while anticipating future investment and changes in use. Each project sponsor should be prepared to answer the following questions pertaining to the site context.

- Site connections: How can site planning provide safe pedestrian and vehicular connections between buildings in and outside the project? What other safety elements should be included?
- Building alignments: What are the building edge and spatial relationships among groups of buildings? What is the orientation of building lobbies and entries?
- Streetscape and landscape design: What type of landscaped setbacks and treatment exists along public streets? What landscaping needs replacement? How can the landscape plan be enhanced to attract pedestrians and promote walking? How can the landscape help to improve the environment?
- Roadway and parking lot design: How can parking lots and driveways be designed to increase pedestrian, disabled and bicycle connections and overall safety in the district? How can trees and cool, permeable pavements be used to reduce heat generated by parking lots?
- Architectural context: What are the strongest architectural features in the district and how can the project complement these themes or ideas?
- Signage design: How can an overall signage concept contribute to the graphic identity of the project and the district?

5.2 Employment District Design Principles and Guidelines

Employment districts should possess an overall design framework that provides an internal organizational structure and a contextual response to the surrounding community.

Office, business, and institutional projects should be designed with good pedestrian connections to public transit and public realm circulation networks.

Use of landscaping features can provide cohesion and continuity through the various districts.

5.2.1 Employment District Design Objectives

Employment districts and projects should be planned to accomplish both functional and district design objectives.

Design Guidelines

- Office, business, and industrial parks should possess a clear organizational structure. The urban design concept for them should make it a distinctive address with definable hierarchy of streets and focal points.
- Office, business, and industrial parks should be planned to provide centrally located or accessible commercial services and conveniences for employees, and visitors. Utilizing existing neighborhood businesses to access goods and services is desirable and brings economic benefits to the surrounding community.
- Office, business, and industrial parks should provide a deliberate and attractive gateway and entrance design.
- Employment district interface with other types of uses, particularly residential, should be planned carefully. The transition in scale, use, visual privacy, noise, odors, operational hours and traffic flow should respect the needs and livability of adjacent neighborhoods.
- Industrial parks should be clearly separated from residential areas with adequate buffers to shield neighborhoods from noise, odors, vehicular, and development scale impacts.

5.2.2 Roadway Design and Streetscape

Streets should be designed to reflect both the place-making and circulation objectives for new and existing employment districts.

Design Guidelines

- Employment districts should have complete streetscape concepts and strategies that contribute to their identity, safety and comfort.
- Streets should have a design hierarchy. Primary address streets should demonstrate a “higher order” of streetscape, setbacks, medians and other distinctive features.
- Functional street requirements for truck and emergency vehicle access should be accommodated and not over-sized. Streets should not be used for queuing or backing into loading and service yard areas.

- All streets should be designed to encourage pedestrian and transit use, with transit access in close proximity to buildings. The design of raised sidewalks and planting strips should contribute to the comfort and safety of walking in employment districts and connectivity to neighboring districts.
- Traffic calming techniques, such as a change in elevation and paving materials, should be used at crosswalks, drop-offs and lobby zones – in addition to appropriate signage and speed limits.
- Special hardscape, such as pavers, stained concrete, and stone, should be used to identify pathways and gathering places in projects. Use of permeable pavers, permeable concrete, and cool pavements is highly recommended for all pedestrian facilities, in parking lots, plazas, building entrances, public use and other suitable areas.
- Construct and utilize green street design practices to the greatest extent practicable. Curb cuts into landscaped drainage swales and medians are part of green street design that is encouraged.
- Streetscape concepts and themes should be a distinctive feature for employment districts. This includes tree selection, lighting, furniture, signage, decorative walls, arbors, pylons, trellis, art and other design elements.
- Streetscape should reinforce urban design concepts for the employment district. This includes creation of gateway elements, defining focal points, framing views and edges, and highlighting architectural design features.
- Paseos should be utilized to provide common outdoor spaces and allow for pedestrian access through the development, and connection to adjacent developments.
- When necessary, streetscape should screen views of parking lots and loading areas. Berms or shrubs should be used to screen parking lots.
- Street and parking lot trees with large canopies should be planted to increase the amount of shade and reduce heat in employment districts.
- Trees should not block the visibility of identification signage.

5.2.3 Parking and Loading Areas

The visibility of parking and loading areas should be reduced when planning and designing Employment Districts and projects.

Design Guidelines

- On-site circulation concepts, and use of landscaping, should reduce the visibility of parking lots from adjacent buildings and public streets.
- The design of on-site circulation and parking lots should reflect the need for mixing and segregation of modes (i.e., trucks, autos, transit, pedestrians and bicycles).
- Parking lots should be to the rear or side of buildings to allow buildings to front public streets.

- Loading areas should be located to rear or inside side yards. Loading areas should not be visible from public streets or adjacent buildings.
- For corner parcels, parking should be from primary streets and service areas from secondary streets.
- Landscaping should be used to enhance and soften screening of loading and parking areas.
- Lighting in parking and pedestrian areas should be LED lights or other acceptable high energy efficiency light, with automatic controls to dim lights after certain hours or when no one is present. Lighting shall be adequate to provide for a safe environment.
- Provide for electric vehicle fast-charging stations, car and bike share locations, and other alternatives such as zip car.

5.2.4 Building Setbacks and Alignments

The overall planning concepts for employment districts and projects should result in a pleasing composition of buildings that support an image objective, shape and enliven public and common spaces while enhancing pedestrian connections.

Design Guidelines

- Building entrances should be designed as a prominent feature of buildings. Building entries should be placed to reinforce their presence on primary business streets and where they can enhance pedestrian linkages to other buildings, transit, parking areas and facilitate drop-off of employees and visitors.
- Building setbacks along public streets should enhance the streetscape, particularly the pedestrian realm and reflect the district design objectives.
- The design of entries should be inviting and employ architectural elements such as canopies, recessed lobbies, contrasting materials and colors, landscaping, and expressive building massing.
- Buildings located at street intersections should orient building entries toward the corner. This is particularly important at key intersections and entryways.
- Building orientation and placement should shape and activate public spaces.
- Building design should place public uses toward streets and public spaces. Private and service uses should be placed to the rear or away from public spaces. For industrial buildings, business and reception areas should face public streets.
- Industrial buildings should place auto parking adjacent to lobby and public areas and truck loading and parking adjacent to service and manufacturing areas.
- Multi-tenant single story buildings should face lobbies toward public streets.
- Loading and service bays should orient away from residential development and public streets. Loading and service bays should not dominate the public street frontage.

- Trash enclosures, utility meters, transformers, and other services should be screened and located away from adjacent neighborhoods and out of view from public streets and building entry areas.
- All landscaping and paving shall consider the needs and safety of the disabled.
- Orientation of new employment district buildings should take advantage of solar and wind access.

5.2.5 Integrated Transit

All employment district projects should facilitate access to transit for employees and visitors.

Design Guidelines

- Transit facilities should be centrally located throughout employment districts. They should be visible, lit and provide shelter from the elements, and socially integrated into the planning of new and renovated projects. The design and location of transit shelters shall consider safety and be coordinated with Regional Transit.
- Pedestrian connections to transit facilities should be easy to navigate, safe, comfortable, friendly and within a 10 minute walk.
- Shelters and lighting shall be provided. The design of shelters shall anticipate the number of transit patrons and their physical comfort. Shade, see-thru screening from wind and rain, benches or lean bars shall be design considerations for transit shelter design. Solar facilities on shelters are highly encouraged. Advertising on shelters should not exceed the signage allowed by Regional Transit and should not obstruct the ability for passersby to provide visual surveillance.
- Bike facilities and reasonable access to them, by employees and visitors, should be designed into every project and consistent with the Zoning Code.
- Employment districts and projects should be planned, designed and managed to reflect the County's transportation demand reduction programs.
- Employment districts and projects should be planned, designed and managed to support employee's health and visitors desiring to walk around the districts for pleasure and exercise. Maps/signs providing walking routes and distances encourage walking.

5.3 Landscaping / Site Elements

On-site landscaping should reinforce overall site and architectural concepts; increase walkability, pedestrian safety, access, health and comfort; reduce heat gain, water consumption and pollution/flooding from stormwater runoff.

Design Guidelines

- Landscaping should contribute to the "sense of place". It should enhance the definition and distinctiveness of courtyards, plazas and other public spaces.

- Ancillary elements such as patio shelters, outdoor furniture, trash and recycle containers, storage sheds, bicycle enclosures shall be integrated into the overall landscape concept and be architecturally compatible with the project design.
- Landscaping should reinforce project's site entry concepts.
- Planting in front and side yards should reinforce the employment district's streetscape concept.
- Foundation planting and accent planting should be used to enhance architectural and massing concepts for buildings.
- Accent planting and color should reinforce architectural and site design entry expression.
- Screen planting should be used around parking lots and to block undesirable views. Parking lot screen planting should be approximately 30 inches tall, provide adequate security visibility, and not obstruct security cameras and lighting.
- Grading should be done to fulfill functional and drainage requirements while reinforcing site planning and architectural design concepts. Grading can provide elevation changes that bring interest to design concepts.
- Drought tolerant landscaping should be used in accordance with the County Water Conservation and Landscape Ordinance. Irrigation plans should provide for use of recycled water and minimize the use of potable water.
- The design of landscaping should reduce the creation of heat islands caused by roadways, buildings, rooftops and parking lot paving.
- Rainwater collection systems should be used to offset the water required for landscape irrigation. Consider the use of rainwater collection barrels to provide non-potable water for irrigation purposes. Rainwater harvesting systems should be designed to capture 50% of the total roof area (including surface runoff and/or roof runoff) for landscape irrigation use.
- Parking lots shall include shade trees per Zoning Code standards. Tree selection, planting approach and irrigation should provide for rapid growth and sustained health of shade trees. Small ornamental trees are appropriate for accent planting but should not be used as shade trees. All trees and landscaping shall be maintained. In the event a tree is removed, it shall be replaced by a tree with similar benefits.
- Site landscaping shall include stormwater quality treatment features, such as vegetated swales, to attenuate flows and remove pollutants from runoff before it leaves the site, consistent with the Guidance Manual for On-site Stormwater Quality Control Measures. Use of River Friendly Landscape Designs will provide stormwater quality treatment while; conserving water, improving air quality, reducing maintenance needs and reducing greenwaste.
- An automatic irrigation system, that includes a controller with weather station, rain shut-off valves and sensors, shall be installed and properly programmed.

- Flood protection and drainage facilities shall be designed to provide multiple public benefits wherever possible. Facilities shall include multi-purpose improvements consisting of recreation, the environment, storm water runoff, water reclamation, infiltration, groundwater recharge, flood control, etc. Attractive joint use basins, such as parks (in addition to Quimby land dedication requirements) or parkways with trails that also convey water to water quality basins or similar facilities and provide some water quality treatment are examples of desired multiple public benefit facilities.
- Public safety is a high priority and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be applied.
- Special hardscape, such as pavers, stained concrete, and stone, should be used to identify pathways and gathering places in projects. Use of permeable pavers, permeable concrete, and cool pavements is highly recommended for all pedestrian facilities, in parking lots, plazas, building entrances, public use and other suitable areas.
- Artwork and other amenities such as murals, sculptures, and fountains are encouraged in public areas of projects. The landscape plan should identify locations and infrastructure support (i.e., lighting, power, water, etc.).
- Mature trees, rock outcrops, creeks and other desirable natural site features shall be preserved and incorporated into the landscape plan to the greatest extent possible. Building placement and configuration shall protect any heritage and landmark trees. Where existing trees must be removed, trees shall be replaced on-site or in another location, acceptable to the Planning Director, to compensate for the loss in canopy and environmental benefits. Participation in the County's Tree Mitigation program to compensate for canopy loss is also acceptable
- Projects located adjacent to open space, creeks and wetlands should integrate these natural features into project design. Views and the location of outdoor patios, plazas or eating areas should be considered in the context of the site's natural features. The project landscape theme and plantings should be coordinated and consistent with adjoining natural areas. If an existing or proposed trail exists, coordinate a connection and easement from the project to the trail. A vegetative buffer should be preserved or created to treat off-site runoff before it reaches the natural area.
- Landscaping, artwork, amenities, and paving should consider the access needs, safety, and comfort of all users.
- Use of known high allergen plantings is discouraged.

5.4 Employment District Architectural Design Principles and Guidelines

- New office and industrial buildings should reflect both their tenants' business needs and contribution to the design objectives for the district. The architectural design for industrial and office projects should strive for design excellence. Building design should be unique to the project. "Stock plan" buildings and

generic designs are discouraged. The use of green and sustainable development standards and practices in planning, design, construction and renovation of new and existing buildings; along with green infrastructure should be used wherever possible.

5.4.1 Building Form and Massing

The massing of employment district buildings should express a combination of the internal function and external urban design objectives for the Employment District.

Design Guidelines

- The shape and orientation employment district buildings should support overall district design concepts. This includes framing of gateways, views, edges and focal points.
- New employment district buildings should respond to their architectural context by transitioning in scale, by stepping the massing, reflecting the bay spacing and rhythm, and using fenestration patterns of historically or architecturally significant adjacent buildings.
- Building massing and siting should demonstrate a response to how they are viewed. This includes orientation and posture towards streets and being seen from all directions.
- The massing and shape of buildings should result in a coherent and pleasing composition of roof, wall, building base and site landscape elements.
- Long, unbroken blank walls are discouraged. Each side of buildings should have a uniform approach to design and detail.
- Roofs should be designed as integral elements of building architecture. Flat roofs with a continuous parapet around the entire building are preferable to mansard or other superficial roof forms.
- Roof-mounted equipment should be screened from view with enclosures that are consistent with the building architecture.
- Industrial buildings should be designed and shaped to reflect how they function as well as meeting district and site design objectives.
- Buildings should be sited and oriented to create and activate public spaces. Building massing should provide an appropriately scaled edge for pedestrians.
- Wherever possible utilities shall be undergrounded.

5.4.2 Architectural Design and Features

Architectural design features and themes should provide a pleasing composition of elements and support massing concepts.

Design Guidelines

- In employment districts where an architectural theme or style has not been established, the project proponent shall define an appropriate theme or style for the community or neighborhood.

- The architectural appropriateness for employment district buildings should be considered. This includes the choice of materials, architectural design features, proportions and other desirable attributes appropriate to the use.
- The vertical and horizontal bay spacing should have a pleasing rhythm and composition in building elevations. Articulation of structural elements is desirable. Design features such as canopies, trellis, and grillwork should be designed as part of the building's composition of design elements. Poorly proportioned "tacked-on" elements that do not fit the building's character are discouraged.
- Lobbies and entries should be featured in the design of building elevations. In employment district buildings, the scale and pedestrian use of entries shall provide a connection to the rest of the district.
- Walking edges of buildings should provide visual and tactile interest. Utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) practices to provide for pedestrian safety.
- Vertical elements in employment district buildings, such as elevators, stairways, and multi-story interior spaces should be studied as opportunities for design enhancement. Stairways shall be easily accessed and in prominent view to encourage use and promote health.
- For industrial buildings, louvers, vents, mechanical equipment, loading bays, roof venting, skylights, solar, wind turbines and other functional elements should not be treated as an afterthought. They should be hidden or deliberately treated as an architectural feature.
- Window patterns for employment district buildings should result in pleasing and sophisticated elevations.

5.4.3 Materials and Colors

Material and color selection for employment district buildings should reinforce overall massing and architectural concepts while portraying a sense of high quality and permanence.

Design Guidelines

- Architectural materials should convey an image of high quality and durability. Preferable facade materials include plaster, articulated pre-cast concrete panels, and masonry. Curtain wall systems with large continuous surfaces are discouraged. Concrete block, if used, should be split-faced. Precision blocks should be used sparingly only as color or texture accents. Combining materials should support the overall architectural concept.
- Use sustainable building materials that are high quality, durable, provide energy efficiency benefits, require low maintenance, and complement the design of the building. Use of quality recycled products is encouraged. Products shall be of a quality that is durable and not readily show signs of weathering and aging.

- Use of “Permanent” and/or cool roof products and materials with reflective surfaces are desirable because of their low maintenance, energy conservation and insulation values.
- Material selection for employment district buildings should be appropriate for building type, location and context. Materials that have an inherently residential or garish quality are discouraged.
- Discouraged roofing materials: composite shingles, painted or glazed tiles.
- Discouraged wall materials: metal siding, plywood, hardboard or vinyl materials.
- Similar quality materials and colors should be used on all sides of office and industrial buildings.
- Window glass should be lightly tinted or clear. Reflective and very deeply tinted glass is discouraged. Windows should be oriented or shaded to minimize heat transfer from summer sun. Provide natural lighting features where possible.
- Reflective materials, such as mirrored glass and unpainted steel siding or roofs, are discouraged.
- Use of solar and wind turbines is encouraged, should be properly placed to obtain premium results and designed to support the overall architectural context.
- The color and textures of materials should enhance the expression of architectural features. The pattern of wall materials should acknowledge the scale and proportions of building elevations.
- Employ Energy Star appliances and energy efficient lighting in construction, to the extent feasible, consistent with the adopted Green Building Policies and requirements. Material selection should promote energy efficient and environmentally sustainable design.
- Efforts shall be made to advance energy reductions and conservation efforts to achieve California’s zero-net energy 2030 goals for commercial buildings.

5.4.4 Lighting

Every employment district project should have an overall lighting plan for pedestrian pathways, architectural lighting, lobbies and entryways, parking lots, and service areas.

Design Guidelines

- Lighting should enhance the architectural and site design concepts while being energy efficient. Architectural lighting is encouraged.
- Spillover lighting that is visible from outside the site should be avoided by orienting fixtures downward or shielding light.
- Energy efficient lighting shall be at levels that provide public safety and meet or exceed Zoning Code standards.
- Low, pedestrian-scaled fixtures are encouraged to help identify and light pedestrian routes.

- Lighting in service areas should be the minimum required for operation, and should be designed to minimize the visibility to those areas, while providing for a safe environment. Motion controlled lighting is recommended.
- Lighting should be LED lights or other acceptable high energy efficiency light, with automatic controls to dim lights after certain hours or when no one is present. Lighting shall be adequate to provide for a safe environment.
- Provide energy efficient lighting in all common areas and buildings, including pedestrian and vehicular routes. The emphasis should be on personal safety, with lighting landscape or building surfaces secondary.

5.4.5 Screen Walls and Security Fences

Service and loading dock areas should not be placed in visually prominent locations. They should be screened from view. Screen walls are generally regarded as mitigation for poor site planning. However, when walls or fences are required, they should be designed as an extension of architectural and landscape design concepts.

Design Guidelines

- Screen walls should be architecturally treated as an extension of the building. They should be architectural concrete block, and a cement plaster finish or otherwise reflect the design and materials of the building. Vertical and horizontal reveals, accents and other details should be included.
- Screen walls along pedestrian routes or sidewalks should be set back to allow for landscaping consistent with Zoning Code setback standards.
- Chain link fencing is discouraged. When slats are necessary, they should be of vinyl materials.
- When razor wire or barbed wire is necessary, it should not be visible from public streets or adjacent properties. A Minor Use Permit is required.

5.4.6 Service Areas

Service facilities should be concealed from public view.

Design Guidelines

- Trash bins and compactors, utility meters, transformers, and other service elements should be enclosed or otherwise completely concealed from view. Service elements should be designed as an integral element of the employment district's project architecture. Services and equipment should be enclosed or buried, or otherwise concealed from view.
- Services and equipment should be enclosed or buried, or otherwise concealed from view.
- Consider utilizing commercial waste haulers that support food waste to fuel/energy projects and programs and who utilize clean fuels in their waste trucks.
- Provide trash and recycling education information near enclosures. Enclosures shall be in a safe and secure location and shall be kept clean and odor-free.

- Trash enclosure areas shall be designed to the County's latest storm water quality source control design standards, and shall provide trash and recycling education information.

- Equipment located on a project site shall be located so as to not interrupt project visual image or pedestrian path systems. Elements shall be landscaped or treated externally with color and material to not deter from the project image.
- Roof-mounted equipment should be concealed by enclosures that are consistent in design with the building roof.

5.5 Employment District Signage

Signage for employment districts should be designed to comprehensively enhance the identity of the district.

5.5.1 District Signage

Employment Districts should have overall signage and graphic identity concepts that guide district, site and building signage design that identify the uses and provide wayfinding, both day and night, and graphic identity objectives.

Design Guidelines

- Employment district projects should have one detached monument sign located at the principal entry. Larger corner sites may be allowed a second sign, to be located on the corner.
- Monument signs should be incorporated into the landscaping concept and be consistent with the architecture of the buildings that they serve.
- Wayfinding signage is encouraged. Signage that directs people to building address, parking and visitor areas should be designed to reflect the graphic identity of monument and building signage. All signage shall comply with ADA requirements.

5.5.2 Multi-Tenant Buildings

Multi-tenant employment district buildings should have graphic standards and schedule for monument, building, tenant and wayfinding signage.

Design Guidelines

- Multi-tenant buildings should have an overall signage design concept supported by tenant standards.
- Signage should be systematically located and styled to support the architectural design.
- Signage should be designed and located so as to not detract from the building design image.
- All building signage shall comply with ADA requirements.

5.5.3 Single-Tenant Buildings

Each employment district building should have an overall signage design concept that set forth standards for tenant signage.

Design Guidelines

- Building signs should appear on one elevation.
- Affixed signage should be placed only on vertical surfaces below the parapet or eaves. Roof signs are discouraged.
- Corporate parapet signage should include only the company name or logo and address. Naming services or products on building signage is discouraged.
- All building signage shall comply with ADA requirements.

5.5.4 Temporary Signage

Temporary signage permitted by the County employment district developments should be designed to a high graphic and construction quality.

5.6 Operational Elements

The operational elements design guidelines for employment districts mirror those of the commercial section. Please refer back to section 4.6 for this information and details.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 Village Centers / Mixed-Use Design Guidelines

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide design principles and guidelines for mixed-use village centers and projects that provide an integrated mix of uses including residential, office, retail, and civic activities. These centers and projects provide a social, healthy, sustainable and economic focus for Sacramento County's communities and commercial corridors.

Mixed use may be created as part of New Communities, or may evolve within larger infill sites and redeveloped older commercial sites. Pedestrian and transit-oriented designs are integral within the buildings and include horizontal or vertical mixed use. New mixed use projects are a major element in creating and fostering a sense of place within their segment and the related community.

There are three types of Mixed Use Centers, as outlined in the Zoning Code. These types include: 1) Neighborhood Mixed Use Centers (NMC), Community-Regional Mixed Use Centers (CMC), and Corridor Mixed Use Centers (CMZ).

6.1 Understanding Context: Village Center Districts

Village center projects provide a social and economic focus for surrounding communities. Each project should contribute to the streetscape, pedestrian and auto access objectives, architectural and signage design objectives for the site and surrounding area. They should establish and reinforce a sense of place for their project area. Project sponsors need to consider the following questions.

- Site connections: How can driveway, sidewalk and other perimeter areas provide connections to increase the connectivity and accessibility to the site from adjacent neighborhoods and development? How can the district attract and benefit from public transportation access?
- Building alignments and orientation: How can building alignments, orientation and transparency contribute to pedestrian attraction and usages? What should be the building and landscape setbacks along public streets that will support the community objectives to provide a pedestrian usable focus? How are existing and proposed building storefronts, communal open space, and entries oriented?

Streetscape and landscape design: What type trees exist along the adjoining public streets? Is there a landscape plan for the neighborhood or district? How can the landscape plan help to knit the project together and link it to the surrounding community? What landscaping needs replacement? How can the landscape plan be enhanced to attract pedestrians and promote walking?

- Roadway and parking lot design: How can parking lots and driveways be designed to increase pedestrian comfort, safety and connectivity? How can trees be used to reduce heat generated by parking lots?

- Architectural context: What are the strongest architectural features in the development center area and how can the project complement these themes or ideas?
- **Signage design:** How can an overall signage concept contribute to the graphic identity of the project and the district?

6.2 Village Center Design Principles and Guidelines

Village centers should provide a community design framework that blends a mix of uses together around well-defined, active communal spaces.

6.2.1 Creating a Sense of Place

New mixed-use residential and commercial projects should provide a social and economic focus for surrounding neighborhoods by creating a sense of place.

Design Guidelines

- Mixed-use village centers should locate and connect commercial and residential uses to result in a sense of community. Buildings should shape and activate streets and public spaces. Adjacent commercial and multi-family residential uses should be designed to create and share public spaces and streets.
- A unified design concept should be established and be reflected in the architectural style, landscaping, lighting fixtures, signage and other public amenities provided. The use of corporate or franchise architecture is discouraged in the Village Center and shall not be used as compatible theme or style.
- New mixed-use developments should use open space, streets and community facilities to provide social and design focal points. Villages should have a central place such as a town square, main street or village plaza. "Parklets" also effectively contribute to providing social spaces. All these public spaces should be linked by an easily recognized pedestrian system.
- New mixed-use village centers should provide common open space as a centrally located and defining feature.
- Communal activities, such as recreation and gathering spaces, should be centrally or purposefully located to contribute to the social interaction of mixed-use projects and surrounding neighborhoods and feel welcoming.
- The travel experience for pedestrians and drivers should contribute to the sense of community and "neighborhood belonging" in new village center projects and adjacent neighborhoods. The travel experience should convey that pedestrians and bicyclists are present and that autos are secondary.
- New buildings should be designed and oriented to spatially define and activate streets and common open space areas with building entries, storefronts and pedestrian routes. Commercial storefront uses should face public spaces and street edges. These designs promote the sense of safety for those present.
- Village Center parking should not dominate any aspect of the centers pedestrian and open space systems and community image.

- Village Centers should attract a wide range of commercial and retail businesses. Providing healthy food sources and choices; such as full-service grocery stores, ethnic food markets, farm stands or farmers' markets, and food establishments that provide fresh food supporting sustainable local food systems is desirable. Drive-thru fast food restaurants are not appropriate in Village Centers.
- Incorporate co-location of other facilities or services that supports the needs of residents (i.e. health care center, recreation center, farmer's market, drug or corner store, deli, etc.).

6.2.2 Connections to the Community

New mixed-use and commercial projects should be planned as an extension of adjacent new or existing neighborhoods.

Design Guidelines

- Gateways and edges of new village development should provide landscape, street improvements and furnishings as common amenities that are shared with adjacent neighborhoods.
- Village Centers should not be socially gated or distinguished as an enclave.
- New mixed-use projects should provide for connections of existing and future streets.
- Principal access roads into new mixed-use development areas should be of similar scale as streets in adjacent residential neighborhoods. In the event that the adjacent streets are oversized, incorporate designs to reduce street widths and speeds in order to provide a pedestrian dominated environment.
- The street patterns at the edges of a mixed-use village project should be extended into the site.
- The design for new villages, and for retrofit of existing shopping or commercial centers, should have emergency and service vehicle access that maintains the pedestrian friendliness of the street.
- Unnecessary tall concrete block sound walls should not separate commercial uses from residential uses. Where sounds walls exist or are necessary, provide breaks in the sound walls for access from adjacent neighborhoods and designed as "live-ends."
- When designing sound walls, pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjacent neighborhoods can include "live-end" features. Also used in cul-de-sacs, "live-ends" provide for pedestrian access at the ends to adjoining streets, open spaces, parking lots while permitting the access point to be used as a common outdoor space. "Live-ends" should be landscaped and can include benches, providing nice areas for sitting and socializing.

6.2.3 Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Streets

Village center projects should be organized around pedestrian-oriented streets rather than driveways and parking lots.

Design Guidelines

- Pedestrian connections between commercial and residential developments should be active, friendly, attractive and safe. Large blank walls should not face streets or walkways.
- Public streets must meet the Sacramento County Improvement Standards, including standards for traffic calming. Auto speeds should be between 10-25 mph.
- Mixed-use villages should have a street design that reflects both a functional and design hierarchy that supports a sense of community,
- Primary organizational streets in villages should incorporate planting strips, medians and other design features.
- Private drives should be designed as pedestrian-friendly streets that are a natural extension of the surrounding neighborhood.
- All village streets should include an interconnected system of separated sidewalks and crosswalks.
- Minimize the number and width of driveways and curb cuts.
- Quality paving treatment in areas such as parking lots, common areas, and pedestrian walkways can enhance the visual appearance of a project; promote walkability and activity that contributes to healthy residents, while also providing environmental benefits.
- Use accent paving such as textured paving and paving blocks in driveways. Use of permeable concrete, cool pavements and pavers is desirable.
- Paseos should be utilized to provide common outdoor spaces and allow for pedestrian access through the development, and connection to adjacent developments.

6.2.4 Block Sizes, Lot Patterns and Building Orientation

New village center projects should use a block, lot and building pattern that provides an overall organizational structure and results in a pedestrian-scaled environment.

Design Guidelines

- Traditional residential-scaled blocks should be used as a reference for the pattern and scale that organize mixed-use village areas. A grid or modified grid block pattern is preferred.
- Block patterns should result in a pedestrian-scaled mixed use neighborhood that is comfortable for pedestrians and increases access options for the village and surrounding areas.
- Design concepts for mixed-use villages should consider the scale and character of residential streets. The sizes of lots, scale of buildings, and width of streets should be planned to support a unifying design concept.

- Lots and parcels should be planned to promote friendly residential and commercial building orientation towards neighborhood streets. Lot and parcel patterns should orient storefronts, porches, and yards to enhance the social role of village streets. Residential entries and lobbies should face streets and common open spaces.
- Service areas for commercial uses should be located at the edge of the site and screened to reduce impacts on residents.
- Special siting and building design strategies that protect residential livability near service areas should be incorporated into project design. Avoid trash enclosures, loading docks or other noise-generating areas in close proximity to residential uses. If proximity is unavoidable, establish operational requirements noise or odors to residents.

6.2.5 Parking

Parking in village center projects should support commercial and residential requirements but with less visual prominence than auto-oriented strip commercial centers.

Design Guidelines

- Solutions that minimize the visual impact of residential and commercial driveways should be used, including sharing driveways, using alleys, or other innovative design approaches.
- Parking for commercial uses in villages should be located next to or behind buildings. These parking areas should be divided up into smaller, landscaped lots with defined pedestrian connections.
- Parking lots on corner sites should not be located near the intersection and occupy space for streetfront buildings or open space features.
- Residential parking for mixed-use village developments should be located in courts that are not visible from public streets; broken up with shade trees and landscaping; and use a variety of paving materials. For residential uses, a maximum of four garage doors (spaces) should be allowed without a five-foot break between groups of doors.
- Mixed-use village projects involving a planned development process should consider alternative parking solutions including tandem parking, remote parking, single car garages and other methods of reducing the visual presence of parking and cars from the street.
- Parking areas should incorporate designs that include: trees, lighting, landscaped storm water features, cool and pervious pavement and pavers. Plant trees and shrubs to soften the overall impact of parking areas and to provide shade and noise reduction, heat island cooling and improved air quality.
- Flexible use of parking areas provides opportunities for additional social interaction between businesses, customers, and residents by providing space for large special events and festivals.

- Lighting in parking areas should be LED lights or other acceptable high energy efficiency light, with automatic controls to dim lights after certain hours or when no one is present. Lighting shall be adequate to provide for a safe environment.
- Create textures, patterns, and colors in the design of paved parking areas or entries to create visual interest and to distinguish them from other paved areas. Do not design large monolithic areas of single color untextured paving.
- Use accent paving such as textured paving and paving blocks in driveways. Use of permeable concrete, cool pavements and pavers is desirable.
- Incorporate storm water quality measures into the parking areas to treat the storm runoff and enhance the parking areas by providing shade and reducing the amount of paving.
- Residential parking garages should be located behind the front building elevation.
- Multi-story garages serving mixed use villages should have an exterior design that is consistent with the village design theme and image. When garages are located along major pedestrian circulation routes, the ground floor frontage should be considered for commercial or public focused use.
- Provide for electric vehicle fast-charging stations, car and bike share locations, and other alternatives such as zip car.
- Bike racks shall be designed with the most current designs that provide secure locking features and are attractive. Many bike racks double as public art to add interest.

6.2.6 Streetscape and Landscaping

Streetscape and landscaping should promote pedestrian activity and provide for pedestrian safety, access, comfort and connections while contributing to overall placemaking and image objectives for village districts. Landscaping and trees can be used to complement buildings and to make a positive contribution to the aesthetics and function of the specific site and area. These aesthetics contribute to the mental and emotional well-being of customers, and support economic activity. Landscaping helps reduce storm water runoff, filters water and captures carbon and air particulates to improve air and water quality, provides shade during summer months and lowers temperatures reducing heat island impacts.

Design Guidelines

- Landscape concepts should enhance the linkages between residential and commercial uses.
- All streetscape improvements must meet the Sacramento County Improvement Standards. Larger trees will require wider planting strips.
- Mixed-use village developments should provide a comprehensive streetscape plan. The plan should satisfy street design; pedestrian safety, access and comfort; and visual amenity objectives for the village. Signage, lighting and landscaping should provide a thematic identity for mixed-use sites. The use of green and

sustainable development standards and practices in planning, design, construction and renovation of new and existing buildings should be used wherever possible.

- Streetscape should enhance the identity of the village center by employing a variety of trees and other plant material that contributes to each street's identity and character.
- Along streets with greater than 50,000 vehicles ADT, plant trees conducive to absorbing particulates including deodar cedar, valley oak, and redwoods. Utilize canopy trees for pedestrian areas to increase shading, cool the pavement and support walking.
- In residential areas, projects should include at least one street tree per lot or 30' of lot frontage, whichever is smaller. Trees should be placed in planting strips, sidewalk tree wells or front yards in a manner that supports the village comprehensive streetscape plan.
- Sidewalks adjacent to storefronts should be wide enough to accommodate outdoor sitting areas and landscape. This should include a combination of at least four feet for planting, eight feet for sitting, and six feet clear for walking.
- Street trees with large canopies are required for sidewalk areas. Trees should be spaced 25-30 feet on center and be coordinated with the bay spacing and storefront design of the project.
- Include street furniture and pedestrian-scale lighting in planning and development of mixed-use projects.
- Landscaped storm water quality design measures provide multiple public benefits and should be integrated into open space areas to provide storm water quality benefits and landscaping benefits.
- Incorporate appropriate landscaping that includes a variety of trees, shrubs, and other plantings. Utilize Sacramento County's River Friendly Landscape (RFL) Guidelines for plant material selection, placement and maintenance. The sustainable RFL guidelines are water and energy efficient, reduces maintenance, improves air quality and diverts green waste from the landfills.
- Provide on-going maintenance to identify and ensure the timely replacement of any dead or diseased vegetation.
- Design landscaping to be compatible with building design. Use trellises, arbors, cascading landscaping, vines and perimeter garden walls wherever suitable.
- Consider security issues in the landscape design of the site, including creation of barriers and screening.
- Do not allow landscaping to impede fire access to hydrant connections.
- Preserve and incorporate existing and native trees within the project site design to the greatest extent possible.
- Retain existing mature trees in landscape and building location plans to the greatest extent possible. Where existing trees must be removed, trees shall be

replaced on-site or in another location, acceptable to the Planning Director, to compensate for the loss in canopy and environmental benefits. Participation in the County's Tree Mitigation program to compensate for canopy loss is also acceptable.

- Provide all landscaped areas with irrigation systems as needed to sustain the landscape. Comply with the County's Water Conservation Ordinance. Utility services and equipment should be enclosed or buried, or otherwise concealed from view.
- Use of known high allergen plantings is discouraged.

Drainage/Flood Facilities

- Size, type, and location should be sized and located as to support the community master plan goals.
- To encourage sufficient usage, parks and open space should be strategically located in or near residential areas and commercial districts and be accessible via roadways, transit routes, and off-road pedestrian and bicycle trails and paseos (walkways).
- Neighborhood parks are encouraged to be centers of neighborhood activity and could be combined with schools, community recreation centers, libraries and other civic uses.
- Public safety is a high priority and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be applied.
- Flood protection and drainage facilities should be designed to provide multiple public benefits wherever possible. Facilities should include multi-purpose improvements consisting of recreation, the environment, storm water runoff, water reclamation, infiltration, groundwater recharge, flood control, etc. Attractive joint use basins, such as parks (in addition to Quimby land dedication requirements) or parkways with trails that also convey water to water quality basins or similar facilities and provide some water quality treatment are examples of desired multiple public benefit facilities.

6.2.7 Integrating Transit

Transit access is of particular importance for village center districts. Bus and transit stops should be safe, social and centrally located places that help energize and focus village districts.

Design Guidelines

- Transit facilities should be centrally located in the village district. They should be visible and socially integrated into the planning of new and redeveloped village centers.
- Pedestrian connections to transit facilities should be easy to understand, safe, comfortable and friendly.
- Provide convenient route and schedule information.

- Shelters and lighting should be provided. The design of shelters should anticipate the number of transit patrons and their physical comfort. Shade, and screening from wind and rain should be a design consideration for transit shelter design.
- Bike facilities should be designed into every village in a way that supports use of bicycles.

6.3 Architectural Principles and Guidelines

Each project in a village should contribute to placemaking objectives for the community.

6.3.1 Building Form and Massing

Massing and orientation for residential, commercial and mixed-use buildings in village districts should have a pleasing composition while reinforcing placemaking, economic and social objectives.

Design Guidelines

- Building form and design should have a deliberate street and street corner orientation in village districts.
- Upper levels should have expressive design features, such as balconies and bay windows, which give the building a rhythm and residential scale.
- Roof forms should reflect the project's architectural context
- For vertical mixed use, the uses should be an identifiable design element.
- Roof-mounted equipment shall be concealed by enclosures that are consistent in design with the building roof.
- The massing concepts of multi-story development should transition in scale between commercial streets and adjacent single-family neighborhoods.
- Building design concepts should include stepping down the scale and mass and increasing side or rear yard setbacks of taller buildings where they are adjacent to existing single-family areas.
- Orient units toward public streets and commons rather than neighboring backyards;
- Parking for commercial or mixed use buildings should be designed and located to mitigate noise and visual impact on adjoining residential neighborhoods.
- Residential and commercial development should be interfaced with streets or open spaces rather than sharing a property line.

6.3.2 Architectural Design

Architectural features should reinforce massing, placemaking concepts and express the mixed-use nature of village centers.

Design Guidelines

- Commercial and residential buildings in mixed-use villages should contribute to overall planning and placemaking objectives, while providing architectural variety. They shall conform in design to the relevant provisions of the Multi-

Family Guidelines (Chapter 3.0), the Commercial Design Guidelines (Chapter 4.0 and the Employment Center Design Guidelines (Chapter 5.0)

- Residential and commercial buildings should express their function and purpose. Commercial storefront buildings should be designed to create a successful shopping experience. Transparent storefronts, bay spacing and details should reflect the pedestrian scale and pace of storefront retailing.
- Storefronts should maximize openness and transparency.
- Residential design features should enhance the expression of individual units and houses. This includes balconies, bay window elements, roof design, entries and porches, and window patterns.

6.3.3 Materials and Colors

Selection of materials and finishes should support architectural and massing concepts for village centers.

Design Guidelines

- Commercial frontage portions of mixed-use projects should utilize materials and colors that support retailing and image objectives for shopping environments.
- Use sustainable building materials that are high quality, durable, provide energy efficiency benefits, require low maintenance, and complement the design of the building. Use of quality recycled products is encouraged.
- Use of "Permanent" and/or cool roof products and materials with reflective surfaces are desirable because of their low maintenance, energy conservation and insulation values.
- Employ Energy Star appliances and energy efficient lighting in construction, to the extent feasible, consistent with the adopted Green Building Policies and requirements.
- Portions of mixed-use projects with residential frontage should use colors and materials that enhance the project's architectural concepts and are compatible with adjacent residential streets.
- Architecture within each mixed-use project should use a palette of materials that convey an image of quality and durability. Certain materials have an inherently inexpensive, insubstantial or garish quality. These materials should not be used in new construction or renovation. Examples include:
  - ✓ Roofs: glazed or painted tiles, highly reflective metal or sheet materials, fake shingles made from metal or plastic materials
  - ✓ Walls: vinyl, metal, plywood, T-111 siding, masonite or other sheet materials
  - ✓ Wood or hardboard siding, if used, should be shiplap or board-and-batten.
  - ✓ Shiplap should be installed so there are no visible joints. Board-and-batten should be installed so there are no visible joints in the underlying "board" material.

- ✓ Painted surfaces should use colors that reinforce architectural concepts and are compatible with natural materials, such as brick or stone.

6.3.4 Lighting

Lighting concepts should be an integral part of the overall village design concepts anticipating the needs of pedestrian and automobile circulation, open spaces, storefront shopping, and residents.

Design Guidelines

- Lighting on commercial elevations of mixed-use village projects should support overall objectives for the street and storefront design.
- Elevations with residential front porches should have individual lights that illuminate entries and walkways.
- Lighting in service or common areas should be shielded from adjacent residential units.
- Lighting should provide for business interest even afterhours, when business is closed, to contribute to pedestrian presence and sense of safety.
- Provide energy efficient lighting in all common areas and buildings, including pedestrian and vehicular routes. The emphasis should be on personal safety, with lighting landscape or building surfaces secondary.

6.3.5 Walls and Fences

Screen walls are generally regarded as mitigation for poor site planning. However, when walls or fences are required, they should be designed as an extension of village architectural and landscape design concepts.

6.3.6 Service Areas

Service and loading dock areas in village centers should be placed in locations that are not visually prominent and be screened from view.

Design Guidelines

- Loading areas should be located to rear or inside side yards. Loading areas should not be visible from public streets or adjacent buildings.
- Trash bins and compactors, utility meters, transformers, and other service elements should be enclosed or otherwise completely concealed from view. Service elements should be designed as an integral element of the project's architecture.
- Provide sound-attenuation features around noise-generating areas such as trash enclosures and loading docks. Such features may include fully enclosed loading docks and higher dock walls.
- Locate noise generating services so that vehicular service drives have a minimized noise impact on any adjacent residential uses.

- Consider utilizing commercial waste haulers that support food waste to fuel/energy projects and programs and who utilize clean fuels in their waste trucks.
- Provide trash and recycling education information near enclosures. Provide enclosures in a safe and secure location kept clean and odor-free.
- Design trash enclosure areas to the County's latest storm water quality source control design standards, and provide trash and recycling education information.

6.4 Village District Signage

Village district signage should help define the district's identity and address a pedestrian's pace and scale.

6.4.1 District Image and Wayfinding Signage

Village centers should have overall signage and graphic identity concepts that guide district, site and building signage design day and night.

Design Guidelines

- Village image and design themes should be reflected in a districtwide signage plan. The plan should include a "family" of signage that supports the merchandising needs of tenants, wayfinding, and graphic identity objectives for the village and adjacent neighborhood.
- District identity and wayfinding signage should be designed and located as part of an overall district signage plan
- Placement and maintenance of village district signage must be coordinated with the County Department of Transportation and comply with ADA requirements.

6.4.2 Multi-Tenant Project Signage

Village center buildings should have graphic standards and schedule for building, tenant and wayfinding signage that reinforce pedestrian scale and pace of the district.

Design Guidelines

- Multi-tenant buildings in village districts should have an overall signage concept plan.
- A project's signage plan should be designed for known tenants and future unknown tenants.
- Large, garish signs unnecessary to the commercial use of a village center are discouraged.
- Affixed signs should be composed of individual characters; cabinet signs are discouraged.
- Affixed signs should be placed only on vertical surfaces below the eaves or parapet line. Rooftop signs are discouraged.

6.4.3 Storefront Signage

Storefront signage should reinforce the pedestrian orientation of village centers.

- Awning signs are allowed with graphics and signage limited to vertical surfaces. Awning signs should count against cumulative areas for affixed signs.

  Suspended blade signs are allowed under awnings or canopies.

- Maintain windows free of obstructions and signs to promote maximum visibility of merchandise, and visibility by Sheriff patrol consistent with CPTED strategies.

CHAPTER 7

7.0 Purpose

Sacramento County expects high quality design in new communities and other large projects. One of the objectives of the County's General Plan Land Use Element is to have urban design in the unincorporated County that is functional, aesthetically pleasing, and distinctive. This objective will be met through the County's Design Review program – a process in which projects from individual buildings to entire new communities are reviewed to ensure that their design is compatible with the project's surroundings and that the project will be a positive addition to the County, both functionally and aesthetically. The County has established design guidelines for residential and non-residential projects which are at the individual building or subdivision scale and design guidelines for new communities which are at the community-wide scale.

The purpose of the guidelines in this chapter is to assist master planning of new communities at the community-wide scale. The application of these guidelines will contribute to the development of high quality new communities where residents could reside, work, socialize and recreate. New communities encompass master plans for new growth areas, master plans for large infill projects, and major revisions to existing planned communities. Master plans for communities in new growth areas and communities in established urban areas should indicate the community's special character, image, livability and sustainability that contribute to the quality of life in Sacramento County.

Using the County-wide Design Guidelines, master plan documents for new communities shall illustrate consistency with design guidelines for each of the plan's land use components (commercial, industrial, residential, etc.). All new communities shall submit a project level set of Design Guidelines that demonstrate compliance with the County's Guidelines and provide a fine grain of detailed project design features. The Master Plan Design Guidelines shall be evaluated on:

- A comprehensive response to meeting and exceeding the new community goals, planning principles, and guideline objectives in Chapter 7.0 ; the development design guidelines contained in Chapters 2.0, 3.0, 4.0, 5.0 and 6.0; the relevant County Department of Transportation, Department of Parks and Recreation, and local park District Design Guidelines; and the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan Design Guidelines (adoption pending).
- Meeting its stated special and unique character, sense of place, and contribution to the health and well-being of present and future residents of Sacramento County.
- Providing a finer grain of specific details for the quality envisioned for the project, including building form, theming at the neighborhood and community level, a robust list of amenities, design and activation of the public realm, and the relationship between uses.

7.1 Planning Goals

The Design Guidelines for New Communities shall implement the goals and policies of the County's 2030 General Plan.

The specific goals for new communities shall encompass:

- Mix of Land Uses: Mix land uses to build complete communities that combine a variety of housing options, retail and commercial opportunities, employment centers, civic and community facilities, public spaces, and recreational amenities. Locate vibrant and compact mixed-use town centers and lifestyle centers near neighborhoods and in major transportation corridors, providing an environment where pedestrians feel safe and comfortable.
- Walkable Neighborhoods: Create neighborhoods with housing, jobs, public spaces, goods and services located within reasonable walking and biking distance of each other. Build compact, multi-use communities with safe and appealing streetscapes, paseos (walkways) and trails to encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- Range of Housing Options: Plan and build a range of housing choices within neighborhoods, varied by cost, design, size, location, and tenure to allow a diversity of economic levels, age groups and cultures to live together. Locate housing near places of work, retail, and educational and health services; and provide an integrated transportation system to offer residents an alternative to traditional, segregated suburban neighborhoods.
- Comprehensive Transportation System: Integrate land use and transportation planning to design and implement a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system, tied to both local and regional networks. Provide facilities that encourage walking, biking and public transit usage as preferred alternatives to automotive travel. Encourage compact mixed-use developments along transportation corridors clustered around transit stops.
- Natural Resource Preservation: Protect, enhance, and preserve natural resources as valued assets that provide critical ecosystems and food production.
- Focus on Livability: The community shall as a whole and in its parts enhance the quality of life, health and wellness for its residents and users, and provide a unique sense of place and contribution to the community.
- Focus on Sustainable Design: Sustainable design supports development in ways that are environmentally conscious, economically sound, and which provide community-wide benefits. Sustainable design increases community resilience, as well as enhances health, livability and protects natural resources. Design strategies should be used that support energy and water conservation, water use efficiency, integrative storm water treatment, urban greening and forestry, green infrastructure, and use of renewable resources. Active design strategies are also sustainable and should also be used to provide active transportation choices such as walking, bicycling, and accessing transit in coordination with safety and crime prevention through environmental design elements.

- Comprehensive Planning: All parts of the community should function as an integrated whole.
- Integrated with Other Communities: The land use plan for a new master plan community should be integrated with those of adjacent master plan communities. For instance, land uses along the community's borders should be compatible with land uses of the adjacent community and be interconnected with those land uses at a pedestrian scale.

7.2 Application of Guidelines

- These guidelines shall apply to all development encompassing new communities of over 50 acres that are not part of an existing plan.
- Master plans of new communities should include the following components and meet and exceed the objectives of the following guidelines. It is recognized that some projects, due to size limitations, cannot include all of the components.

7.3 Components

(Note: Figure 1 "Components of a New Community" illustrates the application of many of the following guidelines)

7.3.1 Village Center / Mixed Use Districts

Design Guidelines

- Because a village center serves as the center or "downtown" of the community, a center should be a mixed-use district with higher intensity development and be centrally located within the community. A village center shall also have strong pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections to the rest of the community. Vehicular connections shall be provided that are clearly identifiable and connected to the regional transportation network.
- Village centers should use open and landscaped spaces such as courtyards and plazas, streets and community facilities (civic buildings) to provide social and design focal points. The community's main civic buildings and spaces should be located in prominent locations and be established as community landmarks. Village centers should also have a central place such as a town square, main street or village plaza which could be areas of community events such as live theater, concerts, festivals and street fairs.
- To create a sense of place, streets should be aligned such that they provide views of prominent buildings and spaces and which will also aid in orientation and way-finding.
- There should be a variety of land uses in village centers and these land uses should be intermixed. As much as possible, each block should have two or more of the following land use categories: institutional, commercial, office, and high density housing.
- To enhance walkability and connectivity, the predominant street pattern for village centers should be a grid or modified grid pattern with maximum block

lengths of 300 to 500 feet. Blocks of greater than 500 feet should have mid-block crosswalks and pass-throughs that are accompanied by pedestrian-oriented lighting, signage to warn drivers, and traffic calming features along the block.

- When any mixed-use district is designated in a master plan, it shall have a master development plan. This master development plan shall have a residential component and at least one or more of the following uses: retail/services, office/institutional, public/civic.
- For horizontal mixed-use, contiguous discrete areas devoted to one use of no more than three to five acres are encouraged.
- Use Village Center/Mixed-Use Guidelines in Chapter 6.0 for the design of village center plans and elements.

7.3.2 Commercial Districts

Design Guidelines

- Commercial districts adjacent to residential neighborhood areas should be concentrated in centers (nodes) rather than spread thinly along frontages of major roads in typical "strip mall" fashion.
- Commercial districts should be located so that all residential neighborhoods and employment centers have convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to appropriate commercial activity so as to reduce auto usage and promote alternative modes of travel.
- Commercial districts should include a wide spectrum of uses to serve the new community's commercial activity needs and contribute to the economic vitality of the community.
- Commercial districts should vary in size from community commercial districts with large anchor stores and grocery stores that serve the entire community to neighborhood commercial districts that may have a small grocery or convenience store, pharmacy or health center, and serve the nearby neighborhood.
- For the convenience of residents, community commercial districts should be located no more than two miles apart from each other. Neighborhood commercial districts should be no more than one mile from another neighborhood commercial district or the nearest community commercial district.
- To create a sense of place while contributing to the vitality of the district, commercial districts should be designed around well-defined active communal spaces that include a central place, such as a large courtyard, main street or plaza. These communal spaces could be sites for special events.
- To maximize connectivity within the commercial districts and so support pedestrian activity, the overall vehicular and pedestrian circulation pattern in larger commercial districts should be a grid or modified grid pattern that include roadways and driveways. As much as possible, a major roadway such as a thoroughfare or arterial should not separate residential areas from commercial areas.

- Use Commercial Design Guidelines in Chapter 4.0 for the design of commercial district plans and elements.

7.3.3 Employment Districts

Design Guidelines

- Employment districts may include office, institutional, business, and industrial uses.
- To encourage public transit use, high employment areas such as business parks should be located within ¼ mile of public transit.
- High employment areas should be located near major residential and commercial areas and have auto, pedestrian and bicycle linkages to those areas.
- For the convenience of its employees, employment districts should have supporting user facilities such as dining and day care.
- Major employment districts shall have a clear master plan framework and design esthetic that also incorporates a landscape theme and elements contributing to the health and wellness of employees and patrons. Green open space should be part of the employment district's site design.
- Heavy industrial uses, such as manufacturing or processing, should be located near railroad lines and/or major thoroughfares. These uses should be buffered where appropriate, from residential, commercial and high employment areas to eliminate or reduce impacts to these areas.
- Use Employment District Guidelines in Chapter 5.0 for employment district design at the district, complex and individual building level.

7.3.4 Residential Neighborhoods

Design Guidelines

- To encourage income diversity within a master plan community, there should be a variety of housing types and densities, and could include single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, accessory dwelling units, townhomes, condominiums, and apartments in a variety of settings.
- For the convenience of its residents and to encourage pedestrian and bicycle activity, residential neighborhoods should include neighborhood parks and schools that are located together or separately in central locations, with safe pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Residential neighborhoods should plan for neighborhood-oriented institutional uses such as churches, day care centers, health centers, and private schools.
- If the overall project includes employment centers, then the project should provide connections and facilities to encourage pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use between employment centers and residential neighborhoods. Strive to locate residential neighborhoods within walking distance (1/2 mile) of employment centers.

- Residential neighborhoods should provide convenient, well-lighted and landscaped pedestrian and bicycle connections to major project or community amenities, such as community centers and regional trails systems.
- Medium and high density residential developments should be integrated into the community in a transit-supportive fashion such as locating apartments next to shopping centers that are served by transit lines.
- Residential densities should increase as development meets a community or neighborhood center in order to maximize the number of potential customers that are near the community or neighborhood center.
- In environmentally sensitive areas and areas abutting land intended to remain rural, provide appropriately lower densities and preserve open spaces by clustering units close to roads and existing developments.
- Residential neighborhoods should have a variety of housing types in a grid or modified grid street pattern to enhance walkability and connectivity. Block lengths should be 500 feet or less. Blocks of greater than 500 feet should have mid-block crosswalks and pass-throughs that are accompanied by pedestrian-oriented lighting, signage to warn drivers, and traffic calming features along the block.
- Residential units that are used to meet Housing Element Program A4 requirements are required to have at least a certain percentage of its residential units to be built at a density that is equal to or exceeds the current Housing Element's "default density". This "default density" is considered appropriate to accommodate the development of future housing for lower income households.
- Alleys can remove garages from the streetscape and can improve the streetscape of a residential neighborhood.
- Streets that are main routes to neighborhood focal points such as schools and parks shall be "complete streets" with safe access for all users, including pedestrians (sidewalks), cyclists (bike lanes), transit and vehicles. Complete street landscaping shall include trees to provide shading and enhance the users experience while contributing to improving air quality and the surrounding environment.
- Housing that accommodates elderly, special needs, a range of income levels and preferences should be available, and incorporate active design elements.
- Use Single-Family Design Guidelines in Chapter 2.0 and Multifamily Design Guidelines in Chapter 3.0 for the design of residential neighborhood and neighborhood elements.

7.3.5 Parks, Open Space and Drainage/Flood Facilities

Design Guidelines

- Size, type, and location of parks and open space shall be sized and located as to support the community master plan goals.

- To encourage sufficient usage, parks and open space should be strategically located in or near residential areas and commercial districts and be accessible via roadways, transit routes, and off-road pedestrian and bicycle trails and paseos (walkways).
- Parks and open space areas should be used as methods to connect communities and neighborhoods and provide alternative modes of travel via sidewalks and trails.
- Open space areas could be used to delineate community or neighborhood boundaries.
- Parks and open space should be integrated into neighborhoods to encourage outdoor recreation and preserve natural habitats.
- Neighborhood parks are encouraged to be centers of neighborhood activity and could be combined with schools, community recreation centers, libraries and other civic uses.
- Parks and open space areas should include linear parkways with off-street trails integrated with the transportation system. Public safety is a high priority and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be applied to the design of off-street trails.
- Flood protection and drainage facilities shall be designed to provide multiple public benefits wherever possible. Facilities shall include multi-purpose improvements consisting of recreation, the environment, storm water runoff, water reclamation, infiltration, groundwater recharge, flood control, etc. Attractive joint use basins, such as parks (in addition to Quimby land dedication requirements) or parkways with trails that also convey stormwater to water quality basins or similar facilities and provide some water quality treatment are examples of desired multiple public benefit facilities.
- Open space should be connected to provide habitat corridors through urban environments.

7.3.6 Transportation Systems

Design Guidelines

- Design the circulation system with multiple routes by: 1) creating direct, short and simple linkages between residential neighborhoods and activity centers, as well as between activity centers; 2) reducing the need to use arterial streets for local trips; and 3) combining circulation routes with other community elements (e.g. pedestrian and bicycle paths through parkways).
- Transportation needs of the community should be served by an integrated and balanced system for vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian use.
- Master plans should provide direct and efficient connections between internal transportation infrastructure (including roads, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, trails and transit routes) and existing, planned or proposed transportation infrastructure adjacent to the Master Plan boundaries.

- To encourage transit usage, high density residential and commercial mixed-use projects (vertical or horizontal) should be located within walking distance (¼ mile) of a transit center.
- Development should reflect the use of average residential and commercial densities that maximize transit system ridership.
- The streetscape design of the circulation system should clearly portray the street hierarchy with attention to traffic calming and pedestrian safety.

7.3.7 Sustainability

Design Guidelines

- The master plan as a whole and in its parts shall support sustainable design principles that reflect those delineated in the Sacramento County 2030 General Plan, and the Active Design guidelines highlighted throughout the Countywide Design Guidelines and further described in Appendix D of these guidelines. Sustainable Design elements shall be used that contribute to improving the human, economic and environmental health of the community.
- Use Chapters 2.0, 3.0, 4.0, 5.0, and 6.0 of the Sacramento County-wide Design Guidelines to indicate sustainable design strategies at the project level.