

Town of Gilbert Planning Department

Residential Subdivision Design and Development Guidelines

February 15, 2000



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PURPOSE AND GOALS

The Residential Design and Development Guidelines were prepared to promote the creation of livable neighborhoods through better design of Gilbert's residential areas. The Guidelines will be a basis for design and development decisions of the Town Council. The guidelines are intended to:

- Apply to all projects filed for pre-application conference on or after August 1, 1996.
- Respond to the residential area design policies stated in the Gilbert General Plan by providing standards to achieve the quality of design stated in the Plan. Establish the framework to implement the regulatory requirements of the Unified Land Development Code.
- Identify a range of standards (safety, privacy, image and character) that produce appealing and cohesive neighborhoods.
- Assist land planners and developers in producing creative designs for new residential communities. Create neighborhoods where high levels of energy efficiency is achieved by: proper lot orientation, use of reclaimed water to irrigate open spaces, and applying heat control measures to houses design.
- Be illustrative and user friendly for citizens, developers, professionals, public officials and staff to use and apply.

The intent is in no way to limit or restrain the designer's creativity, but rather provide background and support. Instead, the guidelines are intended to direct creativity to achieve innovative design style distinguishable and specific to Gilbert.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

To accomplish the purpose of the Guidelines, it is necessary to include in this document general development goals. These goals address a wide range of desirable characteristics for the residential communities being proposed in Gilbert.

- Create residential neighborhoods that are cohesive, safe and have a human scale that promotes opportunities to socialize with neighbors.
- Promote residential developments which reflect Gilbert's historic and agrarian past. Explore other vernacular themes to create neighborhoods that differ from "the look alike" neighborhoods in other communities.
- Encourage the creation of Planned Area Developments (PAD) with a mix of high quality land uses and diverse housing types. Planned Area Developments should promote development patterns that will enhance the physical, social and economic value of an area.

- Create neighborhoods with street patterns to enhance the neighborhood atmosphere. The developer/land planner should pay special attention to the design of streets. They are a major factor in the safety and environment of a neighborhood.
- Design open space to provide functional and recreational areas for the neighborhoods and the Town. Provide adequate open space in the form of mini-parks, neighborhood parks that are accessible to all residents.
- Combine proposed open space of new residential development with existing open space and recreation facilities. Design the open space to provide visual and functional links with parks, school sites (where possible), and other neighborhoods.
- Design residential products considering key ingredients to the appeal of the development. Achieve privacy by skillful integration of land planning and architecture, and at the same time strive to seek a sense of community. Envision the creation of communities not just dwelling units.

SUPPORTING REGULATORY DOCUMENTS

The Residential Design and Development Guidelines are intended to serve as an adjunct to the residential design characteristics described in the General Plan and other regulatory documents described below. In some cases the Guidelines may be more restrictive but in no case are they

intended to relax any applicable requirements of other regulatory documents. The following summary describes the sequence and scope of the supporting documents.

Users of these guidelines are encouraged to refer to the following publications for an overall understanding of the desired quality prior to submitting a formal application for a residential project:

A. GILBERT GENERAL PLAN: Sections Addressing

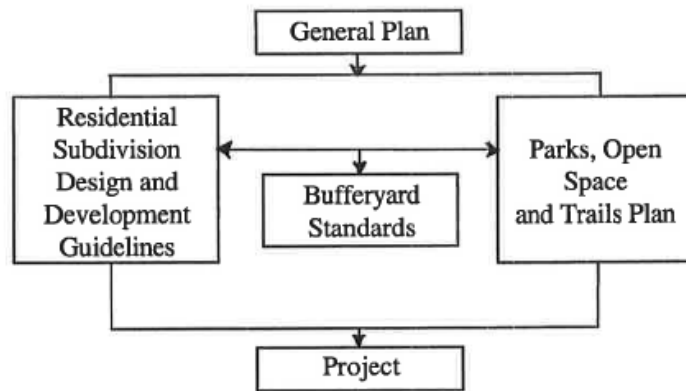
- Long range vision, overall intent and the criteria to evaluate quality and conformity of projects.
- Planning considerations to identify possible configuration for Village Centers for the optimum location of residential development with other land use mixes.
- Residential area design goals and policies.

B. UNIFIED LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE: Articles Addressing

- Residential district classifications to identify permissible uses, lot sizes, height and coverage requirements.
- Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay Zoning District to consider certain flexibilities of project design to otherwise applicable district requirement. The project

applicant and the Town will evaluate additional quality amenities in consideration of the flexibilities conferred.

- Subdivision regulations to understand the platting procedures and requirements.



How To Use These Guidelines

The Residential Design Guidelines are comprised of five parts: *Lot and Streets Design Guidelines*, *Open Space and Landscaping Design*, *Community Character and Monumentation*, *Easement and Setbacks* and *Building Design and Architectural Character*.

The five categories listed above describe the qualitative standards for each one of the design components of a residential development.

1. LOT AND STREET DESIGN GUIDELINES

These guidelines address the recommended mix of lots according to the size of the project and the recommended standards for street patterns and physical characteristics of the site.

Low Density Residential

- For Low Density Residential (0-3 du/ac, target=2.0 du/ac) developments, a PAD may be utilized with a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet.
- For subdivisions where the average minimum lot size meets or exceeds 35,000 square feet, and to promote the rural theme in the design of subdivisions, the following standards may be permitted if Engineering requirements are met:
 - On-site retention;
 - Ribbon curbs;
 - No sidewalks;
 - Reduced right-of-ways;
 - Flood irrigation
 - Modified street lighting: style, spacing, levels of illumination;
 - No interior lot-line walls.

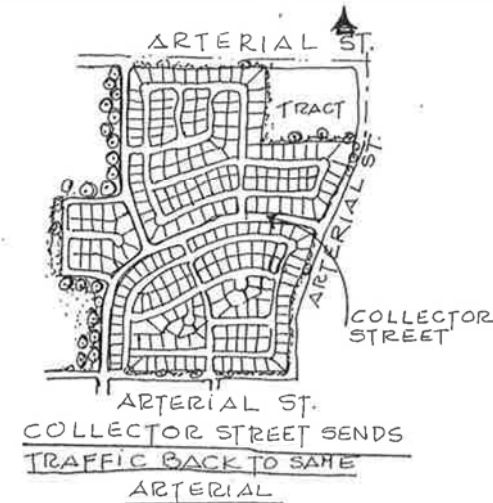
Medium Density Residential

Lots of less than 7,000 square feet shall not exceed 20% of lots in the subdivision and the average lot size in a PAD shall not be less than 7,500 square feet. No other single range of lot sizes shall exceed 40% of the total count of lots. Ranges of lots shall exhibit distinct lot sizes (distinct meaning a variation of 2,000 square feet from the minimum lot size between the RI-5 and RI-7 districts, and 1,000 square feet thereafter.

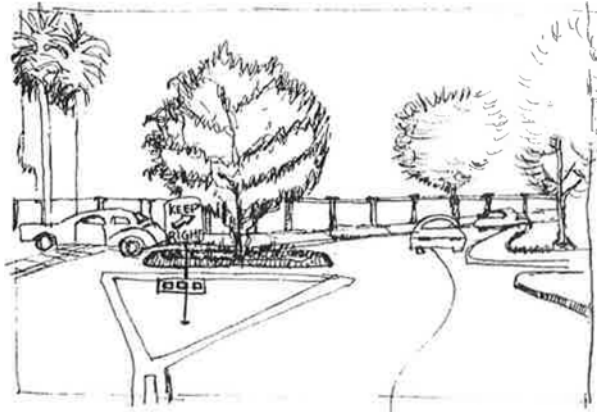
- Neighborhood street patterns should reflect the transportation policies contained in the General Plan by:
 - Designing neighborhood street patterns which preserve neighborhood integrity, promote lower speeds, and encourage pedestrian activity. Short loops and cul-de-sacs served by gentle curving collector streets, sized to carry local traffic, or
 - If the grid system is selected for the streets design, it should be accompanied by a street tree program that establishes a theme for the residential development proposed i.e.: Neotradition, rural, orchard etc.
- Provide T intersections in lieu of cross intersections.
- Provide an appropriate right-of-way width for each street which accommodates its character theme i.e.: reduced right-of-way for rural residential theme. The intent is to make the street as pedestrian friendly as possible without compromising its function.

- 80' R.O.W. for major collector streets
- 66' R.O.W. for residential collector streets
- 50' R.O.W. for local streets
- 32' R.O.W. for fire access only

Avoid linear through streets that link two or more arterial streets surrounding the subdivision(s). Consider a loop-type collector street design that sends traffic back to the same arterial the subdivision was entered from.



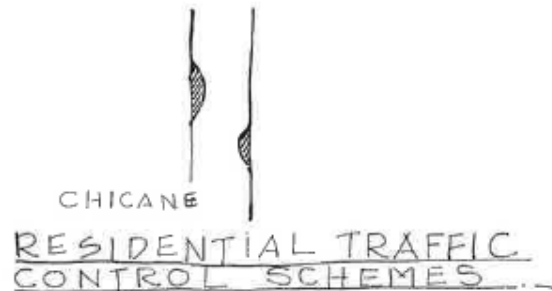
- Consider existing site conditions (i.e.: significant vegetation, surrounding context) when designing the street system.
- Provide bicycle-only lanes within collector street right-of-ways.



LANDSCAPED DIVERTER



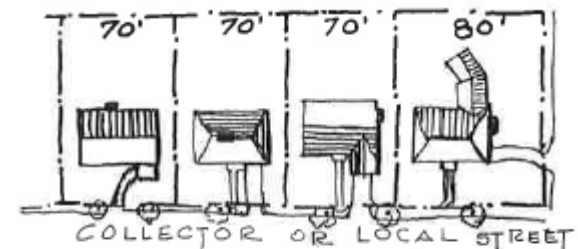
TRAFFIC CIRCLE



CHICANE

RESIDENTIAL TRAFFIC CONTROL SCHEMES

- Consider the use of various residential traffic control schemes that encourage lower vehicle speeds. Among the schemes to be considered are: chokers, traffic circles and chicanes. More information on residential traffic calming can be obtained from the Town Traffic Engineer or the Planning Department. Depending on the street design, the Town may require some method of traffic calming
- Provide cross-easements as required in order to tie into, extend existing, or create new off-site bicycle/pedestrian linkages and equestrian trails.
- Widen corner lots a minimum of ten (10) feet more than interior lots to allow for wider corner setbacks, diverse plan arrangements and unique driveway designs.



WIDEN CORNER LOTS BY 10'
MORE

F

- The design of residential development shall use creative land planning concepts which propose a specific design theme or a unique environmental character. The Town of Gilbert encourages developments which reflect the Town's historic agricultural roots.

2. OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING DESIGN

This category addresses design, location and types of amenities in the open space within the development, and its relationship with other neighborhoods green areas, as well as the Town's recreation spaces.

- The preliminary plat of 20 acres or more should be accompanied by an open space program. This program should address the types of amenities and how the proposed open space relates to the existing open space in the surrounding neighborhoods. It should also address the use of open space and its relationship with the Town's trails and parks.
- When locating and designing open space, carefully consider the surrounding natural and manmade elements by:
 - Designing view corridors, preserving and creating focal elements;
 - Locating open space to be visually and/or physically useable, accessible and safe;
 - Designing open space for a wide variety of activities for all ages such as: walking, sports, neighborhood events, etc.

Plan for adequate open space that provides opportunity for active and passive recreation. Adequate means:

1. Except for 20,000 square foot lots or greater, ten (10) percent of the gross project area or;
2. If the minimum 10% requested is not provided, all lot sizes must be increased by at least 15% over the area required by the zoning district.

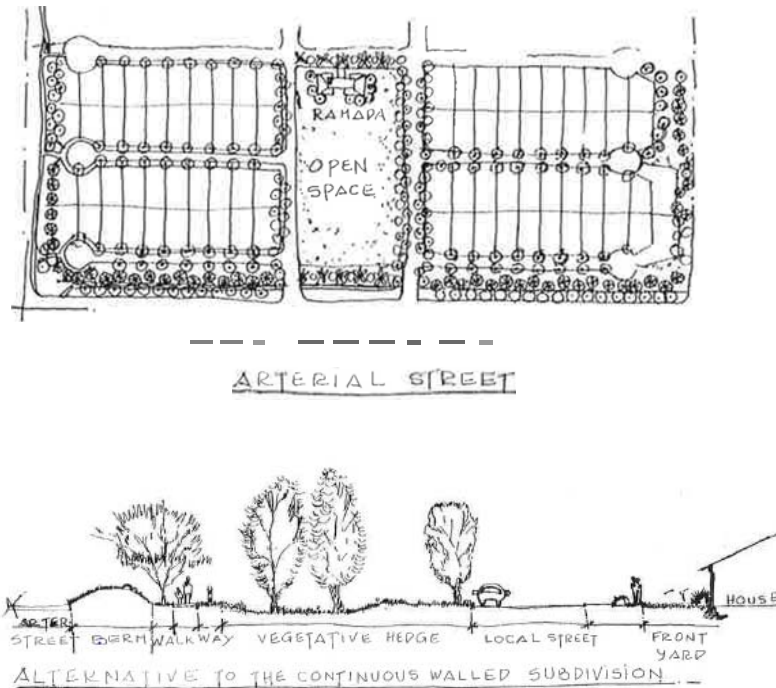


Open Space for active and passive recreation



Open Space designed for a variety of activities

- Open space provided by individual lots, 20,000 square feet or greater, may be counted toward the 10% requirement and as active open space.
- Placement of open space shall allow the opportunity for unusual siting of the houses adjacent to the open areas.
- Consider using landscape or earthscape elements such as: trees, earth berms, vegetative hedges etc. in lieu of perimeter fences to achieve the same purposes.



- The open space system in new residential developments shall encourage pedestrian circulation within and external to the project by means of landscaped greenbelts. These elements should act as connectors that link such development with the Town's major open space system. Greenbelts should connect neighborhoods in a safe and secure manner with elementary schools and commercial centers, where possible.



- Open space abutting the Town's major trail system (canals, railroads, electrical transmission easements etc.) shall include these elements on the landscape concept plan at the time of preliminary plat approval. Conceptual landscaping plan to be reviewed and approved by Design Review prior Council's approval of the preliminary plat.
- Design active open space in a manner which is easily accessible to local residents. Accessible means 1/6 of a mile or 880 feet by walking or biking.
- Neighborhood parks in all residential developments shall include a variety of amenities such as tot lots, bar-b-ques, ramadas, picnic tables, ball courts, interpretive experiences, connecting sidewalks, play fields, pedestrian scale lighting etc.
- Use grading/landscaping along arterial and collector street frontages to buffer residences from traffic-generated noise and light pollution.
- Develop perimeter landscaping or areas adjacent to a linear trail to produce an interesting pedestrian experience. Break-up any straight, paved sidewalks at points no longer than two hundred (200) feet with ornamental trees and shrub planting to create focal elements. Provide smooth transitions around focal plantings. Utilize the required landscape easement as additional space to separate the sidewalk from the property line (see picture at right).
- Consider buffering pedestrian walks from street curbs with a minimum three (3) foot wide landscape strip.
- e Shade sidewalks by planting the required street trees to the South or West of pedestrian walks and as close to these areas as practicable.
- Landscaping/Hardscape as defined herein, shall include the following combinations: trees, shrubs, organic and inorganic groundcovers, lighting, irrigation, boulders, berms, paving, and finish materials.



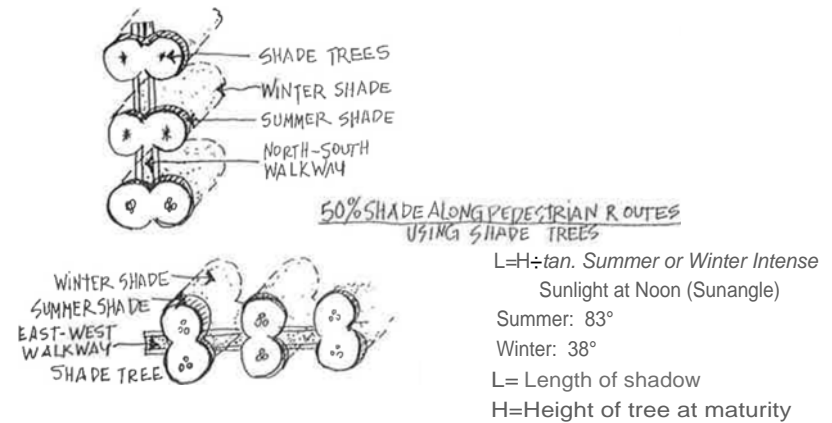
Use of landscape to separate sidewalk from property line

3. COMMUNITY CHARACTER/ MONUMENTATION

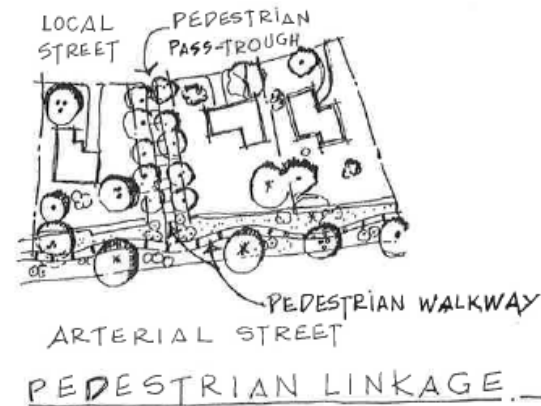
These guidelines address the opportunities the developer has to provide a special character to the neighborhood or district proposed through design of entry monuments, special landscaping, distinctive pavement or enhanced fence wall details.

- Consider alternatives to the "continuous walled community" look, replacing it with residential buildings which face the street or create other types of attractive streetscapes. Create landscape and/or other buffer zones with interesting effects appropriate to the character of the project. This applies to arterial, collector roads, and neighborhood streets. Landscape the area between the public right-of-ways and adjacent property line with "theme landscaping" which reflects the intended character of the project.
- Design pedestrian trails, along streets and in greenbelts, to create an interesting experience which reinforces the projects theme or character. Along streets, maximize the experience for the pedestrian:

- by encouraging 50% shade along walkways;
- upgrading the walkway surface with decorative pavement;
- using distinctive landscaping that integrates changes in grade, boulders, and accent flowering shrubs and ground covers



- If walls are used, vary heights from six (6) to eight (8) feet and stagger a minimum five (5) feet horizontally at points no longer than two-hundred and fifty (250) foot sections (Building Safety approval required.)
- In walled neighborhoods, establish pass-throughs designed in a safe and secure manner where permissible, at 600 feet intervals to destinations such as neighborhood parks, trails, elementary schools and neighborhood shopping.



- Perimeter walls adjacent to arterial, collector streets and open space tracts shall be constructed of textured (split-face, single-score, fluted, etc.) integrally-colored concrete block. Wrought iron or painted steel railing view walls should be placed to the rear or sides of lots abutting open areas or focal points in the subdivision. Any other decorative material accent -- or plain block with a finished treatment -- stone or brick veneer, should be used on portions of walls exposed to open areas. Space any pilasters at a minimum of one hundred (100) feet apart and finish with a different material than wall infill.
- Consider use of open fencing such as steel pipe tubular fencing as an alternative to masonry walls.
- In the case of projects that exhibit a rural/agrarian theme, picket fences and rural landscape plantings such as citrus trees, pecans or other native species would be appropriate.
- Provide mature densely-planted landscaping, 36" box in size or greater, at main entrance(s) and other focal points within the subdivision.



Openfencing for agrarian rural theme.



Native species planted to define rural theme.

- Landscaping at main entrances should make a distinctive statement about the community and provide the resident with a sense of arrival.
- Integrate entry monument signs into the design of the perimeter wall through the use of materials, colors, texture and form. When walls are not used, highlight the character of the development by displaying artifacts appropriate to the development theme to act as focal points.



Landscaping at entrances should provide residents with a sense of arrival.



Monument sign integration with the perimeter wall.

- Monumentation design, landscape bufferzone, perimeter wall design and open space program for any residential subdivision shall be reviewed by the Design Review Board prior to Council's approval of the preliminary plat.

4. EASEMENTS AND SETBACKS

These guidelines address the appropriate dimensions required on the site plan to implement the desired separation between houses and the right-of-way to avoid visual encroachment, provide useable space between dwellings, and maximize separation for privacy.

- Provide a minimum twenty (20) foot wide landscaped tract along all arterial streets, between the right-of-way and the lots' property line in all residential neighborhoods.
- Provide a minimum ten (10) foot wide landscaped tract along collector streets, and on the side of lots siding onto local streets between the public right-of-way and the lot's property line in all residential neighborhoods.
- Provide a minimum fifteen (15) foot wide, maintained landscaped tract on both sides of the main entrance drive(s) to the subdivision between the right-of-way and the property line.
- Provide a minimum twenty (20) foot wide landscape tract along the subdivision boundary adjacent to the SRP, SPRR right-of-way and/or RWCD canal. Said tracts shall be planted with fifteen (15) gallon trees at thirty (30) feet on center and will include a durable pedestrian path (such as, concrete or asphalt) at least 8' wide.
- For Medium subdivisions, front yard setbacks shall be staggered, such that no more than two (2) adjacent lots the same setback. Front yard setbacks should vary within a range between 20 feet and 25 feet, with a minimum three (3) foot variation between any adjacent lot. No front yard setback shall be less than 20 feet from the property line.

A minimum of 10foot wide landscaped area along collectors roads.



A minimum of 20foot wide landscaped easement along all arterial streets.



- For R1-5 through R1-8 zoning districts, provide a minimum of thirty-five (35') feet for two-story and twenty-five (25') feet for single story as rear yard setbacks for all lots backing onto an arterial street or adjacent to commercial/industrial property. All residential districts shall provide a minimum of fifteen (15) foot sideyard setback, exclusive of landscape easements or tracts, where lots side onto an arterial street, commercial or industrial site.
- Provide non-vehicular access (1') and fence easements as required by the layout of the subdivision.
- All side yards are subject to the clear space requirements of Ordinance 803.

5. BUILDING DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

This section addresses the most common issues involved in defining the character of the dwellings proposed in the subdivisions to build distinctive communities.

- All standard plans proposed for R1-15 zoning districts and smaller shall require review by the Design Review Board. The applicant shall submit: four (4) side elevation drawings for each standard plan, a color board addressing color, materials and finish schemes proposed for the roof, walls, and any other architectural detail. Design Review Board review and approval is required prior to the submittal construction documents to the Community Development Department.

...that recall the historic or rural context of Gilbert

- Elevations to be submitted for review by the Design Review Board shall include articulation of the front elevation as well as the rear and sides on the two story houses.
- Single story houses shall achieve articulation by means of details, architectural forms, fenestration treatment, etc. All elevations facing public view on the single story houses shall be architecturally treated.
- Encourage the use of architectural forms, proportions, materials, colors and other features that recall the historic or rural context of Gilbert. For example, wood porches, trellises brick or stone veneer, picket fences, awnings on patios, double-hung windows, weather vanes, cupolas, etc.



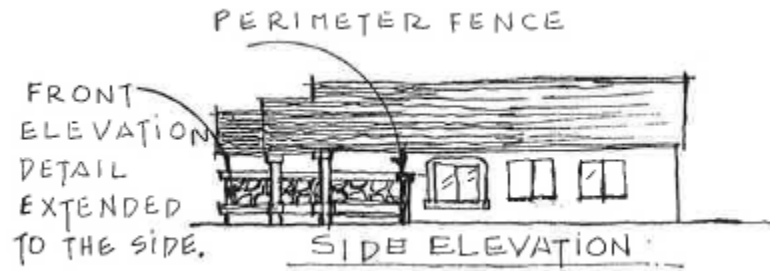
Use of architectural forms such as porches, double hung windows and awnings....





Contemporary house with a rural appearance.

- Emphasize front entryways, not garage doors, by:
 - Varying garage door designs on each elevation.
 - Encouraging the use of side-entrance garages with 25% of front facing wall area architecturally treated.
- Treat any house elevations that front, side or back up to a public street or open space with interesting and diverse architectural accents and style elements.
- Do not stop any architectural details on the front elevation. Extend it to the sides to meet the perimeter wall or any architectural projection.



- Angling the garages and placing it further back on the lot.
- Recessing garage doors 12 to 18 inches, to create a shadow so they are less obvious.
- Limiting the area of the front elevation used as a garage to 40% of the front elevation plane. Recessing 3rd car garage plane and providing architectural details around garage openings.
- Considering the use of alleys when designing subdivisions to access garages from the rear.
- Enhancing the driveways by using colored or stamped surfaces or textured paving to create a sense of arrival.



*Mouldings around garage openings to create shadows and upgrade appearance.
Recessed third car garage door to make it less obvious.*



Using an alternative to driveway enhancement, consider the use of pavement strips on vegetative ground covers to emphasize the front yard landscape

- Considering attached/detached garages to the rear of the housing units.



Detached garage to the rear of the housing unit.

- No similar front or rear building elevation massing when visible from public view, or architectural details and rooflines are allowed on adjacent lots or across from one another. Elevations that merely change minor architectural features shall be considered similar.
- Consider providing all front doors with one or more of the following usable entry transition elements attached or otherwise integrated: covered porches; arbors; pergola; low-walled, shaded front patio areas and courtyards.
- All entryways shall be well lit and shall be visible from the street.



Shaded front patio area.



House with integrated covered porch.

Treatment of rear elevation windows on a two-story house backing onto a public street.



- Create interest in building elevations by: stepping building massing horizontally and vertically, recessing windows, providing popouts around all two-story windows on houses adjacent to a street or open space; varying roof profiles, materials, distinctive colors between adjacent houses and not merely tones of the same color.
- Provide architectural treatment (i.e.: popouts around all front windows and on the rear and side windows of two-story houses as specified above, simulated vents under the eaves etc.) and variation in roof line on houses which back up onto arterial streets and open spaces visible from public roads.
- Roof-mounted mechanical equipment is prohibited. Screen ground-mounted mechanical equipment from public view by a minimum four (4) foot high screen wall.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Arterial Street: A busy main street with high volumes of traffic and high speeds, usually with limited or not street side parking.

Bicycle Path: defined routes designed and designated for bicycle use only.

Buffer: a form of visual, audible, or land use separation through the use of structures (such as walls) or landscape materials.

Buffer Effect: the absorption of or deadening effect on audible or visual intrusions. Or, an effect that causes pedestrians to shy away from the curb, building walls, window shoppers, and street furniture, which must be accounted for in the design width of a walkway.

Chicane: a traffic calming technique where physical obstacles or barriers are placed in the street which require drivers to slow down and drive around them.

Community: a town, city, or tribe where a group of people live together under the same laws.

Cupola: a dome roof or ceiling.

Design Guideline: a standard or principle by which to make a judgment in elements of form, color, texture, material, rhythm or pattern.

Density: the quantity or number of dwelling units or separate structures per unit (usually an acre).

Destination: the location to where a person or a transportation mean is going.

District: the medium-to-large sections of a community, conceived of as having a two-dimensional extent, which the observer mentally enters “inside”, and which are recognizable as having some common, identifying character.

Human Scale: a scale of surroundings that is proportional to the human comfort level.

Linkage: a walkway connection, usually between two activity generators.

Neighborhood: a social unit defined by its inhabitants. It may be a part of a community or district.

One Footcandle Lighting Level: assumed sufficient for public spaces, it is equal to the amount of direct light thrown by one international candle on a surface one foot away.

Pedestrian: a person walking, jogging, or otherwise journeying on foot (including persons in wheelchairs or other assistive devices).

Pedestrian Area: a location used by persons afoot, inclusive of the walkway, the roadway, and the adjacent surroundings or users.

Policy: any governing principle, plan, or course of action.

Traffic Calming: methods used to slow traffic which in turn reduce speed, accidents, noise, pollution, and congestion.

View Corridor: the surrounding area which can be viewed from a single viewpoint, usually in a linear form with a view terminus.

Walkway: the pedestrian path itself, defined or undefined by materials or barriers. The walkway is a channel in the pedestrian area along which pedestrians move.

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