

7 | GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN

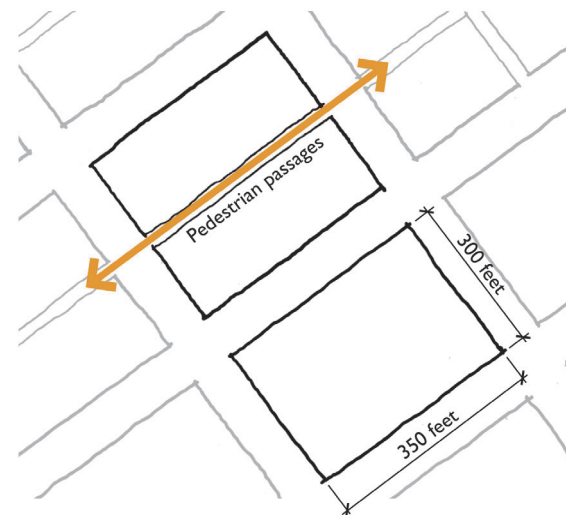
To make the Vision Plan Area into a popular retail destination and a great place to live, developers will need to provide high-quality, well-designed buildings that respond appropriately to their sites. All development should contribute to a sense of place by shaping a memorable public realm. It is important that buildings work in concert with each other to form good streetscapes.

This chapter provides design guidelines that offer inspiration and potential solutions for important aspects of the Plan Area's site planning and architecture. The guidelines are not intended to be a checklist or to impose a particular style on future development. All projects should use creative design solutions that build on Coachella's character and natural setting, and they should follow fundamental principles of good architecture and design.



General Principles

This section describes principles of architecture and site planning that all types of development should follow. Specific principles for commercial and residential development appear later in this chapter.



Blocks in Coachella's Downtown Colonia have a pedestrian-friendly scale.

1. Placemaking

Buildings, public space and public amenities should strengthen Coachella's identity. Successful placemaking builds upon a community's natural environment, its culture and its history. The architecture of buildings should reflect this. Vistas should be preserved and incorporated into the design of streets. Street signs, street names, street lighting and other public features can be designed with a local theme. Public art, historical markers and descriptive plaques should decorate public spaces, parks and trails. Local themes might include the desert, the mountains, local Native Californians, grapefruit and date farming, or the history and background of farm workers.

2. Site Planning

All new buildings should be placed on their sites in a way that maximizes their contribution to the streetscape. Also, buildings should be organized into neighborhoods that are easily traversed and that provide public spaces in which people can gather.

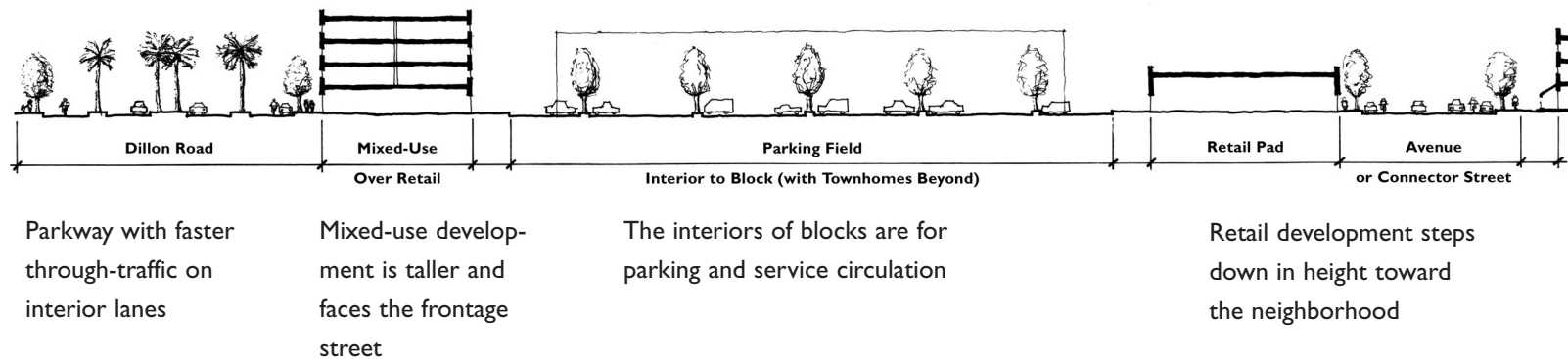
Block Sizes

Small block sizes make a neighborhood more walkable by enabling pedestrians to move quickly from street to street. In Coachella’s Downtown Colonia, for example, each block measures about 350 by 300 feet, for a total block perimeter of 1,300 feet; many of these blocks also include midblock passages that provide shortcuts for pedestrians.

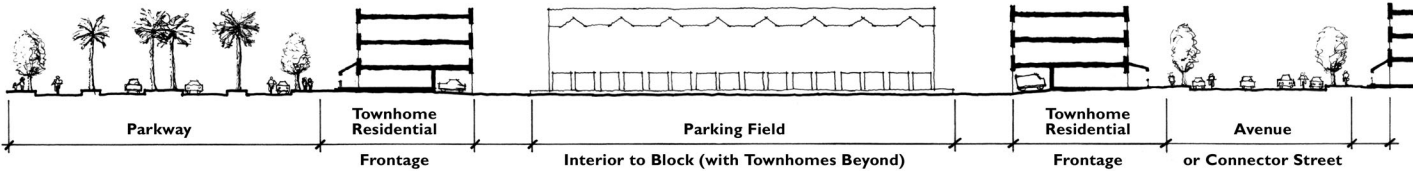
In the Vision Plan Area, the maximum perimeter of each block should vary based on the Community District:

◆ **Entertainment Commercial.** To accommodate retail uses with large building footprints, the maximum block perimeter should be 2,500 feet.

- ◆ **Research & Development/Light Manufacturing.** To accommodate manufacturing and warehouse uses that require buildings with large, open floorplates, the maximum block perimeter should be 2,000 feet.
- ◆ **Parkway Commercial.** To allow for mid-sized retail uses, such as a major supermarket, the maximum block perimeter should be 1,800 feet.
- ◆ **All Other Community Districts.** In all other Community Districts, the maximum block perimeter should be 1,500 feet. Smaller blocks with perimeters of 800 to 1,000 feet are preferred.



Cross-section through typical CE Block



Parkway with faster through-traffic on interior lanes

Residential development facing onto the frontage street

Alley system on the interior of the block can serve higher density residential development that fronts onto neighborhood side streets

At the back of the block, varying types of residential development frame neighborhood streets

Cross-section through typical Parkway Commercial Block



Residential development faces onto a neighborhood park or school

Interior of a block includes varying densities of residential development

Continuing network of residential streets that provide the fabric for the neighborhood

Cross-section through typical Residential Block

Civic Spaces

All neighborhoods, regardless of the land uses they include, should provide parks, plazas or other civic spaces in which people can relax and spend time with one another. These spaces should fit together logically into an open space network and should be connected by pedestrian and bicycle trails where practical.



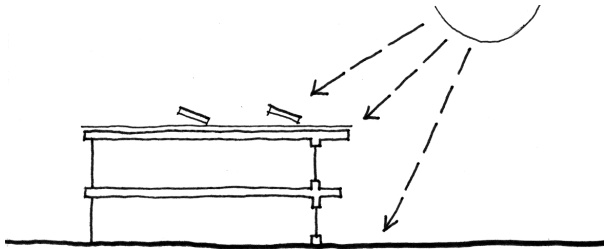


An enhanced entryway gives prominence to a building's entrance.

Building Orientation

A building's main entrance should face the street, not a parking lot or side yard. The building should include architectural features that emphasize and give prominence to the street-facing entrance.

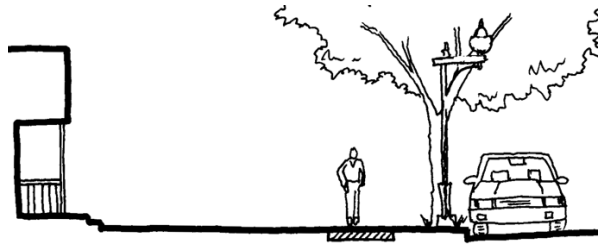
Most windows should face the south side of a building so the building's interior receives daylight. They should also be provided with awnings, roof overhangs or similar features that minimize the amount of direct sunlight inside the building.



Landscaping

Planters, planting beds and planting strips should be provided in building setbacks and near entryways. All plants should be irrigated with reclaimed water when possible.

Although landscaping can include some plants, especially shade trees, that are not native to the desert all plants should be chosen for compatibility with Coachella's desert climate. Shade trees should be located where they can protect pedestrians from the sun and cast shade on a building's walls and windows.



A large street tree shades the sidewalk.

Landscaping with drought-resistant plants.

3. Building Form

The overall shape and detailing of each building should create a sense of variety and include features that help the building relate to the human scale.

Massing and Articulation

To break up the mass of individual buildings, each building should be designed with varying wall planes or heights, so that the building is a collection of varied forms rather than a large, featureless box. Each building should also include features that project out, such as window bays and pilasters, and features that step back, such as entryways. These features should be in keeping with the building's overall architecture and design.



A building's mass is divided into varying forms.

Four-Sided Architecture

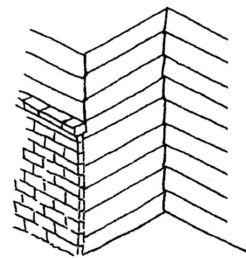
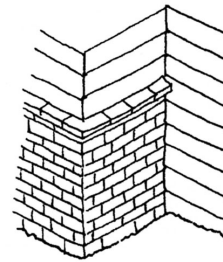
Buildings should include appropriate, consistent details and design treatments on all sides, not just the sides that face a street.

Shade-Providing Features

Roof overhangs, sun screens or other projecting features that provide shade should be used where appropriate to provide visual interest and help keep the building cool inside.



Sun screens reduce the amount of direct sunlight that enters a building.

**Discouraged****Encouraged**

4. Building Façades

The quality of a façade's design and materials should reflect the façade's role as the public face of the building.

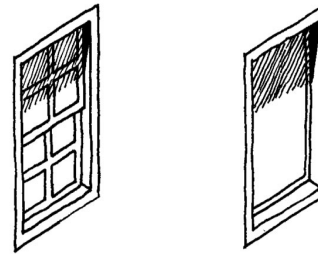
Appropriate Materials

Building façades should use durable materials that are chosen to complement one another. All materials should be used in appropriate ways, especially when they are meant to simulate another building material. For example, a facing material that simulates masonry should wrap around the building's corners, just as real masonry would.

The choice of materials should also reflect Coachella's climate. Light-colored finishes are especially appropriate, since they help buildings reflect heat. Walls should use extra insulation to keep heat out of buildings.

Three-Dimensional Detailing

Façades should include architectural details, such as cornices and deep window reveals, that add an extra dimension to the building's flat surface. These details create visual interest and divide the building into smaller components that relate to the human scale.



Deep window reveals create shadows, heightening the visual interest of the façade.



Projecting wall elements

Recessed bands

Canopy over building entry



Retail, Office and Mixed-Use Development

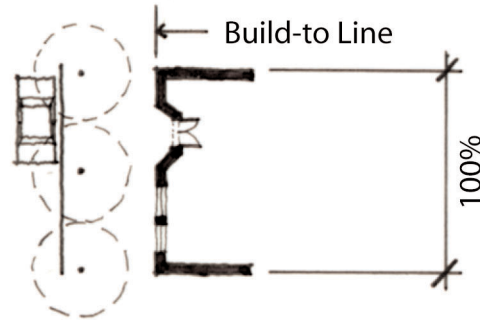
Retail and office development will be the most visible component of the Vision Plan Area. People will come from around the Coachella Valley to shop at the city's new destination retail centers and work in its research and development facilities. New commercial and mixed-use development should use high-quality design that gives visitors a positive impression of Coachella and makes it more enjoyable to work, shop and live in the Plan Area.

I. Site Planning

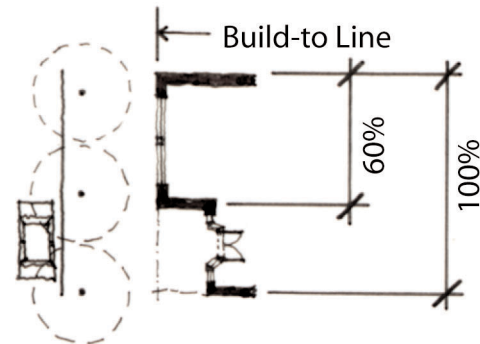
Commercial buildings should be located and designed so they are oriented towards the street. This practice creates a more interesting and active pedestrian realm and, for retail stores, attracts business from passersby.

Build-To Line

Placing buildings at the back of the sidewalk and at the front property line, helps to define the sidewalk’s edge, which is especially important on wider streets. Along parkways, which are the widest streets in the Plan Area, each commercial building should be built to the front property line along its entire frontage. Along avenues, which are also relatively wide, at least 60 percent of each building’s frontage should be built to the front property line. Commercial buildings on other types of streets should meet the property line where possible.



100% Build-to Line



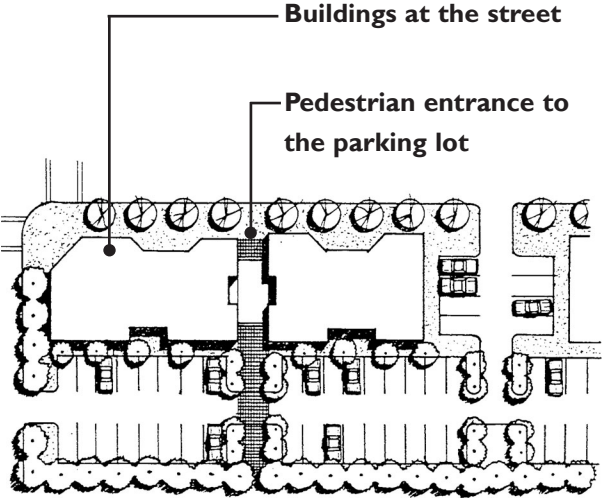
60% Build-to Line



Parking Location

Whenever possible, parking lots should be placed behind buildings instead of fronting onto streets. Placing buildings at the backs of sidewalks creates a more lively street, and it encourages people to walk from one shop to another.

If a parking lot fronts onto the street, it should be located next to a building that is built to the front property line. Street-facing parking lots should use vegetation and low walls or fences to separate them from the street and create a clear demarcation of the pedestrian realm. The number of driveways serving parking lots should be kept to a minimum. The width of these driveways should also be kept to the minimum necessary.



2. Building Form

A commercial building's façade should reflect the number of businesses that occupy the building and it should provide variety so that the building has a visually interesting appearance and is scaled to the pedestrian.

Differentiation of Retail Tenants

When multiple tenants share a retail building, the building's design should differentiate tenants' spaces from one another. Elements such as awnings or pilasters should be used to distinguish each tenant's space.



Colored awnings help to distinguish stores from one another.



Varied but compatible roof lines.



A distinctive cornice enhances the roof line.

Roof Lines

Roofs should include strong features, such as cornices or colored trim, that provide a sense of termination for the roof. Buildings should include a variety of distinctive roof line profiles where appropriate, and roof lines should be consistent with those of neighboring buildings.

3. Building Façades

The façade of a commercial building should form and define the edge of the public realm, and it should include windows that let passersby see what goes on inside.

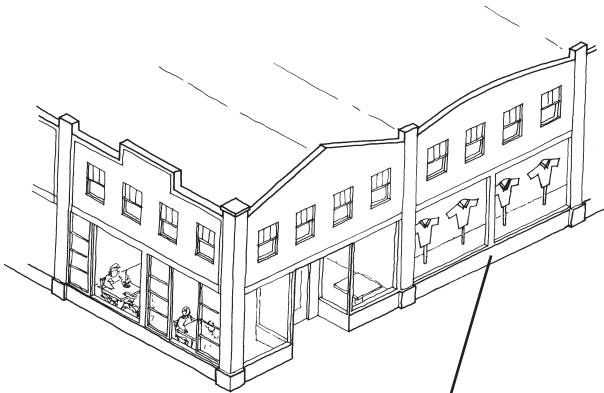
Projecting Features

Buildings should include features that project above the public right-of-way, such as awnings or arcades, although such features should be in keeping with the building's architecture. These features promote pedestrian comfort by creating shade and they engage the building with the pedestrian realm.





Upper-floor windows should be smaller than storefront windows on the ground floor.



Building base of durable materials

Windows

Windows should be used to help divide a building’s mass into smaller components. The largest windows should be used on the ground floor, and their pattern should relate to individual tenant spaces in buildings with more than one tenant. Windows on upper stories should cover a smaller portion of the façade than windows on the ground floor.

Ground-floor retail spaces should provide storefront windows, display windows and glass doors on at least 50 percent of the façade’s length. False windows that do not provide a view into the store should not be used.

Doors

Doors should open onto sidewalks for easy access. They should be located frequently enough to make entry convenient for pedestrians.

4. Signs

A commercial building's signs should serve as attractive additions to the building's overall design.

Design

Signs should use a design that relates harmoniously to the architecture of the building. Their materials and colors should be in keeping with the building. Signs should be of a scale that is conducive to the building's mass and façade.

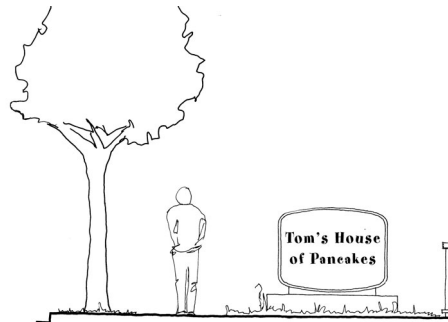
Placement

Signs attached to a building should be located within an area of the façade that enhances and complements the architectural design. They should not obscure architectural details such as recesses, ornaments or structural bays.

Other signs should be kept to a reasonable size and placed where they can be read by pedestrians and bicyclists, and in some cases, passing vehicles. They should not be oriented primarily towards drivers.



Pedestrian-scaled signs integrate well with building façades.





Single-family home near the sidewalk with parking behind the house.

Residential Development

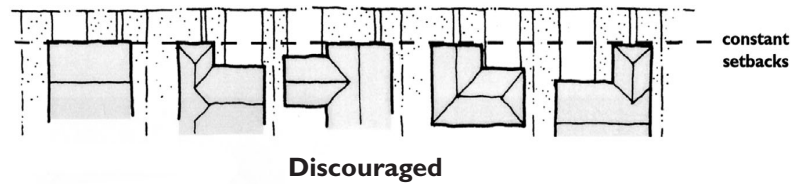
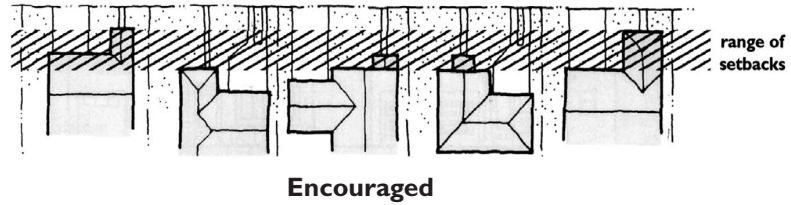
New single-family and multi-family residential development in the Vision Plan Area should create strong, identifiable neighborhoods that people are proud to call home. Each neighborhood should include opportunities for neighborhood-serving retail near people's homes where they can make routine purchases or spend time with others. The design of individual homes should emphasize the human scale, rather than the needs and scale of the automobile.

I. Site Planning

Residential buildings should be located near the sidewalk, so that homes are connected to the public realm instead of isolated from it. They should also be designed so that parking does not dominate the street-facing façades of buildings.

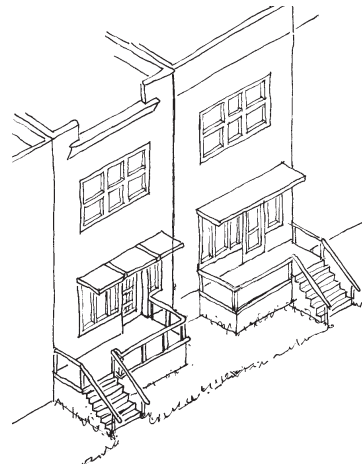
Setbacks

Single-family homes should have a minimum front setback of 10 feet, except that garages should have a minimum front setback of 20 feet. Projections from the building, including front stoops, can extend into the minimum setback. Front setbacks should vary by at least 3 feet from unit to unit to break up the street façade.



Multi-family buildings have no required front setback, except that any garage with a driveway in front should have a minimum front setback of 20 feet.

For all residential buildings, overly large front setbacks are discouraged.



Front stoops of townhomes extending into the setback area.

Parking Location

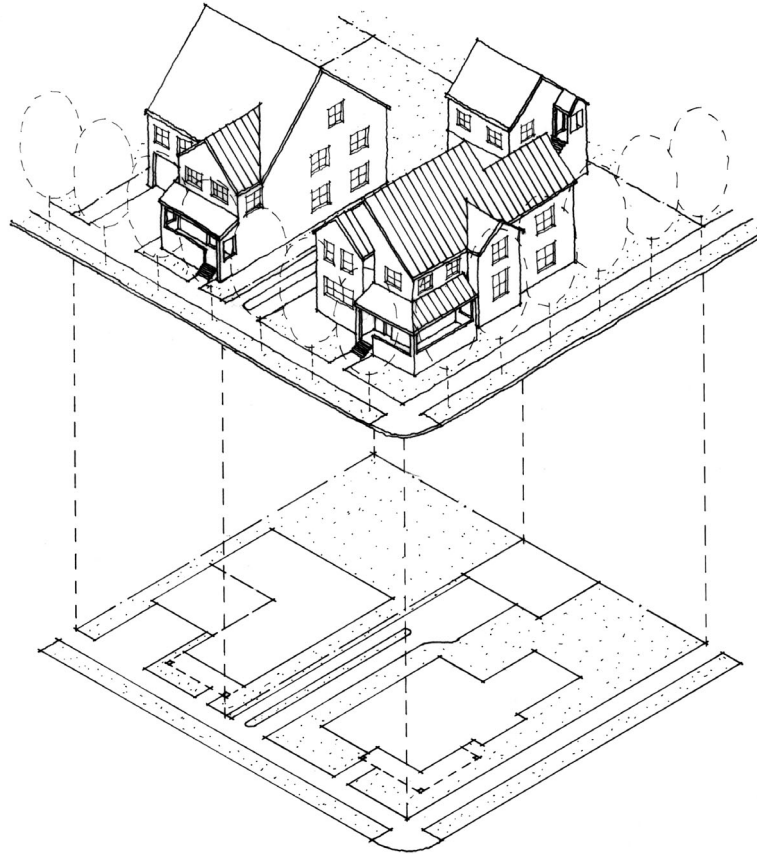
Garage entrances should take up no more than 40 percent of a building's frontage, measured along the length of the frontage. For single-family homes, the garage should be set back at least 5 feet from the primary façade of the residence.

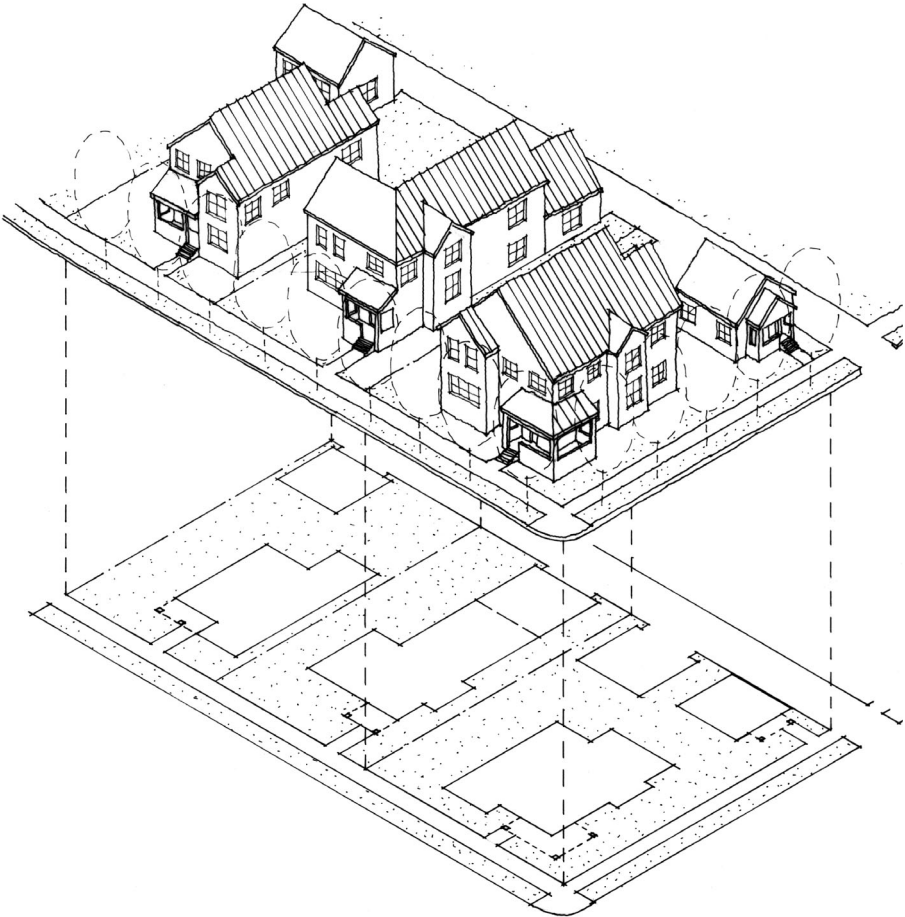
Designs that minimize the visibility of garages, including alley-loaded parking and rear garages with a driveway leading to the street, are encouraged.



A garage is set back from the front façade to emphasize the front entry to the residence.

Garages can be attached or detached but are held back further from the street so that the predominant feature of residential development is the porch or pedestrian-scaled entry feature for the residence.





Alley-loaded homes facilitate uninterrupted sidewalks at the fronts of houses and provide a place for utilities and trash and recycling services to the rear of parcels. Alley-accessed garages can be attached or detached and can also be built with upper floor “second unit” apartments.

2. *Neighborhood Center*

All neighborhoods should have an identifiable center that attracts activity and brings residents together. The center could be a public facility, such as a small park, school, library or day care center, or it could be a neighborhood retail center with restaurants and cafés.



A plaza and fountain create a place where people can gather.

3. Building Materials

To establish and reinforce a sense of neighborhood identity, consistent materials should be used for homes throughout a neighborhood. The materials should not be identical from building to building; instead, homes should draw from a palette of compatible materials, or they should use a variety of compatible materials in combination with a consistent base material.

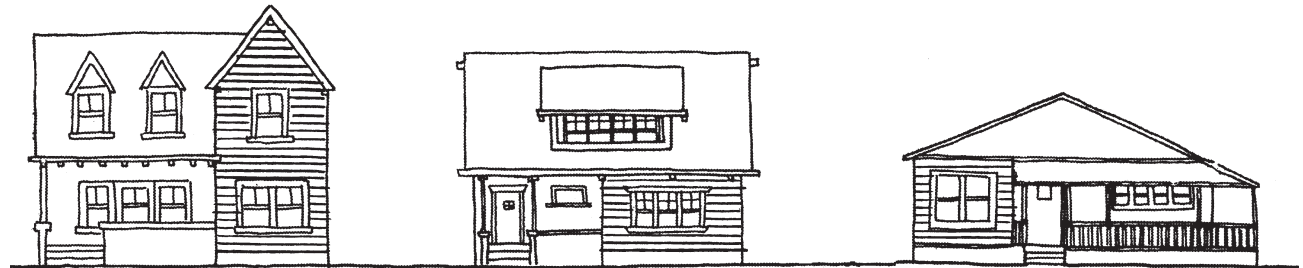
4. Building Form

The overall form of a residential building should emphasize the individuality of the homes it contains. It should provide transitions between the private realm of each home and the public realm of the street.

Varied Building Types

Residential developments should provide several different building plans, with meaningful differences between each plan. This practice avoids the repetitiveness that is commonplace in conventional suburban development and enables residents to take pride in the distinctiveness of their homes.

Different building plans should be distributed so that identical units are not too close to one another.



The repeated use of a specific architectural element, such as horizontal wood siding, can create a thematic component that helps to identify a neighborhood.

Identifiable Units

In residential buildings with attached units, including townhomes, apartments and condominiums, individual units should be identifiable from outside the building. Features like the following should be used to distinguish units from one another:

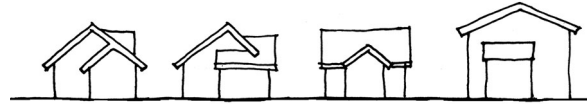
- ◆ Projecting elements, such as bay windows
- ◆ Recessed elements, such as entryways to each unit
- ◆ Slight variations in building setbacks



Individual residences are articulated through the use of variation in the massing, recessed balconies, wall breaks and varying roof forms.



Individual residences are articulated through the building volumes and entrance areas.



Variation in building types and roof forms contributes to a more visually rich neighborhood.



Roof Lines

A building's roof lines should be consistent with its overall design, including a variety of roof forms where appropriate. Flat roofs are discouraged unless they are in keeping with the building's architecture.

Entryways and Porches

Entrance courtyards or front stoops should be provided to create a transition between the street and individual homes. Front porches, which offer semi-private transitional space between the home and the street, should be provided where appropriate.