

3.2 Multiple-Family Residential

Note: This section primarily addresses the Medium Low, Medium and Medium High density (8-30 dwelling units per acre) land use designations as identified in the General Plan. Some provisions may not be appropriate for densities above 30 dwelling units per acre. Section 2.5 - High Density Housing (not completed as of the initial publication of these Design Guidelines) will address issues specific to the Core Area High Density residential.



Fig. 3.2.1 This affordable housing development demonstrates “superior design” which is expected in all multiple-family developments.

I. GOALS

- A. To develop multiple-family housing that is compatible with existing surrounding homes and other structures and provides “superior design” just as in the case of single family homes already discussed.
- B. To provide a quality living environment.
- C. To develop multiple-family housing that encourages residents to take pride and a sense of ownership in their neighborhood.
- D. To encourage multiple-family projects which are safe, contribute to safer neighborhoods, and support Police and Fire Department efforts to promote public safety.
- E. To provide developments with logical layouts that people can navigate through without confusion.
- F. To enhance the public realm with attractive buildings and landscaping treatment along the City’s streetscape.
- G. To encourage energy efficient design.



Fig. 3.2.2 These attached townhomes in Orenco Station, OR, incorporates rear parking with individual entries creating an attractive streetscape.



Fig. 3.2.3 This 90 unit housing project in Healdsburg, California was redesigned from two stories to three in order to reduce the site coverage to better protect an existing creek with associated native Oak trees.



Fig. 3.2.4 This townhouse project, with a series of garage doors, lots of asphalt and parking along the streetscape would not integrate well within a traditional single family neighborhood.



Fig. 3.2.5 Multi-family units that front-on to the public street are preferred to back-on treatment.

II. SITE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

A. EXISTING CONDITIONS/ SITE CONSTRAINTS

1. Incorporate existing natural features such as trees, topography, creeks and riparian vegetation into the site plan. These and similar natural elements should be considered when developing a site plan. Every effort should be made to preserve dominant elements, such as mature trees, for example. When trees must be removed mitigation may be required. See the Appendix for Chapter 17-24 of the City Code which governs tree removal and replacement issues.
2. Integrate new development carefully into existing neighborhoods. Refer to Section 4.3 for specific guidelines relating to infill development.
3. For purposes of noise attenuation, early acoustical site planning is encouraged. State law and the General Plan regulate acceptable noise levels for both indoor and outdoor environments. Mitigate noise to stipulated levels. Use the structure of the home to shelter the private yards from noise. Use the building skin to reduce noise within homes to acceptable levels. The use of frontage roads with structures facing Transitional Streets and side-on treatment are all preferable to back-on treatment with walls or fences to block noise. Sound walls should be considered only after all other options have been exhausted.
4. When sound walls are found to be necessary along a street, locate them a minimum of 25 feet from the edge of the road and provide a significant landscaped buffer. Earth berms are encouraged to minimize the perceived height of the wall. Extend walls between buildings to create pockets of protected common space avoiding long continuous walls for the entire length of a project site.

5. When existing public amenities such as parks or school playgrounds are in the immediate vicinity, provide pedestrian access to take advantage of these features.

B. NEIGHBORHOOD AND STREET PATTERN

1. Refer to Section 1.1- Neighborhood Design for more general neighborhood related guidelines.
2. Locate multiple-family units close to the center of a neighborhood in order to place larger numbers of residents close to open space, commercial uses and potential transit stops.
3. Integrate multiple-family projects with pedestrian and bicycle circulation systems that extends to neighborhood centers, along creek corridors and to adjacent neighborhoods and shopping districts.
4. Integrate multiple-family developments with surrounding neighborhood as opposed to isolating this housing. Include vehicular connections between new projects and adjacent neighborhoods in an indirect pattern. When vehicular connection is not possible to an adjacent street, provide pedestrian and bicycle connections where legally permissible.
If connections are not provided local traffic will be forced on to Transitional and Regional Streets, increasing congestion. Indirect circulation will minimize “shortcut” traffic.

5. When duplexes, triplexes, or fourplexes are developed within a single family neighborhood, design the buildings to resemble a single family home. Provide individual front doors to each unit and interior stairs. Take design cues from existing single family homes in the neighborhood.



Fig. 3.2.6 This stacked flat with exterior stair on Sebastopol Avenue is out of character with the surrounding single-family homes.



Fig. 3.2.7 This fourplex in the Portland, OR area is designed to resemble a large single family home. This approach is encouraged when small multi-family buildings are added to single family neighborhoods.

6. If a multiple-family project is located across the street from a single family neighborhood, orient the buildings to the street with individual entries, patio areas and landscaping facing the single family homes. Parking lot areas, and carports should not be located along these street frontages.
7. Orient buildings so that the entries to units face on Local or Transitional Streets; it may not be desirable to face entries on Regional Streets.



Fig. 3.2.8 This gateway into the common open area gives a signal to the outsiders that this area is not public space.



Fig. 3.2.9 This low patio wall provides a buffer between the communal area and the private area within the unit.

C. SPACE HIERARCHY

It is important to clearly delineate public space (streets), communal space (common open space, play areas, laundries, etc.) and private space (dwelling and private yards). Residents feel uncomfortable when the public violates the communal space or when other residents intrude on the private spaces.

1. Make the distinction between public streets and project common open space clear enough so that residents and non-residents alike can see the distinction.
2. Locate common facilities such as laundries and play areas so they are clearly intended for the residents and are not public amenities.
3. Provide a visual buffer in the form of landscaping, privacy walls or semi-private patios between the interior of dwellings and sidewalks and common open spaces.
4. Provide a series of gateways between the public space and the private space.
Residents prefer that visitors or strangers pass through a series of zones from public to semi-public to semi-private prior to entering their private domain.

D. ORIENTATION

1. Multiple-family developments should be easy to navigate through in a logical, common sense manner. Give thought to how a visitor will enter the site, park the car, if any, and find a particular unit.
2. Provide orientation maps when a development does not follow an easy to comprehend street pattern.
3. Clearly identify each building and dwelling unit to assist visitors and emergency respondents. Note-illuminated addressees are required by the Zoning Code.



Fig. 3.2.10 Maps of developments that include multiple buildings help visitors find residents.

E. SECURITY THROUGH DESIGN

“Formal surveillance is undertaken by police, caretakers and security guards. Equally important is informal surveillance, which involves the casual observation of neighbors, children, and visitors by residents as they go about their daily lives. It can be facilitated by the positioning of windows and gardens, the location and design of pathways and play areas, the quality of lighting and landscaping, and the avoidance both of large, ambiguous spaces and of small, secluded ones. The feeling that others will see if help is necessary reassures residents that they are not alone and this encourages use of communal areas. This, in turn, improves security because intruders will rarely trespass if they think they are being observed.”¹

1. Orient dwellings and windows of frequently used rooms (living and dining rooms) to overlook common open space and child play areas.
2. Locate parking areas such that the walk from parking to the dwellings is short and direct.
3. Ensure that the entry to each dwelling is visible from at least one other dwelling.



Fig. 3.2.11 This play area is within the view of many residents.

¹ Housing As If People Mattered



Figure 3.2.12 This fence with a lattice top provides a sense of privacy when sitting within the yard but also allows residents to observe beyond the yard and monitor activity when standing.



Fig. 3.2.13 Semi-private sitting area at entry to a unit. The ability to personalize this space with flower pots and a chair gives residents a strong sense of place.

4. Limit the height of solid fencing between private yards and common open spaces to 4.5 feet in height. If a six foot fence is desired, the top 18 inches should allow for vision in and out of the yard.
5. Provide semi-private spaces at the entries to units in the form a small sitting area with a low fence, a porch or a balcony.
Such spaces provide a transition from public to private space, which encourages residents to take “ownership” of the fronts of their units and to engage in casual socialization and interaction with neighbors. The more time residents spend in the public realm, the greater the number of “eyes on the street” and the smaller the likelihood of crime in the area.
6. Locate common open spaces within easy view of relatively close-by housing units so the residents can watch over this space. See Figures 3.2.11 and 3.2.15.
7. Design the site so that “shortcut” pedestrian access through the site is discouraged.
This will enhance the sense of community and security.
8. Avoid outdoor areas that are between or behind buildings, that have little or no surveillance. These spaces with ambiguous “ownership” should be placed within the control of individual units.
Areas which are a ‘no-man’s land’ often become degraded and become locations for illicit activities because they are not controlled or observed by the residents.

F. COMMON OPEN SPACE

1. Incorporate common open spaces into a site plan as a primary design feature.
The open spaces should not be remnant spaces or space left over after the buildings are placed on the site.
2. Provide common useable open space for all multiple-family projects with more than 10 units.
3. Provide between 70%-80% of the common open space as a landscaped green area or garden, with the remaining area in hardscape.
Common open space should contain landscaped areas as well as hardscape areas that encourage social interaction.
4. Utilize all weather surfacing within the hardscape area such as concrete or pavers and include features to encourage social interaction such as: benches, low walls for sitting, shade structures, a structure for gang mailboxes, a laundry facility.
5. Create a sense of enclosure for the common open space, for example with the dwellings the space serves and/or with low walls or fences, and/or with landscaping such as hedges or trees. The common space should have a parking area bordering no more than one side of the space. A common space should be visible by as many of the dwellings it serves as possible.
Residents are more likely to respect and protect a common space when their perception is that it “belongs” to them.
6. Use landscaping, building placement and fencing to create gateways to a common open space. This creates a distinction between the public realm and the semi-private nature of the open space.

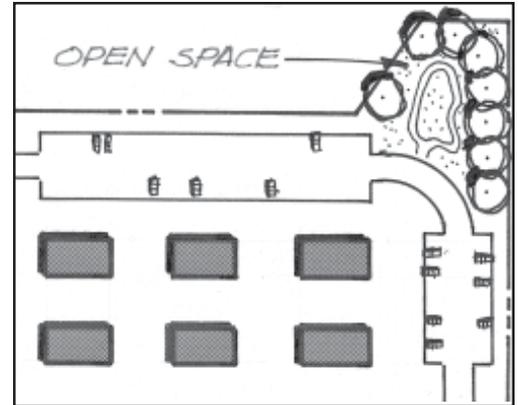


Fig. 3.2.14 This plan locates the common open space in a corner, after the units have been placed. It is inconvenient and not easily observed by the residents. This approach is discouraged.

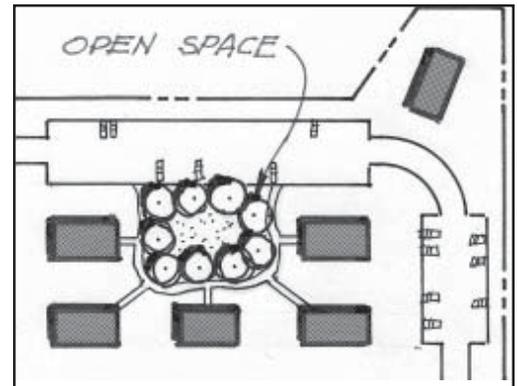


Fig. 3.2.15 This plan started by placing the common open space in the center and orienting the units around the open space. This is the preferred approach.



Fig. 3.2.16 This open space has a nice combination of both hardscape as well as greenscape.



Fig. 3.2.17 Tot lot for young children.



Fig. 3.2.18 In larger projects a basketball court for teens is recommended.



Fig. 3.2.19 Patio areas and balconies provide a small but important outdoor space for residents.

7. When a multiple-family project exceeds 20, two (or more) bedroom units (unless it is a restricted Senior project), accommodation should be made for a minimum of two common open space areas, one for adults and one for a child play area. Each area should be furnished appropriately for its user group.
8. When a multiple-family project exceeds 100 units, (unless it is a restricted senior project) accommodation should be made for a minimum of three common open spaces areas, one for adults, one for teenagers, and one for younger children. Each area should be furnished appropriately.
9. Include play equipment for children under the age of five in child play areas. The play area should be visible to as many units as possible to provide casual surveillance. Separate the play area from traffic. Provide benches or picnic tables for adults that are accompanying younger children.
10. Include a paved area with basketball hoop and benches in teenager play areas. As a group, teenagers can be noisy. To minimize conflicts avoid locating the teen play area directly adjacent to units, the child play area, or adult open space.
Teenagers also need a little privacy.

G. SEMI-PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

1. Provide each unit with a minimum of 40 square feet of semi-private open space directly adjacent to the unit. It is not intended for the space to have a privacy (6 foot) wall. The intent is to provide a balcony on units above the ground level and a small patio area on the ground level. See Figures 3.2.13, 3.2.19, 3.2.28, 3.2.31, 3.2.33 and 3.2.34.
2. These semi-private spaces should feature an open rail, low wall, or hedge or other element that defines the space but permits the resident to have a presence on the street or open space.

3. These semi-private spaces shall not require noise protection.

H. PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

1. Locate sidewalks so that they do not violate the privacy of dwellings. When proximity is unavoidable, provide a landscaped buffer.
2. Provide sidewalks from dwellings to all common facilities such as; laundry, play areas, trash dumpsters, parking, etc.
3. Locate sidewalks so that adults will walk through common open spaces on the way to common facilities such as laundries.

This provides adult supervision of children playing and a greater sense of ownership is developed when residents regularly pass through a space.



Fig. 3.2.20 Provide sidewalks through open space.

I. LANDSCAPING AND SITE FURNITURE

1. Water all common areas using an automatic irrigation system.
2. Plant street trees no more than 30 feet on center. Refer to section 1.3 (II) B for more information about street trees.
3. Avoid the use of ivy as a ground cover as it creates a habitat attractive to rats.
4. Use landscaping to provide privacy screening.
5. Along public street frontage provide a planter between the curb and sidewalk that is planted with ground cover and street trees. In mixed use and urban settings a contiguous sidewalk with tree wells may be used when on-street parking is adjacent to the sidewalk.



Fig. 3.2.21 Low walls are used as informal seating areas.



Fig. 3.2.22 Decorative iron fencing should be used along public streets to retain visibility. Additionally, it cannot be “tagged” with graffiti like solid wood fencing. Chain link fencing has a commercial or industrial feel and should be avoided.

6. Provide a strip of landscaping at least five feet wide at the perimeter of parking areas. Provide shade trees throughout the parking area with at least one tree for each six parking spaces.
7. Consider the use of low masonry walls to contain planting areas at common open spaces. These walls also may find use as informal seating areas.
8. Provide outdoor seating at the following locations: common open spaces, child play areas, teenage play areas, laundry rooms and along heavily used sidewalks.
9. Consider providing some picnic tables both for outdoor eating and writing.
10. Fencing
 - a. If perimeter project fencing is utilized along public streets, use decorative iron, pre-painted welded steel, or wood picket fencing.
 - b. The use of barbed wire or razor wire at the tops of fences is discouraged.
 - c. Fencing that encloses semi-private patio areas should be consistent with the architecture of the buildings.
11. Refer to Section 4.1 - Landscaping for general information relating to this topic.

J. PARKING

1. Provide for parking in small lots reasonably close to the dwellings they serve and within sight of some of the dwellings. Provide required parking on-site.
2. Choose shrubs and trees for parking lots and locate them such that the landscaping does not provide hiding places.

3. Clearly identify which spaces are for visitors. Locate these spaces close to the entry of the parking lot so that visitors are not forced to search for spaces.
4. Carports and parking areas should be located and/or screened so that headlights do not shine into living areas.
5. Refer to Section 4.2 - Off -Street Parking, for additional information.

K. LIGHTING

1. Provide lighting for safety and security at all common areas that have regular night time use.
2. Light should be even, without glare and dark spots.
3. Provide pedestrian scaled light standards for on-site streets, parking areas and common areas that do not exceed 14 feet in height.



Fig. 3.2.23 A pedestrian scaled light fixture.

L. COMMON FACILITIES & AMENITIES

1. Mailboxes
 - a. Consider mail delivery early in the design process.
 - b. In multiple-family developments provide Gang Mailbox Units (GMUs).
 - c. Locate GMUs in sheltered a location with night time lighting to permit mail pickup in inclement weather and at night. Locate GMUs in a location that is centralized and easy to get to for the residents. Consider coordinating with other common facilities such as laundry rooms.



Fig. 3.2.24 Mailboxes integrated with a common building.



Fig. 3.2.25 Common Building at Lavell Village between Santa Rosa and Windsor.



Fig. 3.2.26 An attractive dumpster enclosure made of concrete block, with a steel gate, a wood trellis and vines growing over the top.



Fig. 3.2.27 An attractive dumpster enclosure of concrete block, steel gate and wood trellis.

2. Laundry Rooms
A laundry room should:
 - a. be in a centralized location within view of at least one dwelling;
 - b. include a table for folding laundry, seating and trash receptacles; and
 - c. include two separated entries into the laundry facility.
Residents, particularly women, may be reluctant to use a laundry facility at night without a second means of egress.
3. Common Buildings.
In larger projects (of more than 100 units) a common building that provides space for meetings is encouraged.
Other uses may be combined in this structure, such as laundry, rental management offices, and mailboxes.
4. Refuse Containers
 - a. Four units or less may be served by individual garbage containers.
 - b. When individual garbage cans are used, they must either fit in the garage or into a special enclosure.
 - c. When there are five units or more, provide dumpsters for garbage collection within a special enclosure.
 - d. When dumpsters are to be used, designers should coordinate with the refuse pickup provider to determine the size and number of dumpsters required. A rule of thumb is to allow for between 30 and 90 gallons per unit per week, depending on size of the unit. Pick up is generally once per week.
 - e. Shield all dumpsters within an enclosure a minimum of six feet tall. Allow adequate size to accommodate the needed dumpsters and recycling

containers. All enclosures and gates should be detailed to withstand heavy use. Provide wheel stops or curbs to prevent dumpsters from banging into walls of enclosure.

- f. Make allowances within the enclosure for stacking recycling crates (in small projects) and recycling dumpsters (in large projects)
 - g. Locate dumpsters sufficiently far from units to reduce to a minimum problems with offensive odors.
 - h. Provide an opening so that pedestrians can access the dumpsters without opening the large gates.
 - i. Provide lighting at trash enclosures for night time security and use.
 - j. Locate dumpster enclosures so that no dwelling is more than 100 feet from a dumpster.
5. Storage. Provide outdoor storage units for such items as barbecues, bicycles, big wheels, etc. which otherwise would tend to accumulate on balconies and patio areas. 60 cubic feet of storage volume per dwelling unit should be provided for as a minimum. Storage units should be covered and capable of being locked. They should be constructed of materials similar to that used for the units.
Prefabricated steel storage units such as those sold at the local home center are not appropriate.
6. Outdoor meters, transformers, vents and flues.
- a. Make allowance for electrical transformer locations. Provide adequate room for the transformers and provide landscaping for screening the transformers.
 - b. Make allowance for gas and electric meters and water heaters. Consider enclosures or rooms for these items to screen them from public view.



Fig. 3.2.28 Storage units are used here to screen the balconies from each other. The balcony provides a private outdoor area for second floor residents.



Fig. 3.2.29 The architect of this project incorporated a cupola to gather vents, eliminating much of the visual clutter on the roof.



Fig. 3.2.30 Due to multiple units and the requirement for plumbing, water heater and furnace vents, apartment rooftops often are visually chaotic

c. Combine plumbing vents and water heater/ furnace flues to minimize the visual blight frequently seen on rooftops. See Figures 3.2.29 and 3.2.30.

7. General. All site features including; trash enclosures, fencing, light fixtures, mailboxes, laundry and facilities utility screens, should be architecturally compatible with the main structures.



Fig. 3.2.31 This apartment complex on Petaluma Hill Road and Kawana Springs Road in Santa Rosa creates interest with extensive articulation of the form and use of color.



Fig. 3.2.32 The use of different materials, contrasting colors, and metal awnings create a visually interesting entry.

III. BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. FORM AND MATERIALS

1. Break up the mass of larger structures with articulation of the form, use of color and the use of multiple materials, including: horizontal wood, cement fiber and composite siding, vertical wood siding, stucco, wood shingles, real and cultured masonry.
2. When panel siding is used, provide 5/8" thick minimum and the use of battens are encouraged for a board and batt appearance.
3/8" and 1/2" panel siding often does not stay flat.
3. When wood trim is used, provide nominal 2x material.
1x wood trim does not stand up well to sun exposure in our climate.
4. Avoid dressing up fronts of building with higher quality materials and switching to less expensive siding material on the sides and back. Design all four sides of buildings.
5. Within mixed income developments, provide the same level of detailing and materials on the affordable units as on the market rate units.

B. ENTRANCES

1. Orient the main entrance of each unit, or the building to the street or to a common open area.
2. Entries to the units should be clearly identified, protected from the weather and provided with lighting for night time safety and security.

C. MASSING/ ARTICULATION

1. Incorporate features such as balconies, cantilevers, dormers, bay windows, patios, entries, accent materials, etc. to provide articulation and interest.
2. Avoid buildings with a massive appearance. Divide buildings into segments that break down the scale.
3. Provide wood trim or stucco surrounds at window and door openings. Windows set in stucco without any trim or surround are discouraged.

D. PERSONALIZATION

1. Provide opportunities for residents to add their own touches to the exterior of their units. For example by using planter boxes or hooks for hanging plants and by providing space for a chair and/or bench and potted plants.
This allows residents to express themselves and personalize their units which helps to create a greater sense of community.



Fig. 3.2.33 Individual entries from the exterior create a greater sense of identity to residents, compared to an anonymous doorway off a common corridor. In this case, the resident has personalized the entry with a hanging plant and chair.



Fig. 3.2.34 The main entries to these townhouse apartments at Lavell Village, north of Santa Rosa feature a porch area oriented to a large common open space.



Fig. 3.2.35 The use of a hip roof form and matching concrete roof tiles visually connect the carport to the main structures.

E. GARAGES/ CARPORTS

1. Design garages or carports with an architectural treatment that derives from the main buildings in terms of materials, detailing, roof materials and colors.
2. Locate garages or carports so as to minimize their impact from the public street. The main buildings should be the dominant visual statement along the public streetscape.