

## DESIGN ELEMENT

### Draft 05.23.23

#### *Preface*

The Design and Historic Preservation Design Elements are ~~is not mandated a required element~~ under the state ~~California P~~planning law ~~Guidelines~~. They are ~~it is included in the Arcata General Plan because the issue~~ due to the importance of community appearance, form, function and livability is important to Arcata. In addition to addressing community-wide design features and criteria, the Design Element also is important for protecting ~~on of City~~ scenic and visual qualities of the City and those in the ~~coastal zone as required by the California Coastal Act of 1976.~~

~~The Design Element is intended to guide form and functions of the city's future built environment while at the same time respecting the unique relationship to the natural environment. Design considers both preserving character defining neighborhoods, commercial areas, public spaces and buildings; and for continual adaptation and improvement of the built environment.~~

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

~~The Design Element is intended to guide form and functions of the City's future built environment while at the same time respecting the unique relationship to the natural environment. Design considers both preserving character defining buildings and public spaces; and for continual adaptation and improvement of the built environment.~~

~~The Design Element is not a required element under California Planning Guidelines. It is included in the Arcata General Plan due to the importance of community appearance, form, function and livability to Arcata. In addition to addressing community-wide design features and criteria, the Design Element is important for protecting City scenic and visual qualities and those in the coastal zone as required by the California Coastal Act of 1976.~~

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**Overview of Arcata's Design Character.** The ~~city~~City of Arcata's ~~is located in a physical and cultural setting of~~ on the California North Coast has ~~great natural beauty~~ is one of its most valuable assets. ~~A sense of physical~~Physical and visual separations ~~from other communities is,~~

~~provided by extensive open space lands which surround the city. These include Arcata Bay, marsh landses, tidelands, and agricultural lands to the south; the agricultural lands of the Arcata Bottoms to the west; the Mad River and its agricultural floodplain to the north; and forested hills to the east. For residents and visitors alike, the aesthetic encounter with the landscape of the North Coast is presented along the State Route 101 corridor and several other principal roadways. From the south, the State Route 101 parallels and provides scenic views~~ Views to the marshes and open waters of Arcata Bay to the west and agricultural land with a forested coastal foothill backdrop to the east. This separation provides a distinct City image which is visible from many different vantage points. The City's built environment has evolved for more than 100 years and represents several architectural themes and forms. The sense of scale and "fit" of ~~the Arcata townscape~~ complements ~~this the~~ scenic rural coastal environment.

The ~~overall urban form of the city~~ City's consists of a dense and compact downtown urban core centered around the ~~and~~ Plaza ~~and are downtown, with a series of~~ surrounded by varied and dispersed residential ~~many smaller commercial centers and distinct city~~ neighborhoods extending into the hills and bordering agricultural areas. These mixed-use areas and neighborhoods provide ~~residents with~~ a range of housing, working and recreational environments and a direct n immediate relationship to natural areas. Several interspersed There are still some agricultural areas accentuate the juxtaposition of town and country within City limits. Much of ~~the Arcata's~~ character ~~of Arcata~~ is derived from the architectural styles of its buildings, particularly ~~of~~ older historical residences and commercial buildings near the City's center. ~~For the most part, buildings are small in scale and only a few buildings are three stories or more in height.~~

The Element plans for continually integrating public spaces for informal and organized community gatherings, with art and other visual amenities, where residents and visitors can engage in both active and passive outdoor activities, and where community events can occur. These public spaces are defined in part by the City's history, diversity, distinctive physical qualities, uniqueness and desire for equitable accessible gathering venues.

There is an established grid of transportation corridors throughout the City. Development along these corridors must accommodate multi-modal transportation while maintaining neighborhood connections. There can be pressures to widened roadways for increased motorized vehicle capacity, which can adversely affect other transportation forms, notably pedestrian and bicycle travel. Future corridor design features should include pedestrian and cycling routes that increase mobility and create viable multi-modal corridors. There are also neighborhood development opportunities adjacent to the corridors, to improve the overall circulation system and extend sustainable streetscape practices.

In addition to the Design Element update, a Gateway Area Plan Element, specific to the part of the City west of downtown, is added to the General Plan. ~~The Gateway Area intends to fulfill Arcata's community aspiration of providing high quality of life and equitable housing/ employment options to everyone, regardless of skin color, economic standing, or national origin.~~ The Plan has a substantial design component, promoting a distinctive and attractive

sense of place built through creative placemaking. There is also a connected series of green spaces, trails, protected greenbelts, and daylighted creeks planned to provide pockets of active and passive recreational opportunities, complementing the Gateway Area's urban environment. The Plan Element includes a form-based code for development that ~~also preserves greenbelts and open space around the City perimeter~~ adheres to objective design standards.

### **Guiding Principles and Goals.**

- A. Promote orderly and harmonious development of the City.
- B. Assure ~~that~~ new development is designed to preserve important natural features, ~~built environment assets~~ historic resources, and scenic resources.
- C. Promote building designs ~~that are~~ well suited to their functions and sites.
- D. Prevent excessive and unsightly grading ~~of hillsides~~ associated with development.
- E. Create both natural and built visual environments ~~which are~~ of high aesthetic quality and variety.
- F. Achieve maximum benefit from natural environmental settings.
- G. Assure ~~that~~ new buildings ~~are~~ designed to fit appropriately with the existing neighborhood or area context.
- H. Promote design that maintains land value stability ~~of land values~~ and encourages desirability of City investment ~~in the City~~.
- I. Incorporate "green building" and "universal design" concepts and features into new and renovated structures.

## **5.2 POLICIES**

The Design Element contains the following policies:

- D-1 Overall Community Character
- D-2 Downtown Arcata Design
- D-3 Scenic Routes, Resources, and Landscape Features
- D-4 Subdivision Design
- D-5 Residential Design
- D-6 Design of Commercial and Industrial Development
- D-7 Landscape Design

### **POLICY D-1 OVERALL COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER**

**Objective.** Maintain ~~a~~ community ~~with~~ diversity and quality in the built environment; with ~~small-scale~~ structures ~~that are~~ and other physical features harmonious with their neighborhood context; and with a ~~sharp~~ physical and visual distinction transition between ~~the~~ urban area and the surrounding open space lands.

D-1a **Maintain small scale of Building Characteristics.** Buildings shall be design~~ed to maintain the small scale~~ shall to consider established City characteristics and planned character features, including and shall offset the neighborhood impact of increased heights and new uses in some areas -of the community. This shall be accomplished by:

1. ~~This may be accomplished by~~ breaking ~~designing the massing of~~ larger developments through setbacks into several smaller buildings rather than constructing a single large, monolithic building. \_\_\_\_\_
2. ~~This shall be accomplished by~~ Avoiding large, unbroken expanses of wall and roof planes.
3. ~~This shall be accomplished by~~ includes providing articulation in building mass, surfaces, rooflines, wall planes, and facades, and including distinctive architectural features and ornamentation.

D-1b **Emphasize Arcata Plaza area as at the main the central community focal point (~~Not applicable in Coastal Zone~~).** ~~Buildings fronting on streets around facing the Arcata Plaza shall be multi-story.~~

Architectural and other design elements shall emphasize the importance of the Arcata Plaza as a the community's main focal point the City's center for commerce, entertainment, and special events. Designs shall promote pedestrian access and continuity of retail space at the street level back of sidewalk. Parking should be accommodated off-site to the extent practicable. NOTE added as GPA by Resolution 090-028



D-1c **Promote quality and diversity of design compatible with neighborhood context.** Site and building design shall ~~be harmonious with the~~ consider neighborhood context, including existing structures, especially when increased structure heights and coverages are proposed. Within new subdivisions development, diversity in building appearance structure facades and materials, rather than repetitive designs is encouraged.

D-1d **Preserve natural landforms and landscape features.** Site designs shall have the minimum disturbance necessary to natural conditions such as existing contours and ~~vegetation native landscape~~, and shall preserve, to the maximum extent practicable, any unusual natural features.

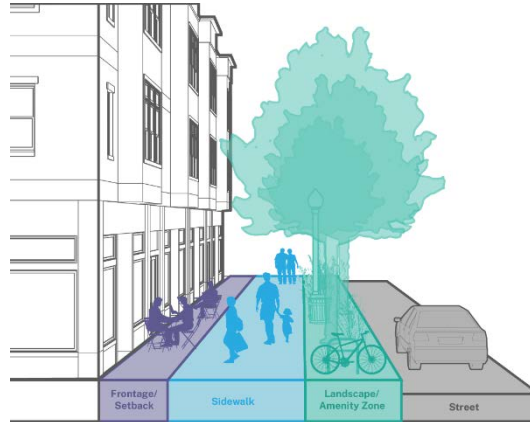
D-1e **Promote energy efficiency and solar access.** Site and building design shall emphasize energy efficiency, and solar orientation and minimize consider shading of adjacent structures to the extent feasible, balancing development needs with solar access.

- D-1f **Create buffers between incompatible land uses.** At boundaries between different land-use designations, and where different ~~and incompatible~~ land-uses are adjacent, buffer areas shall be incorporated into site design ~~for new development~~. Buffers may consist of additional setbacks, landscaping, and visual and noise barriers such as fences or walls.
- D-1g **Provide for bicycles, pedestrians, and transit in design.** Design ~~of commercial, industrial, and multi-family housing~~ shall incorporate provisions for bicycle and pedestrian circulation, and ~~bus~~ transit. Facilities should be located and designed so that these alternative travel modes are fully interconnected.
- D-1h **City edges.** ~~The d~~Development patterns ~~shall be designed shall to be managed to retain the sharply demarcated~~ have distinctive physical and visual separations ~~of Arcata from the urbanized areas of Eureka and McKinleyville~~ adjacent communities. This shall be accomplished by:
1. Restricting development in surrounding open space lands to very low density (minimum parcel size from twenty to sixty acres).
  2. Requiring that construction in hillside areas shall be sited so that it does not ~~intrude protrude~~ above the ridgeline.
  3. Retaining existing vegetation, providing landscape screening, and shielding exterior lighting to minimize visible impacts ~~of any development~~ on prominent sites or in open space areas, especially on hillside ~~sites~~ visible from State Route 101.
- D-1i **Renewable green building.** Site and building design shall incorporate green building concepts including maximizing recycled materials use ~~of recycled materials and recycling~~, energy efficiency, solar access, insulation, energy efficiency, use of toxic-free materials, natural lighting, native landscaping, permeable surfaces around structures, and minimizing construction waste ~~generation~~ disposal.

## POLICY D-2 DOWNTOWN (CENTRAL – COMMERCIAL) DESIGN

**Objective.** Maintain and continue to develop a built environment which accentuates the Plaza and surrounding downtown ~~lands designated in the Commercial-Central use category~~ as the commercial and cultural hub of the city ~~City~~, maintains the ~~consider~~ historical flavor of ~~building and site~~ design features, integrates bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and which incorporates appropriate trees and other "softscape/landscape" elements.

D-2a **Arcata Plaza Design of Arcata Plaza (Not applicable in Coastal Zone).** The basic historical pattern of Plaza design of the Plaza shall be retained, including the symmetrical pathways arrangement of pathways, the open lawn expanses of lawn, and the central as a community focal point of the McKinley statue for the community. ~~Tracked Changes adopted by Resolution 189-43. See: P:\Arcata Services\Arcata SIRP 2021\3-Tasks\3-GeneralPlanAmendments\A-PastVersionsOf\_GP\Past-GP-Amendments~~



D-2b **Streetscape design.** Future changes to public street rights-of-way in the downtown shall focus on improving include amenities such as non-obstructive street furniture, access and safety for pedestrians, and bicycles, and reasonable and safe while maintaining vehicle access including the possibility of “car free” streets. The following design features should be considered in future improvement projects:

1. Increase the width of sidewalks.
2. Demarcate pedestrian crosswalks with pavement marking or special paving materials or colors.
3. Provide or improve bike lanes, with an emphasis on protected bike lanes, where appropriate.
4. Incorporate street trees in appropriate locations.
5. Use special paving materials or patterns for sidewalks at key locations or intersections.
6. Provide landscape screening between parking lots and the street, with preference for parking associated with new buildings behind, or away from street frontage.
7. Provide shielded and directional street and parking lot lighting ~~that is~~ adequate for safety but that is not overly bright.
- ~~8. Establish a uniform lighting fixture and post (or pole) design for streetlights;~~
- ~~8.9. Establish a uniform design for various items of "street furniture," such as benches, trash receptacles, water fountains, etc. Consider the possibility of “car free” streets.~~
- ~~9. Strongly encourage undergrounding of utilities to eliminate poles and overhead wires.~~
- ~~10. Require undergrounding of utilities and elimination of poles and overhead wires.~~

D-2c **Alleys.** The existing alleys in the downtown shall be retained and should be improved as multi-functional accessways. Businesses are encouraged to use alleys for secondary entries. Enhancements should emphasize amenities and safety for pedestrians, such as



improved surfacing, lighting, landscaping, and enclosures for garbage and recycling receptacles where space permits.

D-2d **Street trees.** The City shall ~~encourage the installation of~~ maintain a street trees ~~within the downtown area. The City shall develop a comprehensive street tree planting and maintenance program which includes~~ with the following components:

1. Identification of streets where trees may be installed.
2. Siting ~~S~~standards, ~~for the location of street trees; generally, locations will~~ either be in wells located between on-street parallel parking areas, in cutouts within the sidewalk where the sidewalk is of sufficient width (7 feet or more), or in containers where the preceding locations are not workable.
- ~~3. Standards for spacing between street trees (usually 20 to 35 feet on center).~~
- ~~4. Specification of a list of acceptable tree species and the appropriate streets and locations for each species.~~
- ~~5. Standards for size of trees and specifications for their installation (e.g. size of well, staking, materials).~~
- ~~6. Identification of responsibilities, procedures, and standards for tree maintenance. Where space is insufficient for street trees, trees may be incorporated into the landscape design on private property adjacent to the street property line.~~

D-2e **Design criteria for new structures and additions.** The height, scale, and mass (volume) of new buildings and additions to existing buildings shall ~~be compatible~~ take into account ~~with~~ other buildings in the immediate vicinity. Each building shall have an entry from the sidewalk to the street-level floor. Building elevations shall be articulated: long, continuous, unbroken wall and roof planes should be avoided. The visual organization and proportions of building elevations — including the size, spacing and shape of window and door openings — should be consistent with neighboring buildings. Architectural detailing and ornamentation, such as cornices, eaves, recessed or covered entryways, and awnings, are encouraged. Design review applications shall include depiction of buildings on adjoining lots, either in elevation drawings or photographs.

D-2f ~~Design criteria for vacant lots on Arcata Plaza. In addition to the criteria in D-2e, the following criteria shall also apply to development on vacant parcels with frontage on streets surrounding the Plaza:~~

- ~~1. All buildings shall have a minimum height of two stories to create a sense of enclosure for the City's central open space and focal point.~~
- ~~2. All floors of buildings should be parallel to and at the street parcel line.~~
- ~~3. Any building located at a corner or intersection shall incorporate architectural features at the ground floor which emphasize pedestrian circulation, such as building cut-offs, walk-through arcades, pedestrian spaces, or similar elements.~~
- ~~4. Parking is encouraged to be provided off-site; if any on-site parking is provided, it shall be accessed from the rear.~~

~~5. Loading docks shall not be required.~~

D-2g **Design criteria for remodeling existing facades (storefronts).** ~~In remodeling facades,~~ distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features shall be avoided whenever possible. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced whenever practicable. Storefronts shall be designed to fit inside the original opening and not extend beyond it. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing structures shall not be prohibited when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical or architectural character of the property. The size and proportions of any additions shall be compatible with the original building.

D-2h **Site design, including parking areas.** The placement of new buildings and building additions on a site should be compatible with site layout on neighboring properties. In general, buildings should be sited immediately adjacent to the sidewalk and any onsite parking should be placed to the rear of the building. Parking areas shall be the minimum necessary and be separated from the street and sidewalk by a landscape buffer ~~of at least six feet~~. Trees that reach a mature height of at least twenty feet should be included in the interior of all parking lots with more than two parking spaces. Pedestrian spaces, circulation areas, or gathering areas are encouraged as design elements.

~~D-2i Design of signs. Permanent signs in the Central Commercial area shall be oriented to pedestrians rather than automobile traffic, and shall conform to the following criteria:~~

- ~~1. Signs shall be placed so that they do not obscure other building elements such as windows, cornices, or decorative details.~~
- ~~2. Size, materials, style, and color shall complement the building facade and shall be compatible with the surrounding area.~~
- ~~3. Copy shall be limited to icons, logos, business identification, and hours of operation (rather than advertising copy).~~
- ~~4. Flush-mounted signs with copy in a specifically designated horizontal band is the preferred type; monument and hanging (cantilevered) signs may be allowed, provided that the latter has a vertical clearance of at least 7.5 feet and an encroachment permit is obtained.~~
- ~~— Pole signs shall be prohibited, except for public traffic, directional and safety signs.~~
- ~~6. When lighted, signs shall be designed to minimize glare and with the minimum amount of illumination necessary to make the sign legible; neon signs with distinctive designs are acceptable. Plastic faced internally lit signs should be discouraged.~~
- ~~7. At the time of any future alterations of an existing sign, the sign shall be required to be modified to conform in its entirety to these policies. Alterations shall mean any change to the structure, area, or height of a sign, but shall not mean a change in copy.~~



**D-2j2i Incorporation of amenity features in new development.** Any new development shall incorporate an appropriate combination of project enhancements in lieu thereof. Potential enhancements include, but are not limited to, the following:

special paving materials in parking lots	special architectural features
public art, including sculpture and murals	flower beds
outdoor spaces for public use	window boxes
street trees or street furniture	courtyards
fountains or other water features	awnings
secondary pedestrian access from alleys	planted wall trellises
balconies or decks on upper floors	recessed entryways
sidewalk and/or entry mosaics or decorative tile	

### **POLICY D-3 SCENIC ROUTES, RESOURCES, AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES**

**Objective.** Identify and protect scenic routes, resources, and landscape features. Retain natural features, coastal scenic resources, and scenic vistas as important aesthetic components of the built environment and visual and associative links to nature. Minimize impairment and obstructions of scenic views to the minimum necessary to allow ~~reasonable~~ development.

**D-3a ~~Designation of coastal scenic highways.~~** ~~The following are designated coastal scenic highways routes are hereby designated:~~

- ~~1. 7th Street and Bayside Road, from 7th Street overcrossing to Crescent Drive~~
- ~~2. Bayside Cutoff, from State Route 101 to Old Arcata Road~~
- ~~3. Old Arcata Road, from Bayside Cutoff to Crescent Drive~~
- ~~4. Samoa Blvd. (State Route 255), from Crescent Drive to Manilathe western City limits at Slaughterhouse Road~~
- ~~5. Janes Road, from 11th Street to Foster Avenue~~
- ~~6. State Route 101, from the southerly City boundary to the Seventh Street overpass Mad River~~
- ~~7. South "I" Street, from Samoa Blvd. south to the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary~~
- ~~8. South "G" Street, from "H" Street to State Route 101~~
- ~~9. All public roads west of the City in the Arcata Bottom~~

**~~D-3b Designation of non-coastal scenic highways (Not applicable in Coastal Zone).~~** ~~The following non-coastal scenic highways are hereby designated:~~

- ~~1. Fickle Hill Road~~
- ~~2. Jacoby Creek Road~~
- ~~3. Golf Course Road~~
- ~~4. L. K. Wood Blvd. from the St. Louis Road Overcrossing to 14th Street~~  
~~added as GPA by Resolution 090-028~~

D-3c **Design policy for projects affecting scenic ~~highways~~ routes and State Routes.** The following standards shall apply to any development which affects scenic ~~highways~~ routes, as well as views from State Routes 101, 255, and 299:

1. Billboards or other off-premises ~~freeway-oriented~~ signs are prohibited.
2. Landscape planting along State Route 101 shall not interrupt scenic views to the bay or eastward across agricultural lands.
3. New development or redevelopment in the ~~industrial~~ area of South "G" Street shall provide dense landscape screens along all perimeter lot lines visible from State Route 101.
4. The City shall work jointly with the County of Humboldt, Caltrans, and the Coastal Commission to enhance scenic views along scenic highways, particularly State Route 101 and 255 corridors.

D-3d **City Scenic entryways.** The appearance of the following additional entryways, ~~while not scenic resources~~, should be enhanced with appropriate landscaping and entry signs or structures:

1. Samoa Blvd. (State Route 255) between Jackson Ranch Road and "K" Street
2. State Route 101 between Bayside cutoff and Samoa Blvd.
3. State Route 101 between the Mad River and Giuntoli Lane
4. State Route 299 from North Bank Road to Giuntoli Lane
5. Old Arcata Road from Bayside Cutoff to Jacoby Creek Road

These public improvements may include uniform landscaping, pedestrian enhancements, and directional signing.

D-3e **Arcata Bay—Open waters, shoreline, and tidal marshes.** Proposed land uses and development shall not significantly alter the natural appearance or landforms of the waters, shoreline, and tidal marshes of Arcata Bay, which are designated in the natural resource land-use category. Where these resources are visually degraded, developments shall be required to restore or enhance their appearance. Development within the area bounded by Samoa Blvd., Butcher's Slough and Gannon Slough shall include local native plant landscaping, screenings and other measures to ensure compatibility with scenic coastal resources and with the educational, recreational, wildlife and other uses of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge and the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary.

D-3f **Bay and ocean views.** Views of Arcata Bay and the Pacific Ocean from vantage points along public streets in hillside areas of Arcata shall ~~not be blocked by development be preserved to the extent practicable, balancing development rights in these areas~~. Any impairment or partial obstruction of these ocean views from new development shall be the minimum necessary ~~to for~~ allow ~~able reasonable~~ development.

- D-3g **Wooded hillsides.** Views of wooded hillsides forming the City's eastern edge from vantage points along public streets west of the State Route 101 should not be blocked by development- to the extent practicable, balancing development rights in these areas. Any impairment or partial obstruction of these ocean views from new development shall be the minimum necessary for allowable development. The City shall encourage Cal Poly Humboldt to avoid blocking views in its new development.
- D-3h **Farmlands and open countryside.** Views of farmlands and open countryside — in the Arcata Bottom, along the State Route 101 south of Samoa Boulevard, north of Giuntoli Lane, and along State Route 255 west of the ~~city~~City, should be protected to the extent practicable, balancing development rights in these areas. Any impairment or partial obstruction of these views from new development shall be the minimum necessary for allowable development. New development should be sited and designed to minimize any impairment of such views.
- D-3i **~~Preservation of hedgerows (windrows, or rows of trees).~~** ~~Preservation of the following windrows, hedgerows, or groves of trees shall be encouraged:~~
- ~~1. The cypress windrows separating Arcata Heights from the Sunset neighborhood.~~
  - ~~2. The trees along the north and western edges (Alliance Road) of the Sunset neighborhood.~~
  - ~~3. The trees on the small knoll adjacent to State Route 101 south of Spear Avenue.~~
  - ~~4. The windrow of trees adjacent to the west side of the State Route 101 between 7th and 14th Streets.~~
  - ~~5. Windrows in the Arcata Bottom.~~
  - ~~6. The row of trees along the westerly side of State Route 101 at the State Route 299 interchange.~~
  - ~~7. The groves of eucalyptus and other trees which line Bayside Road between Union Street and Crescent Way.~~
  - ~~8. The elm trees on "J" Street between 14th and 16th Streets.~~
  - ~~9. Redwood Grove at 7th and Union, and Bayside Road to be left intact.~~
- D-3j **Streamside riparian areas.** Creeks or drainage channels and any associated riparian vegetation shall be retained in a natural state and incorporated into site design as a visual asset to development which that adjoin them. Design codes should encourage "daylighting" streams on City and private property, and restoration of riparian ecology and function.-

#### POLICY D-4 SUBDIVISION DESIGN

**Objective.** Achieve subdivision design which that accommodates orderly growth; assures ensures proper development of land and access to lots; promotes open space retention;

~~insures~~ adequate circulation, utilities, and services; preserves existing landforms; and retains significant vegetation.

D-4a **Design of roadways ~~and~~, subdivision, and redevelopment site improvements.** New subdivisions and infill or redevelopment site design shall provide orderly arrangement of complete streets that minimize impacts on natural landforms and habitats and that create connectivity between existing neighborhoods and recreational areas using pedestrian oriented development and principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. The following criteria shall be required and or encouraged as appropriate: comply with the following criteria:

1. Proposed street alignments including sidewalks and bikeways shall conform to the relevant Transportation and Road Safety Plans, wherever possible. Unless it is demonstrated to be infeasible, all new lots shall have frontage on a public street or improved alley, or publicly accessible courtyard or open space. ~~Where direct access is infeasible, the number of lots or units to be served by a common access driveway easement shall be based on accessway design meeting all, but not limited to, these requirements: public safety access, ingress, egress, parking, utilities, drainage, and environmental issues.~~
- ~~2. The Proposed street alignments arrangement of proposed streets shall conform to the Transportation Plan, where possible. When not shown on the Street Plancity standards, the design Alignments shall provide for the have appropriate connections to existing streets. Cul-de-sacs should be avoided where possible.~~
- ~~3. The subdivision design may utilize narrow or "skinny" streets and various traffic calming approaches; alleys are encouraged for access to garages.~~
- ~~2.4.~~ Gated subdivision streets shall be prohibited in order to maintain a sense of community.
- ~~5. Use of natural drainage techniques in subdivision design is encouraged. In general, curbing and gutters are appropriate for street drainage, safety and delineation and protection of pavement edge. Where curbing is not required, some other type of edge definition and stabilization shall be furnished.~~
- ~~3. 6.~~ Natural drainage patterns shall be preserved to minimize potential slippage and flooding. Building site grading shall be contoured to direct water away from structures.
- ~~7. No lighting shall be allowed that results in illumination above the tree canopy.~~
- ~~8. Sidewalks and bikeways shall be provided; sidewalks may be furnished on one side of the street only. In planned developments, additional sidewalks and bikeways may be located away from the street.~~
- ~~349.~~ Appropriate landscaping and illumination shall be applied to enhance safety and provide attractive screening and distinctions between spaces; illumination of streets shall be unobtrusive and the lowest intensity compatible with safety, complying with night sky standards wherever possible.

~~10. Landscaping shall be provided as part of subdivision design; plantings shall include street trees or an equivalent number of trees planted on individual lots adjacent to the street frontage.~~

~~11. Where subdivisions abut a major street or railroad, or include more than one land-use or housing type, landscape buffers shall be included at appropriate locations to create a visual screen and minimize any adverse impacts.~~

D-4b **Lot patterns.** Lot boundaries should be regular in shape and lots should either have direct access to a public street or to an access easement which connects to a public street. Clustering of lots with common open space areas and/or common parking lots is encouraged. Condominium or other common multiple-unit tenancy designs may be approved with alternative vehicular access requirements, within fire safety considerations.

D-4c **Grading and hillside subdivisions.** In hillside areas, subdivision design and grading shall minimize disturbance to natural landforms, ~~not destroy visual quality, nor create and mitigate~~ conditions that ~~could~~ increase the risk of landslides, flooding, or erosion. ~~Designs shall comply with the following criteria:~~

~~1. Street layout should in general be parallel to topographic contours to reduce the extent of cut and fill slopes.~~

~~2. Long, continuous, or unbroken manufactured slopes should be avoided.~~

~~3. Graded slopes should be contoured by varying slope increments and undulating banks vertically and horizontally; building pad elevations should be varied to avoid the appearance of monotonous, flat, level pads.~~

~~4. Generally, slopes greater than 2:1 (horizontal: vertical) should be avoided.~~

~~5. Permitted densities shall be adjusted in designated hillside areas such that the steeper the slope, the less the allowed density; in such areas, at least fifty percent of each new lot shall be retained as ungraded "natural area."~~

~~6. Along ridgelines, new development or lighting which would extend above the tree canopy shall be prohibited.~~

~~7. Parallel on-street parking should not be provided on steep street segments; in such areas, alternative designs for on-street parking shall be required.~~

D-4d **Retention of natural features.** ~~Design of subdivisions~~Subdivisions shall be designed ~~shall be based upon an analysis of the~~ considering the natural conditions and features of the site. To the maximum extent practicable, development shall be located to preserve natural features and avoid areas of environmental sensitivity, including but not limited to: wetlands, significant or mature locally native trees or stands of such trees, creekside riparian habitat areas, floodplain areas, and areas with slopes greater than thirty percent. Residential structures, including decks and balconies, shall not extend into significant natural areas.

D-4e **Open space and parks.** New residential subdivisions shall either be required to dedicate land for public parks or stormwater detention facilities, provide commonly-owned and maintained park or open space lands for use by residents of the subdivision, pay a fee in-lieu thereof, or some combination of the foregoing.

## POLICY D-5 RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

**Objective.** Create residential living environments which meet the needs of residents, are aesthetically pleasing, provide for personal safety and privacy, promote social interaction, maintain continuity with the community's past, and provide for leisure needs. Blend residential design objectives with neighborhood conservation area objectives expressed in the Historical Preservation Element.

D-5a **Multi-family housing design.** Within each neighborhood where multi-family is allowed by the Land-Use Element, multi-unit housing designs should comply with the following criteria:



1. Citywide objective design standards shall be developed to ensure fulfillment of the following design policies for all new multifamily projects:

1. Buildings should maintain the scale and ~~character of other residential structures in the immediate vicinity and avoid abrupt changes in height and bulk between structures~~ massing allowed in the City's zoning ordinances.
2. Buildings should be grouped compactly to provide more usable open space.
3. Building elevations should be articulated and long, continuous wall and roof planes should be avoided. Architectural features such as bay windows, balconies, porches, and similar elements are encouraged.
4. Features should be incorporated into site and architectural designs which provide maximum exposure to sunlight and protection from rainstorms and other adverse climatic conditions (such as covered entryways).
5. Site and building design shall incorporate features to mitigate noise from nearby noise sources (see Noise Element).
6. Sufficient useable outdoor open space should be provided to accommodate the recreation and leisure needs of the residents, of the development, and individual households.
7. Individual units should be designed to be readily distinguishable from one another from the exterior.
8. Parking should be designed to protect the privacy of residents and prevent intrusion of noise and lights from vehicles.
9. Parking lots shall be landscaped with trees that reach a mature height of at least twenty feet and shall be visually screened from the street by solid walls, fences, or a



planted landscape buffer of at least six feet in width. Site design should incorporate safety features that maintain visibility and provide security lighting.

10. Service and storage areas, such as for recycling and garbage, shall be screened by fencing or walls; appropriate landscape planting and setbacks from adjacent properties shall be provided.

D-5b **Single-family residential design.** The intent in single-family residential design shall be to allow maximum flexibility consistent with ~~maintaining existing community objective design standards~~ character. ~~Maintaining character means~~ Design standards shall provide architectural style ~~consistency,~~ standards for structures proportional to the site and surroundings, and ~~harmony with the~~ that emphasize or contrast design of adjacent buildings. Good design respects its neighbors, is properly sited for privacy and solar access, minimizes disturbance of natural site conditions, and is landscaped to complement the streetscape, including street trees where appropriate.

Design of single-family houses on existing lots in hillside areas shall ~~adhere to the following additional criteria:~~ minimize visual impact on the terrain and blend with the natural features. Development on ridgelines shall be avoided unless there is no alternative developable area. In light of the policies that encourage addition of accessory dwelling units on "single family" zoned lots, strive for accessory dwelling unit design that: complements surrounding development; retains privacy; access to direct sunlight; and a sense of appropriate scale.

- ~~1. Disturbance of existing landforms (cut and fill) shall be minimized.~~
- ~~2. Terrain adaptive architectural designs which fit into the contour of the hillside are encouraged, including:~~
  - ~~a. Reduced footprint design with multi-level structures;~~
  - ~~b. Multiple "Step-up" or "step-down" structures;~~
  - ~~c. Stilt houses, with enclosure of area underneath the building.~~
- ~~3. Significant trees and drainageways should not be disturbed.~~
- ~~4. Development should be confined to portions of a site which are less steeply sloped.~~
- ~~5. Garages should be located under or over the structure depending on whether the lot is uphill or downhill from the street.~~
- ~~6. The scale and character of buildings should be matched with the terrain, scale, and character of the surrounding neighborhood.~~

## POLICY D-6 **DESIGN OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

**Objective.** Create functional commercial centers and industrial areas ~~which are functional,~~ suited to ~~the needs of the particular businesses~~ staff and customer needs, responsive to site conditions, and compatible with the neighborhood context.

D-6a **Design of commercial development.** The following criteria shall apply to design of new commercial development, except for the Plaza area, ~~which is addressed in Policy D-2~~:

1. To encourage pedestrian access buildings should be sited so that entries and front facades face the public sidewalk; loading docks and vehicular entrances shall be located to the side or rear.
2. When located adjacent or near to residential areas, buildings should respect the residential character by avoiding long, uninterrupted expanses of wall and roof planes, and by incorporating architectural features such as covered entries or porches, cupolas, towers, arbors or pergolas, etc. which add variety and interest to larger buildings.
3. Pedestrians and bikes should be accommodated through appropriate location of walkways and rain-sheltered entrances to buildings.
4. Drive-through service windows for restaurants shall be restricted to the Valley West area.
5. Where commercial development abuts residential or other non-commercial uses, appropriate visual and noise buffers shall be included in the site design, such as increased setbacks, [noise attenuation features](#), or landscaped screening.
6. Service and storage areas shall be screened by fencing and appropriate landscape plantings.
7. The siting and design of buildings shall promote energy-efficiency and [consider](#) solar access, ~~and shall minimize impacts on other nearby uses~~ [balancing development needs with solar access](#).
8. ~~Parking areas are encouraged to be provided~~ [If parking is necessary, the minimal necessary parking should be located](#) to the rear or side of buildings and include trees that reach a mature height of at least twenty feet whenever feasible.
9. Noise impacts shall be minimized through acoustical features in building design and on site sound attenuation.



**D-6b Design of Mixed Use Development.** In addition to the criteria stated in Policy D-6a, the following criteria shall also apply to new mixed-use development:

1. [Ensure the design provides for internal compatibility and privacy between the residential and non-residential uses on the site.](#)
2. [Ensure that new development is human-scaled and supports a pedestrian-friendly public realm. Buildings should be located at or close to the sidewalk.](#)
3. [Provide for sensitive transition from the public realm \(sidewalk\) to the private realm \(residences\).](#)

4. Encourage outdoor dining, publicly-accessible courtyards, window-shopping areas, and other pedestrian-friendly uses in spaces between building walls and the sidewalks.
5. Encourage ~~Provide for~~ convenient pedestrian access from the public street into the nonresidential portions of the project, through such means as courtyards, plazas, walkways, and street furniture.
6. Require main building entries to be visually prominent and oriented to a public street or pathway, ~~or publicly accessible courtyard.~~
7. Locate parking facilities away from building frontages in the rear of the lot.
8. Encourage non-residential uses to be located above the first floor or behind ground-floor commercial, except in limited applications.
9. Ensure that the residential units are of a residential character, ~~and that appropriate privacy between residential units and other uses on the site is provided.~~

**D-6b6c Design of industrial development.** In addition to the criteria stated in Policy D-6a, the following criteria shall also apply to new industrial development:

1. Building facades that include regional materials (e.g., locally produced wood, stone and recycled products) are encouraged. ~~Prefabricated and manufactured materials may be used only where they are compatible with surrounding development.~~
2. Outdoor storage areas, including storage of trucks and equipment, shall be screened from view from adjacent streets and parcels by appropriate fencing and landscaping.

**D-6c6d Design of institutional development.** Since institutional uses—such as churches, schools, government facilities, and others—are frequently located within residential areas, their design shall be reviewed for compatibility with the adjacent residential neighborhood. In addition, the City requests that ~~HSU~~ Cal Poly Humboldt, school districts, and other institutional entities adhere to the applicable City design ~~following~~ criteria, which ~~shall~~ apply to design of any facilities within Arcata:

1. Long, uninterrupted expanses of wall and roof planes should be avoided and architectural features ~~which add interest and variation~~, such as porches, cupolas, towers, arbors or pergolas, etc., should be incorporated.
2. Appropriate buffers and screening should be provided between institutional uses and adjacent residential uses to minimize noise and visual impacts, including increased setbacks, fencing, and landscaping.
3. The massing of buildings and the visual organization of facades, including the proportion of window and door openings to total wall surface, exterior materials and colors, and architectural detailing and ornamentation, should be designed to harmonize with any adjacent residential uses.
4. ~~Appropriate setbacks and landscaped buffers should be provided to minimize noise and visual impacts.~~

**D-6e** **Design of signs.** Signs shall be scaled, sized, and located appropriate to the uses on site and readily viewable from the public right of way without causing distractions through animation, flashing, or glare, or other off-site impacts that affect public safety and enjoyment.

The following criteria shall apply to all signs, except those located within the Central-Commercial Area use category:

1. Signs shall be placed so that they do not obscure other building elements such as windows, cornices, or decorative details.
2. Size, materials, style and color shall complement the building facade and shall be compatible with the surrounding area.
3. Copy shall be limited to icons, logos, services identification, and hours of operation (rather than advertising copy) except as required by law or ordinance.
4. Flush-mounted signs and monument signs are the preferred types; no more than one free-standing sign may be allowed per business street frontage (including alleys), and freestanding signs shall not exceed fifteen feet in height.
5. Pole signs are discouraged; when permitted, such signs shall not exceed fifteen feet in height.
6. Signs shall not be of a height or design which is intended to be read from the State Routes 101 or 299, except for in the commercial visitor serving district.
7. When lighted, signs shall be designed to minimize glare and with the minimum amount of illumination necessary to make the sign legible; neon signs are acceptable.
8. All off-premises (or off site) business identification and advertising signs are prohibited.
9. The planned sign program is encouraged whenever there are multiple businesses on a site; no more than three signs may be allowed per parcel except through approval of a planned sign program permit. The planned sign program shall require harmony in shape, placement, materials, and other appropriate design elements for all signs on the site.
10. At the time of any future alterations of a lawfully permitted existing sign, except for a change in copy, the entire sign shall be modified as necessary to conform to these policies.

## POLICY D-7 LANDSCAPE DESIGN

**Objective.** Promote landscape designs which are appropriate for the climate zone and emphasizing native plants, that may be complemented by non-invasive, non-native species specific site conditions, when they integrate harmoniously with the scale and architecture of buildings on the site, and improve the overall aesthetic appearance of the city and its neighborhoods, and serve to protect the general safety and welfare.

**D-7a Landscape plans required.** A landscape plan drawn to scale shall be required for all new development subject to City discretionary review by the City. The plan shall identify existing and proposed trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and other landscape and hardscape elements. Native species are encouraged for in all new landscaping.

- D-7b **Planting area required.** A minimum landscape planting area shall be required in all commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential land-use zones; ~~these shall be contained in the zoning ordinance~~ and expressed as a percent of site area.  
~~[Revised by Ordinance No. 1377, September 2008]~~
- D-7c **Parking lot landscaping.** All parking areas, other than single family residential, containing two or more parking spaces shall be landscaped. Landscaping shall include a minimum of a six-foot wide screen or buffer between the parking area and any public street. Trees that reach a mature height of at least twenty feet shall be provided within the parking area at a ratio of one or more trees to each five parking spaces.
- D-7d **Site design criteria.** Landscaping shall be an integral part of site development, connecting site design elements, enhancing the site identity, and creating a pleasing appearance. Landscape designs ~~shall conform to the following criteria;~~ should incorporate existing natural vegetation where appropriate; provide for erosion control, help to manage stormwater onsite for absorption and percolation, and for privacy, and beauty.
- ~~1. Existing natural site vegetation should be incorporated, to the extent appropriate.~~
  - ~~2. Coverage by impervious surfaces should be minimized in order to reduce runoff.~~
  - ~~3. Cut and fill slopes shall be landscaped for erosion prevention.~~
  - ~~4. Landscaping should include trees adjacent to the public street right of way, where appropriate.~~
  - ~~5. Consideration should be given to native plant species and to those non-invasive exotics which have demonstrated adaptability to local climate.~~
  - ~~6. Where a development borders a major street, railroad, or different land-use type, a landscape buffer shall be provided to create a visual screen, promote privacy, and to shield the development from any adverse external effects, and to shield neighboring properties from any adverse effects of the development. The buffer may include fencing, berms, plantings, or a combination thereof. The appearance of fences from public streets should be softened with plant materials.~~
  - ~~7. The design for a particular site should harmonize with the surrounding landscape, including the landscape design of adjacent lots.~~
  - ~~8. Site design should incorporate safety features such as maintaining visibility and providing security lighting.~~
- D-7e **Upgrade of non-conforming landscape.** When improvements are made to structures on sites where landscaping is non-conforming, landscaping should be required to be upgraded if feasible.
- D-7f **Maintenance of required landscaping.** All required landscape plantings shall be properly maintained to assure survival; ~~any non-surviving~~ with plants shall be replacements as needed for first five yearsd.

### 5.3 IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

#	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
LU-1	<b>Objective Design-Review Standards, Sign Regulations, Language Standards (LUC Zoning Amendment)</b> Prepare a <u>PLUC Zoning</u> amendment ( <del>formerly LUDG</del> ) to implement Design Element policies, including <u>objective design standards for residential projects standards for review, sign regulations, landscape standards</u> , and applicability of design review (specify when design review and approval is required).	Community Development Dept./ Planning Commission	Year <u>2-5</u>
<del>D-1</del>	<del><b>Design Review Commission/Project Design Review</b></del> <del>Review and approve the design of private and public projects.</del>	<del>Comm. Devel. Dept./ Design Review Comm.</del>	<del>Ongoing</del>
<del>D-2</del>	<del><b>Downtown Street Tree Program</b></del> <del>Prepare a street tree program consistent with the Design Element for review and recommendation by the Design Review Commission and approval by the City Council. Financial assistance may be provided by the Arcata Community Development Agency.</del>	<del>Public Works Department/ Downtown Business Organizations</del>	<del>Year 1</del>
D-3	<b>Design Criteria and Brochure</b> Prepare design review brochures or handouts which explain and illustrate design criteria, standards, and procedures, <u>explaining differentiation between design guidance and objective design standards.</u>	Community Development Dept./Design Review Comm.	Year <u>3-6</u>
<del>D-4</del>	<del><b>Design Awards Program</b></del> <del>Recognize and award projects that demonstrate the highest quality design and context.</del>	<del>Comm. Devel. Dept./Design Review Comm.</del>	<del>Ongoing</del>
<del>D-5</del>	<del><b>Valley West/ Samoa Blvd. Public Improvements Program</b></del> <del>The City of Arcata shall work to obtain funding to develop a specific public improvements program to improve the appearance of <u>Samoa Blvd. Valley East and Valley West, and Giuntoli Boulevards.</u> <del>from State Route 101 to "I" Street.</del> These improvements may include uniform landscaping, pedestrian enhancements, and directional <u>signingsignage.</u></del>	<del>Public Works Department/ Environmental Services and Engineering Departments</del>	<del>Year 2</del>
<del>D-6</del>	<del><b>Design Review MOU</b></del> <del>Develop Memorandum of Understanding with other governmental agencies for design review</del>	<del>City/County/State agencies/Special Districts</del>	<del>Year 2</del>