02 OVERARCHING DESIGN GUIDELINES

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02 OVERARCHING GUIDELINES

PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

The following design guidelines are intended to provide general direction for design across all development project types in Santa Cruz County. These general application guidelines address site features and design qualities that are common to most development types. Design guidelines that are tailored toward specific development types - including multifamily residential, commercial, mixed-use, and workplace flex developments - can be found in the other chapters of this document.

Project types with specific guidelines that are provided in Chapters 3 - 6 should follow both the Overarching Design Guidelines and the guidelines specific to that project type.

In some cases, the guidelines in Chapters 3 - 6 serve to provide more detailed direction for topics addressed in the Overarching Guidelines, and in other cases they provide guidelines for topics that are unique to certain development types.

These guidelines provide ideas and best practices for well-designed projects. In cases where design guidelines are related to specific quantitative requirements, links to the relevant standards are provided.

OVERARCHING DESIGN GOALS

1. Establish site planning and building orientation patterns that create active street edges and efficiently organize on- and off-site connectivity.
2. Create open spaces that support on-site uses and create a network of interconnected active, safe and attractive public and private open spaces.
3. Encourage new structures that have compatible mass and scale, architectural style and materials that respect and contribute to the neighborhood context.
4. Install landscaping and design utilities and trash enclosures to increase the quality of frontages, enhance open spaces, provide screening and contribute to the overall aesthetic of the site.
5. Integrate sustainable and pedestrian-oriented design across all development types.

A. SITE PLANNING

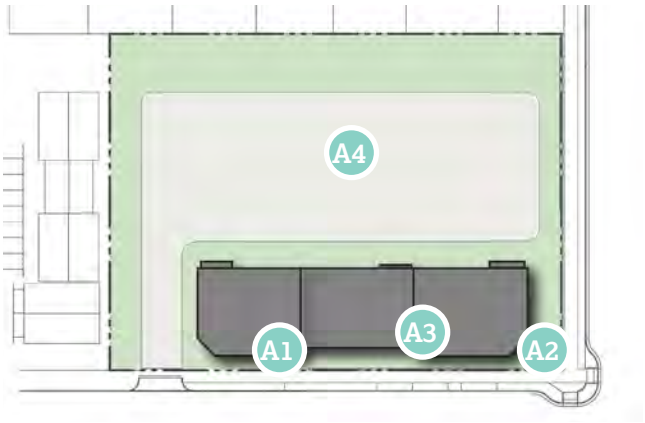
A1. Building Placement. Place new structures at or near public right-of-way edge of Main Street and Active Connector street types to activate the pedestrian realm. Where needed, building placement along Multimodal Corridors may allow landscaped buffers. Building placement along Local Residential Streets should follow the pattern of existing neighborhood context. Place buildings to preserve existing natural systems such as creeks.

A2. Corners. Locate new development to activate important street corners. Where needed, set back buildings to create corner plazas to be utilized as common open space in commercial, mixed-use, and workplace flex projects along Main Street and Active Connector street types. Extra setbacks at corners may also be necessary to ensure safe sight distance for drivers.

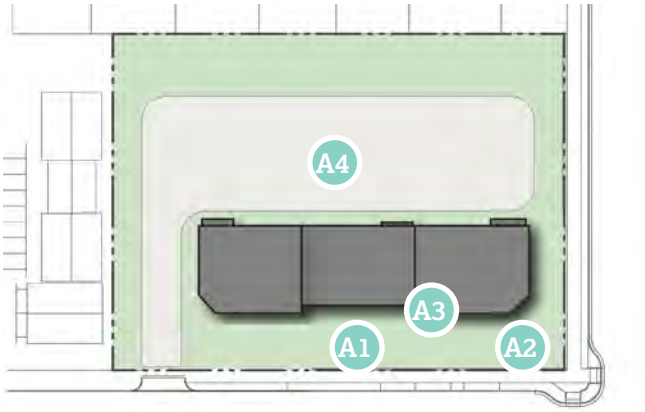
See SCCC 13.16.093 and County Design Criteria for site distance requirements.

A3. Building Orientation. Maximize the length of street-facing frontage of new structures along public streets to encourage street definition and activation.

A4. On-Site Parking. Provide on-site parking behind buildings rather than between buildings and street frontages, especially along Main Streets, Multimodal Corridors and Active Connectors. See Section D: Access, Circulation and Parking for more detailed guidance on parking design.



Active Connector / Main Street



Multimodal Corridor

A. SITE PLANNING

1 Activity zone
2 Pedestrian sidewalk zone
3 Pedestrian Amenity Zone

A5. Setbacks. Provide street-facing **setbacks** to ensure space for the pedestrian amenity zone, pedestrian sidewalk zone, and activity zone. See Appendix A for more information about appropriate widths for these zones along different street types.

Setback - distance between a building and a property line or other marker

A6. Usable Open Spaces within Street-Facing Setbacks. Design wider setbacks as active, usable open spaces such as pocket plazas and other programmable areas, especially for projects fronting Active Connectors and Main Streets. See Section C: Open Space for more detailed guidance on open space design.

A7. Interior Side and Rear Setbacks. Buffer new development from less intense neighboring land uses with increased side and rear setbacks.

See SCCC 13.10.323 for residential setback requirements, SCCC 13.10.333 for commercial setback requirements, and SCCC 13.10.335 for mixed-use setback requirements.

B. BUILDING DESIGN

B1. Upper Floor Stepbacks. Visually break up building mass through the use of upper floor wall **stepbacks**. This is especially important for buildings that are three or more stories when sited near lower-scaled structures on adjoining properties.

Stepback - setback of an upper floor of a building from a lower floor.

See SCCC 13.10.323 for residential third story setback reuqirements and SCCC 13.10.333 for commercial third story setback requirements.

B2. Wall Plane Variation. To add visual interest, consider creating setback offests of at least one (1) foot in depth every 25 to 50 feet of wall plane along street-fronting walls.

B3. Roofline Variation. Consider using a variety of roof designs and dormers to create variation in building height and further enhance visual interest. Pitched roofs with dormers can be used to reduce the appearance of upper-floor building mass.

B4. Building Modulation. Provide vertical and horizontal **modulations** with elements such as facade extrusions and recesses, alternating materials and roof forms, to provide more interest and depth to the building facade.

Modulations - building facades differentiated by depth, direction, or material

B5. Facade Articulation. Provide an array of treatments such as trim, **awnings**, windows, balconies, and other architectural elements to create variation along the building facade.

Awnings - fabric projections that provide weather protection, identity, or decoration

B. BUILDING DESIGN

B6. Design Consistency. Select compatible and high-quality building materials that harmonize with the overall project design, landscaping, and neighboring structures.

B7. Balconies, Patios, Decks. Design decks, patios, and upper floor balconies along high-visibility corridors and frontages to create an "eyes on the street" effect and foster a more inviting and comfortable street environment.

B8. Windows. Place ground floor and upper floor windows and openings along all exposed edges of the building face with particular attention to public streets.

B9. Ground Floor Activity Area. Create an attractive and open ground floor design along building frontages for all development types in order to help activate the streetscape. Locate public and publicly-oriented uses on the ground floor of buildings to encourage pedestrian activity.

See SCCC 13.10.335(C) for ground floor commercial use requirements.

C. OPEN SPACE

C1. Frontage Open Space. Consider allocating activity zones along Main Street and Active Connector street frontages as open spaces for public use. These spaces can be designed as **plazas**, **forecourts** or **paseos**, programmed uses such as outdoor dining, mobile and pop-up businesses, farmer's markets, temporary events, play spaces and community gardens. See Appendix A for more information about activity zones.

C2. Internal Open Space. Design internal open spaces tailored to on-site building users including common open spaces for building residents, and outdoor seating, **plazas**, **forecourts** and **paseos** to support businesses that do not have street frontages.

For projects along Multimodal Corridors, internal open spaces should be located in central and rear portions of the site in order to create a quiet environment insulated from street noise and emissions.

Plaza - public square

Forecourt - area between a building entrance and the sidewalk or street frontage

Paseo - walkway for strolling

C. OPEN SPACE

C3. Parklets. When possible, repurpose public right-of-way and parking spaces into passive common public space to serve as seating and outdoor retail for clientele and the general public. Such installations are well-suited for Main Street and Active Connector contexts.

C4. Amenities. Design open spaces with chairs, tables, trash receptacles, lighting, shade features, and landscaping to create outdoor social areas, especially along commercial frontages and on residential properties.

C5. Shading. Incorporate shade elements in open spaces through elements such as canopies, awnings, **trellises**, umbrellas, or other similar features. Adequate tree cover may fulfill this purpose as well.

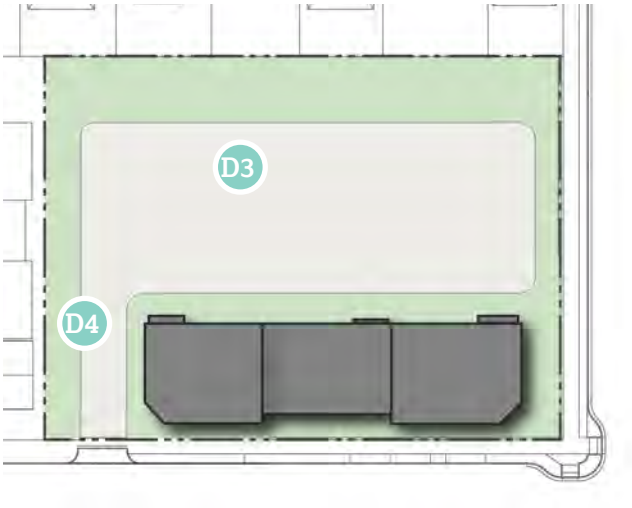
Trellis - framework that supports and displays climbing plants

D. ACCESS, CIRCULATION AND PARKING

D1. Primary Pedestrian Access. Locate primary ground floor pedestrian building entrances for access from the public sidewalk, especially on Multimodal Corridors, Active Connectors and Main Streets. If a building faces more than one of these street types, determine primary street frontage by the following priority: (1) Main Street, (2) Active Connector and (3) Multimodal Corridor.

D2. Residential Unit Pedestrian Access. Orient residential buildings so that the majority of ground floor units have individual entries from public streets. This encourages a safe and activated streetscape.

D3. Parking and Access. Locate parking areas toward rear of the site or otherwise obstruct from off-site views, while maintaining appropriate access for people with disabilities. On Main Streets, discourage parking lots between street frontages and buildings. On Multimodal Corridors, surface parking lots should occupy less than 50% of any single street frontage.



See County Design Criteria and SCCC 13.16 for parking design requirements.

D4. **Curb Cuts.** Limit curb cuts for vehicle entrances and exits to maximize pedestrian character and safety. Curb cuts should not exceed the minimum width required.

See County Design Criteria for curb cut requirements.

D5. Landscape Buffers. Parking lots located along street frontages should include landscaped buffers to screen and soften the appearance of parking lots. See Section G: Landscaping for more guidance on parking lot landscaping..

D6. Surface Parking Coverage. Consider limiting the total automobile area (parking, driveways, travel lanes, etc.) to less than half of the total site area, inclusive of surface parking lots and new streets. Underground or structured parking is encouraged as an alternative to surface parking lots where feasible and appropriate.

D. ACCESS, CIRCULATION AND PARKING

D7. Parking podiums. For buildings with integrated parking garages, maximum height of a **parking podium** visible from a street should be one story from finished grade. Parking podiums should only be open-sided on the back or when facing alleys. Integrate shallow commercial spaces at ground level to activate the streetscape.

Parking podium - Above-ground parking structure enclosed by walls and supporting residential or commercial space overhead.

D8. Bike Parking. Install shared long and short term bike parking outside buildings along Multimodal Corridors, Active Connectors and Main Streets, and in interior building locations for on-site residents and workers, if applicable. Provide covered bike parking whenever possible.

See SCCC 13.16.040 for bike parking requirements.

D9. Paving Materials. Create more comfortable pedestrian environments through the use of high-quality paving materials for on-site, at-grade surfaces used by both vehicles and pedestrians on private property. Consider pavers, colored concrete, and stamped or scored concrete.

D10. ADA Compliance. Ensure minimum four-foot wide wheelchair-accessible pedestrian pathways, including where sidewalks cross driveway ramps.

D11. Pedestrian Crossings. Create enhanced internal pedestrian crossings delineated with materials or colors to prioritize pedestrians within developments. Mid-block pedestrian crosswalks should be provided on blocks longer than 500 feet.

D12. Access to Amenities and Networks. Connect building and site design to transit stops and pedestrian/bike networks. Provide controlled pedestrian access to creeks and other open space amenities where appropriate. Consider public access easements through large parcel developments.

E. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

E1. Sense of Place. Encourage traditional and contemporary styles that respond to the character and climate of the local community, while reinforcing a sense of place through adaptation of local architectural influences.

E. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

E2. Consistent Theme. Ensure visual interest and continuity with the streetscape and adjacent neighborhoods through massing, architectural styles, materials, colors, and other treatments that respect local scale and character. Use design elements such as materials, colors, textures, and rooflines to articulate the design theme.

E. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

E3. Identity. Where possible, incorporate art and sustainable elements to celebrate local stories and community values.

E4. Frontages. Provide staggered block frontages and pedestrian areas within setbacks to reflect massing that is consistent with adjacent structures.

E. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

E5. Complementary Style. Use complementary textures, colors, and materials to ensure that new buildings seamlessly blend into existing residential neighborhoods and mixed-use and commercial corridors.

Rehabilitate existing buildings by retaining the architectural style of original buildings while adding new elements that improve functionality such as skylights that maximize natural light.

F. NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITIONS

F1. Stepped Massing. Encourage building massing to be **stepped-down** or provide greater setbacks when adjacent to property designated for low-density residential development in order to create visual interest and reduce the perception of bulk and height.

Stepped-down massing - shorter building height near the edges of a new development where the new development borders existing shorter buildings.

See SCCC 13.10.323 for residenital third-story setbacks and SCCC 13.10.333 for setback requirements for commercial buildings adjacent to residential or agricultural developments.

F2. Scale Contrasts. Reduce the bulk and scale of multi-unit and mixed-use buildings by including upper-level dormers, angled roofs and other similar architectural elements.

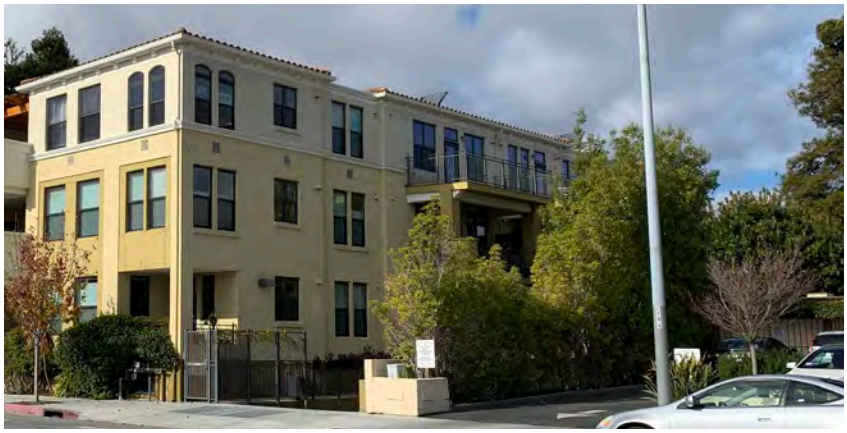
Use a variety of colors and materials to de-emphasize the bulkiness and height of upper building levels.

F. NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITIONS

F3. Finer Scale. Encourage larger buildings to be broken up into smaller, distinct individual forms reflective of the scale and character of adjacent structures and the local neighborhood.

See SCCC 13.11.070(B)(3) for infill development design strategies.

F. NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITIONS



F4. Horizontal Elements. Use horizontal linear elements such as porches, balconies, **clerestory windows**, **cornices** or **plinths** to counteract the vertical mass of taller buildings and complement the character of surrounding neighborhoods.

Clerestory Windows - windows above eye level designed to let in light

Cornice - molding along the ledge of a building

Plinth - base or platform that supports a structure

F. NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITIONS

F5. Transitional Landscaping. Use trees and landscaping to soften scale differences, particularly in areas where trees and vegetation are unifying aspects of community character. Landscaping should also be used to provide privacy screening when a commercial project adjoins existing residential or lower-scale commercial development.

See SCCC 13.11.070(D) for landscaping design requirements.

G. LANDSCAPING

G1. Corridor Landscaping. Along commercial corridors, use landscape treatments to define outdoor spaces, screen unsightly features, buffer pedestrians from high-traffic areas, and create a shaded, inviting pedestrian experience while maintaining public safety.

G2. Plant Palette. Utilize locally appropriate plant species to improve quality of life, reduce heat island impacts and create the conditions for thriving wildlife habitats and ecological systems. Encourage plant species that provide habitat or food sources for butterflies, birds, honey bees and other pollinators.

G3. Green Landscapes. Consider green roofs, green walls and edible landscapes. Edible plants may be segregated into particular landscaped areas such as community gardens or integrated with the larger landscape.

G. LANDSCAPING

G4. Tree Placement. Locate trees to increase shade and provide buffers for parking areas, buildings, and the public realm. For security purposes, openings should be incorporated into the landscape design to provide clear views into sites.

California Building Code 5.106.12.1 Surface parking areas. For non-residential and mixed-use projects, shade tree plantings, minimum #10 container size or equal, shall be installed to provide shade over 50% of the parking area within 15 years.

California Building Code 5.106.12.2 Landscape areas. For non-residential and mixed-use projects, shade tree plantings, minimum #10 container size or equal, shall be installed to provide shade over 20% of the landscape area within 15 years. Exception: Playfields for organized sport activity are not included in the landscape area calculation.

See SCCC 13.11.070(D), SCCC 13.16.060(D) and County Design Criteria for landscape design requirements for sites, streets and parking areas.

H. SUSTAINABILITY

H1. Energy Conservation. Reduce energy usage and carbon footprint using energy efficiency and energy generation technologies in the building and open space design in support of Santa Cruz County's Climate Action Plan goals.

H2. On-Site Energy Production. Encourage the installation, maintenance and use of solar and wind power generation systems on new or remodeled commercial buildings. Explore structures and mechanisms that can serve a dual purpose as public art features either through their design, movement or lighting.

H3. Passive Solar Design. Consider passive heating and cooling techniques during building design. Integrate these elements to articulate building facades.

Passive Solar heating and cooling - The use of the sun's energy directly for heating and cooling. Walls and floors are stone, concrete, or other materials that collect, store and distribute solar heat. Windows and shades are designed to let in light and heat in the winter but not in the summer, based on the angle of the sun in the sky.

H. SUSTAINABILITY

H4. Shading. Control solar heat gain and glare using external shading devices.

H5. Operable Windows. Incorporate operable windows or ventilated double facades to allow natural ventilation and reduce energy consumption.

H6. Natural Lighting. Maximize exposure to daylight with glass, skylights, atriums, and **light reflectors**. Design windows on northern facades and shading on southern facades to reduce reliance on artificial lighting.

Light reflectors - trim around light fixture to maximize light transmittal from the fixture or from a window and direct light to other areas

H. SUSTAINABILITY

H7. Stormwater Management. Create an integrated system of **pervious** and **impervious** systems that function together to capture, transport, filter/prefilter and treat stormwater on site in order to reduce off-site flows, replenish groundwater and provide water for landscape irrigation. Incorporate **swales** and **rain gardens** into the design of pedestrian amenity zones.

Pervious - Allowing water to pass through. Examples of pervious site materials include landscaping, gravel, brick or stone pavers without grout, and pervious asphalt and concrete.

Impervious - Not allowing water to pass through. Examples include roofing, asphalt, concrete, and grouted brick or stone pavers. Runoff from impervious surfaces causes erosion and flooding.

Swale- Landscaped linear ditch that collects, filters, and slows the flow of stormwater.

Rain Garden - Garden bed planted with deep-rooted species that collects and absorbs on-site stormwater into the soil.

See County Design Criteria for stormwater management design requirements.

H. SUSTAINABILITY

H8. Building Stormwater Runoff. Encourage drainage systems that divert stormwater runoff from building rooftops, parking areas, and hardscapes (sidewalks, pathways, plazas) into **cisterns** or stormwater systems integrated into on-site open space designs or public art features.

Cistern - A tank for storing water, located above or below ground.

H9. Preserve Existing Natural Systems. Situate buildings to preserve existing natural systems and mitigate negative environmental impacts.

See SCCC 13.11.070(B) for environmental consideration requirements in site design.

I. TRASH ENCLOSURES AND UTILITIES

I1. Trash Location. Ensure trash enclosures are located away from public view and pedestrian path of travel on Main Streets, Active Connectors and adjacent parcels in order to minimize noise and odor impacts typically associated with garbage collection and storage.

I2. Trash Size. Ensure enclosures are of sufficient size to house the number and size of bins and containers needed to accommodate the waste generated by building users, including trash, cardboard, cans and bottles, food waste, green waste, and other recyclables.

See SCCC 13.11.070(C)(2) for recycling and waste storage design requirements.

I. TRASH ENCLOSURES AND UTILITIES

I3. Trash Screening. Screen trash enclosures to reduce their visual impact on the overall site and building design. Screening should be constructed of durable materials. Structural screening such as fences should be supplemented with landscaping.

I4. Utility Screening. Either contain (within a building) or fully screen all utility cabinets, meters, and backflow prevention devices on Active Connectors and Main Streets to reduce visual impacts. Screening mechanisms can include landscaping, fencing, low walls, or other techniques.

See SCCC 13.11.070(C)(1) for utility equipment design requirements.

I5. Outdoor Storage and Delivery Screening. Screen outdoor storage and delivery areas containing materials, supplies, utilities or equipment from public view along Multimodal Corridor,s, Active Connectors, Main Streets, and Local Residential Streets. Consider using landscaping and art elements to screen larger areas.

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