



COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

**FOR DISCRETIONARY COMMERCIAL
MIXED-USE PROJECTS**

Adopted July 22, 2014, Resolution # 14-102

APPLICABILITY

The following are specific design goals and objectives which apply to discretionary commercial projects within the mixed use zoning districts located within the UVAP Area. Applicants are encouraged to follow these guidelines for all other projects.

The Planning Director, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, or Board of Supervisors shall have the authority to apply or modify the following Design Guidelines depending upon the size, scale, intensity, and location of the development project.

SITE PLANNING

Natural Site Features

Generally, a designer should plan a project to fit a site's natural conditions, rather than alter a site to accommodate a stock building plan.

Significant existing site features such as mature trees/ landscaping, lot size and configuration, topography, and the relationship to surrounding development should be compelling factors in determining the development capacity and design of projects.

All required grading and drainage plans shall be prepared by a registered civil engineer or other qualified professional acceptable to the Chief Building Inspector.

Parking

The number of parking spaces and overall parking lot design shall comply with the requirements of the Mendocino County Zoning Code. Deviation from the parking requirements of the Zoning Code can be approved through the discretionary review process provided a finding is made that there is a unique circumstance associated with the use of the property that results in a demand for less parking than normally expected. These circumstances may include uses that would attract young teenagers, bicyclists, or a high number of drop-off patrons.

Parking facilities shall be aesthetically screened and shaded with shrubs, trees, short walls and fences according to the requirements of the Zoning District in which the property is located. Wherever possible, parking lots shall be used as buffers when property is located adjacent to agricultural parcels

The visual prominence of parking areas should be de-emphasized by separating parking areas into small components. The practice of placing the majority of parking areas between the building(s) shall be de-emphasized by separating parking areas into small components. The practice of placing the majority of parking areas between the building(s) and the primary street frontage should be avoided (Exhibit 1).

Parking Lots

Parking lots with twelve (12) or more parking spaces shall have a tree placed between every five (5) parking spaces with a continuous linear planting strip, rather than individual planting wells, unless clearly infeasible. Parking lot trees shall primarily be deciduous species, and shall be designed to provide tree canopy coverage of fifty percent (50%) over all paved areas within

ten (10) years of planting. Based upon the design of the parking lot, a reduced number of trees may be approved through the discretionary review process.

Parking lots shall have a perimeter planting strip with both trees and shrubs. The planting of lawn areas are discouraged but can be acceptable when they are planted with the trees and shrubs associated with a water conservation landscape plan.

Parking lots with twelve (12) or more parking spaces shall have defined pedestrian sidewalks or marked pedestrian facilities within landscaped areas and/or separated from automobile travel lanes. Based upon the design of the parking lot, and the use that it is serving, relief from this requirement may be approved through the discretionary review process.

Street trees are required. They may be placed on the property proposed for development instead of within the public right-of-way if the location is approved by the Department of Transportation, based upon safety and maintenance factors.

Species of street trees shall be selected from the Master Tree List with the consultation of the County staff.

Pedestrian Orientation

Pedestrian walkways should be included that directly link all parking areas with building entrances, off-site transportation facilities, established sidewalks, and adjacent public rights-of-way. They should also be consistent with uses and architecture from both a functional and aesthetic standpoint.

Outdoor pedestrian spaces should be landscaped and include such features as planters along sidewalks, pedestrian oriented signs, attractive street furniture, low-level lighting, and outdoor seating areas.

Compatibility With Surrounding Development

The placement and layout of buildings, parking areas, landscaping, exterior lighting, and other site design features should be compatible with surrounding land uses and architecture from both a functional and aesthetic standpoint.

Development should not create unattractive views for neighbors or traffic corridors. All exposed elevations should maintain consistent architectural character. Service areas, trash enclosures, utility meters, and mechanical and electrical equipment should be screened from view.

Property owners are strongly encouraged to develop shared facilities such as driveways, parking areas, pedestrian walkways, and outdoor living areas to maximize usable areas and create unique design opportunities.

Setbacks for new development should consider the character of existing frontages. Setbacks deeper than the minimum required are encouraged only in order to allow for sidewalk widening or the creation of special pedestrian areas such as entryways, courtways, outdoor cafes, and other features intended to enhance the pedestrian environment. Non-residential buildings should be located closest to adjacent agricultural lands to act as a buffer.

BUILDING DESIGN

Architecture

Monotonous box-like structures devoid of variety and distinctiveness and without openings and changes in wall planes are discouraged. Architectural features such as arches, raised parapets, decorated cornices, eaves, windows, balconies, entry insets, a variety of roof angles and pitches, and the inclusion of relief features in wall surfaces are strongly encouraged when tied into a comprehensive design theme.

Building Colors

The use of strong or loud colors, especially those with no tradition of local usage, should be reviewed in context with the overall aesthetics of the area.

Colors should be compatible with adjoining buildings. Color work on the side and rear walls should be compatible with the colors on the front or street side walls. Decoration and trim should be painted in order to call attention to it.

Building Materials

The creative use of wood, stucco, masonry (brick, stone, tile), and recycled materials are strongly encouraged.

The use of metal buildings is discouraged, unless they are designed in a creative and unique way that meets the purpose and intent of the Design Guidelines.

Concrete block and exposed concrete are generally acceptable building materials, provided they are treated, textured, painted, and/or used in a pleasing aesthetic way consistent with the Community Design Guidelines. Materials should be selected to create compatibility between the building and adjoining buildings.

Lighting

Exterior lighting should be subdued. It should enhance building design and landscaping as well as provide safety and security. Exterior lighting should not spill out and create glare on adjoining properties, and should not be directed towards the night sky.

Light standard heights should be predicated on the lighting need of the particular location and use. Tall lighting fixtures that illuminate large areas should be avoided.

Lighting fixtures, standards, and all exposed accessories should be harmonious with building design, and preferably historic and innovative in style. All pedestrian and building access areas should be adequately lighted to provide safety, security, and aesthetic quality.

The location, intensity, and shielding of all exterior lighting for buildings, businesses, landscaping, streets and parking lots, and recreational and public areas should be downward shielded and employ approved "Dark Sky Friendly Fixtures" (www.darksky.org) that are operated on a limited night schedule so as to avoid or prevent the illumination of adjoining uses or areas or the night sky.

Energy Conservation

Both active and passive solar designs are encouraged. Natural ventilation and shading should be used to cool buildings whenever possible.

Sunlight should be used for direct heating and illumination whenever possible.

Solar heating equipment need not be screened, but should be as unobtrusive as possible and complement the building design. Every effort should be made to integrate solar panels into the roof design, flush with the roof slope (Exhibit 2). Solar panels are encouraged to be located on parking lots and designed as parking shade structures.

Signs

The amount, type, and location of signage on a site shall comply with the requirements of the Mendocino County Zoning Code. However, sign programs should be designed tastefully and in a way where the overall signage does not dominate the site.

Sandwich board signs shall conform to the requirements of the Mendocino County Zoning Code, and shall be tastefully designed with subdued colors, minimal sign copy, and a creative appearance. Every sign should be designed in scale and proportion with the surrounding built environment. Signs should be designed as an integral architectural element of the building and site to which it principally relates.

The colors, materials, and lighting of every sign should be restrained and harmonious with the building and site. No sign shall be placed within the public right-of-way without the securement of an Encroachment Permit.

Fences & Walls

All sides of perimeter fencing exposed to public view should be finished in a manner compatible with a project's materials, finishes, colors, and architectural styling. Large blank fence walls, and fences and walls that create high visual barriers are strongly discouraged unless necessary to establish a barrier or separation with an adjacent agricultural property. All proposed unpainted wood surfaces should be treated or stained to preserve and enhance their natural colors. '

All fencing and walls shall comply with the provisions of the Mendocino County Zoning Code. No fencing or wall shall obstruct the sight distances of motorists, as determined by the Department of Transportation.

Outdoor Storage & Service Areas

Storage areas should be limited to the rear of a site, and from public view with a solid fence or wall using concrete, wood, stone, brick, or other similar material and should be screened. All outdoor storage areas and enclosures should be screened, when possible, with landscaping.

If trash and recycling areas are required in the discretionary review process, they shall be designed to harmonize with the building and landscaping.

Where common mailboxes are provided, they should be located close to the front entrance of building(s). The architectural character should be similar in form, materials, and colors to the surrounding buildings.

Landscaping

All landscaping shall comply with zoning code requirements. Landscaping shall be proportional to the building elevations.

Landscape plantings shall be those which grow well in Mendocino County's climate without extensive irrigation. Native, habitat-friendly flowering plants are strongly encouraged.

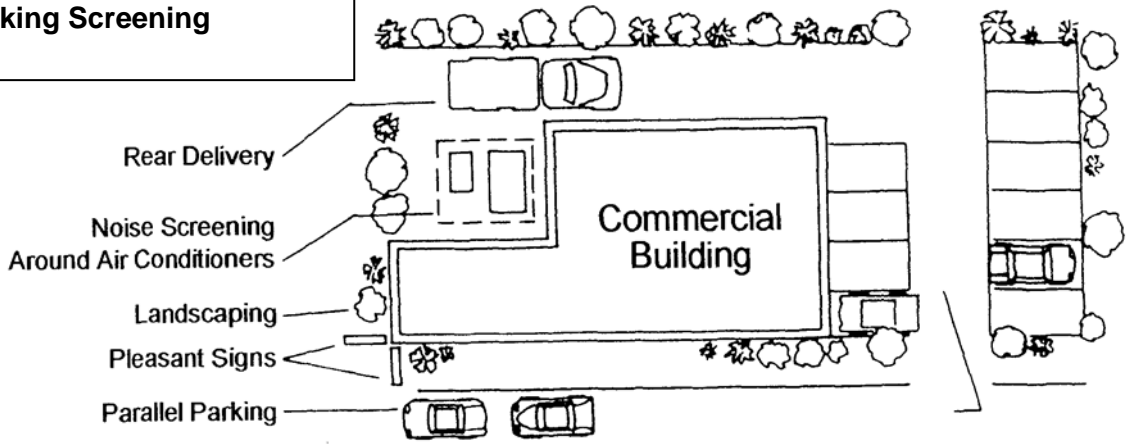
All plantings shall be of sufficient size, health and intensity so that a viable and mature appearance can be attained in a reasonably short amount of time.

Deciduous trees shall constitute the majority of the trees proposed along the south and west building exposures; non deciduous street tree species shall be restricted to areas that do not inhibit solar access on the project site or abutting properties.

All new developments shall include a landscaping coverage of twenty percent (20%) of the gross area of the parcel, unless because of the small size of a parcel, such coverage would be unreasonable. A minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the landscaped area shall be dedicated to live plantings. New tree planting will assume an average canopy for a 10 year old mature tree. Landscaping plans are subject to the State of California Water Conservation in Landscape Act of 1990.

Projects involving the redevelopment/reuse of existing buildings shall provide as much landscaping as feasible. Landscaping plans shall include an automatic irrigation system and lighting plan. All required landscaping for commercial development projects shall be adequately maintained in a viable condition.

**Exhibit 1-
Parking Screening**



**Exhibit 2-
Energy Conservation-Screening Solar Equipment**

