

## ***DESIGN ELEMENT***

### **5.1.1 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.

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

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

**Overview of Arcata's design character.** The City of Arcata's physical and cultural setting on the California North Coast is one of its most valuable assets. Physical and visual separations from other communities include, Arcata Bay, marshes, tidelands, and agricultural lands to the south; agricultural lands of the Arcata Bottoms to the west; the Mad River floodplain to the north; and forested hills to the east. 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 Arcata complements the scenic rural coastal environment.

The City's downtown urban core and Plaza are surrounded by many smaller commercial centers and distinct neighborhoods extending into the hills and bordering agricultural areas. These mixed-use areas and neighborhoods provide a range of housing, working and recreational

environments and a direct relationship to natural areas.. Much of Arcata's character is derived from the architectural styles of its buildings, particularly older historical residences and commercial buildings near the City's center.

The Element plans for continually integrating public spaces for casual and organized community gatherings, with art and other visual amenities. These public spaces will invite residents and visitors to engage in both active and passive outdoor activities during community events. These public spaces are defined in part by the City's history, diversity, distinctive physical qualities, uniqueness, and desire for equitable and 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 widen 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, the General Plan includes the Gateway Area Plan Element which applies specifically to the part of the City west of downtown. The Plan has a substantial design component, promoting a distinctive and attractive sense of place built through creative placemaking. The Gateway Areas Urban environment is complimented by series of green spaces, trails, protected greenbelts, and daylighted creeks planned to provide pockets of active and passive recreational opportunities. The Gateway Area Plan Element includes a form-based code for development that adheres to objective design standards.

### 5.1.2 POLICIES

The Design Element contains the following policies:

- D-1 Overall Community Design
- D-2 Downtown (Central – Commercial) 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
- D-8 Community Benefits Program

**POLICY D-1 OVERALL COMMUNITY DESIGN**

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

**D-1a Building and Site Characteristics.** Building design shall consider established City characteristics and planned features and shall offset the neighborhood impact of increased heights and new uses in some areas of the community. This shall be accomplished by:

1. Breaking the massing of larger developments through setbacks rather than constructing a single large, monolithic building.
2. Avoiding large, unbroken expanses of wall and roof planes.
3. Providing articulation in building mass, surfaces, rooflines, wall planes, and facades, and including distinctive architectural features and ornamentation.
4. Parking Lot Locations. Disallow the placement of parking lots along street frontages in the interest of maintaining continuous building frontages along the primary commercial streets and improving walkability. Parking lots and structures must be located behind buildings, or otherwise located subordinate and obscured by design features.
5. Custom Standards Along Designated Streets. Plan for custom use, development, and design standards along designated streets with the objective of generating a more welcoming and vibrant city.
6. Main Building Entrances. Require main building entries to be visually prominent and oriented to a public street or pathway.
7. Pedestrian Connections. Required pedestrian walk paths to connect entrances directly to a public sidewalk.
8. Pedestrian-Friendly Design. Require parking location and design to not detract from pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, walkable neighborhoods, and active and inviting mixed-use districts. Locate parking facilities away from building frontages in the rear of the lot unless determined infeasible in unique circumstances.
9. Minimize Visual Dominance. Screen parking facilities for limited visibility from the street frontage with landscaping, art, or other visually appealing methods.
10. Varied and interesting Facades. Create street-facing building facades that are varied and interesting with human-scale design details.
11. Articulation. Incorporate architectural elements that reduce the box-like appearance and perceived mass of buildings.
12. 360-Degree Design. Provide for buildings designed as a unified whole with architectural integrity on all sides of the structure.
13. Quality Materials. Ensure quality materials that maintain their appearance over time.
14. Design Details. Promote design details and materials compatible with the existing neighborhood design.

- D-1b **Emphasize Arcata Plaza area as a central community focal point.** Architectural and other design elements shall emphasize the importance of the Arcata Plaza as a City center for commerce, entertainment, and special events. Designs shall promote pedestrian access and retail space at the back of sidewalk. Parking should be accommodated off-site to the extent practicable.



- D-1c **Promote quality and diversity of design compatible with neighborhood context.** Site and building design shall consider neighborhood context, including existing structures, especially when increased structure heights and coverages are proposed. Within new development, diversity in structure facades and materials, rather than repetitive designs is encouraged. Allow for and encourage complementary diversity in building forms and creativity in project design as long as projects support a pedestrian-friendly environment and other General Plan goals. Provide for human-scale and pedestrian-friendly building massing where large buildings are broken into smaller volumes that fit into the surrounding neighborhood.
- D-1d **Preserve natural landforms and landscape features.** Site designs shall have the minimum disturbance necessary to natural conditions such as existing contours and 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, solar orientation and consider shading of adjacent structures, balancing development needs with solar access.
- D-1f **Create buffers between incompatible land uses.** At boundaries between different land-use designations, and where different land-uses are adjacent, buffer areas shall be incorporated into site design. Buffers may consist of additional setbacks, landscaping, and visual and noise barriers such as fences or walls. Provide for sensitive transition from the public realm to the private realm. Require buildings to incorporate massing strategies to minimize impacts on adjacent uses.
- D-1g **Provide for bicycles, pedestrians, and transit in design.** Design shall incorporate provisions for bicycle and pedestrian circulation, and transit. Facilities should be located and designed so that these alternative travel modes are fully interconnected.
- D-1h **City edges.** Development patterns shall be designed to have distinctive physical and visual separations from 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 protrude above the ridgeline.
  3. Retaining existing vegetation, providing landscape screening, and shielding exterior lighting to minimize visible impacts on prominent sites or in open space areas, especially on hillsides visible from State Route 101.
- D-1i **Renewable green building.** Site and building design shall incorporate green building concepts including recycled materials use, energy efficiency, solar access, insulation, energy efficiency, use of toxic-free materials, natural lighting, native landscaping, permeable surfaces around structures, and minimizing construction waste disposal.
- D-1j **“Greening” efforts.** Prioritize “greening” efforts in Arcata’s urban spaces to help dampen ambient noise, cool pavement surfaces, and maintain high air quality. These may include the addition of street trees, community gardens, and green spaces.
- D-1k **Pedestrian priority and accessibility in streetscape design.** Ensure that streetscape design and improvements prioritize pedestrian circulation that promote walkability and support a car-free lifestyle and accessibility for all ambulatory modes and abilities. Require new development to consider the needs of a diverse range of abilities; for example, position obstructions to path-of-travel to the curb line or other less obtrusive locations wherever feasible.
- D-1l **Utility Screening.** Minimize visual impacts from utility boxes, utility meters, backflow preventers, and other similar devices. Utility devices must be underground or located to the side or rear of buildings and screened from public view by landscaping. Exceptions may be granted through a discretionary review process.
- D-1m **Lighting.** Provide adequate pedestrian-scaled street lighting to enhance public safety, encourage evening use of outdoor spaces, and enhance the visual quality of the public realm. Utilize “CPTED” (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) guidance as applicable to ensure lighting achieves outlined goals of increasing pedestrian safety. Ensure all new lighting is compliant with “Dark Sky” policy guidance. Dark Sky policy shall supersede CPTED policy.
- D-n **Cohesive Identity.** Ensure new development design includes recognizable design themes and a distinctive sense of place.

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

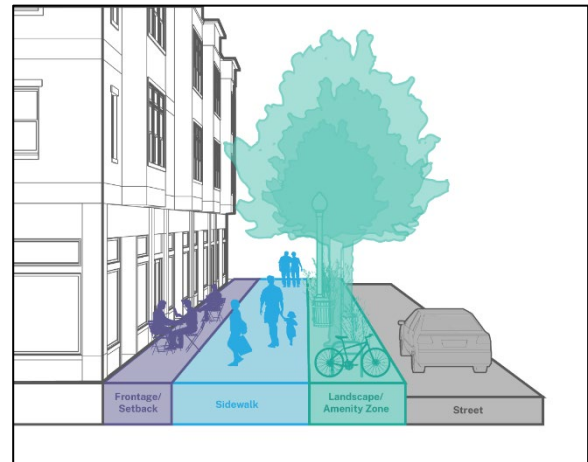
**Objective.** Maintain and continue to develop a built environment which: accentuates the Plaza and surrounding downtown as the commercial and cultural hub of the City, consider historical

building and site features, integrates bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and incorporates appropriate trees and other "landscape" elements.

**D-2a Arcata Plaza design.** The basic historic pattern of Plaza design shall be retained, including the symmetrical pathways arrangement, open lawn expanses, and as a community focal point. The Plaza and adjacent streets may be closed to vehicular traffic for special events.

**D-2b Streetscape design.** Future changes to public street rights-of-way in the downtown shall include amenities such as non-obstructive street furniture, access and safety for pedestrians and bicycles, 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 adequate for safety but that is not overly bright.
8. Consider the possibility of "car free" streets.
9. Strongly encourage undergrounding of utilities to eliminate poles and overhead wires.
10. Woonerfs are allowed and encouraged where appropriate.



**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 maintain a street trees program with the following components:

1. Identification of streets where trees may be installed.
2. Siting standards, either 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.

**D-2e Design criteria for new structures and additions.** The height, scale, and mass (volume) of new buildings and additions to existing buildings shall take into account 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 remodeling existing facades (storefronts).** 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-2g 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. 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-2h Incorporation of amenity features in new development.** Any new development shall incorporate an appropriate combination of project enhancements. 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 development.

**D-3a Design policy for projects affecting scenic routes and State Routes.** The following standards shall apply to any development which affects scenic routes, as well as views from U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101), State Route 255, and State Route 299:

1. Billboards or other off-premises, freeway-oriented signs are prohibited.
2. Landscape planting along U.S. 101 shall not interrupt scenic views to the bay or eastward across agricultural lands.
3. New development or redevelopment in the South "G" Street area shall provide dense landscape screens along all perimeter lot lines visible from U.S. 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 U.S. 101 and State Route 255 corridors.

**D-3b City 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. U.S. 101 between Bayside cutoff and Samoa Blvd.
3. U.S. 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 signage.

**D-3c 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-3d **Bay and ocean views.** Views of Arcata Bay and the Pacific Ocean from vantage points along public streets in hillside areas of Arcata shall 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 for allowable development.
- D-3e **Wooded hillsides.** Views of wooded hillsides forming the City's eastern edge from vantage points along public streets west of the U.S. 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-3f **Farmlands and open countryside.** Views of farmlands and open countryside — in the Arcata Bottom, along the U.S. 101 south of Samoa Boulevard, north of Giuntoli Lane, and along State Route 255 west of the 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.
- D-3g **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 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 that accommodates orderly growth; ensures proper development of land and access to lots; promotes open space retention; ensures adequate circulation, utilities, and services; preserves existing landforms; and retains significant vegetation.

- D-4a **Design of roadways, 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:

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.
2. Gated subdivision streets shall be prohibited to maintain a sense of community.
3. Natural drainage patterns shall be preserved to minimize potential slippage and flooding. Building site grading shall be contoured to direct water away from structures.
4. 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 dark sky standards wherever possible.
5. Where existing streets are extended or new streets established, aim to keep the length of new blocks to no more than 300 feet.
6. Block Layout. When establishing new streets and extending existing streets, connect to the existing block layout and complete grid system in a manner that also protects and enhances natural resources.
7. Mid-Block Passageways. For blocks longer than 300 feet, provide for passageways mid-block through new development for convenient bike/ped through access. Passageway shall be an integral part of a project and be configured to provide safe access to rear parking lots, commercial storefronts, restaurants, and mid-block pathways.

**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 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, and mitigate conditions that increase the risk of landslides, flooding, or erosion.

**D-4d Retention of natural features.** Subdivisions shall be designed 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, creek-side 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:



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 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 the 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 for single-family residential design shall be to allow maximum flexibility consistent with objective design standards. Design standards shall provide architectural style, standards for structures proportional to the site and surroundings, and 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 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.

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

**Objective.** Create functional commercial centers and industrial areas, suited to employee 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 by zoning.



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 landscape 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, balancing development needs with solar access.
8. 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. Focus on the “destination” aspect of the activity centers throughout the City to celebrate the car-free nature by encouraging pedestrian-oriented streetscape amenities, such as parklets and outdoor dining.
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 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.

**D-6c 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.
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-6d 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 Cal Poly Humboldt, school districts, and other institutional entities adhere to the applicable City design criteria, which apply to design of any facilities within Arcata:

1. Long, uninterrupted expanses of wall and roof planes should be avoided and architectural features, 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.

**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.

**D-6f Sidewalk zones – core area/pedestrian-oriented frontage.** Along pedestrian-oriented frontages, provide sufficiently wide sidewalks to accommodate outdoor seating, business display areas, and sidewalk sales. Except in unusual circumstances approved by the City Engineer, sidewalks shall be no less than six feet wide. Where viable, the City should strive for sidewalks eight feet or greater in width.

**D-6g Street furniture.** Provide consistent bicycle racks, seating, and trash receptacles integrated within the right-of-way and consistent and appropriate to the neighborhood design.

**D-6h Building placement.** Locate building at or close to the sidewalk to support a pedestrian-friendly public realm.

## **POLICY D-7 LANDSCAPE DESIGN**

**Objective.** Promote landscape designs that emphasize native plants, that may be complemented by non-invasive, non-native species, when they integrate harmoniously with the scale and architecture of buildings and improve the overall aesthetic appearance of the City and its neighborhoods.

- D-7a **Landscape plans.** A landscape plan shall be required for all new development subject to City review. The plan shall identify existing and proposed landscape and hardscape elements. Native species encouraged in all landscaping.
- D-7b **Planting area.** A minimum landscape planting area shall be required in all commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential land-use zones; and expressed as a percentage of site area.
- 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 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.
- 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 ensure survival with plant replacements as needed for the first five years.

## **POLICY D-8 COMMUNITY BENEFITS PROGRAM**

**Objective.** Ensure new development benefits the community generally while streamlining approval and accountability in the development planning process.

- D-8a **Choice of benefits.** Allow applicants to select community benefits from a menu of available options. The Form-Based Code will reflect the community's priorities among and relative value of community benefits. All buildings that exceed four stories must include architectural features amenities.
- D-8b **Housing production emphasis.** Ensure that the available community benefits emphasize and support the City's goal of maximizing housing production.
- D-8c **Value of benefits.** Ensure that the additional intensity allowed is appropriately calibrated to the value the community places on the benefits provided. High-value benefits should allow for a greater increase in allowed intensity than low-value benefits.

- D-8d **Owner-occupied affordable housing as a community amenity.** Encourage new home ownership opportunities for households of all income levels. Include deed-restricted affordable opportunities for low- and moderate-income households. Encourage a range of ownership opportunities including condominiums, townhouses, and other alternative ownership models. Provide strong incentives through community benefits program for owner occupancy.
- D-8e **Incentivize residential density as a community amenity.** Through the community benefit program, allow increased development intensity and simplified development processes for projects that provide residential densities above established minimums.
- D-8f **Incentivize affordable housing as a community amenity.** Through the community benefit program, allow increased development intensity and simplified development processes for projects that provide deed-restricted affordable units above established inclusionary zoning minimums.
- D-8g **Incentivize adaptable design.** Through the community benefit program, allow increased development intensity and simplified development processes for projects that provide fully accessible or “adaptably designed” units to facilitate the conversion to housing accessible for people with disabilities or general frailty.
- D-8h **Incentivize the arts as community amenities.** Through the community benefit program, allow increased development intensity and simplified development processes for projects that provide amenities that supports the arts and area artists, such as murals on building exteriors, art installations in public-facing locations, and outdoor pedestals for sculptures. Arts-related community amenities shall be informed by consultation with Arcata’s Local Arts Agency as well as other arts and equity-related stakeholders as determined appropriate by staff (e.g., equity arcata, Cal Poly stakeholders, etc.)
- D-8i **Public art.** Through the community benefit program, encourage new development to incorporate public art that both is creative and reflects neighborhood identity and history and speaks to the goals and intent of the Arcata Strategic Arts Plan. Specifically encourage development of public art that uplifts and supports BIPOC artists and narratives as described in the Arts Plan.
- D-8j **Incentivize active and alternative transportation as a community amenity.** Through the community benefit program, allow increased development intensity and simplified development processes for projects that provide on-site active and alternative transportation amenities, such as car share/bike share, free electric vehicle charging stations, employee showers, on-site covered and secure indoor bike parking, bus passes for residents and/or employees, dedication of parcel frontage to transportation uses, charging stations for E-bikes, shared parking, and related amenities that stimulate non-



motorized and zero-carbon transportation options above and beyond current requirements of state law.

- D-8k **Sustainable and green buildings as a community amenity.** Through the community benefit program, allow increased development intensity and simplified development processes for projects that provide designated levels of sustainable and green building features.
- D-8l **Incentivize energy efficiency and electrification as community amenities.** Through the community benefit program, allow increased development intensity and simplified development processes for projects that exceed Title 24 and other State or local energy efficiency requirements and all new construction to be electric only, with limited commercial cooking exceptions.
- D-8m **Incentivize privately-owned open spaces as a community amenity.** Utilize the community benefit program to incentivize the creation of new privately-owned, publicly accessible open spaces.
- D-8n **Incentivize Artist Housing and Cultural Spaces as Community Amenities.** Through the community benefit program, allow increased development intensity and simplified development processes for projects that provide various forms of artist housing, including live/work units and deed restricted low-income housing units dedicated to artists and/or with amenities to attract artists. Encourage efforts to create a Native Arts and Cultural Space within the Gateway Area boundary.
- D-8o **Incentivize Enhanced Architectural and Exterior Design as Community Amenities.** Through the community benefit program, allow increased development intensity and simplified development processes for projects that provide enhanced architectural and exterior designs that go beyond base standards.

### 5.1.3 IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

#	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
LU-1	<b>Objective Design Standards, (Zoning Amendment)</b> Prepare a zoning amendment to implement Design Element policies, including objective design standards for residential projects and applicability of design review (specify when design review and approval is required).	Community Development Dept./ Planning Commission	Year 2-5

D-1	<b>Design Criteria and Brochure</b> Prepare design review brochures or handouts which explain and illustrate design criteria, standards, and procedures, explaining differentiation between design guidance and objective design standards.	Community Development Dept./Planning Commission	Year 3-6
D-2	<b>Valley West Public Improvements Program</b> The City of Arcata shall work to obtain funding to develop a specific public improvements program to improve the appearance of Valley East and Valley West, and Giuntoli Boulevards. These improvements may include uniform landscaping, pedestrian enhancements, and directional signage.	Environmental Services and Engineering Departments	Year 2
D-3	<b>Development Impact Fee for the Arts</b> Consider establishing an impact fee to pay for public art.	Environmental Services and Community Development	Year 1-2
D-4	<b>Car-Free Plaza</b> Evaluate the feasibility, practicability, and desirability of making the Plaza a pedestrian zone, including closing off through traffic for motor vehicles and eliminating parking.	Community Development	Year 5