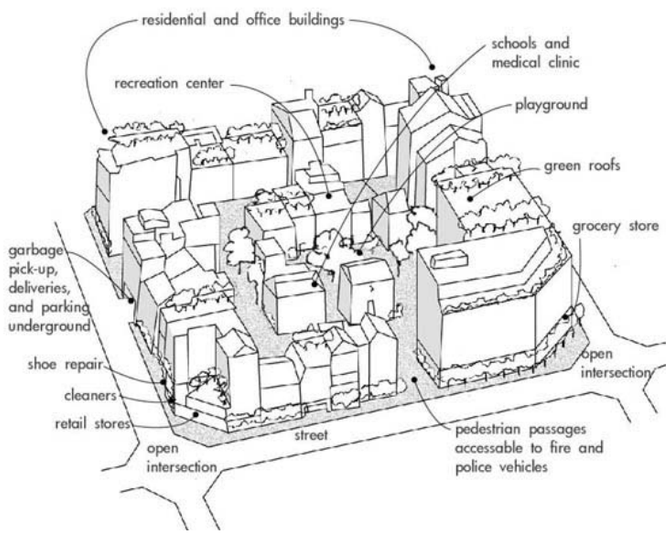


CHAPTER 2
DESIGNTRENDS&URBANFORM

INTRODUCTION

This chapter lays the foundation for development within the City by exploring relevant and successful neighborhood design concepts, such as Smart Growth, New Urbanism, and Sustainability. These concept promote an appropriate density and diversity of housing types supported by commercial and recreational uses within close proximity to each other, to induce pedestrian activity and ultimately establish a sense of community. Sustainable planning and design practices have also become common in the building industry due to the sense of community ideals and quality neighborhoods in which the sustainable practices result. The core principles of these design concepts were used to develop the design guidelines within this document. A summary of the following urban design concepts and the benefits of each are provided in this chapter.

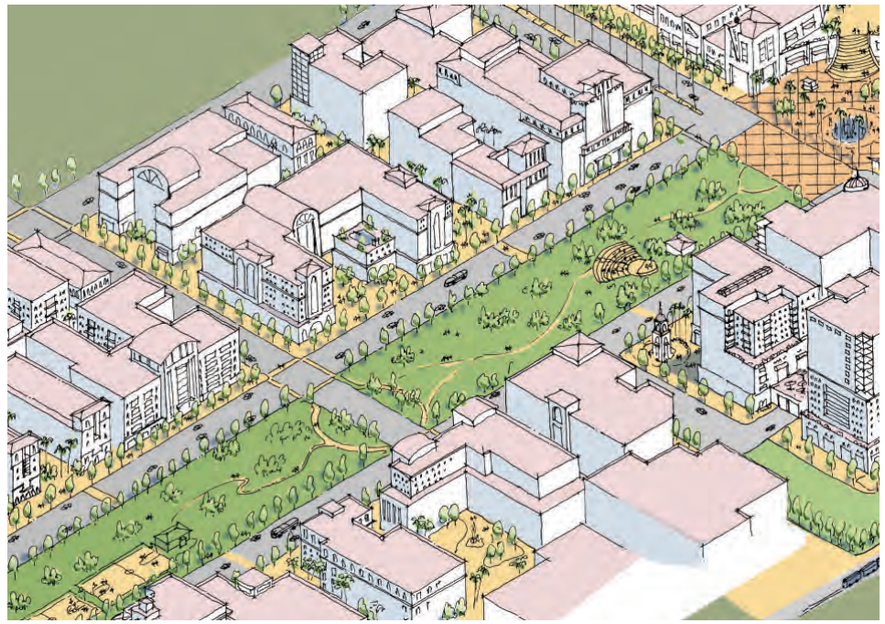
- Smart Growth
- New Urbanism
- Transit-Oriented Development
- Valley of Villages
- Low Impact Development
- Sustainable Design Principles
  - Smart Location and Linkage
  - Neighborhood Pattern and Design
  - Green Construction and Technology
- General Design Principles

DESIGN TRENDS AND URBAN FORM

SMARTGROWTH

Smart Growth is a concept that describes the efforts of planners, designers, and communities to manage and direct growth in a pattern that reduces environmental degradation and builds livable neighborhoods. Smart Growth advocates believe that compact mixed use development is necessary to establish environmentally-friendly pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods. A variety of uses (essentially residential, commercial, open space, civic, and institutional) is a critical component of any vibrant community. Mixed use development provides an opportunity to accommodate many household types and needs. The core principles of Smart Growth, as stated by the Smart Growth Network, include:

- Mix land uses.
- Take advantage of compact building design.
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- Create walkable neighborhoods.
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environment areas.



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DESIGN TRENDS AND URBAN FORM

SMARTGROWTH (CONT.)

- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.
- Provide a variety of transportation choices.
- Make development predictable, fair, and cost effective.
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Ultimately, Smart Growth encourages patterns of development that promote a balanced mix of land uses and a transportation system that accommodates pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and automobiles.

DESIGN TRENDS AND URBAN FORM

NEW URBANISM

New Urbanism is an urban design movement that was established in the 1980s as a basis to promote compact neighborhood designs that reduce automobile dependence and enhance the sense of community. New Urbanism is also referred to as traditional neighborhood design, neotraditional design, and transit-oriented development. New Urbanism is based on traditional urban design principles that stress the importance of establishing a diversified neighborhood core with a mix of land uses that are well connected and allow for a variety of travel options. New Urbanism promotes streetscapes with grid-like street patterns to relieve congestion, narrow streets to reduce the dominance of the automobile, and buildings with a pedestrian scale.

DESIGN TRENDS AND URBAN FORM

NEW URBANISM (CONT.)

Similar to Smart Growth objectives, New Urbanism principles include designing streets that are pedestrian-oriented. By providing wide sidewalks with landscaped buffers, street trees, and on-street parking a separation is established between the pedestrian and vehicle traffic. These techniques make walking safer and more appealing. In addition, the pedestrian experience can be enhanced if site furniture such as benches, bollards, litter receptacles, and other similar elements are well placed. The built environment defines public spaces such as squares, plazas, small parks, and civic institutions that are dispersed in prominent locations throughout the neighborhood.

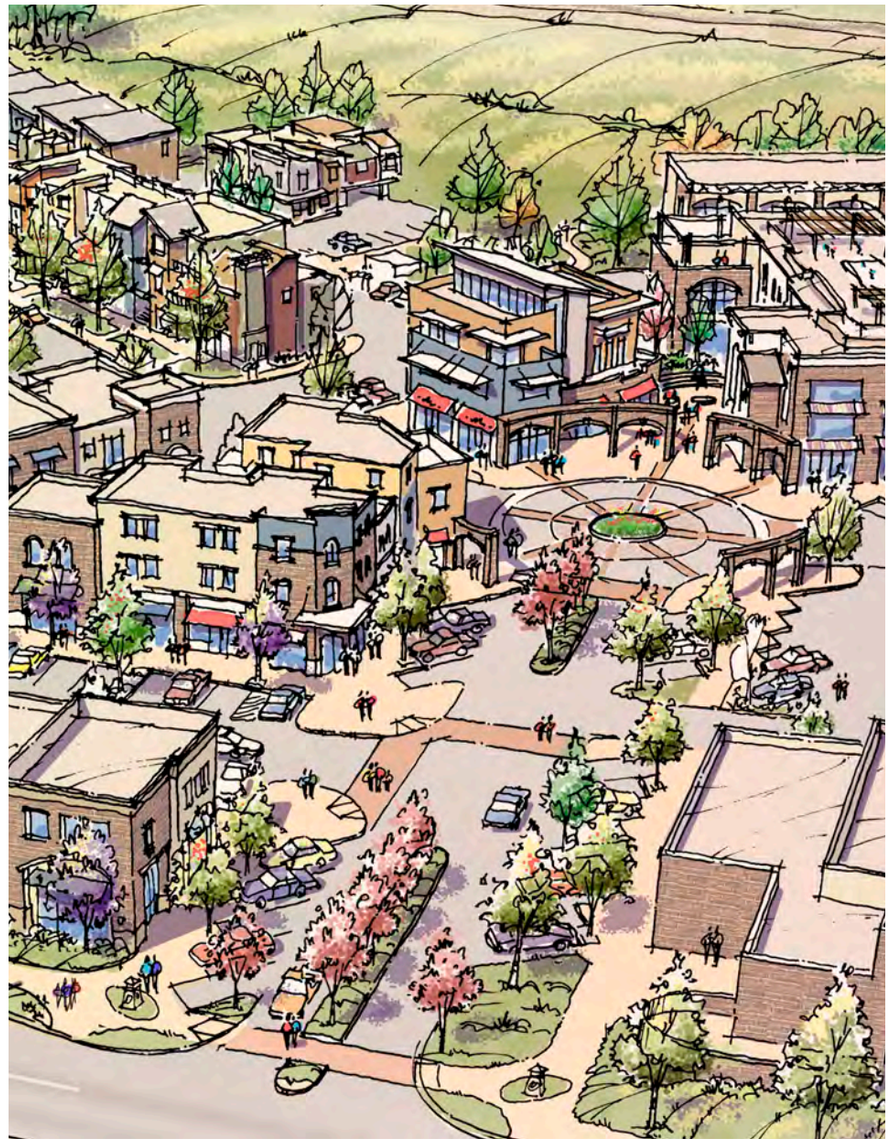
New Urbanism goals include:

- Identifying a discernible center.
- Placing most dwellings within a five-minute walk of the center.
- Providing a variety of dwelling types.
- Providing a mix of commercial uses that can meet the weekly needs of a household.

DESIGN TRENDS AND URBAN FORM

NEW URBANISM (CONT.)

- Placing civic uses and schools within walking distance of most homes.
- Locating parks and playgrounds near every dwelling.
- Creating a well connected network of streets and pedestrian paths to disperse traffic by providing a variety of pedestrian and vehicular routes to any destination.
- Designing relatively narrow streets shaded by rows of trees.
- Placing buildings in the neighborhood center close to the street.
- Locating parking lots and garage doors away from the street.



DESIGN TRENDS AND URBAN FORM

TRANSIT-ORIENTEDDEVELOPMENT

An effective method of reducing automobile dependency is establishing a viable alternative for commuters to get to and from work. A Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a neighborhood design concept that is designed to enhance access to public transportation by placing residential and commercial development around a transit station (train, bus, etc.). The development requires the appropriate amount of residential density to create adequate transit ridership and help create active street life, as well as locating commercial activities, such as grocery stores and coffee shops, within walking distance of homes. In order to enhance pedestrian activity and access, TODs are generally located within a ¼ to ½ mile radius from a transit stop.

DESIGN TRENDS AND URBAN FORM

VALLEYOFVILLAGES

As the City of Santa Clarita and the Santa Clarita Valley as a whole continue to mature, the City is focusing its efforts on creating a "Valley of Villages." Existing communities and neighborhoods within the City, as well as future developments, will be encouraged to explore a village concept that offers a healthy, sustainable environment with a unique sense of place and identity. Each village throughout the City will possess a special character reflective of the community's history and style. Though each village will be unique in terms of size, activity level, architecture, and amenities, there are numerous components essential to each village. These components include:

- A higher density live-work-play environment.
- Mixed use – retail, office, dining, entertainment and housing intermixed in multi-story buildings.
- A variety of transit alternatives, including rail and bus, with modal transfer availability.
- Outdoor, pedestrian-oriented gathering places with amenities (street furniture, landscaping, lighting, public art, water features).
- Quality architectural design elements and appropriate building scale to promote a inviting, pedestrian-oriented environment.

DESIGN TRENDS AND URBAN FORM

VALLEY OF VILLAGES (CONT.)

- Variety of housing styles offered to cater to a range of lifestyles (families, singles, and seniors) and income levels (workforce, students, and seniors).
- Opportunities for live-work space.
- Land uses planned to reduce the need to use a vehicle and travel outside the village for employment, goods and services.
- Trail and roadway linkages provided throughout the village and to other villages.
- Shared parking and subterranean parking where appropriate.
- Opportunities to incorporate civic components.

DESIGN TRENDS AND URBAN FORM

VALLEYOFVILLAGES(CONT.)

The village concept offers a number of direct and indirect quality of life benefits for the Valley-wide community. These include:

- Dispersing employment centers, housing, and services throughout the Valley.
- Reducing vehicular traffic, both regionally and within the Valley.
- Maximizing the potential for community interaction by mixing compatible land uses and creating public spaces.
- Concentrating development in village settings and protects outlying greenbelt areas.
- Encouraging pedestrian activity and an environment which promotes physical health.
- Discouraging isolation of land uses by providing trail linkages.
- Maximizing utilization of land through multi-story buildings and subterranean parking.

DESIGN TRENDS AND URBAN FORM

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)

In addition to the general landscape requirements listed above, all development is strongly encouraged to incorporate as many low impact development (LID) best management practices (BMPs) as possible. One of the basic concepts of LID involves the on-site treatment of storm water; it is preferable to infiltrate as much rainwater as possible rather than diverting it into storm drain systems. Examples of some common stormwater BMPs are:

- Vegetated swales
- Porous pavements
- Bioretention
- Wet ponds
- Infiltration basins
- Rain gardens

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes a number of fact sheets detailing various BMPs that can be found online at the EPA's website.

The use of sustainable materials is also strongly encouraged in selecting site furniture (e.g. recycled plastic benches), pavement (e.g. recycled aggregates), and planting mulch (e.g. green waste recycling).

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

SUSTAINABLEDESIGNPRINCIPLES

Sustainable design refers to design and construction practices that significantly reduce or eliminate the negative impacts of development on the environment and its inhabitants. A sustainable design approach can be defined by a variety of green building practices and the availability of pedestrian-oriented amenities. The essential components that make up a successful sustainable development have been identified by the U.S. Green Building Council through the emergence of their latest neighborhood program. LEED-ND (Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development) has been developed as a tool to gauge the effectiveness of neighborhood design principles similar to those promoted through Smart Growth and New Urbanism. The program recognizes that the layout and design of the built environment influences the way residents and visitors experience a neighborhood, and it can impact their quality of life and sense of community.

Following are selected sustainable design criteria developed for the LEED-ND process that will be used as a guide to review proposed project submittals that come before the City to further embrace the City's commitment to sustainable planning and design practices. The design guidelines in the following chapters include more specific requirements aimed at meeting the following objectives.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

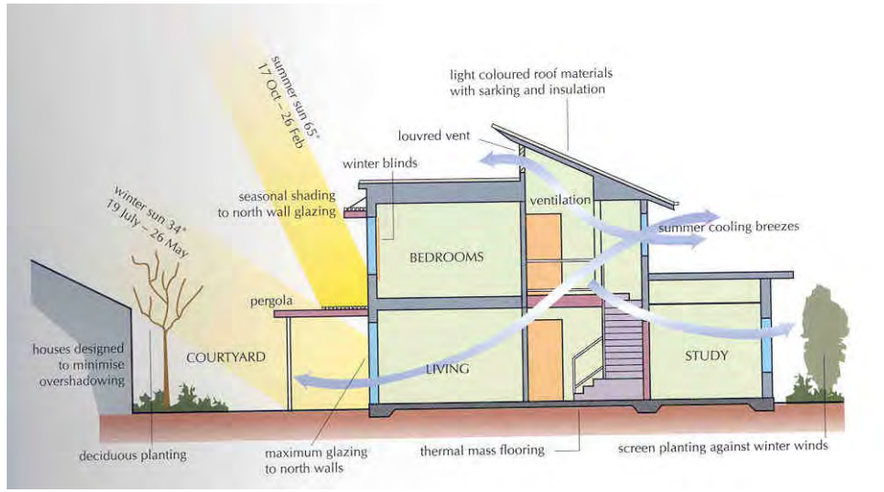
SMARTLOCATION&LINKAGE

1. Encourage development within and near existing communities or public transportation infrastructure to reduce vehicle trips and induce pedestrian activity.
2. Promote neighborhoods that are physically connected to each other to foster community and connectedness beyond the individual project.
3. Minimize erosion to protect habitat and reduce stress on natural water systems by preserving steep slopes in a natural, vegetated state.
4. Design parking to increase the pedestrian orientation of projects and minimize the adverse environmental effects of parking facilities (locate parking at the side or rear of buildings leaving building frontages and streetscapes free of parking facilities).

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

NEIGHBORHOODPATTERN&DESIGN

1. Encourage the design of projects that incorporate high levels of internal connectivity and connections to surrounding development to promote a variety of travel options.
2. Provide direct and safe connections for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers to key components of a project, local destinations, and neighborhood centers.



SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

GREEN CONSTRUCTION & TECHNOLOGY

1. Encourage the design and construction of buildings to utilize green building practices.
2. Encourage the design and construction of energy efficient buildings to reduce air, water, and land pollution and environmental impacts from energy production and consumption.
3. Preserve existing tree canopy, native vegetation, and pervious surfaces.
4. Reduce the impact of heat islands by providing shade structures and trees that can produce large canopies to provide shade. In addition, choose roof and paving materials that possess a high level of solar reflectivity.
5. Achieve enhanced energy efficiency by creating the optimum conditions for the use of passive and active solar strategies.
6. Use recycled and other environmentally-friendly building materials whenever possible.
7. Minimize light trespass from site, reduce sky-glow to increase night sky access, improve nighttime visibility through glare reduction, and reduce development impact on the nocturnal environment.

GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

GENERALDESIGNPRINCIPLES

The following are general design principles that apply to all new development throughout the City to ensure that projects possess quality design attributes.

Desirable Elements of Project Design

Desirable qualities and design elements include:

- Richness of material surface and texture.
- Muted earth tone colors (such as off-whites, ochres, siennas, umbers, beiges, tans, browns, or other similar subdued colors) for primary building surfaces, with more intense colors limited to accents.
- Significant wall articulation (insets, canopies, wing walls, trellis features, arcades, colonnades).
- Full-sloped roofs, multi-planed roofs (combination of pitched and flat roofs).
- Roof overhangs, articulated eaves, parapets.
- Window configurations compatible with the design of the building.
- Articulated building mass and form.
- Landscape elements, which includes plantings and hardscape, that complement the style of architecture, enhance building and site design, and are integrated into the surrounding context.

GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

DESIRABLE ELEMENTS OF PROJECT DESIGN

In addition to the elements previously listed, commercial projects should possess the following:

- Comprehensive sign program integrated with building, site, and landscape design.
- Visually distinctive, inviting, and identifiable entrances to the sites and buildings.
- Clear vehicular access and circulation.
- Safe and easy access for pedestrians.
- Parking areas landscaped and screened from public view.
- Architecturally integrated and concealed mechanical equipment.

GENERAL DESIGN PRINICIPLES

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS OF PROJECT DESIGN

Undesirable Elements of Project Design

Elements to avoid or minimize include:

- Large blank, unarticulated wall surfaces.
- Exterior materials inconsistent with the architectural design or style.
- Exposed, untextured concrete precision block walls.
- Highly reflective surfaces.
- Visible outdoor storage, loading, and equipment areas.

In addition to the elements above commercial projects should avoid the following:

- Disjointed parking areas and complex circulation patterns.
- Large parking areas visible to major thoroughfares.
- Large, out-of-scale signs.