



MARCH 24, 2009

# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Santa Clarita Community Character and Design Guidelines document is to guide the creation of new residential, commercial, mixed-use, and industrial developments and give clear direction for the renovation and redevelopment of built areas. This document supersedes the Santa Clarita Architectural Design Guidelines (adopted in 2002) and includes up-to-date planning trends and guidelines written to promote the high quality standards that the City and the community value. The intent of these guidelines is to retain and encourage architectural variety, promote quality development, and ensure that both existing and new development:

- Is compatible in size, scale, and appearance with the character of Santa Clarita.
- Is attractive and an asset to the community.
- Preserves and enhances natural features of a site.
- Incorporates quality articulation, community character features, multiple building forms, desirable building details, and other elements that display excellence in design.
- Provides pedestrian-oriented design to enrich the pedestrian experience.

PURPOSE AND GOALS  
PURPOSE (CONT.)

- Includes pedestrian friendly amenities such as pedestrian connections, plazas, seating, bike racks, fountains, and other similar features, for the enjoyment of the community and visitors.
- Promotes the use of high quality materials.
- Promotes well-landscaped parking lots with efficient pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
- Provides suggestions for ways to improve the environmental performance of projects through the strategic incorporation of green building components.

The guidelines have been written to make it easy for a property owner, architect, developer, City staff, and members of the Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council to use. The guidelines describe the design review process, citywide goals and objectives, site planning concepts, and architectural design guidelines for residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use projects. Specific guidelines have been drafted to ensure that architectural quality and character is preserved within each of the four communities of the City - Canyon Country, Newhall, Saugus, and Valencia. In essence, the purpose of this document is to provide clear and concise direction through a user-friendly document that is easy to administer.





## PURPOSE AND GOALS GOALS

The overarching objective of this Community Character and Design Guidelines document is the desire to establish communities that possess unique qualities that make them special and memorable. How the distinct communities are integrated within the overall fabric of the City is essential to each community's success. The following goals guided the development of the design guidelines in this document.

### *Sense of Timelessness*

A sense of timelessness is a feeling that the design and quality of development in the community will neither be frozen in time nor look like it was built yesterday. The community should have characteristics that suggest long-term value. The physical fabric of a community should reflect cultural, aesthetic, and historic character and yet be adaptive to functional changes.

### *Sense of Ownership*

Each sector of the community must have a sense of ownership and a belief that they will benefit from the economic health and quality of life within the community. There should be a feeling that the attributes of the community command an economic premium. Whether or not there is individual property ownership, there must be a sense that everyone has a stake in the overall well being of the community.

PURPOSE AND GOALS  
GOALS (CONT.)

*Sense of Place and Identity*

The built and natural environment must be interwoven and should express a special sense of place. The community character should create a feeling of an original, and not duplicated, place. There should be a perception that the community has a unique identity and attributes that differentiate it from other urban neighborhoods.

*Sense of Community*

A sense of community is a belief that each individual has a responsibility and obligation to work toward the well being of the community. An acknowledgment of that community is the interconnectedness within the neighborhood and with other sectors of the community and linkage to surrounding neighborhoods.





## PURPOSE AND GOALS GUIDELINE USERS

The guidelines are designed for a variety of user groups. A description of how each type of user can benefit from the guidelines is described below.

### *Property Owners:*

The guidelines provide property owners with a clear and simple design review process. This document works in conjunction with the General Plan, Unified Development Code, and Uniform Building Code for the City of Santa Clarita and provides a clear set of expectations and responsibilities for property owners. This document broadens the scope of the design process beyond basic code requirements and takes the attention to detail, quality, and character to the next level.

### *Design Professionals and Developers:*

The guidelines provide a clear and graphic direction for renovation and new construction. The guidelines serve as an information tool that can provide a link between the property owner and the designer or developer and will clarify the aspects of quality design.

PURPOSE AND GOALS  
GUIDELINE USERS (CONT.)

*City Staff:*

City staff uses the guidelines in assisting applicants and their representatives with all aspects of project development including site planning, building orientation, building massing and articulation, architectural themes, and other amenities that work together to create a sense of place. The guidelines serve as the basis for evaluating proposals for quality of design. City staff will also use these guidelines when working with the Planning Commission and the City Council.

*Review Bodies:*

The guidelines provide the Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Commission, Planning Commission, City Council, and other reviewing agencies with a basis for evaluating proposals for quality of design.





## CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION CONTENTS & ORGANIZATION

This document is a compilation of design guidelines and recommendations that provide direction for new development and redevelopment. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the intent and purpose of the guidelines. Chapter 2 provides a discussion of design trends and quality design principles. Chapter 3 helps to define the individual character of each community within Santa Clarita and lists suggested building materials and identifies specific design considerations. These community-specific guidelines are intended to complement the general design guidelines provided in the following land use chapters. Chapter 4 - Chapter 8 provide guidelines for five land use categories: single-family residential, multi-family residential, commercial, mixed-use, and industrial, respectively.

No single architectural theme is being promoted, but rather the emphasis is to promote variety. With exception of those styles provided in Chapter 2, many of the styles and patterns shown in the following pictures and graphic illustrations represent a concept of recommended building elements and details as opposed to thematic images. Caution should be exercised when considering architectural styles that have recently become popular (i.e. "trendy") but have not yet stood the test of time. In addition, historic styles that cannot be faithfully replicated should be avoided.

## CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION CONTENTS & ORGANIZATION (CONT.)

Sustainable planning and design concepts were used as a foundation from which the guidelines in this document were drafted. The core principles of Smart Growth and New Urbanism as well the key components of LEED™ (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), which are defined in Chapter 2, were integrated throughout this document to ensure that proposed developments are planned and designed to reduce impacts on the surrounding environment. Conventional design and construction methods can produce buildings that contribute to excessive resource consumption, that generate waste, and that are expensive to operate. Sustainable principles that can improve the environmental performance of a project without forcing excessive costs on builders or developers have been marked with a white bar throughout the document.

This document is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 (Introduction) contains the purpose and goals of this document and sets the framework for the design review process.







## CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION CONTENTS & ORGANIZATION (CONT.)

Chapter 2 (Design Trends and Community Setting) reviews the latest and most influential trends in planning and design that promote efficient sustainable development practices and provide a foundation for the design principles and guidelines contained in this document.

Chapter 3 (Individual Community Character) identifies the architectural details that define the architectural character prescribed for each one of the four communities of the City.

Chapter 4 (Single-Family Residential) depicts the specific site planning and design and building design guidelines that pertain to single-family neighborhood development. The focus here is the creation of a neighborhood that offers public spaces, lush landscaping and a close-knit neighborhood feel, rather than a sterile housing tract lacking variety and personality.

Chapter 5 (Multi-Family Residential) sets similar parameters as Chapter 4 but for the denser product type of multi-family residential development. Chapter 5 also includes guidelines for utility and mechanical equipment and lighting. For multi-family developments, the integration of appealing public gathering places, decorative hardscape and landscape plantings, and other resident amenities is even more critical given the higher intensity of development.

CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION  
**CONTENTS & ORGANIZATION (CONT.)**

Chapter 6 (Commercial) includes design guidelines for commercial development to ensure commercial components such as on-site parking, loading and service areas, trash enclosures, lighting, and signage are properly designed. Special design considerations are also addressed.

Chapter 7 (Mixed-use) includes design guidelines for mixed-use projects and the unique requirements these developments entail. This chapter is supported by case studies. Special attention is given to pedestrian connectivity and amenities as well as commercial building layout and orientation in mixed-use projects.

Chapter 8 (Industrial & Business Park Development) includes design guidelines for industrial development. If not designed properly, industrial facilities can diminish the visual quality of the surrounding areas and can become undesirable land uses. These guidelines address visual and functional aspects of industrial and business park developments and provide guidance to reduce environmental impacts.





RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

*Consistency with the Unified Development Code and General Plan:*

This document is a tool for the implementation of the City of Santa Clarita's Unified Development Code (UDC) and the General Plan. While the guidelines contained herein are not standards intended to supersede the requirements of the UDC, the guidelines should be considered "recommended practices" that both the Planning Commission and Planning Division consider important to the design of projects within the City.

*Santa Clarita Beautification Master Plan:*

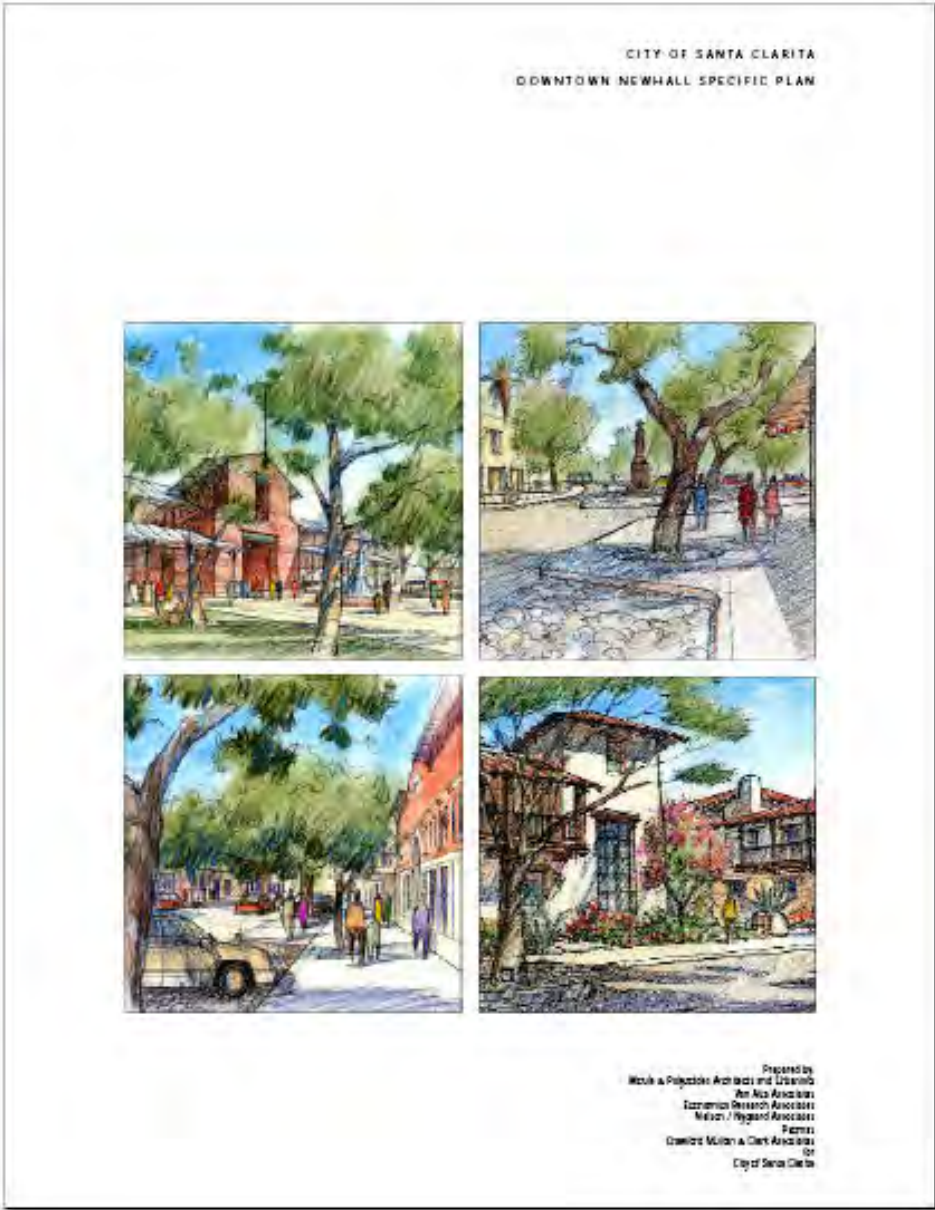
The Community Character and Design Guidelines work hand in hand with the Santa Clarita Beautification Master Plan. The Beautification Master Plan focuses on improvements within the public rights-of-way. These improvements include streetscape and landscape enhancements, fencing, gateways, monuments, and signage both on a regional and community scale. The Design Guidelines focus on private property improvements outside the public rights-of-way. Both documents contain design guidelines that help guide improvements and aid the City of Santa Clarita in accomplishing their long-term goal of city-wide beautification. The documents strive to maintain the identity of the individual communities, while at the same time unifying the City of Santa Clarita.

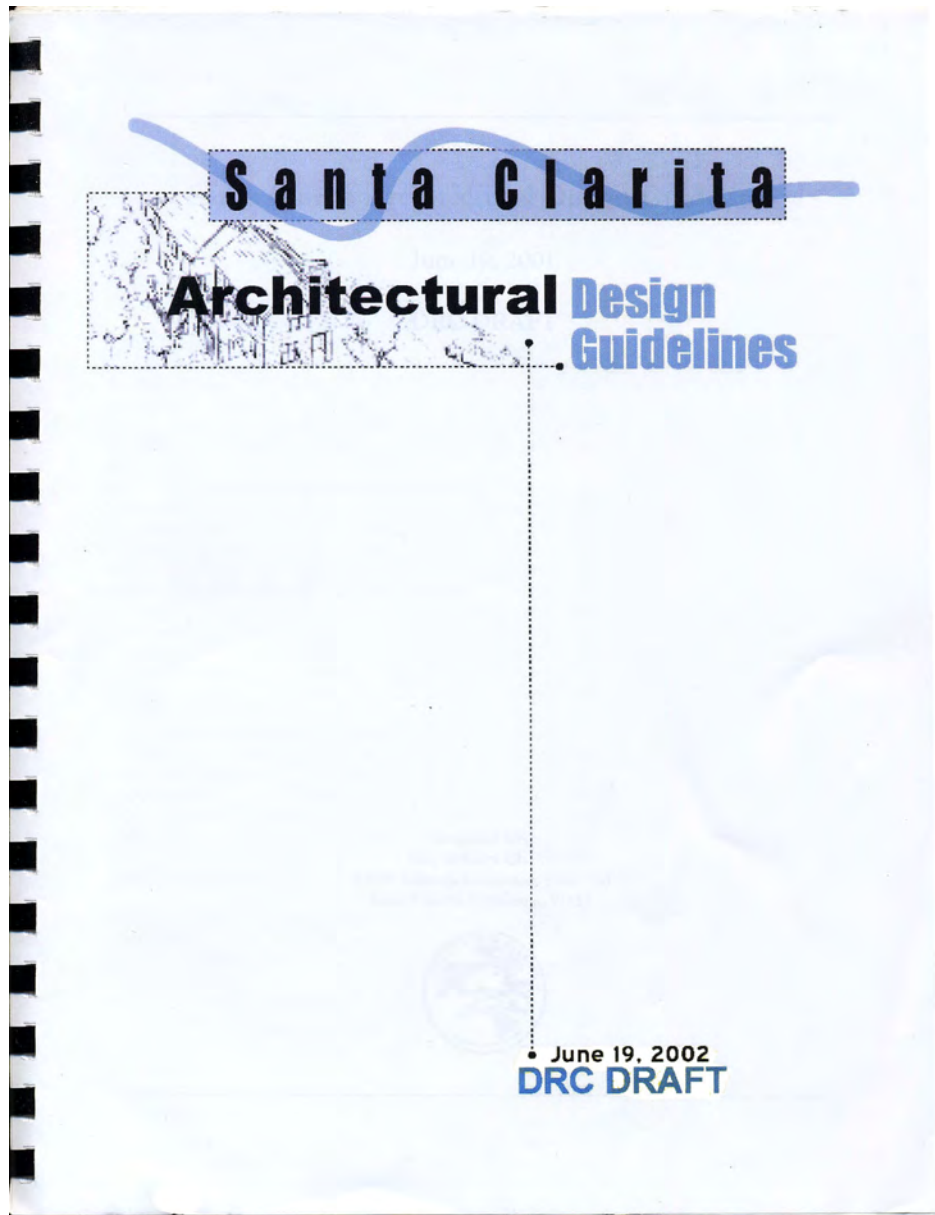
RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS  
(CONT.)

*Downtown Newhall Specific Plan:*

The quality and character of the architecture depicted in this Community Character and Design Guidelines document guides development throughout the entire City, which includes the community of Newhall. The Downtown Newhall Specific Plan, adopted in December of 2005, contains specific standards and guidelines for development within the 271-acre downtown area. The Downtown Newhall Specific Plan depicts specific zones and a variety of architectural types. The building form is further defined by a set of development standards. Therefore, the Downtown Newhall Specific Plan takes the architectural theme and character defined in this document a step further to fit the specific requirements in each of the zones in the downtown area as defined by that document.





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RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

(CONT.)

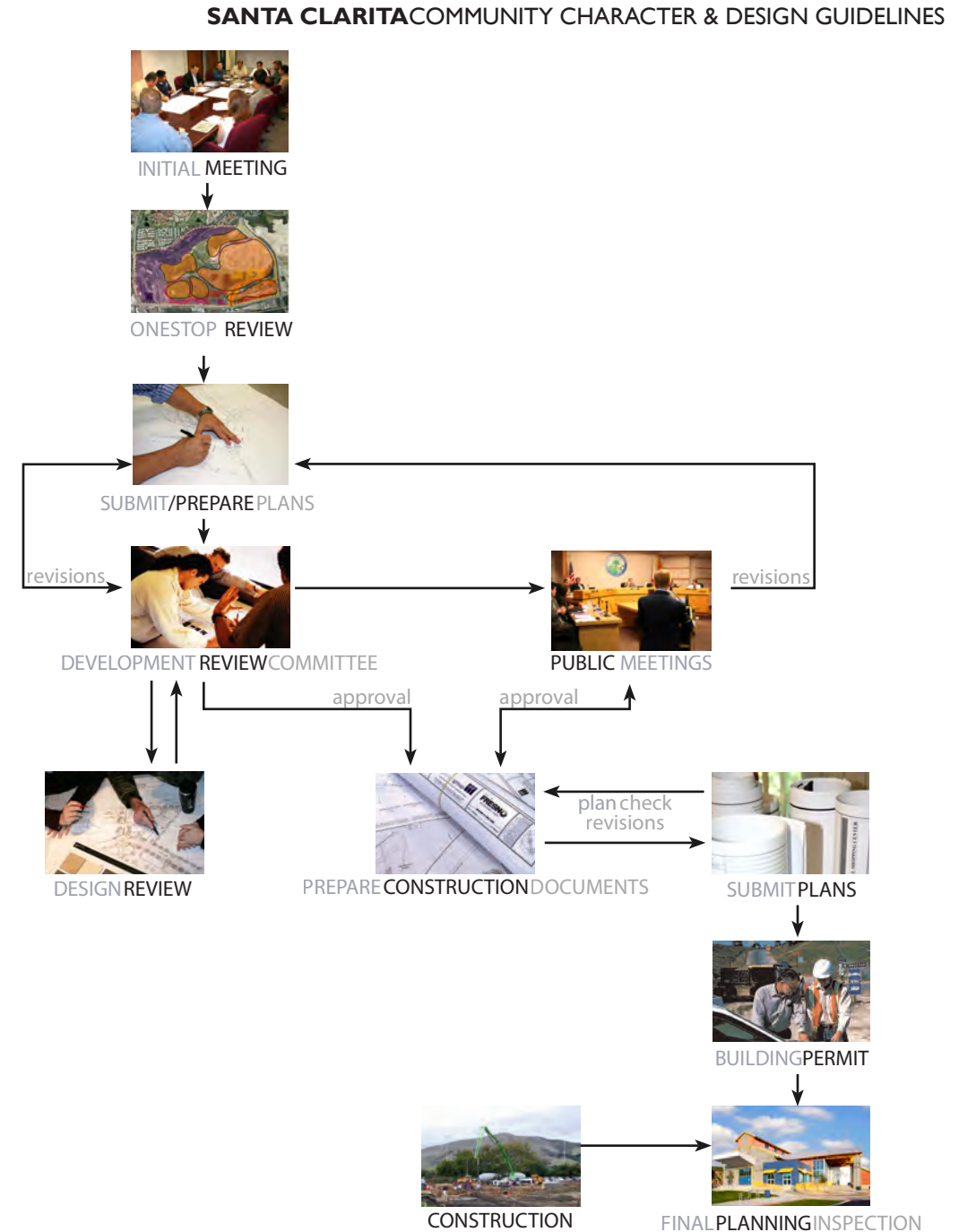
*Existing Santa Clarita Architectural Design Guidelines (Adopted in 2002):*

This Community Character and Design Guidelines document supersedes the existing Architectural Design Guidelines adopted in 2002. The 2002 document was used as a basis from which this document was drafted. This update includes new and revised guidelines that support the latest planning trends and City and community goals as described in Chapter 2 of this document. This document goes beyond architectural design to encompass a more comprehensive treatment of the built environment and quality urban design.

APPLICATION PROCESS  
**APPLICATION PROCESS**

All applications for development reviews, minor use permits, variances, conditional use permits, tentative tract maps, grading permits, or other entitlements that include physical alteration or construction, shall be reviewed to ensure consistency with these guidelines. The Director of Community Development and/or the Planning Commission/City Council will decide if a proposed project is consistent with the overall intent of this document.

The adjacent diagram depicts the application and approval process.





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## APPLICATION PROCESS INITIAL MEETING

The purpose of the initial meeting is to advise the project applicant of applicable design guidelines (such as this document), design review policies, and other specific design criteria that may affect the project's design. During the initial meeting, the City will provide the applicant with all of the application information, including the following:

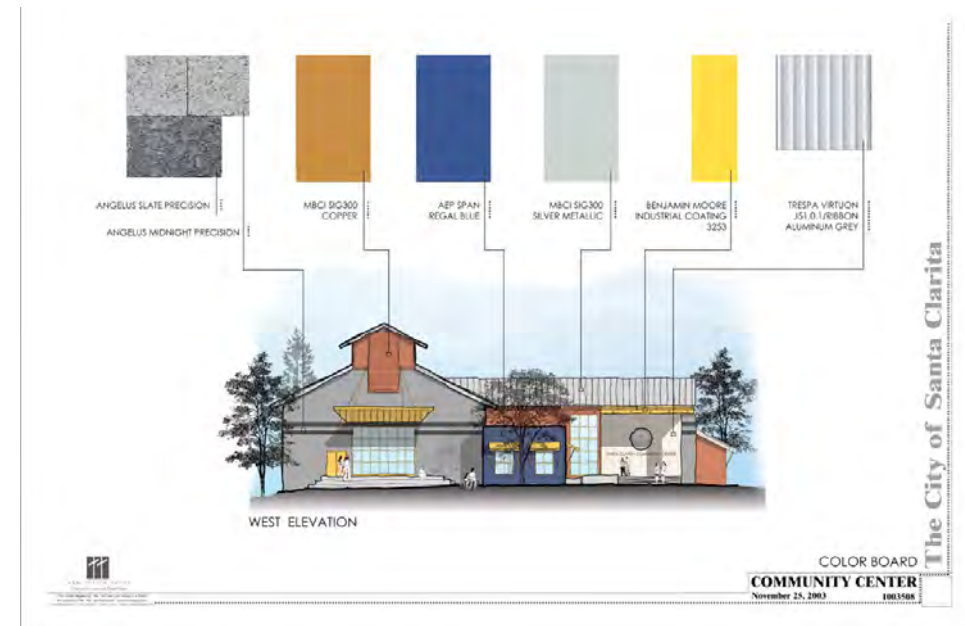
1. Entitlement application.
2. Application requirement checklists for all necessary entitlements.
3. Copies of the relevant sections of the Community Character and Design Guidelines document.
4. Design questionnaire – to help the developer demonstrate that the guidelines set forth in this document have been reviewed and incorporated into the project design.
5. Environmental questionnaire - to determine the environmental impacts of the project.

APPLICATION PROCESS  
**ONESTOP**

In many instances, a developer may want to obtain more detailed information regarding the feasibility of a potential development without committing the required application fees. In order to provide preliminary comments without the financial commitment required by a formal application submittal, the City has developed a preliminary One Stop review process. The One Stop process described below is encouraged as an initial review of a project to ensure all the required components of a development package are provided by the applicant before continuing on with the formal review process.

In order to ensure a proper review of a project during the One Stop process, the applicant should provide at minimum the following material:

1. Conceptual Site Plan.
2. Elevations (color with material callouts).
3. Conceptual Floor Plan.
4. Aerial Photograph of the Site (depicting the project site and surrounding uses).
5. Photographs (of the project site and surrounding uses).







## APPLICATION PROCESS

### ONESTOP (CONT.)

In addition to the materials previously listed, the applicant should also demonstrate how the proposed project will relate to the surrounding environment and how the landscape design is to be incorporated as an integral part of the project. An analysis of the existing site conditions should include a review of a site's physical properties, amenities, special issues, and neighboring environment. Specific design considerations that should be examined include the following:

#### *Existing Conditions Analysis*

1. Basic Site Data: Boundaries and dimensions; location of adjacent streets, sidewalks, and rights-of-way; location of setback lines and easements; existing structures and built improvements.
2. Existing Natural Features: Location, size, and species of mature trees; topography; patterns of surface drainage; and other important natural features that are either amenities or potential hazards in development.
3. Neighboring Environment: Analysis of the site and project impacts; land use, the site design, form, character, age and important site details on neighboring properties.
4. Locale: Available services and facilities including local parks, shopping centers, bus stops, bike lanes, and parking.

APPLICATION PROCESS  
ONESTOP (CONT.)

*Site Design Objectives*

1. Develop compatible relationships among the topography, building placement, and existing open spaces.
2. Provide a transition from existing to new development by careful placement and massing of buildings, well-designed and strategically located landscaping, and other appropriate methods.
3. A conceptual landscape plan, prepared by a licensed landscape architect, should be submitted with the One Stop pre-application package to demonstrate that the site plan includes plantings that are effectively integrated with the surrounding topography, site design, and architectural design of the project. The conceptual plan should have a preliminary plant list with plant genres, species, and common names. Plantings should be complementary to the characteristics of the project's surrounding area and suitable for the environmental conditions of Santa Clarita.





## APPLICATION PROCESS APPLICATION SUBMITTAL


Upon submittal of a One Stop application, the various City departments that are part of the Development Review Committee provide preliminary comments regarding the submittal requirements and comments regarding the potential development. If the developer decides to formally submit a project after going through the One Stop process, the applicant will receive a credit for the cost of the One Stop toward the required processing fees.

Following the initial meeting or One Stop, plans are produced and submitted as part of the application process to the City. Specific submittal requirements vary by project type and should be obtained from the City during the Initial Meeting. All applicants must complete a Design Questionnaire as part of the formal submittal. In addition to the required application materials, developers are encouraged to provide before and after photo simulations and renderings in order to demonstrate that the design of the project meets the requirements of these guidelines. Design review is implemented by City staff and the City's architectural consultant. Depending upon the level of permit, a project may be approved by staff, the Planning Commission, the Redevelopment Agency, or the City Council. If a public hearing is necessary, the project goes to the Planning Commission and/or to City Council for approval.

APPLICATION PROCESS

# DESIGN QUESTIONNAIRE

In an effort to ensure that projects conform to adopted design and architectural guidelines, the City has created a form that will be used in the development review process. The applicant is required to fill out this form completely and submit it as part of the application process. Refer to Appendix A for the Design Questionnaire Form.



**CITY OF SANTA CLARITA  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

**DESIGN QUESTIONNAIRE**

*In an effort to ensure that projects conform to adopted design and architectural guidelines, the City has created this form that will be used in development review process. The applicant is required to fill out this form completely. If sections are left blank, the associated application file may be deemed incomplete.*

A. Background

1. Master Case No.: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Project Location (street address or description): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Assessor's Parcel Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_
5. Brief Project Description: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Is the project located in a Specific Plan area or a Planned Development Overlay? Yes No  
If yes, please list: \_\_\_\_\_
8. This project is best described as:  
\_\_\_ Single Family Residential \_\_\_ Multi-family \_\_\_ Commercial \_\_\_ Mixed-Use
9. The subject property is located in:  
\_\_\_ Canyon Country \_\_\_ Newhall \_\_\_ Saugus \_\_\_ Valencia

- 1 -

3. Decorative paving features have been incorporated into the project to delineate pedestrian paths, driveways, entries, public spaces, etc.;  
Yes / No

III. Open Space/Natural Resources Preservation

1. Describe how this project provides access to usable open space and preserves natural resources (land forms, habitat, views, distinctive features, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The project incorporates "full cut-off" lighting that reduces glare and prevents light-spill-over into adjoining properties: Yes / No
3. The proposed landscape plan utilizes drought-tolerant and native species of plants:  
Yes / No Describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

IV. Circulation/Parking

1. Planted parkways exist between sidewalks and all driveways, streets, and other paved areas: Yes / No
2. Landscape strips and planters separate buildings from sidewalks, parking or paved areas, and other structures: Yes / No
3. Parking is well landscaped and screened from public view: Yes / No  
Describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Surface parking lots are shaded with canopy trees: Yes / No
5. A combination of side-loading, front-loading, detached and rear garages are integrated into site design to reduce their visual impact: Yes / No Provide percentage of total parking spaces for each type: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 3 -