

5.1 PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of the Specific Plan’s Design Guidelines is to describe the visual character that is desired for the residential development within MetroWalk, and the manner in which developed areas should relate to other elements of the MetroWalk community. As this Specific Plan site is an extension of the Vista Canyon Specific Plan, the intent of these guidelines are to be consistent with the Vista Canyon Design Guidelines for residential development, to achieve a common aesthetic and high-quality design in both the public and private realm.

The Design Guidelines address issues that are primarily aesthetic in nature and subject to a variety of solutions. Due to varying interpretations of aesthetic design, flexibility should be permitted to encourage design innovations and changes in design standards that occur over time. For these reasons, rigid adherence to the Specific Plan’s Design Guidelines is not intended. Instead, it is intended that developments within MetroWalk be evaluated for their substantial conformance to the general intent associated with the applicable “General Guidelines” and the other applicable guidelines set forth below.

5.2 GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following General Guidelines are intended to allow flexibility and innovation throughout the Specific Plan site.

5.2.1 *Design Themes*

- (a) Consistent with the Vista Canyon Specific Plan adopted by the City of Santa Clarita in April 2011, MetroWalk will retain and encourage architectural variety and promote quality development. The overarching design objectives are to create a sense of timelessness, ownership, place and identity, and community.
- (b) Neighborhood design concepts will encourage sustainable planning and design practices, including the smart growth, new urbanism, and sustainability principles described in Chapter 2 of the 2009 Santa Clarita Community Character and Design Guidelines.
- (c) Siting and design of structures should consider views relative to the Specific Plan area.

5.2.2 *Site Planning*

- (a) Residential streets should be designed so that traffic to the highway system flows as directly as possible. Circuitous street patterns and very long residential streets should be avoided.
- (b) Creative siting, design, and landscaping solutions should be used to blend structures into the site, to the extent possible.

- (c) Pedestrian and vehicular circulation should be designed to create a consistent community image.
- (d) Entries to residential buildings should be visibly reinforced through techniques such as landscape treatments, monument signage, and/or pavement details.

5.2.3 *Architecture*

A diversity of architectural styles is encouraged to enhance the character of the community.

- (a) Use of roof overhangs, low-energy outdoor lighting, and passive solar systems to enhance energy conservation is encouraged.
- (b) Roof equipment should be screened from view where feasible.
- (c) Utility and service areas should be treated (i.e., color, landscaping, screening) to minimize visual effects.
- (d) Variations in height within and among buildings is encouraged to create visual interest and avoid a monotonous street scene.
- (e) Siting variations in building facades, articulation, height, mass, and scale is encouraged to create and enhance architectural interest.
- (f) Elements such as stairways should be architecturally compatible and integrated into buildings.

5.2.4 *Fencing*

- (a) Fencing should be compatible with the architectural theme and character of the neighborhood.
- (b) Fencing should be consistent in style and color.
- (c) Wall or fencing sections should be horizontally offset at regular intervals to provide visual relief and landscape opportunities.
- (d) Fencing and landscaping should be designed as an integral part of the overall site design.

5.3 OTHER APPLICABLE ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

The MetroWalk Specific Plan also incorporates by reference the Vista Canyon Specific Plan, adopted by the City of Santa Clarita in 2011. The architectural style will be consistent with the Vista Canyon Specific Plan Design Guidelines, which incorporate numerous elements, including wall articulation, roof elements, attached elements, openings, accents, exterior building materials, and colors, all of which are described in Chapter 3 of the 2009 Community Character and Design Guidelines.

5.3.1 Application Process Guidelines

This Specific Plan will utilize the “Application Process” set forth in the 2009 Community Character and Design Guidelines, including the Development Review Committee process. For all projects/developments within the Specific Plan, design review determinations shall be made by the City’s Director of Community Development, and those determinations shall be considered the final decision, consistent with SCMC Chapter 17.23, Section 17.23.110 - Architectural Design Review.

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