4 Design Guidelines

The goal of this chapter is to illustrate appropriate new construction and design standards for the Suisun Valley. These guidelines will be used by Solano County to review new construction in the Valley. Each application is considered and reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Solano County may allow exceptions to the stated guidelines if the Planning Commission views such exceptions to be beneficial to the overall appropriateness of a proposal.

Purpose of Guidelines

Suisun Valley is well-known for its agricultural beauty and the character of its structures. This strategic plan marks a time when economic growth is anticipated for the Valley. The current character and beauty are part of the attraction to visitors and tourists. In order to protect the rural character of the Valley, the intent of this document is to provide guidance on what can be done to maintain and enhance rural character in the context of individual projects.

The Suisun Valley Design Guidelines (Guidelines) are intended to promote quality rural character in new development for Suisun Valley and to unify the design and construction of individual Neighborhood Agricultural Tourist Centers (ATCs) into the existing agriculturally-focused rural context. The Guidelines will protect Suisun Valley's visual character and integrity by establishing high standards for site planning, architecture, and landscape design for new construction. The Design Guidelines and the County's development review process together will ensure that new projects within the Valley implement the County's General Plan goals, objectives, and policies.

The Design Guidelines will be used in the detailed planning and design of new projects. These guidelines will apply only within the Suisun Valley Strategic Plan Area. Property ownersand design professionals are encouraged to review these Guidelines carefully before commencing planning and design studies. Each project should demonstrate how it meets the intent of the Guidelines. The design approach values creativity and allows for multiple solutions for any particular design issue. Flexibility and innovation in design of new projects are strongly encouraged.

The goals of the Suisun Valley Design Guidelines are as follows:

- Maintain and enhance the Valley's agricultural character.
- Maintain, enhance, or restore natural features.
- Preserve the indigenous landscape and rural character.
- Enhance quality of life and economic vitality.
- Enhance the community brand and destination marketing the Valley.
- Ensure the highest quality new construction.
- Minimize site disturbance.
- Preserve views of natural and cultural features.
- Ensure compatibility of new projects with natural and rural landscapes.

Process

Administration

The Design Guidelines are intended to implement the goals and policies of the County General Plan and to serve as a supplement to the County Zoning Ordinance. In addition, the Suisun Valley Design Guidelines will establish the criteria necessary to promote quality rural design within the Valley. The Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and County Department of Resource Management staff will use the Guidelines to review proposals for new construction within ATCs in order to achieve the Suisun Valley's vision. All new projects, whether as individual buildings or phased multi-building projects, must comply with the appropriate discretionary entitlement process administered by the Planning Manager, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, or other approval processes, as required by the Zoning Ordinance. All new construction within the Suisun Valley must comply with the Guidelines, as well as with the General Plan, and Zoning Ordinance. To the extent that the provisions of the Guidelines conflict with regulations in the Zoning Ordinance, the Guidelines shall prevail.

Format of Guidelines

The Guidelines are organized into three sections addressing specific issues and contain criteria to which new projects must respond in their design and construction. The three sections are:

- Site Design Guidelines
- Site Detail Guidelines
- Landscape Design Guidelines

Each section is divided into two parts: Design Principles and Design Guidelines. The purpose and intent of each section is explained below.

Design Principles

Design principles are intended to provide the overarching guidance for each issue. This guidance sets the design framework and overall intent for the guidelines. Each design principle contains a statement of intent and establishes the rationale for the guidelines that follow. Alternative design solutions that meet the intent of the design principle may be acceptable and substitute for or supplement specific strategies suggested in the design guidelines.

Views of the hills and vineyards around the valley.

Gomer School reflects the architectural detail of the early 20th century.

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are qualitative statements that describe ways in which design principles can be achieved. The guidelines are based on best community design practices for rural communities comparable to Suisun Valley. They address issues such as aesthetics, function, and compatibility. When followed, these approaches will maintain and enhance the quality of new construction, the agricultural landscape, and the character of the Valley.

Sketches, photos, and other graphic illustrations are for conceptual purposes only and are intended as general visual aids in understanding the intent of the guidelines. They are not meant to depict required or mandated design solutions.

Design guidelines are intended to promote flexibility, encourage design innovation, and allow for changes in design approaches that may occur over time due to changes in consumer demand, market conditions, and community acceptance. For these reasons, rigid adherence to each guideline is not intended. Rather, as new construction occurs, design solutions will be evaluated for conformance to the general principles and intent of applicable guidelines and to the vision established for the Suisun Valley. The design guidelines provide the County, builders, and property owners with a comprehensive set of strategies and conditions to guide preparation of plans and specifications that will accompany each submittal of improvement plans for projects throughout Suisun Valley.

County Policies

As stated previously, this document is a direct implementation action of the Solano County General Plan. Relevant General Plan policies include:

LU.P-22: Encourage development of commercial uses to use architecture and site design compatible with the rural character of the surrounding community, the county, and adopted County policies.

LU.P-35: Promote land use and design standards that create cleaner air and water and safer streets.

SS.P-11: Ensure that future development fits the scale of the Valley's rural and agricultural context.

SS.P-16: Develop design guidelines to promote community character and facilitate tourism within neighborhood Agricultural Tourist Centers.

Community Context Types

Agricultural Areas

Agricultural areas within Suisun Valley provide for the practice of agriculture as the primary use. Agricultural land use designations protect these areas from intrusion by nonagricultural uses and other uses that do not directly support the economic viability of agriculture. Within agricultural areas, one dwelling unit, one accessory unit, and farm worker housing is allowed per 20-acre parcel. In addition, the General Plan allows for limited secondary uses that support the economic viability of agriculture. In an effort to reduce barriers that prevent farms from being more profitable, the General Plan allows farms and vineyards to process, store, bottle, can, package, and sell agricultural products produced both on-site and offsite.

Neighborhood Agricultural Tourist Centers

As stated in the General Plan, ATCs provide for areas supporting complementary agricultural and tourist commercial facilities that are compatible with surrounding agricultural uses. Uses permitted within ATCs should enhance the agricultural character of surrounding areas, develop brand recognition, and create a destination for tourists. Permitted uses include small hotels, restaurants, retail shops, and facilities for the sale of local produce.

Existing fruit stand within the Rockville Road ATC.

Site Design

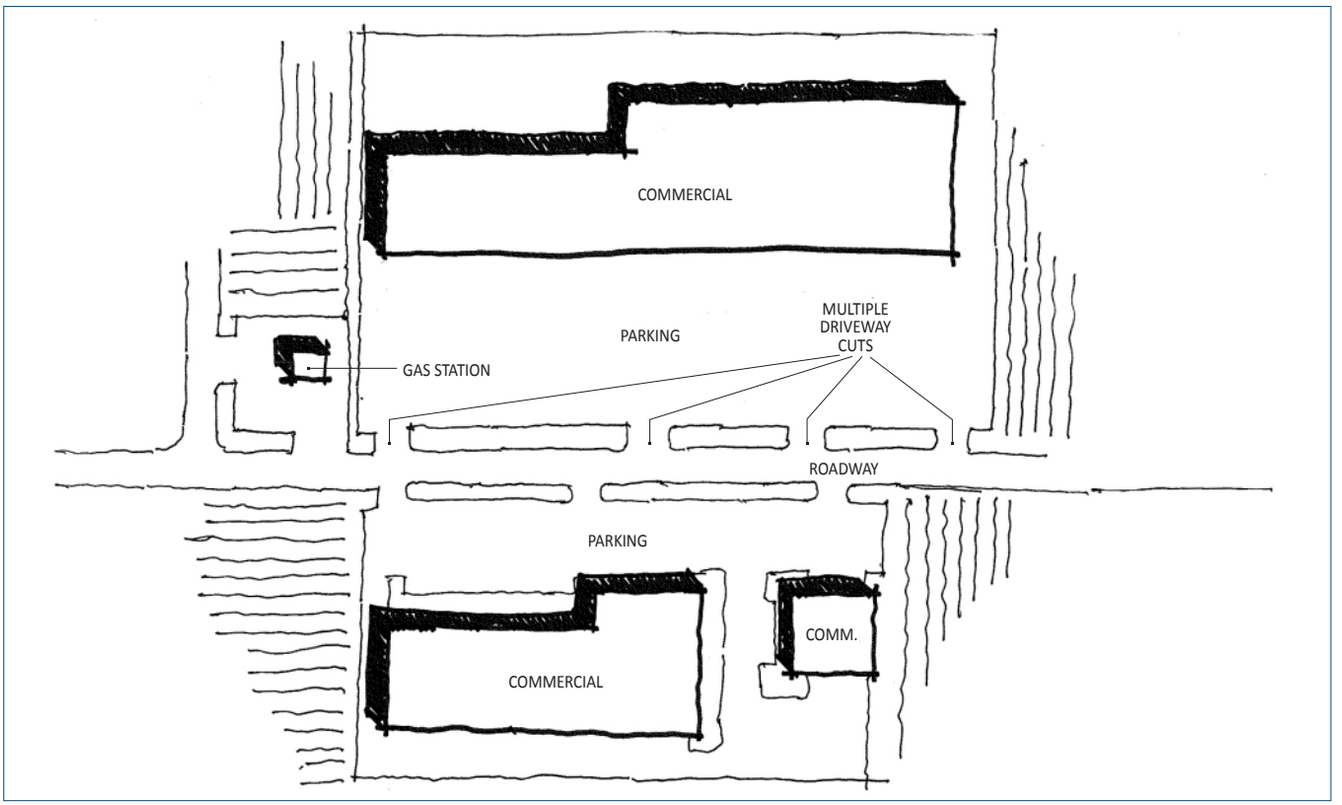
Village Character

Design Principle

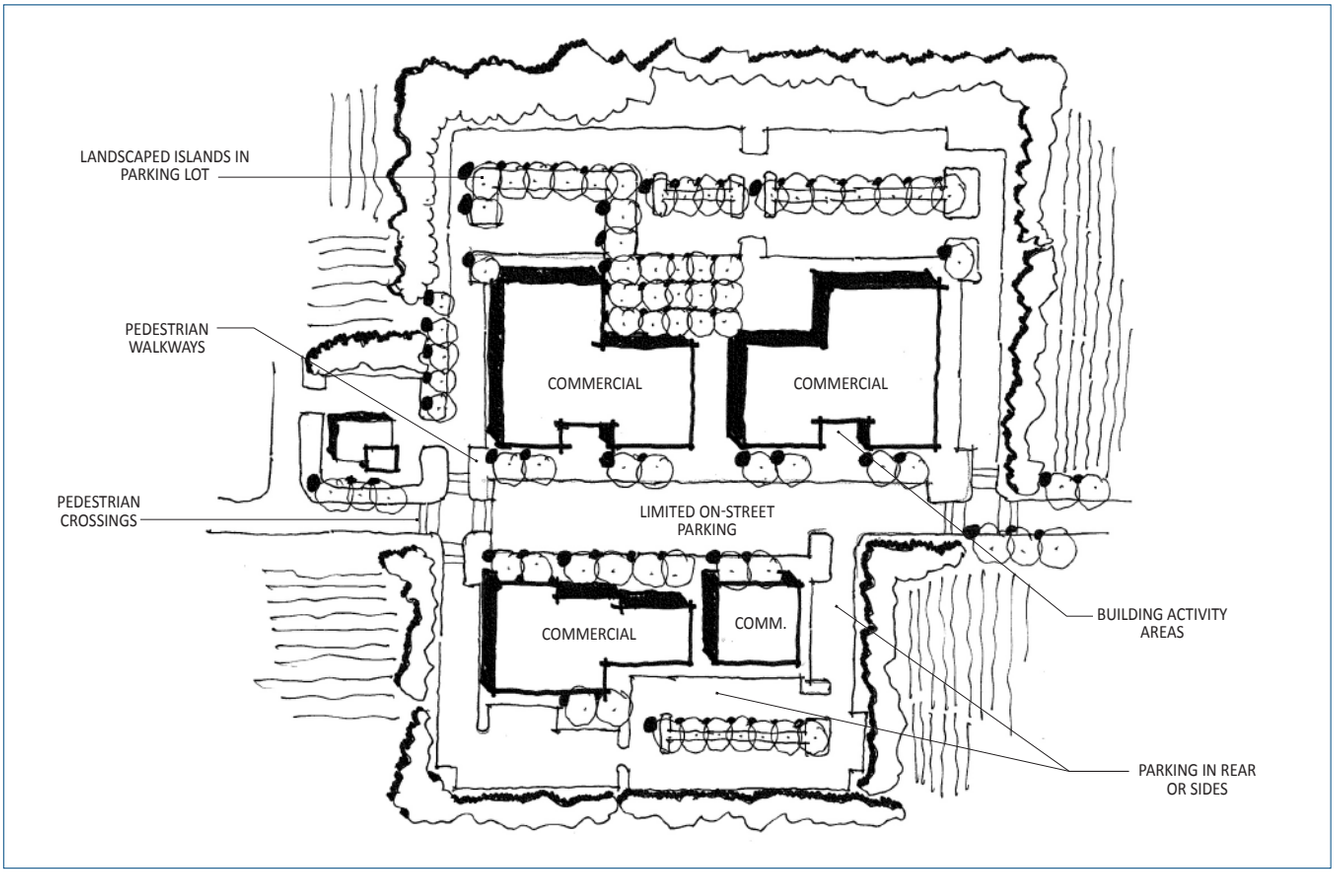
Buildings that serve Suisun Valley visitors should be placed, scaled, and designed to allow and encourage walking. This means buildings should be clustered together (such as within ATCs), should promote short pedestrian connections, and should establish and maintain a feeling of welcome and safety for nonmotorized transportation. Parking should be close and sufficient but not overpower the character of the destinations.

Rationale

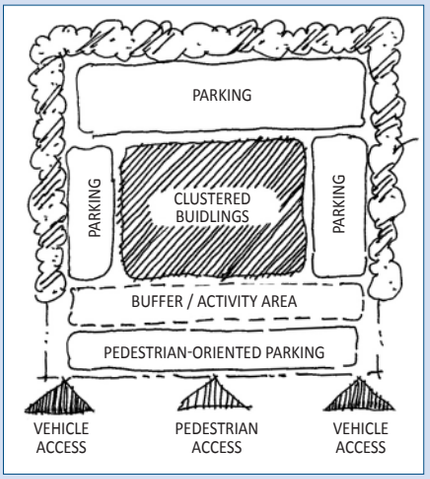
Making ATCs and other visitor-oriented sites walkable and accessible enables a wide range of activities to be supported by visitors walking from a coffee shop to an



Avoid *commercial layouts that include buildings set back from the street with parking in the front.*

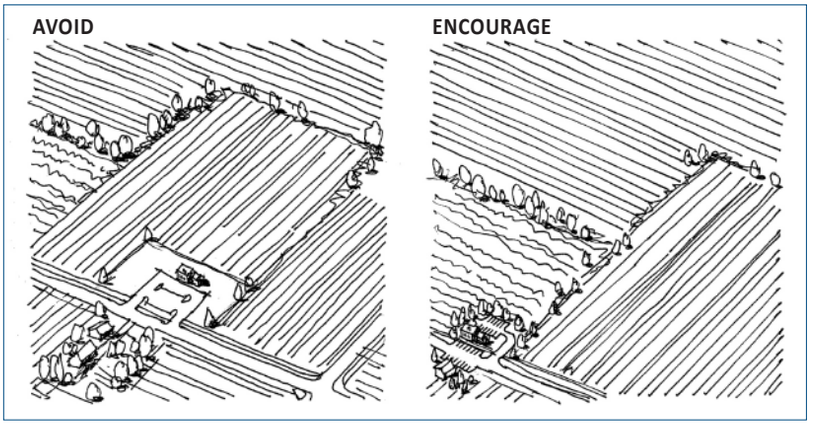


Encourage *commercial buildings designed for maximum activity, with parking available on the street and behind the buildings.*



Separate vehicle and pedestrian access points limits conflicts between the two.

Clustered commercial development allows pedestrians to more easily walk between establishments.



Smaller lots preserve agricultural character.

Short lot frontage helps to create a more pedestrian friendly environment.

art gallery to a wine tasting room. Buildings that are closer to each other foster a sense of community and lead to decreased infrastructure, parking, and public improvement costs for businesses.

Lots

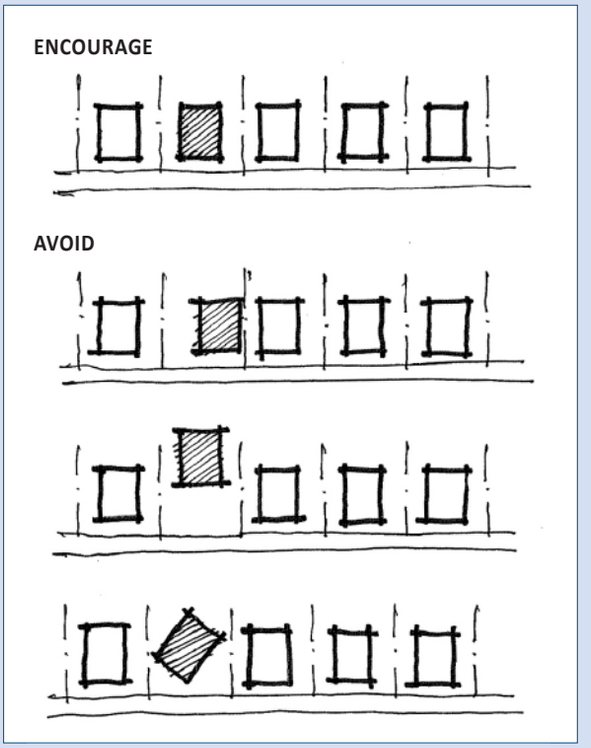
Guidelines

- Smaller lots with a variety of buildings and uses should be created within ATCs to create a rural village character.
- Shorter lot and building frontages should be established in ATCs so that people will walk more and businesses may benefit from foot traffic.
- High maximum lot coverage should be acheived in the ATCs.

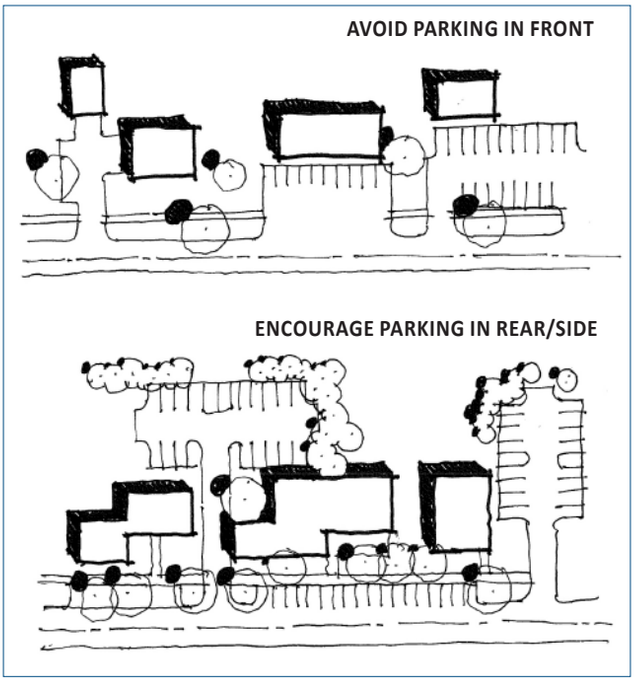
Setbacks

Guidelines

- A consistent line of buildings close to the street should be created in ATCs to encourage pedestrian traffic, slow vehicular traffic, and create a rural village character.
- Side setbacks should be minimal within ATCs to encourage pedestrian traffic and create a rural village character.



A consistent line of buildings close to the street helps make an area more interesting and walkable.



Placing parking to the side and back of buildings enhances their appearance and helps to create an active area.

Parking

Guidelines

- Automobile parking should not detract from the ATCs' rural village character and visual consistency.
- Look for opportunities to share parking, especially among uses that have staggered schedules.
- Roadways within ATCs should include on-street parking.
- Design off-street parking to preserve and enhance the rural village character of ATCs.
- Off-street parking should not be located in front of buildings. Locate off-street parking behind or beside buildings.
- Use physical barriers and signage to indicate points of ingress/egress for off-street parking areas.

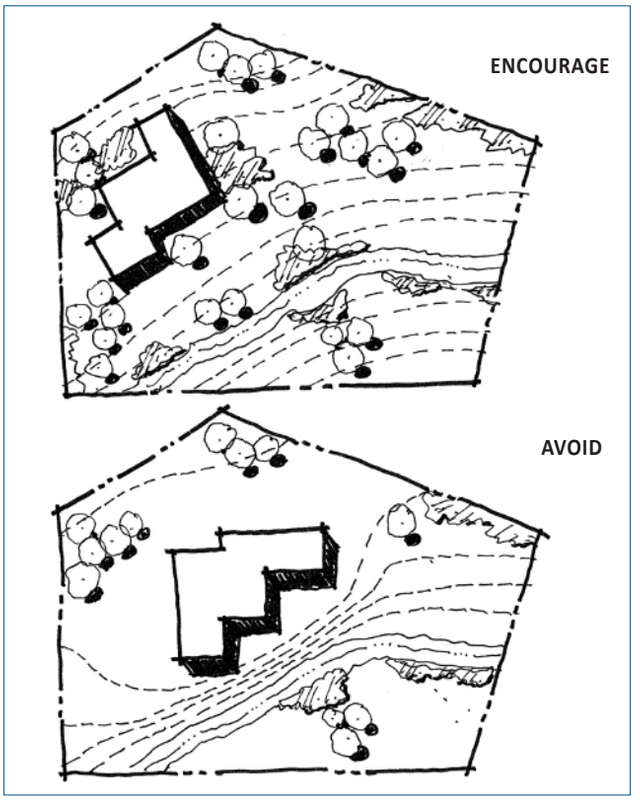
Natural Resources and Agricultural Character

Design Principle

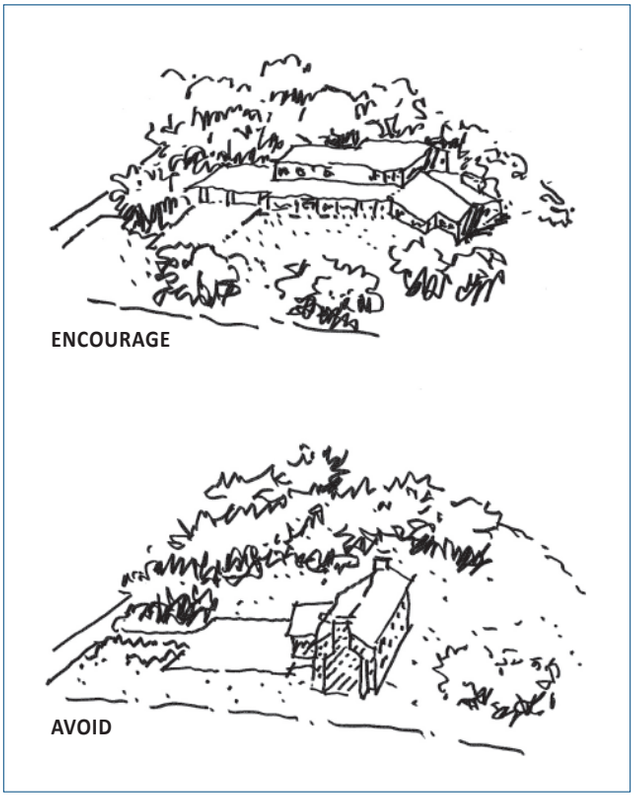
Site planning and project design should carefully address potential undesirable effects on existing uses and natural resources; including traffic, parking, circulation, safety, light, glare, noise, odors, and dust control.

Rationale

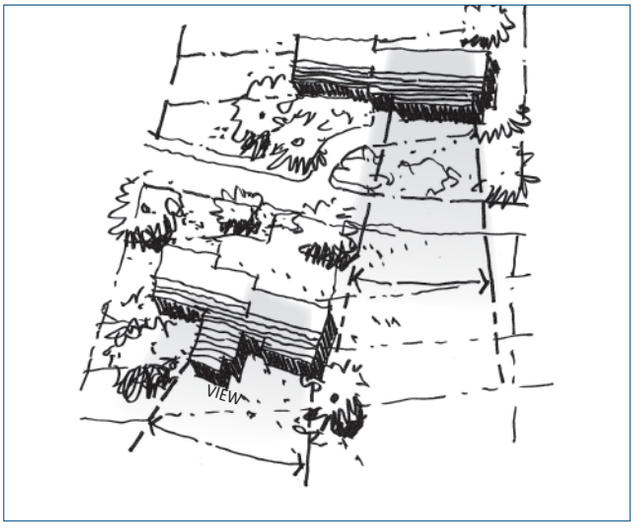
Undesirable or negative effects of new projects on natural and agricultural resources diminish the Suisun Valley's visual character and the long-term sustainability of its natural systems. Protecting these resources enables the Valley to continue to attract visitors and to continue to be a place for viable agricultural cultivation.



New construction should conserve and protect natural resources.



Clear cutting for new buildings is discouraged although buildings must maintain adequate clearance areas for fire safety.



New buildings should be placed in a manner that protects views.

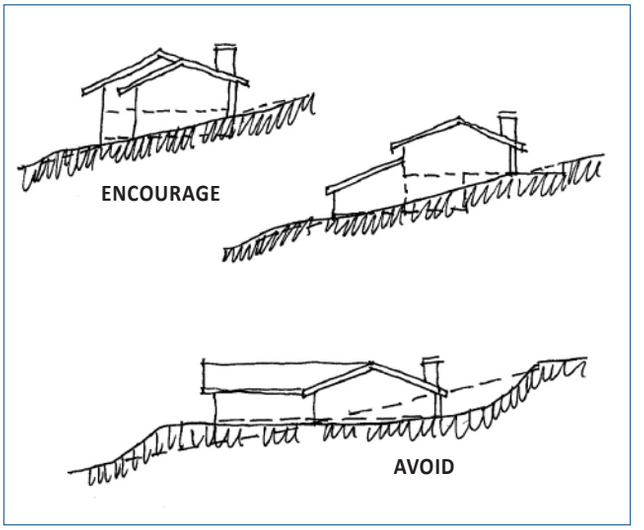
Protecting Natural Resources

Guidelines

- Evaluate the project's compatibility with the existing environment to determine the limitations and capabilities of the site for development.
- Conserve and protect natural resources, including air quality, trees, natural vegetation, existing topography, streams, creeks, wetlands, watersheds, water quality, and wildlife habitat. The size and scale of new projects should be limited to a level that does not exceed the capabilities and requirements of a healthy environment.

Terracing and landscaping is preferred to using blank retaining walls.

- Site features such as wildlife or endangered species habitat, natural ground forms, existing site vegetation, large rock outcroppings, water, and significant view corridors should be identified and incorporated within project plans. Where possible, maintaining a diversity of habitat is preferred.
- Riparian zones, stream corridors, and wetlands should be protected. Development plans for these areas should treat these components as assets, while also minimizing fire danger to new and existing structures. A continuous, connected, natural vegetative corridor should be preserved along all creek and stream corridors to provide stream quality protection and promote efficient movement of wildlife throughout the area.
- No fill, removal, or modification of a riparian area should take place, unless there is no reasonable and feasible alternative. The alteration or improvement of significant natural resource areas where permitted, should ensure that potential losses are mitigated and best management practices are employed to minimize permanent damage.
- Existing vegetation should be retained to the maximum extent possible. Clearing of native vegetation should be limited to that required for essential purposes (i.e., access, building, sewage disposal, wildfire fuel reduction, etc.). Where appropriate, existing native vegetation should be enhanced with plantings of the same variety.



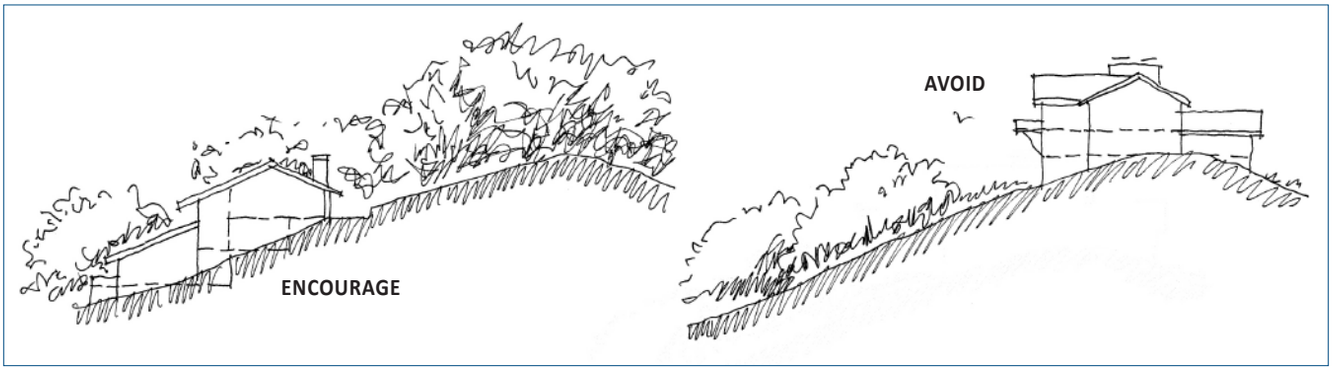
Excessive grading should be avoided.

- Preserve patches of high-quality habitat, as large and circular as possible, feathered at the edges, and connected by wildlife corridors.

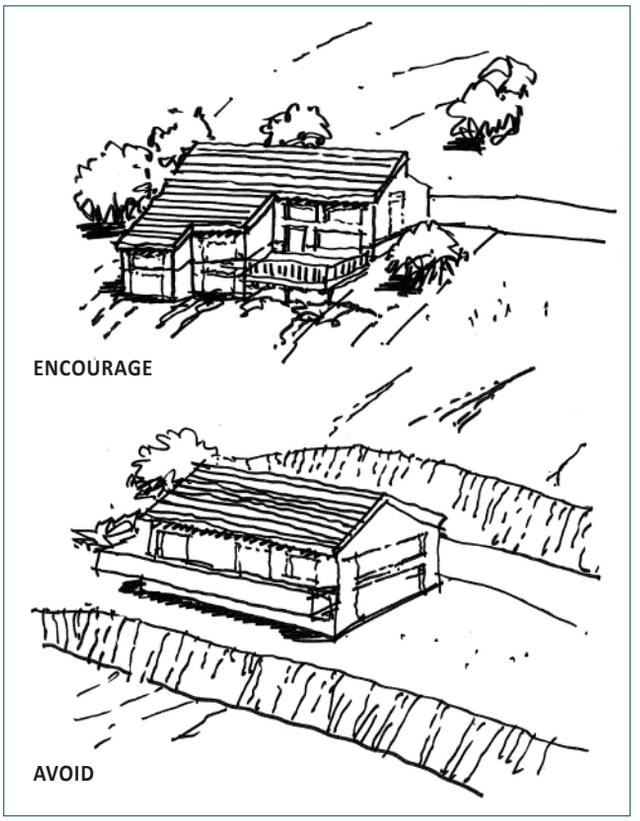
Site Grading

Guidelines

- Developments should be designed to fit the existing contours and landforms of the site and to minimize the amount of earthwork. Where cut and fill is required, balancing the cut and fill is highly encouraged.



Buildings should be designed to blend into the natural environment.



Abrupt or unnatural-appearing grading is strongly discouraged.

- Abrupt or unnatural-appearing grading is strongly discouraged. Avoid the creation of harsh, easily eroded banks and cuts.
- The height and length of retaining walls should be minimized and screened with appropriate landscaping.
- Tall, smooth-faced concrete retaining walls should be avoided in highly visible areas.
- Terracing should be considered as an alternative to the use of tall or prominent retaining walls, particularly in highly visible areas on hillsides.
- Disturbed areas that are not used for roads, buildings, or other auxiliary uses should be replanted.

Drainage

Guidelines

- Natural on-site drainage patterns should be maintained where practicable. Detain runoff within open, natural drainage systems where possible.

Drainage should be kept open and appear natural.

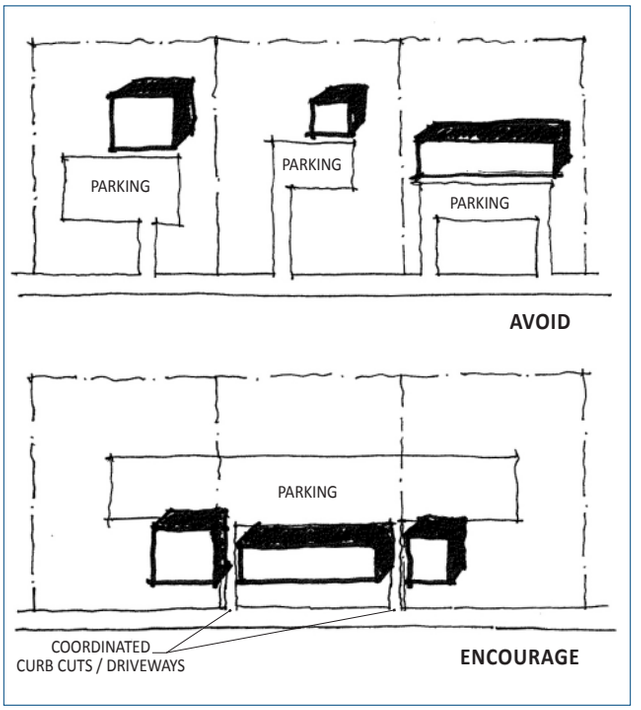
Preserving existing accessory structures contributes to the rural character of the Valley.

- Man-made lakes and stormwater ponds should be desinged to maximize habitat value and/or to serve as amenity features.

Building Location

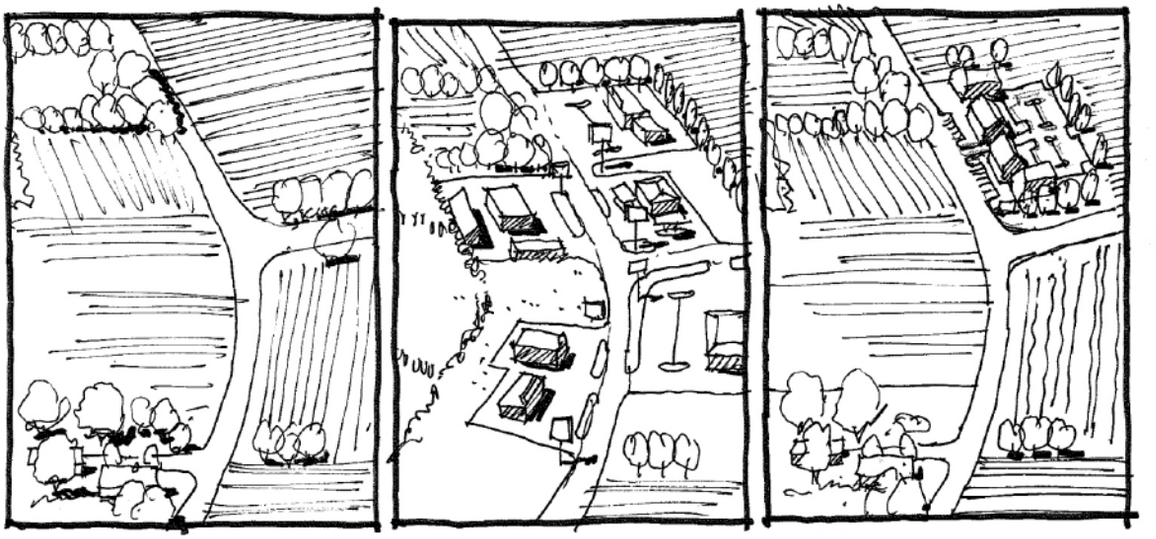
Guidelines

- Where in reasonably good condition, retain existing barns and other agricultural outbuildings that contribute to the rural character of the Valley.
- Buildings and driveways should not be prominent visual features within the landscape along existing rural roadways. When a new building is proposed in an area with an open field or an area with agricultural character—including agricultural buildings and residences—it should be sited at the edge of the field to preserve the view of the open field, pasture, or agricultural scene.
- Gouging out (i.e., clearcutting) building sites along the road is strongly discouraged. Instead, building sites should leave a natural buffer along the road. Buildings should be sited at the edges of clearings rather than in the center.



Coordinate curb cuts to minimize impacts to pedestrian activity.

Avoid prominent uncoordinated driveways and encourage buffers between buildings and roadways



Buildings should be clustered to preserve agricultural and natural resources.

- Buildings sited within an open field are discouraged. Buildings should be clustered and screened from view. Roads should be located at the edge of the clearings rather than in the middle of the open fields, and buildings should be located close to field edges or tree lines.
- Accessory buildings—including secondary dwelling units—should be located within the same compound as the primary dwelling unit to preserve the view of the open field, pasture, or agricultural scene and to keep agricultural areas contiguous.

Site Details

Building Design

Design Principle

Building designs and styles should reflect the rural agricultural character of the Suisun Valley. The selection of materials and finishes should be consistent with the building's architectural style and character of the intended use or tenant. Individual buildings should be designed to create visual interest, avoid long continuous blank walls, or buildings out of scale with a pedestrian-friendly rural village setting.

Site and building designs should maximize energy efficiency, incorporating materials and energy-saving devices that are both feasible and cost-effective. Accessory buildings should be an integral part of the overall site and design of both agricultural areas and ATCs. Site location, architectural style, and building materials and details of accessory buildings should be consistent with and relate to the main buildings on the site and the community as a whole.

Original architectural elements of historic buildings should be retained.

Rationale

Suisun Valley's earliest settlements occurred in the 1800s. Some of the buildings constructed during this time still remain and reflect Suisun Valley's vernacular architecture. As new development occurs in the Valley, every effort should be made to enhance the existing context, rather than in bold opposition to it.

The design and selection of building details are important to establishing the quality of the built environment. Using appropriate colors and high-quality materials and finishes can reinforce the architectural theme established for the community and create variety and interest. Building materials, colors, and finishes also help to give building forms a more human scale.

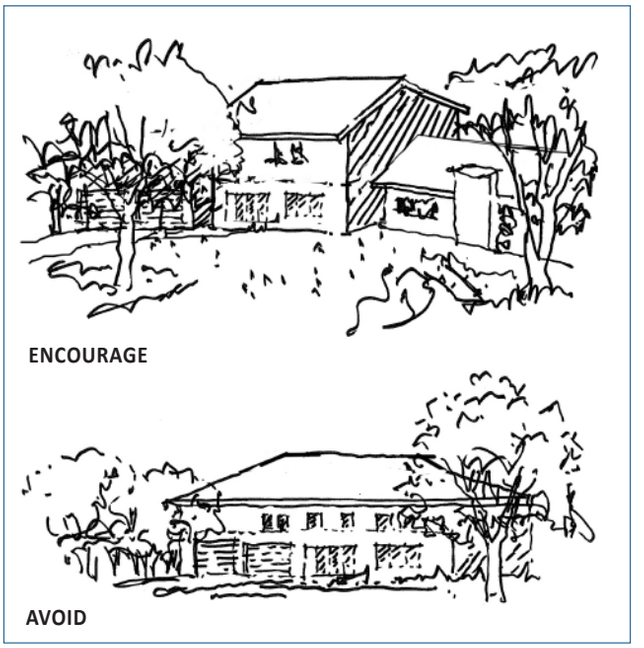
Building designs should provide a variety of forms, heights, setbacks, and step-backs. Wall surfaces articulated with windows, entries, and ground-floor activity adjacent to public spaces provide "eyes on the street" and support a safer environment for users. Large block buildings with unarticulated, blank wall surfaces create an unattractive appearance. Buildings should be well-articulated in keeping with the historic and rural character of the Suisun Valley.

Accessory buildings play an important role in reinforcing the rural character of individual building sites and the Valley as a whole. Accessory buildings may include detached agricultural accessory structures, storage buildings, processing facilities, garages, and secondary residential units. They should not be designed as an afterthought with no relationship to the main buildings on each site.

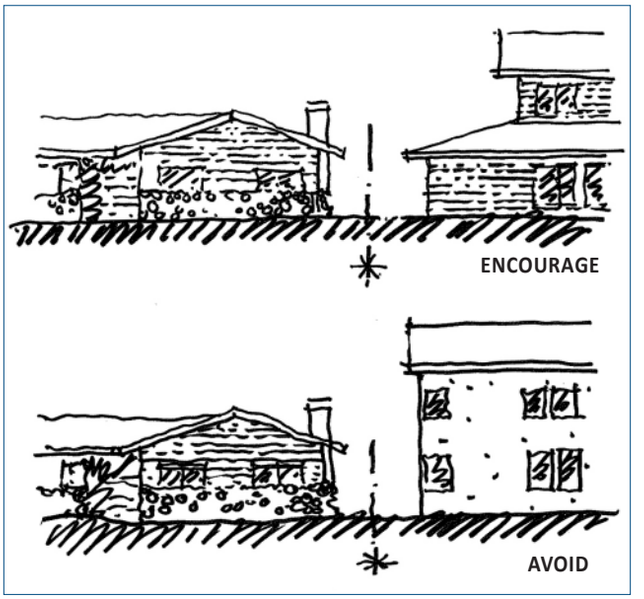
Building Form and Massing

Design Guidelines

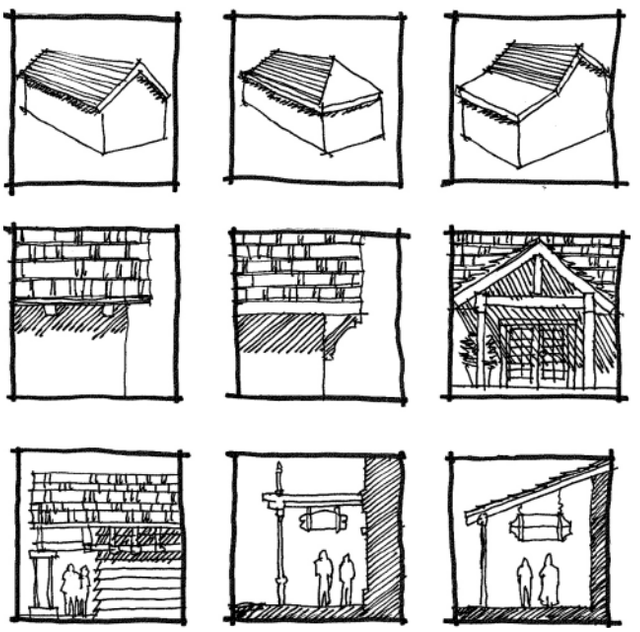
- Building façades should contain setbacks, overhangs, changing rooflines, and other design elements that provide shadows and depth.
- Variations in first-level building massing may be achieved by introducing entry porches and courtyards. Integrating higher vaulted or cathedral ceilings into the building façade at the entry can provide a transitional element that adds distinction to the front elevation.
- Varying building heights by mixing one- and two-story buildings also creates diversity along building edges.
- Building forms and massing can be articulated to help give identity to separate uses within one building. These articulations can be accomplished using architectural techniques and treatments such as:
- Dormers, overhangs, balconies, wall projections, and covered entries;



Building forms should be broken up by varying rooflines.



Architectural styles should complement existing buildings.



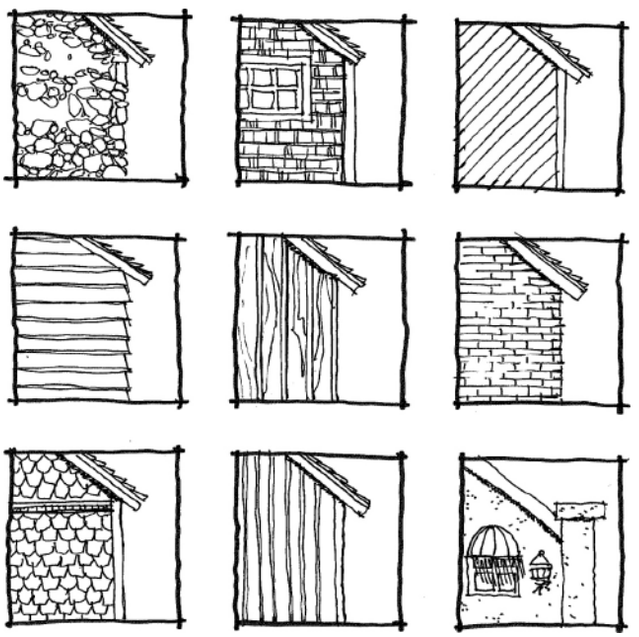
Ways to break up building mass

- varied roof forms, pitches, styles, and heights in keeping with the overall style of the building;
- changes in materials and colors; staggering, offsets, and changes in building elevations between uses or units;
- high-quality front doors that are visible from the street, complement the architectural style, and use distinctive upgraded hardware and materials to denote prominence; and
- architectural elements such as special trim, window boxes, brackets, trellises, molding, window frames, sills, and latticework.

Building Styles

Guidelines

- Architectural elements found within local architecture, such as gable roofs, multi-paned windows, and other structural architectural details, should be incorporated within new buildings.



Materials encouraged

- Original architectural elements of historic buildings should be retained. Historic buildings can be successfully rehabilitated to accommodate a variety of uses.
- Architectural styles should be visually compatible with one another, possess general market appeal and community acceptance, and be easily interpreted and varied.
- Consider the character of each ATC and type of use (wine tasting, fruit stands, olive oil tasting) and design buildings accordingly.
- Wineries should be allowed to pursue more iconic architectural styles that are not necessarily consistent with surrounding character.

Materials and Finishes

Guidelines

- Preference should be given to materials and products that enhance building energy performance and are manufactured with raw materials that are nontoxic, low energy emitting, renewable, recycled, recyclable, and/or regionally sourced and manufactured.
- Buildings should integrate resource-friendly technology and green building practices.
- Architectural variety may be achieved by using a minimum of three basic colors, materials that are texturally different yet visually compatible, and detailed window treatments, trim, porch elements, door design, and other variations in architectural ornamentation.
- Using stone and other masonry materials, particularly as accents, creates a more solid and permanent appearance for the building façade.
- The primary building material should be expressed around all sides of the building. The building side facing the public should allow for additional material and details.
- Accent materials should be used to add interest and variety to the building design. Materials may include brick, tile, stone, wood, and stucco.

Energy Efficiency

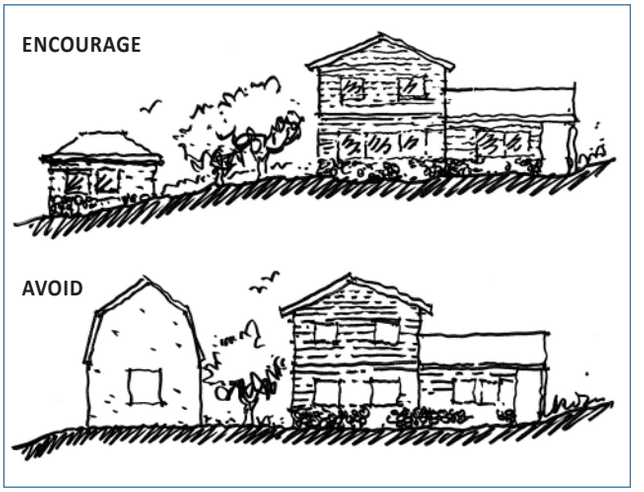
Guidelines

- Orient buildings for maximum southern exposure to allow for passive solar design.
- The slope of building roofs should vary from a 6:12 ratio to an 8:12 ratio to maximize efficiency of solar panels or other active solar devices (such as solar water heaters).
- All exterior lighting shall be oriented in a manner to reduce spillage in compliance with "Dark Sky" standards.

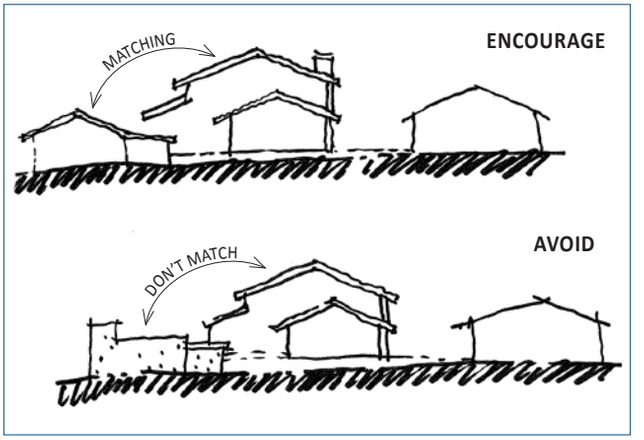
Accessory Buildings

Guidelines

- Accessory buildings should be designed so that they are clearly secondary to the principal building on a lot. Whenever possible, use windows, doors, balconies, and dormers on accessory buildings to create architectural interest and enhance visual surveillance of surrounding yards, walkways, and work areas.
- Accessory buildings should employ the same materials, building and roof forms, and window proportions as the principal building.
- Rear-lot garages may include secondary or "in-law" units as traditional "carriage unit" designs.



Accessory structures should be scaled appropriately



Accessory structures should be compatible with the style of the main building

Landscape Design

The landscape guidelines for the Suisun Valley integrate new development into the rural setting of the Valley, creating transitional edges, landscape buffers, and links to open space and agricultural areas. The focus of this section is on landscape elements that influence the identity and character of the Suisun Valley.

The landscape framework for Suisun Valley should be organized into three fundamental areas: roadways, agricultural areas, and ATCs. Plantings within new projects should reinforce Suisun Valley roadways as shaded county lanes lined with large, evenly spaced trees. Roadways should transition through gateways, thresholds, or identity markers to the rural village character of ATCs. Roadways and ATCs should provide framed vistas, panoramas, and other visual, emotional, and physical connections to agricultural areas and ridge views. The rural, pastoral character of agricultural areas should be protected and enhanced by plant selection and placement. The planting design and plant palette should reflect the nature of each area: more rhythmic linear planting patterns are appropriate for roadway corridors, while more natural approaches are appropriate in ATCs and agricultural areas. Formal, ornamental plantings are used as highlights or accents. Within this broad framework, the guidelines encourage a range of creative design approaches.

Road trees should be chosen carefully

Landscaping

Design Principle

Landscaping should reinforce the role, function, and rural character of the public realm and create an appropriate and safe environment for automobiles, trucks, and farm equipment that is also comfortable for pedestrians, bicycles, and other nonmotorized transportation modes.

Landscaping should create a dynamic appearance and visual continuity within Suisun Valley—along roadways, within ATCs, and throughout agricultural areas. Native and ornamental plants with low water needs should be used to the greatest extent possible.

Water conservation techniques should be employed in irrigation practices to minimize water use whenever possible, while maximizing the beauty of landscaped areas. The type of irrigation systems used should be based on plant type and water use requirements.

Trees along roadways should be used to help define the approach to pedestrian-oriented ATCs. Within and approaching the ATCs, trees should be planted to create an uninterrupted canopy that visually frames the travel way, providing shade and comfort to bicyclists and pedestrians as well as motorists. The roadway design in these areas should show that some places have a special feel characteristic of a visitor destination.

Rationale

Roadway trees provide shade during hot summer months and help to lower the temperatures along roadway right-of-ways. Trees along roadways also provide for filtration of the air, supply oxygen to the environment, and provide habitat for local birds and other species. Trees help to increase property values, and establish the character and quality of a community. Historically, rural California communities are known for their large-canopy trees, which have created a healthy, green urban forest.

Using native plants reduces maintenance costs and the need for irrigation, fertilizer, and pest control. Water conservation reduce the amount and cost of water needed.

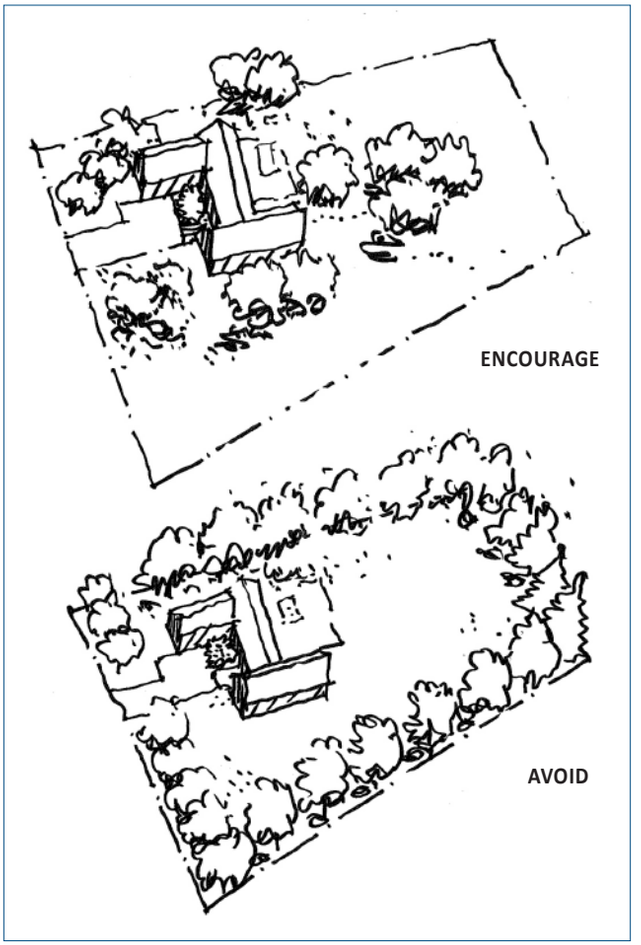
In the climatic conditions of Suisun Valley, summer shade is important to creating a pedestrian friendly environment. In the summer months, all parking areas and walkways should be shaded. Shade trees selected should be medium- to fast-growing trees to maximize available shade as quickly as possible.

Streets and parking lots contribute high loads of pollutants to community stormwater. Where applicable, water-sensitive design techniques should be incorporated into site designs for ATCs. Surface stormwater drainage systems that create opportunities for filtration and infiltration of stromwater are preferred to typical subsurface stormwater drainage systems. For example, surface parking lots can be designed to drain into landscaped bioswales rather than underground drainage systems.

Preserve Existing Rural Landscapes and Natural Resources

Guidelines

- Every effort should be made to avoid removal, change or landscaping that would cause death of existing trees or rare native plant communities and wildlife habitats.
- Landscaping, visible from off the parcel or lot, should be planted in a natural arrangement typical to the area.
- Trees and natural vegetation should be protected from damage during construction with a temporary fence placed at the drip line.
- Fire-safe landscaping is encouraged.
- Landscape plans should reinforce the dominant natural planting patterns that define the California native vegetation indigenous to Suisun Valley.



Preserve existing landscaping and maintain the look of the natural environment

Recommended Plant List

The dominant natural plant community indigenous to Suisun Valley is the California oak woodland. The oak woodland plant community is widespread at lower elevations in coastal California, interior valleys of the Coast Ranges, and in a ring around the Central Valley. The dominant trees are oaks, interspersed with other broadleaf and coniferous trees, with an understory of grasses, herbs, geophytes, and shrubs. Oak savannas occur where the oaks are more widely spaced.

The oak woodlands are dominated by Coast Live Oak (Quercus agrifolia), Valley Oak (Q. lobata), California Black Oak (Q. kelloggii), Canyon Live Oak (Q. chrysolepis), and other California oaks. The foothill oak woodlands around the Central Valley are dominated by Blue Oak (Q. douglasii) and Gray Pine (Pinus sabiniana). The following plant list is an example of noninvasive, drought-tolerant, and native species appropriate to Suisun Valley.

Shade Trees

Deciduous Tree (Ornamental)

Acer freemanii	Autumn blaze maple
Acer platanoides	Norway maple
Acer rubrum	Red maple
Carpinus betulus	European hornbeam
Celtis australis	European hackberry
Celtis occidentalis	Common hackberry
Ginkgo biloba	Maidenhair tree
Pistacia chinensis	Chinese pistache
Platanus acerifolia	Plane tree
Quercus macrocarpa	Bur oak
Quercus phellos	Willow oak
Quercus rubra	Red oak
Tilia americana	American linden
Zelkova serrata	Saw-leaf zelkova

Deciduous Tree (California Native)

Aesculus californica	California Buckeye
Acer macrophyllum	Bigleaf maple
Acer negundo	Boxelder
Arbutus menziesii	Pacific madrone
Fraxinus latifolia	Oregon Ash
Juglans californica	California Black Walnut
Platanus racemosa	California sycamore
Populus fremontii	Fremont Cottonwood
Prunus illicifolia	Holly leaf cherry
Prunus i. lyonii	Catalina cherry
Quercus douglasii	Blue oak
Quercus lobata	Valley oak
Salix laevigata	Red Willow
Salix lasiolepis	Arroyo Willow
Salix goodingii	Black Willow

Evergreen Tree (Ornamental)

Cedrus deodara	Deodar cedar
Eucalyptus microtheca	Coolibah
Pinus patula	Jelecote pine
Podocarpus gracillior	Fern pine
Quercus ilex	Holly oak
Quercus suber	Cork oak

Evergreen Tree (California Native)

Abies concolor	White fir
Pinus coulteri	Coulter pine
Pinus sabiniana	Gray Pine
Pinus torreyana	Torrey pine
Quercus agrifolia	Coast live oak
Quercus wislizeni	Interior Live Oak
Sequoia sempervirens	Coast redwood
Umbellularia californica	California Bay

Accent Trees

Deciduous (Ornamental)

Acer buergeranum	Trident maple
Acer palmatum	Japanese maple
Cercis canadensis	Eastern redbud
Crataegus phaenopyrum	Washington hawthorn
Lagerstroemia indica	Crape myrtle
Malus ioenis	Bechtel crabapple
Nyssa sylvatica	Sour gum
Osmanthus fragrans	Sweet olive
Pyrus kawakamii	Evergreen pear

Deciduous (California Native)

Cercis occidentalis	Western redbud

Evergreen (Ornamental)

Xylosma congestum	Shiny xylosma

Evergreen (California Native)

Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon
Umbellularia californica	California Bay

Shrubs

Shrubs (Ornamental)

Agapanthus ofricanus	Lily of the Nile
Arbutus Unedo	Strawberry tree
Buxus japonica	Boxwood ("Green Beauty")
Cistus sp.	Rock rose
Cotoneaster sp.	Cotoneaster
Euonymus japonica	Euonymus
Lavendula sp.	Lavender
Ligustrum japonica	Privet
Nandina domestica	Heavenly bamboo
Photinia fraseri	Photinia
Pittosporum tobira	Japanese pittosporum
Rhamnus alaternus	Italian buckthorn
Rhaphiolepis indica	Indian hawthorn
Rosemarinaris officinalis	Rosemary
Westringia fruticosa	Coast rosemary

Shrubs (California Native)

Amelanchier alnifolia	Western serviceberry
Arctostapholus manzanita	Manzanita
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi	Prostrate manzanita
Baccharis pilularis	Dwarf coyote bush
Berberis aquifolium	Oregon Grape
Carex praegracilis	Slender Sage
Carpenteria	Carpenteria californica
Ceonothus sp.	Wild lilac
Cornus sericea	Redtwig dogwood
Fallugia paradoxa	Apache plume
Fremontodendron californica	Flannel bush
Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon
Hibiscus lasiocarpus	California Hibiscus
Philadelphus lewisii	Western mock orange
Potentilla fruiticosa	Bush cinquefoil
Rhamnus californica	Coffeeberry
Rhus integrifolia	Lemonade berry
Rhus trilobata	Skunkbush
Ribes sanguinium	Pink flowering currant
Rose californica	Wild Rose
Rosa gymnocarpa	Bald hip rose
Rose woodsii	Wood's rose
Spiraea douglasii	Western spiraea
Mimulus spp	Monkey Flower

- If a new projects would reduce existing tree cover, a certified arborist should develop a plan for tree protection during construction. The elements of this plan should be shown on the project's site plan and include the following:
  - A diagram outlining proposed protection fencing for all trees and other vegetation to remain within the construction area.
  - Trimming and/or root pruning recommendations for specific trees impacted by adjacent grading, excavation, paving, or soil compaction.
  - Materials storage and parking should be designated in areas that will not impact adjacent native trees and their root systems.

Planting

Guidelines

- Landscaping should be used to reinforce the rural character of roadways, agricultural areas, and ATCs. Identifiable changes in street tree and shrub species should be coordinated with other identity-enhancing features such as entry monuments.
- Planting plans should emphasize the use of California and Suisun Valley native plants and low-water, drought-tolerant species (see the "Recommended Plant List").
- Landscaping should be selected for year-round interest, offering fall color, interesting bark, groundcover, flowers, or other appealing seasonal characteristics.
- Plants adjacent to buildings should be sited to provide shade during hot months and to allow solar radiation to reach the building during colder months.
- Decorative or formal landscaping on exposed natural sites is generally discouraged.

Perennials such as this (Monkey Flower) should be the predominant planting in ornamental planting areas to minimize water use.

Use native species such as this (Live Oak) in landscaping.

Native plantings use less water.

- Landscape plans should recognize the importance of water conservation, fire resistance, and erosion control.
- A minimum of 20 percent of trees planted in ATCs should be native species.
- Perennials should be the predominant planting in ornamental planting areas to minimize water use. Annuals, which have higher water needs, may be planted in selected accent areas, such as around entry monuments and outdoor gathering spaces.
- Turf should be used primarily in active play areas within open spaces and limited in other parts of ATCs.
- Low groundcover with minimal water and maintenance needs should be used as an alternative to turf whenever possible.

Irrigation and Water Conservation

Guidelines

- Landscape water use needs shall be calculated in determining adequacy of water resources.
- Plants should be grouped in hydro-zones: groupings of plants with similar watering needs. Irrigation should be calibrated to the water needs of each hydro-zone to avoid over- and under- watering.
- Low-water native plants and ornamentals should be used whenever possible.
- Drip irrigation should be used to provide water to planting areas.
- Turf and ground cover should be irrigated with a conventional spray system, using head-to-head spray coverage. Misting spray heads, which lose a significant portion of their moisture to evaporation, should be avoided.
- Shrubs and trees should be irrigated with a drip system to provide deeper, more even watering and promote water conservation.

Low-water native plants and ornamentals should be used whenever possible.

- Automatic irrigation systems with rain shutoff valves should be installed, as necessary, for planted areas requiring supplemental water.
- Moisture sensors should be installed at appropriate intervals in ATC areas and along planted roadways to minimize overwatering.
- Irrigation controls should be screened from view by landscaping or other attractive site materials.
- Soil should be mulched with 3–4 inches of organic material, such as wood chips, to reduce evaporation, keep the soil temperature even, and control weeds.

Trees along Roadways

Guidelines

- Preference for roadway tree plantings should be given to tall, high-canopied trees that grow to at least a height of 40 feet at maturity and provide an uninterrupted canopy across roadways. Potential choices may include oaks, elms, and sycamores.
- Tree species should be placed and chosen carefully so as to minimize the disturbance of overhead utility lines.
- Roadway trees should be planted at sufficient intervals to accommodate mature growth. The appropriate interval will depend on the species and variety of tree, and location relative to ATCs. Maximum spacing shall be no farther than 40 feet on center.
- Roadway tree spacing should be adjusted to accommodate utilities, curb cuts, and driveways while maintaining a regular roadway tree pattern.
- Tree species should be mirrored on both sides of the street for spatial continuity and uniform canopy coverage.
- Large-canopy, deciduous trees that provide dense shade at maturity should be chosen for placement along pedestrian routes. Narrow, columnar trees are more suitable for street medians.
- Street trees should be easy to maintain and result in minimal pavement and walkway damage.
- Planting intervals can be modified to create interest, with clusters of trees placed near intersections or entry features, and in transitional areas to ATCs and open spaces.
- Accent trees that display seasonal color and interest are encouraged at entryways and at important intersections.
- Roadway trees should be pruned to provide minimum needed clear space between the lower branches and the roadway to allow passage of automobiles, trucks, pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as prevent damage to the tree.
- In ATCs, the clear space provided below roadway trees should also provide an unobstructed view of ground-floor signage, windows, and doors.

Parking Lot and Walkway Landscaping

Guidelines

- Trees should be sized and distributed to achieve at least 65 percent canopy coverage over parking areas and public walkways within 15 years of planting.
- Low hedge planting, shrubs, fences and/or walls up to 36 inches should be provided to screen parking lots along all public roadways.

Landscape parking areas to maximize shade.

Open channels in the street right-of-way should be used to convey and treat stormwater runoff.

Water-Sensitive Design

Guidelines

- Where density, topography, soils, and slope permit, vegetated open channels should be used in the street right-of-way to convey and treat stormwater runoff.
- Minimize the total amount of impervious surfaces through site design.
- Provide compact car spaces, minimize stall dimensions, incorporate efficient parking lanes, and use pervious paving materials in parking lots.
- Integrate stormwater treatment for parking lot runoff by using bio-retention areas, filter strips, and/or other practices in landscaping areas and traffic islands.
- Building greywater and rainwater runoff should be utilized in site and landscape irrigation design.
- Direct rooftop runoff to pervious areas such as landscape areas, open channels, or vegetated areas and avoid routing rooftop runoff to the roadway or directly to the underground stormwater conveyance system.
- Mosquito breeding should be reduced by designing stormwater systems to avoid excessive pooling of water above and below ground.

Public Spaces

Design Principle

The details of how public spaces are designed—elements like lighting, seating, signage, and other elements—should carefully contribute to the aesthetic appeal, visitor comfort and safety, and the character of buildings.

Public art should contribute to and celebrate the identity of the Suisun Valley and the surrounding region. Public art within the Valley is meant to enhance public spaces while complementing and enriching the intellectual and inquisitive life of the community.

Roadway elements should be coordinated to maintain and enhance rural character throughout the Valley. The design and selection of roadway elements (street furniture and pedestrian amenities) should be consistent within individual ATCs.

Signs within public spaces are intended for identification and wayfinding, not for advertising. Signs should use colors, imagery, and quality materials creatively.

Rationale

Benches, lighting, trash receptacles, and paving materials are all significant parts of the character and quality of the public environment. Consistency can be achieved by using a similar “family” of styles without using the same specific products. The character of roadway elements should reflect a rustic, rural village character. Use of heavy timber elements, wrought-iron fixtures, and stone work are appropriate.

Benches, light fixtures, and signage contribute to the village character.

The intention of public art is to provide visitors and residents with a visual landmark, large or small, that inspires a sense of identity, pride, and creativity. Like gateways, public art may have a variety of configurations and scales, although it should be sensitive to the human scale. Public art can be placed in a variety of places and on a variety of surfaces, and can be composed of a variety of materials. It should be consistent and coordinated with surrounding architectural features, street furniture, and events.

Attractive, artistic, well-proportioned, and carefully located signs enhance individual buildings and the overall character of the Valley. Appropriate signs include location and wayfinding signs, informational and educational signs in open space areas, roadway signs, and community entry landmarks. The design of signs, including the roadway signage within the Valley, contributes to the sense of continuity, quality, and character consistent with the rural agricultural theme. New signs should be consistent with the character of the special sign program previously developed for the Valley.

Pedestrian Features

Guidelines

- Roadway furniture should be attractive, functional, easy to maintain, high quality, and vandal resistant. It should be easily viewed by pedestrians, providing an additional reason for them to congregate in and enjoy public places.
- A variety of seating types should be provided in public places, including seat walls and movable seating.
- Seating should be coordinated with shade trees and/or structures.
- Pedestrian features (benches, trash cans, other street furniture, and signage) should be placed at regular intervals outside the road right-of-way, along sidewalks and paths where appropriate, without obstructing minimum sidewalk widths.
- A change of paving materials should occur to indicate those locations likely to include pedestrians to enhance safety, visibility, and aesthetics.

Imaginative, unique and tasteful signs are desirable.

Sign Character

Guidelines

- Signs should be in scale with individual buildings on adjacent lots.
- Imaginative, unique, and tasteful signs that display exceptional design are desirable, and the use of distinctive type, styles, icons, and logos is encouraged.
- Signs should be organized using a consistent style to orient users and clearly identify the associated businesses.
- Signs should be durable, legible, and vandal resistant.
- Signs may be combined when appropriate to create a more orderly appearance.
- Street signs should be designed in keeping with the rural agricultural character of Suisun Valley. Use of classic wine country signposts is appropriate.
- Use of low stone monuments at entries to wineries is appropriate.

Public Art

Guidelines

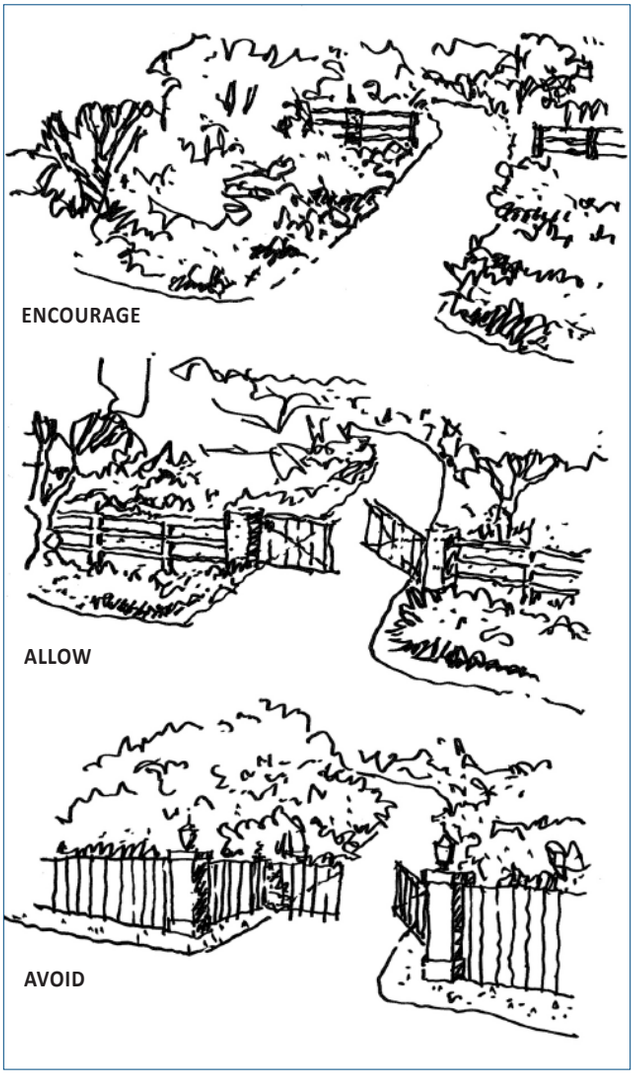
- Modern or contemporary elements with glass, high-gloss finished materials, and stainless steel are not consistent with the character of Suisun Valley; however, in select locations, a more contemporary sculptural art fixture can be used as a contrast to the overall theme, and could provide visual interest and variety in the landscape.
- Art concepts should be considered at the early design stage of a building, renovation, or public works project.
- Permanent installations should be designed to last as long as the related building, structure, or project. Preferred materials for outdoor art include materials such as bronze and marble that can withstand sustained exposure to the elements.

Art helps to create an entrance to the Valley.

Art can be used at all locations.

- Space for performance art or rotating figures should also be allowed.
- Artwork should be of human scale and complementary to building scale, as well as the architectural and landscape fabric of the installation area.
- Public art should be visible from the public right- of-way, preferably outside buildings, but also may be located inside buildings that are accessible during normal business hours or are regularly and frequently open to the public. Outdoor and indoor public art should be installed where unhindered access to the public exists for viewing, such as on self-guided walking/biking tours.

- Outdoor art should be positioned in a well-lit place with lighting designed to illuminate the piece. Art lighting should not produce light spillover onto adjacent properties.
- Art can be combined with function in items such as benches, lighting, gates, railings, and other site features.



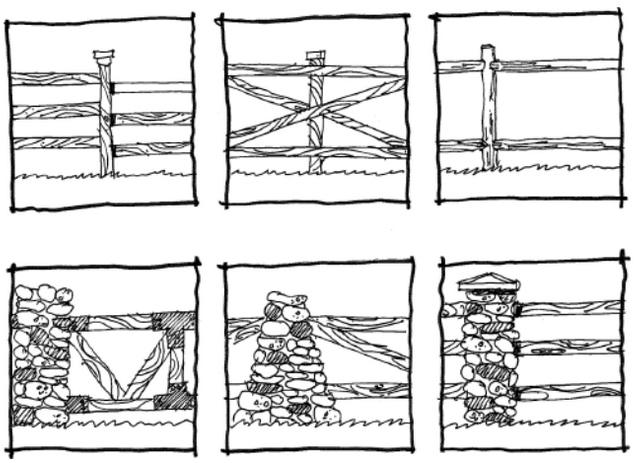
Combining appropriate landscaping and fence styles minimizes the effects of development on scenic views.

Fences and Walls

Design Principle

Fencing and walls should be attractively designed to match the Valley's rural character. Fences and walls should provide security to private areas, screen unattractive uses from the community, and help reduce other unwanted nuisances such as noise, odor, dust, light, and glare from adjoining land uses. In general, high masonry walls should be avoided. See-through fences should be used along roadways to allow visual access to agricultural areas, open space corridors, and ridge top views.

Fences can add to rural character.



Fencing types compatible with the Valley's rural character

Rationale

High-quality fences and walls contribute to the character of roadways and ATCs within Suisun Valley. Screening helps to lessen the effects of new projects on agricultural areas and existing rural residences. Different types of fencing and walls can be used to define edges as well as provide security and privacy.

Guidelines

- The style, materials, and color of fences and walls in ATCs should complement the style, materials, and color of new and existing buildings and reflect the rural character of Suisun Valley.
- Rustic rural fencing—including split rail fences and stone walls no more than 3 feet high—located along the roadways is appropriate to the character of the Valley.
- Acceptable fence materials include wood, wrought-iron metal fencing, stone, and mixed materials (e.g., metal posts between custom concrete/stone columns).
- Chain link fences are discouraged.

Light fixtures should be located at regular intervals to maintain a smooth, level lighting intensity.

Lighting

Design Principle

Lights and lighting fixtures should be designed to contribute to the quality of the community and provide improved safety and security at night without creating a nuisance with unnecessary glare, spillover to neighboring lots, or lighting directly up into the night sky.

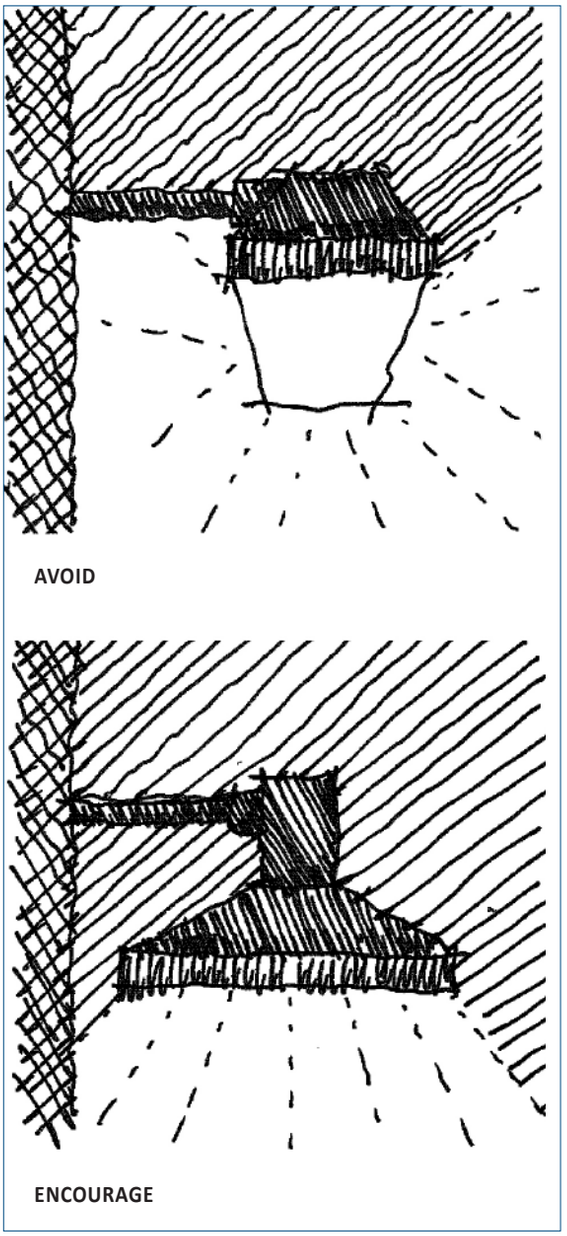
Rationale

Adequate lighting for ATCs increases the potential use of these spaces at night. Lighting should be used to improve safety, and it should add to the character of the built environment without creating a nuisance. Lighting is particularly important for safety on roadways within ATCs but it should not create glare into adjoining uses. Lower intensity lighting close to the ground is preferable to higher intensity lighting fixtures on high poles.

Landscape Lighting

Guidelines

- Landscape lighting should be limited to low, indirect sources. All fixtures should be placed to avoid glare when observed from the roadway and other public areas.
- If up-lighting includes above-grade fixtures, they should be concealed in landscaping. To prevent glare, fixtures should be aimed away from observers. Junction boxes should be placed below ground if they are readily visible from the roadway.



Exterior lighting should focused-on-target to promote a dark night sky

- If special architectural elements, entry signs, entry features or landscape objects are spot-lit, fixtures should be concealed and glare should be eliminated.
- Roof or post-mounted directional floodlights are not acceptable.
- Within ATCs, lighting fixtures should be located at regular intervals to maintain a smooth, level lighting intensity throughout the area and avoid patches of darkness, especially in pedestrian areas.

Exterior Lighting

Guidelines

- Pedestrian-scale lighting (bi-lighting) should be provided for off-street bicycle and pedestrian paths adjacent to roadways.
- Within agricultural areas, site and roadway lighting should be minimized to maintain consistency with the existing rural character.
- Within ATCs, site and roadway lighting should be coordinated to provide a consistent lighting character that compliments adjacent architecture.
- Lighting and light fixtures should be used as an integral component of designing a sense of place.
- Down-lighting should be used along public roadways to reduce nighttime light pollution and promote a dark sky.
- Exterior lighting should be focused-on-target to promote a dark night sky that helps to maintain the rural character of the community.
- Lighting fixtures used exclusively for security lighting should be concealed and shielded to prevent glare.
- The location of lighting standards along roadways and private drives should be coordinated with planting of trees to minimize light blockage from tree canopies.
- All light fixtures located in public areas should be chosen to reduce glare and spillage onto neighboring properties. Lighting should be appropriately shielded to prevent overspill above the horizontal level.

Glossary

Accessory Structures

A structure detached from a principal building, located on the same lot and incidental to the principal use.

Articulation

The dividing or segmenting of building elements into smaller components to create a sense of minor detailing. Articulation may be described in terms of roughness of materials, number of openings, patterns in materials, differences in materials, and massing.

Built Environment

The elements of the environment that are generally built or made by people as contrasted with natural processes.

Design Continuity

A unifying or connecting theme or physical feature for a particular setting or place, provided by one or more elements of the natural or created environment. The use of design continuity helps to avoid abrupt and/or severe differences with adjacent properties.

Elevation

The external faces of a building.

Facade

That portion of any exterior elevation on the building extending from grade to top of the parapet, wall, or eaves and the entire width of the building elevation.

Hardscape

Typically involves street infrastructure, including paving elements such as roads, sidewalks, fountains, shelters and medians.

Heat Sinks

An environment or object that absorbs and dissipates heat using thermal contact (either direct or radiant).

Human Scale

Generally refers to the use of human proportioned architectural features and site design elements clearly oriented to human activity.

Massing

The distribution of building volumes in regard to a) the building's relative location on the site and b) the height, width, depth of the elements of a building relative to each other.

Open Space, Common

Common open space includes all landscaped areas, yards, patios, swimming pools, putting greens, and other recreational-leisure facilities; areas of scenic or natural beauty and habitat areas; hiking, riding, or off-street bicycle trails; and landscaped areas adjacent to roads that are in excess of minimum required rights-of-way.

Orientation

The direction that various sides of a building face.

Pedestrian Scale

A design relating to the scale of an average person.

Public Realm

The public realm is the street space from the back of the sidewalk to the street.

Private Realm

The private realm is typically defined as all private interior and exterior spaces from the building façade to the private yard spaces. The area between the back of the sidewalk to the building facades is a “semi-public” or “semi-private”zone that is visible by the public and controlled by the private owner. Semi-private spaces or semi-public spaces may include front yards, side yards, landscaped setbacks and buffers, and common open spaces between buildings.

Scale

Describes the relationship between the proportions of a project and adjacent uses.

Streetscape

An area that may either abut or be contained within a public or private street right-of-way or access way that may contain sidewalks, street furniture, landscaping or trees, and similar features.