

SECTION 15-100 Development Design Principles

**15-101 DEVELOPMENT DESIGN PRINCIPLES – STANDARDS
AND GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED**

15-101.01 Intent

These Design Principles are set forth to:

1. Promote high-quality design of development.
2. Encourage site design that presents an image of high quality and value.
3. Set minimum quality standards for site development, organization, relationship to adjacent properties and building architecture that work in conjunction with zone-specific standards elsewhere stated in this code.
4. Develop sites in a manner that is sensitive to the existing and adjacent topography while maintaining panoramic views.
5. Allow for the integration of appropriate commercial development with residential development in the Urban Growth Boundary of unincorporated Arapahoe County (as defined and depicted in the Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan).
6. To design a group of integrated neighborhoods with appropriate residential, commercial and employment land uses and public facilities. The neighborhood, as a planning unit, is intended as an area principally for residential use. Space for religious, recreational, educational, and shopping facilities should be provided and designed as an integral part of each neighborhood at a scale commensurate with the size and needs of the neighborhood.

15-101.02 Applicability

- A. Required for All Development – These Design Principles are incorporated into the Arapahoe County Land Development Code and are divided into two categories, Standards and Guidelines. All development applications must comply with the Standards and are encouraged to incorporate the Guidelines into the development whenever possible.
- B. Applications / Processes Affected – Applicable development applications are: Conventional Rezoning, Preliminary Development Plan, Final Development Plan, Master Development Plan, Administrative Site Plan, Location and Extent, Use by Special Review and Special Exception Use.

15-101.03 Relationship between Standards and Guidelines

- A. Standards – The Standards are intended to promote a higher quality of design for all applications by providing requirements for site planning and architecture that allow for flexibility in individual building design while promoting a cohesive image of quality.
 1. These Standards are in addition to the zone-specific standards in this Land Development Code. If only the minimum zone-specific standards for each zone district are followed, as expressed by the various resolutions and codes regulating land development, a standardization of development may occur.
 2. These Design Standards are intended to work in conjunction with the specific requirements, design guidelines, and zone-specific standards to prevent establishment of a monotonous urban setting.
 3. These Design Standards incorporate the idea that the County strives to be a diverse community with a refreshing mix of architectural styles, materials, and forms with building materials that present an image of high quality and permanence. Fostering and maintaining a community with a rich blending of designs that complement each other and create economic value is more important to the County than promoting any one particular design style.

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B. Guidelines – In addition to the Standards that are set in place to complement the requirements outlined in each zone district, the County has adopted Guidelines. The Guidelines serve as flexible guidance for the design of elements throughout a development and promote quality in materials and form in all aspects of new development. In particular, these Guidelines promote better design compatibility between different uses, especially where incompatible uses are located adjacent to one another. In addition, these Guidelines promote a more diverse mix of architectural styles, materials, and forms.

15-101.04 Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

These Standards and Guidelines are consistent with the guidance and intent of the Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan, which states that Arapahoe County will project its local character and convey an image of high-quality design in new development. Furthermore, this section is, in part, fulfillment of a goal of the Comprehensive Plan which states that the County will consider developing and adopting guidelines to enhance the quality of the urban environment. If only the minimum zone-specific standards are followed, as expressed by the various resolutions and codes regulating land development, a standardization of development may occur and may produce a monotonous urban setting. Subdivision design shall be of a quality to carry out the purpose and spirit of the policies and special reports expressed in the Comprehensive Plan (and amendments thereto) and in the Land Development Code.

15-102 DEVELOPMENT DESIGN STANDARDS – NON-RESIDENTIAL

15-102.01 Natural Features

A. The layout of lots and blocks shall make use of natural contours while maintaining existing views, affording privacy for nearby residents and protecting from adverse noise and vehicular traffic.

B. Natural features and vegetation of the area shall be preserved if at all possible.

1. Lacking any reasonable alternative to not grading ridgelines, swales and drainageways, major ridgelines and major swales and drainageways shall be graded in a manner that maintains their approximate topographic form. Significant reconstruction of major or prominent topographic features shall be avoided to the maximum extent feasible.

2. Tree masses and large individual trees shall be preserved. A tree survey mitigation plan is required if tree masses and large individual trees are to be preserved, relocated, or replaced. Healthy trees measuring 4-caliper inches or more shall be replaced with a one-to-one ratio, caliper-inch for caliper-inch or, where not feasible, an equivalent based on numbers of trees and caliper-inch.

15-102.02 Site Layout

A. Subdivisions that create large parcels that offer the possibility of further subdivision shall be arranged to allow the opening of future streets and provide for logical replatting of the large parcels.

B. Shared service and delivery access shall be provided between adjacent parcels and/or buildings to the extent possible.

15-102.03 Architecture

A. Four-Sided / 360-Degree Architecture – Each building shall incorporate a similar level of architectural detailing on all sides subject to public view or viewed from adjacent properties. Blank walls void of architectural details or other variation are prohibited.

B. Screening of Mechanical Equipment

1. All rooftop and grade-level mechanical equipment shall be screened from on-site grade-level view.

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2. Gas and electrical meters, generators, soft water tanks, venting, and heating and air conditioning units shall be screened from public view.
 3. Screening shall be part of the articulation of the building and integrated into the building design.
 4. All vents greater than eight inches in diameter shall be screened.
 5. Screens shall be at least as high as the equipment they hide, and shall be of a color and material matching or compatible with the dominant colors and materials found on the facades of the primary building.
 6. Parapet and screen walls shall be shown on all site plans and elevations as applicable.
 7. Sound attenuation for mechanical equipment shall be included in the overall site design, particularly when impacting residential uses or a public area.
- C. **Building Height and Setbacks** – Building heights shall avoid the perception that individual buildings are out-of-scale with the size of their lots or with neighboring buildings, and shall avoid unnecessary snow shadowing of neighboring buildings and rights-of-way. Buildings located on the south side of streets are required to provide a 1:1 setback from the flow-line (building height to setback ratio) to accommodate snow shadows. Developments are encouraged to display transitional elements when incompatible uses are adjacent to one another.

15-102.04 Pedestrian Amenities

- A. **Ground-floor facades** that face public streets or other public areas (e.g., outdoor gathering spaces, parks or open space, parking areas) shall incorporate pedestrian-oriented design features along no less than 25% percent of their horizontal length. Pedestrian-oriented design features include, but are not limited to, covered or sheltered sidewalks, porticos, entryways, and awnings.
- B. **Pedestrian walkways** shall be separated from roadways used by vehicular traffic. Sidewalks shall be designed to provide all sites with logical pedestrian connections to adjacent uses and public walkways, schools, parks and playgrounds, places of worship, and shopping areas.

15-102.05 Outdoor Storage

- A. All outdoor storage shall be screened from view when the use is visible to the general public from public open space or park lands, from a public right-of-way (including streets, trails, and sidewalks), and from adjacent residential or other non-residential uses.
- B. Screening shall consist of a solid fence or wall, at least six, and not more than ten feet in height, notwithstanding any more restrictive provisions contained in the County Land Development Code.
- C. Where topographic conditions such as elevated rights-of-way permit visibility over the fence or wall, such visibility shall not be considered a violation of these Regulations. For commercial uses, such fence or wall shall match the colors/materials of the site's primary building. Chain link fencing, with or without slats, shall not be used to meet screening requirements for any outdoor storage use.
- D. Stacks or piles of items and materials shall not project above the fence or wall used to screen the material.
- E. No storage or accumulation of waste products, including paint, stain, oils, grease, or other flammable, toxic, or hazardous materials, or stagnant water, shall be permitted as part of any outdoor storage use if such materials exceed applicable fire code requirements.

15-102.06 Hardscaping

Unrelieved, uninterrupted asphalt or pavement area shall be mitigated through the use of landscaping, contrasting colors and banding, or pathways of alternative paving material.

15-102.07 Service Areas

- A. **Location** – Outdoor service areas, including loading docks, refuse collection areas, and similar facilities, shall be located at least 20 feet away from any public street, internal or private drive, sidewalk, internal pedestrian walkway, or building with a residential use (not including a mixed-use building).

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Trash collection or disposal areas, loading docks, or service areas shall not encroach into parking setbacks or required landscape buffers or be located between the front building line and a public right-of-way.

B. **Screening** – Trash containers shall be shielded from view by placement within buildings, or by an enclosure with solid walls and/or fencing at least six feet in height. Trash storage containers, trash compactors and trash placed in such containers shall not project above the screening wall or fence. Wall, gates, and fence materials shall be identical to, or shall compliment, the exterior building materials on the primary structure. Trash enclosure gates shall be constructed of metal or other solid material or cladding. Additional landscaped berms and plantings may be required to minimize views of service and trash areas.

15-102.08 Landscaping and Buffers

A. Landscape design, in terms of quantity, quality, and spacing of landscaping materials, will be reviewed as part of a development plan application. Particular emphasis will be placed on buffers and determination of optimal placing of landscaping between adjacent uses.

B. Landscape buffers shall contain landscaping and other landscape/screening elements such as fences, berms, decorative walls, retaining walls, etc. A combination of such design treatments is encouraged for buffers. Public and private easements are also allowed in landscape buffer areas.

15-102.09 Parking Lots

Parking lot landscaping and screening are required to be provided in accordance with the parking regulations contained in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code. Methods of screening a parking lot include: berming, landscaping, and decorative walls/fencing.

15-102.10 Open Space

All non-residential development shall provide open space areas that are landscaped. All open space areas shall be provided and landscaped in accordance with the requirements of this Land Development Code.

15-103 DEVELOPMENT DESIGN STANDARDS – RESIDENTIAL

15-103.01 General Requirements

A. For all uses, except single-family residential, rural residential, and agricultural, drainage easements for storm sewer or overland conveyance, except for drainage from adjacent lots, shall be platted as tracts to be owned in common ownership.

B. Residential lots shall be platted outside the designated floodplain.

C. The design of individual residential buildings and groups of buildings shall employ a variety of design features, variations in wall and roof massing, textured surfaces, bay windows, the creation of shadow lines, a varied color palette, window patterns, historical reference, and similar residential architectural devices to avoid the creation of monotonous residential neighborhoods and streetscapes.

D. The Homeowners' Association and/or Metropolitan District or a private owner shall maintain any areas not subject to maintenance by Arapahoe County or a recreation district. The ownership/maintenance of such areas shall be specified and/or dedicated on the Final Plats or on the plans for development on a previously platted lot.

15-103.02 Screening

A. Trash containers shall be shielded from view by placement within buildings, or by an enclosure with solid walls and/or fencing at least six feet in height. Trash storage containers, trash compactors and trash placed in such containers shall not project above the screening wall or fence.

B. Walls, gates, and fence materials shall be identical to, or shall complement, the exterior building materials on the primary structure. Trash enclosure gates shall be constructed of metal or other solid screen material or cladding.

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C. Additional landscaped berms and plantings may be required to minimize views of service and trash areas.

15-103.03 Lighting

A. All lighting shall, at a minimum, conform to the lighting standards in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code.

B. All lighting mounted on buildings or poles shall be downcast, without drop lenses, and shall be shielded.

15-103.04 Landscaping

A. Parking lot landscaping and screening are required to be provided in accordance with the parking regulations contained in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code.

B. Methods of screening a parking lot include berming, landscaping and decorative walls/fencing.

15-104 DEVELOPMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES – MIXED USES

15-104.01 Encouraged – Variety of Uses and Housing Types

A. Whenever appropriate, Arapahoe County encourages a mixture of land uses in new developments. The Comprehensive Plan states that “Arapahoe County will amend zoning regulations, as applicable, to allow a greater mix of residential and compatible non-residential uses within the Urban Service Area [Urban Growth Boundary].”

B. The County encourages mixed-use areas with a variety of uses, residential housing types and densities and services and employment areas serving residential areas. Organization of uses should allow appropriate integration to protect sensitive, lower-intensity residential neighborhoods and allow easy cross-neighborhood access.

1. Variety of Uses – A variety of grouped, non-residential land uses are appropriate to the mixed-use area. These include:

- a. Transit station/park and ride;
- b. Neighborhood-serving retail uses;
- c. Small businesses with low traffic generation, such as service businesses;
- d. Small-scale offices and clinics;
- e. Civic Uses;
- f. Schools and day-care centers;
- g. Places of worship and assembly;
- h. Parks and other recreation areas.

2. Variety of Housing Types – Housing types and other uses can, with appropriate design, easily share streets and blocks and provide opportunity for moderate-cost housing to be located adjacent to higher-cost housing, as well as in proximity to non-residential uses. A variety of housing types can fit into this higher-activity area including:

- a. Residential units above retail shops or work places;
- b. Multi-family housing;
- c. Townhomes or duplexes; and
- d. Small lot single family homes with accessory dwelling units.

C. The quantity and quality of uses are determined during specific planning processes and should be appropriate for the respective mixture of land uses. At that time, buffering and proximity of differing land uses are to be established.

D. These guidelines are intended to work in conjunction with the design standards and district-specific standards set elsewhere in this Code.

15-104.02 Location, Connections and Transitions

The County encourages a successful mixed-use center, with a variety of uses serving the local area and connected by a logical system of streets, buildings, and open spaces. These land uses should generally

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transition in intensity and density from the commercial center to surrounding lower-intensity and lower-density residential neighborhoods. Elements include:

- A. Variety of Uses – Mixed-use commercial areas should contain a combination of uses including residential, retail, offices, services, civic uses, parks and open space. Uses located on the ground floor that stimulate pedestrian activity are an example. Auto related uses (auto repair and supply, etc.) are allowed only as secondary uses and located at non-prominent locations. Large retail uses should incorporate the small scale pedestrian pattern of the mixed use area.
- B. Development Pattern – A mixed-use commercial area should maintain a functionally linked pattern of street layout, site design, building scale and character. Street and block patterns, pedestrian and bicycle connections should extend through the mixed use commercial center.
- C. Location of Commercial Mixed Use Areas – Commercial mixed-use areas should be located to maximize pedestrian access by the greatest number of residents as well as the surrounding community.
- D. Transition Areas – Mixed-use commercial centers are a focus for the surrounding neighborhood as a place to live, shop and work. These areas include attached and detached housing of a higher density around a neighborhood commercial center or a commercial area, with secondary uses near primary retail establishments. The surrounding neighborhoods contain moderate densities which form a transition and link between lower-density residential neighborhoods and commercial or light industrial/employment areas.

15-104.03 Structure – Nodal or Linear

The structure of mixed use areas will vary; the following two illustrations represent two possibilities:

- A. Nodal Centers – generally focused on a civic space such as a square, plaza, village green or commons.
- B. Linear Mixed-Use Areas – generally feature “main streets” mixed use retail streets sometimes ending in a civic space, such as a park or plaza.

15-104.04 Horizontally or Vertically Mixed

- A. Horizontally Mixed Land Uses – Horizontally-mixed land uses unified by a pattern of streets and blocks with buildings fronting streets are desirable. This is one way to integrate commercial uses and housing in a mixed use area. Compatible uses may share a street. Higher-intensity uses, with appropriate design, may share a block and an alley while fronting on separate streets.
- B. Vertically Mixed Land Uses – Vertically-mixed uses are desirable, particularly on primary pedestrian streets. Streets lined with shops, with offices and residences above, provide added activity and informal surveillance of the street-life.

15-105 DEVELOPMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES – NON-RESIDENTIAL

15-105.01 Documentation

Adherence to these guidelines should be demonstrated and documented.

15-105.02 Design Guidelines – Commercial Development

Commercial developments should be cohesive, planned lots and tracts, with all elements sharing the same or compatible architectural and landscaping themes within a development. Infill developments are encouraged to consider the surrounding area for their design concept. Both pads and anchor stores should incorporate thematic materials, roof types, and colors. Thematic concepts, floor/area ratios and uses are reviewed at time of the appropriate development application, as established in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code. Strip commercial is discouraged. These guidelines are intended to work in conjunction with the design standards and district-specific standards set elsewhere in this Code.

- A. Design Elements – Design elements, including but not limited to the following, are encouraged to be incorporated into the design of commercial developments:

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1. On-site loading docks and service areas are encouraged to be oriented towards service roads, and shared service drives should be used where possible. They should be located to minimize visibility from public streets or adjacent residential uses. Service and loading areas that are visible from residences or public streets are encouraged to be adequately and appropriately screened by fences, walls, landscaping, berms or any combination thereof.
2. Loading docks and service areas can be combined between multiple sites, when possible.
3. The design of all buildings should employ textured surfaces, projections, recesses, shadow lines, color, window patterns, overhangs, changes in parapet heights, and similar architectural devices to avoid monolithic shapes and surfaces. To emphasize building entries, awnings, banners, lighting and towers are recommended.
4. Each primary building taller than 30 feet in height should be designed so that the massing or facade articulation of the building is appropriately articulated to provide human scale.
5. All stairwells, corridors and circulation components of the building should be completely enclosed within the building envelope;
6. Intense, bright, or fluorescent colors should not be used as the predominant color on any wall or roof of any primary or accessory structure. These colors may be used as building accent colors. Highly reflective or glare-producing glass is not recommended.
7. Soft outdoor lighting at a human scale, in conformance with the lighting standards in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code, is required. Overflow lighting should be minimized, and all lighting should be shielded, as regulated by the lighting section of the Land Development Code.
8. All building facades facing and visible from freeways or arterials should be finished with the same mix of materials and colors, and the same degree of fenestration and articulation used on the major entry walls facing the nearest adjacent street.
9. When sloping roofs are used, the following design elements are encouraged: projecting gables, hips, horizontal/vertical breaks, or other similar techniques.
10. Pitched roofs should be surfaced with durable materials that are complementary to the building architecture.
11. Landscaping, pedestrian areas and design elements within the commercial areas should be maintained by the commercial association or the private owner unless agreed to be maintained by another entity.
12. Where a building design allows, parking can be located behind the structures, so that the building is the focal point along the public street.
13. Tasteful consideration of corporate identities, in terms of logos and signage, should be applied.

B. Retail Pad Developments - Design elements which are encouraged to be incorporated into retail pad developments include:

1. A commercial pad is considered to be a building pad located at the perimeter of a commercial site, adjacent to a street. Commercial pad sites should not obstruct the view of the anchor stores.
2. Sufficient stacking should be provided for each drive through lane to prevent spill-over into major circulation aisles. Ordering systems should not negatively impact adjacent residential uses.
3. Temporary and seasonal outdoor uses, such as farmer's markets, outdoor nursery displays, and sidewalk sales are subject to the regulations of the Arapahoe County Land Development Code.
4. Each building facade is encouraged to have a repeating theme, such as: color or color change, texture changes, material changes, and/or offsets, reveals, or projecting ribs.
5. Pedestrian oriented design features are promoted, for example: ground floor facades that face public streets should have arcades, display windows, entry areas, awnings, or other such features.

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6. Soft outdoor lighting at a human scale, in conformance with the lighting standards in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code, is encouraged. Overflow lighting should be minimized, and all lighting should be shielded for glare.

15-105.03 Design Guidelines – Industrial Development

Industrial parcels should be cohesive, planned lots and tracts, with all elements sharing the same or compatible architectural and landscaping themes within a development. Infill developments are encouraged to consider the surrounding area for their design concept. Thematic concepts, floor/area ratios and uses are reviewed at time of the appropriate development application, as established in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code. These guidelines are intended to work in conjunction with the design standards and district-specific standards set elsewhere in this Code.

A. Creativity – Creativity of design is encouraged.

B. Design Elements – Design elements which are encouraged to be incorporated into industrial developments include:

1. Industrial activities should be oriented to minimize visual and audible impacts to residential uses, and to freeways and arterial roadways. A combination of appropriate screening and landscaping would enhance the compatibility of industrial uses to adjacent land uses.

2. Roofs are to be a prominent and complementary element of a building's architecture. Buildings with flat roofs should be designed to create visual interest by using variations in parapet height. Pitched roofs can be integrated into a building's architecture and used to accent its façade by identifying entrances, providing pedestrian arcades, etc. Large monolithic expanses of pitched roofs should be avoided. Materials such as seamed architectural metals, concrete, clay, and/or slate tiles should be used on all pitched roof surfaces. Internal roof drains are recommended.

3. Position entries to buildings so they are easily identifiable from adjoining public right-of-way and primary access drives. The entrance to the building should be clearly defined. Provide employee-gathering places in areas that are of a sufficient size and scale, and buffered from traffic and circulation areas. Employee gathering areas shall not be located in proximity to primary public entrances.

4. Loading docks and service drives/areas should be combined between multiple sites, wherever possible. On-site loading docks and service areas should be oriented towards service roads. They should be located to minimize visibility from public streets or adjacent residential uses. Service and loading areas that are visible from residences or public streets are encouraged to be appropriately screened by fences, walls, landscaping, berms or any combination thereof.

5. Refuse areas and outside storage areas should not encroach into parking setbacks or landscape buffers.

6. Fences and walls should be constructed of materials consistent with those used on primary structures.

7. Temporary and seasonal outdoor uses are subject to the requirements of the Arapahoe County Land Development Code.

8. A mechanism for maintenance of any common areas, landscaping areas, pedestrian areas and design elements within the industrial development shall be identified at the time of the review of the development application.

9. Outdoor lighting at a human scale, in conformance with the lighting standards in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code, is required. Overflow lighting should be minimized, and all lighting should be shielded for glare.

15-105.04 Architectural Considerations

A. Scale

1. Scale relationships should be carefully considered, and appropriate transitions provided where a change of scale is proposed or required. 'Stairstepping' building height, breaking up the mass of

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the building and shifting building placement can help mitigate the impact of differing building scales and intensities.

2. A proposed commercial or industrial building should also respect the scale of any adjacent residential buildings, and provide an orderly transition to the different scale of development.

3. The actual height and bulk of a two-story office building is usually greater than that of a two-story residence. These buildings will not normally be compatible in close proximity unless they are separated by distance, articulated elevations, or a landscape buffer/screen.

B. Rhythm

1. Building rhythm relates to the horizontal and vertical patterns expressed by architectural features such as cornices, columns, windows, doors, or variations in massing.

2. New developments should respect rhythms established by adjacent buildings. Designers can employ several related rhythms to avoid repetition of one or very few elements throughout the building.

3. Examples of building rhythm include: horizontal and vertical banding with different colors or materials, groupings of windows, repetition of storefront details, or consistent sign design and placement.

C. Building Facade

1. External details in building facades, entries, stairways, retaining walls and other features provide visual interests, enrichment and texture to buildings. Four-sided/360-degree architectural treatment is encouraged. New developments are encouraged to incorporate the use of strong vertical and/or horizontal reveals, off-sets, and three dimensional detail between surface planes to create shadow lines and break up flat surface areas. If large blank surfaces are proposed, they should be for some compelling design purpose. The design should incorporate mitigating features to enrich the appearance of the project, and provide a sense of human scale at the ground level that is inviting to the public.

2. Rear building elevations, especially those facing adjoining residential areas, should be aesthetically enhanced with materials to match the front of the building. Where the rear of a building is viewed from a public right-of-way or an entryway into another building, additional details on the rear of a structure are encouraged. Exterior side yard setback areas (i. e., along side streets) and building elevations along these setbacks should be treated with the same quality of design and materials as the front setback area and front building elevations.

D. Colors and Materials – Materials and colors in the vicinity of the site should be considered when selecting the materials and colors for the proposed development. Materials and colors can unify an area through the use of a clearly defined palette. Colors and materials can be selected for compatibility with the site, as well as compatibility with the neighboring area.

E. Windows and Door Placement – Doors and windows can be located to maximize the possibility of occupant surveillance of common areas. Grids of repeated windows and doors should be architecturally improved so that the patterns created by window and door placements add variety and interest to the design of the building. One such example could be pop out/revealed windows.

F. Screening – All rooftop and grade-level mechanical equipment shall be screened from grade-level view. Soft water tanks, gas meters, generators, heating and air conditioning units and electrical meters shall also be screened from public view, wherever possible. All methods of screening are encouraged to be architecturally compatible with the primary structure. The screening should be part of the articulation of the building and not appear to be an afterthought.

15-105.05 Building Orientation and Siting

A. Placement and Relationships – Placement of the building in relation to the surrounding elements is just as important as the design of the building. The proposed building orientation should respect the orientation of surrounding buildings, existing pedestrian paths/ sidewalks, and the orientation of surrounding streets. Rows of buildings, which create a monotonous, “cookie-cutter” design, are discouraged. Non-residential buildings should be oriented to allow for the use of common driveways,

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especially along arterial streets, where a reduction in the number of curb openings would enhance the streetscape and promote traffic safety.

B. Orientation and Accessibility – Buildings should be oriented so that the entrances are clearly identifiable and directly accessible from a sidewalk. Buildings should be accessible for pedestrians and public transit users, not just for customers and employees driving private motorized vehicles. On commercial sites, especially large retail centers, a portion of the total building area should be located near the street perimeter. Such siting reinforces the streetscape and helps to provide additional screening for large parking areas. Where parking structures are required, architecturally compatible materials are encouraged.

15-105.06 Relationship to Adjacent Uses / Transition / Connectivity

A. Transition of Land Uses and Intensity – In non-residential developments, larger buildings should be encouraged to locate near commercial centers, with a transition to smaller buildings closer to lower density neighborhoods.

B. Entryway Features

1. It is recommended that the entryway features be located at one of a development's primary street entries.

2. The entry feature should be constructed to be consistent with or complementary to the predominant building materials used in the overall development.

3. Entryway features may be located in required landscaped areas, and may be included as part of the gross land acreage used in maximum development density/intensity, but should not be located within sight lines or sight triangles of streets and street intersections.

C. Connect to Existing Neighborhoods

1. Promote the connection of new developments to adjacent uses and neighborhoods, via biking, walking or driving, to better integrate new projects into the existing community and to allow residents to circulate throughout the neighborhoods.

2. The edges of a neighborhood should be formed by features shared with adjacent neighborhoods such as major streets, changes in street pattern, greenways or natural features such as streams and major drainage or riparian corridors.

3. New streets, bikeways, paths and trails should connect to existing adjacent neighborhoods.

D. Pedestrian and Bike Connections

1. Pedestrian and bike connections should be made to residential neighborhoods, retail centers and open space systems. Pedestrian, bike and visual connections should be made wherever auto connections are infeasible due to physical constraints or other considerations.

2. A Merchant's Association and/or Metropolitan District or a private owner should maintain any areas not subject to maintenance by Arapahoe County or a recreation district. The ownership/maintenance of such areas is specified and/or dedicated by recorded agreement and/ or on the Final Plats or Final Development Plan (FDP) if applicable.

3. Open areas are encouraged to be organized so as to create an integrated system that connects with the following types of lands located within or adjacent to the development dedicated park lands, dedicated school sites, other dedicated open spaces, portions of the regional trail and open space system, and activity centers.

4. Whenever possible, retention and detention ponds created to meet storm drainage requirements should be located, designed, and managed to serve as visual amenities, entryway features, or opportunities for passive recreation. However, such areas do not contribute to minimum open space requirements.

15-105.07 Circulation and Parking

Vehicle circulation systems should consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists, and avoid the creation of large, isolated tracts without routes for through-traffic or pedestrian connections.

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A. Pedestrian Circulation

1. Pedestrian connectivity within commercial sites, between commercial sites, and from residential areas to commercial sites should be a high priority, with consideration given to all off-site generators of pedestrian movement, such as open spaces, schools, retail centers, bus stops, etc. Bikeways and pedestrian walkways should be separated and buffered from external and internal vehicle circulation within parking lots.

2. To facilitate convenient movement, and to minimize conflicts with vehicles, walkways should lead pedestrians from parking areas to building entrances. In some cases, a walkway from a perimeter sidewalk to a building entrance may be considered as an alternative.

3. Surface accent strips of brick or textured paving, to define pedestrian walkways, should be utilized. Other designs are acceptable, provided that they meet the intent of defining pedestrian walkways. Pedestrians should feel comfortable that they are in a clearly defined pathway to the building.

4. Pedestrian elements within a non-residential project should incorporate the thematic materials, colors, and design of the development. In addition to adequate sidewalk connections, the following elements would enhance the pedestrian orientation of the parcels:

a) Pedestrian scale details should be incorporated to promote a sense of human scale. Special accent materials and design details can be incorporated into first floor facades and paving areas abutting pedestrian walkways.

b) Site design features should include, but are not limited to: changes in paving patterns and materials at pedestrian building entrances and other significant pedestrian locations, special decorative wall patterns, textures, accent materials, or graphics, trim banks and reveals, special architectural features marking pedestrian entries, and display windows for commercial uses.

c) Site furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, kiosks, newspaper stands, etc, should be used and located, where appropriate, for pedestrian convenience. Site furnishings are encouraged to match the architectural theme of the development. However, site furnishings should not be located in areas that will impede pedestrian traffic.

5. Provisions for access for disabled persons must be incorporated into the overall pedestrian circulation system. The overall design shall be in compliance with the most current disability access laws, in particular the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A).

B. Bicycle and Vehicle Parking

1. It is recommended that bicycle and vehicle parking be provided at appropriate locations within non-residential developments. Bicycle racks should be evenly distributed, and separated from vehicular drives and parking lots by a three-foot separation distance, a curb, or other physical barrier.

2. The quantity of required parking spaces shall be in accordance with the parking design standards contained in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code.

3. Safe vehicular circulation routes around the site should be provided, using landscaped islands, street buffers, and buildings to define drive aisles.

4. Non-residential parking areas should be buffered from adjacent residential properties. Suggested methods of buffering include building design, landscaping, and appropriate fencing.

5. Parking areas should be located to minimize negative visual impacts, particularly as viewed from adjacent roadways and from residential use areas. These visual impacts may be mitigated through berming, screening, landscaping, and other methods acceptable to the County.

6. Surface parking design should utilize shared access drives with adjacent, similarly zoned properties to reduce interference with pedestrians.

7. The number of curb cuts should be minimized and pedestrian access enhanced.

8. Textures, patterns, and colors are encouraged in the design of paved parking areas or entries (not within the ROW). Large monolithic areas of single-color untextured paving are discouraged.

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Colored and textured paving of project entry driveways, parking court entries, and internal driveways are encouraged, so as to soften the streetscape.

9. Large non-residential parking lots are encouraged to be functionally divided by internal circulation corridors, pathways, or aisles into several smaller lots to prevent random or high speed movements.
10. End of row parking islands should be used to delineate primary traffic aisles. Concrete or landscaped islands, in lieu of painted areas, should be provided in order to prevent vehicles from parking in such areas and thereby obstructing sight distances.
11. Parking and circulation aisles are recommended to be perpendicular to the entry faces of buildings to minimize conflicting movements by pedestrians and vehicles. Parking along the curb line adjacent to building fronts should be discouraged to provide for adequate pedestrian visibility.
12. The application of speed bumps and humps, to reduce internal travel speeds, is discouraged for new construction. Structures and circulation aisles should be configured to reduce speeds.
13. Site design should integrate parking structures as part of the overall site design.
14. Parking structure design should include appropriate aesthetic treatments and be compatible with the architecture of adjacent buildings. However, because of their size, parking structures often become a major visual element of the site. Parking structures should therefore be integrated with the architectural style, form and materials of the primary site structures. A convenient, clear, safe, and efficient internal circulation system within the parking structure, for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, is encouraged. Parking structures should provide clarity, safety and be convenient for the user.

15-105.08 Noise

All reasonable efforts should be made to minimize the level of site-generated noise that crosses into adjacent properties. For example, remote outdoor ordering systems, used in conjunction with fast food restaurants and similar retail uses offering a drive through service, should be designed to direct the sound away from residential properties. Other noise-producing businesses, such as automotive repair facilities, are encouraged to be designed so that the entrance to the service bays and other areas where the noise is created are oriented away from residential properties. Auto dealerships are encouraged to use a paging system, rather than an external sound system.

15-105.09 Protection of Natural Features, Resources and Sensitive Areas

- A. The protection of natural features, resources and sensitive areas can be accomplished by including such features in common landscaped areas or dedicated open spaces. Construction in these areas that should utilize techniques that are sensitive to the protection of these features.
- B. If possible, the following features should be connected or integrated with similar amenities on adjacent lands:
 1. Water features;
 2. Parks and public and private open space areas on or adjacent to the site;
 3. Historic or archeological sites, or areas that have been recognized by the Board of County Commissioners as important;
 4. Significant views of the front range or of open space areas as viewed from dedicated public parks and open spaces, from freeways, or from arterial streets, where possible;
 5. Riparian wildlife habitats, as identified by the Division of Wildlife;
 6. Public protection from adjacent natural or geologic hazard areas or hazardous soil conditions, such as unstable or potentially unstable slopes, faulting, landslides, rockfalls, or expansive soils is recommended, with such features having an integrated protection system; and
 7. Other natural features such as bluffs, ridges, steep slopes, stands of mature trees, rock outcroppings, or wetlands.

15-105.10 Landscaping, Water and Plant Materials

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A. Promote Water Conservation – In accordance with water conservation practices, irrigation shall be provided at strategic levels and locations, so that areas requiring high levels of irrigation, such as around shelters, playgrounds, entrances and playing fields are provided only where necessary. Natural areas shall be planted with grasses that adapt to soil conservation district recommendations.

B. Use of Xeric Principles and Plant Materials – The use of xeric plant materials is strongly encouraged. Xeric principles include:

1. Minimize cool season turf areas;
2. Reduce turf areas with mulched planting beds;
3. Amend soils with organic matter;
4. Zone plants by water, soil, and sun needs;
5. Zone irrigation by plant water needs;
6. Maintain landscape to reduce water usage by weeds and promote healthy plant growth.
7. All landscape materials should have a habit of growth that is normal for the species and should be of sound health, vigorous growth, and free of insect pests, diseases, and injuries.

15-106 DEVELOPMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES – RESIDENTIAL

15-106.01 Cohesive, Well-Planned Development

A. Documentation – These guidelines are intended to work in conjunction with the design standards and district-specific standards set elsewhere in this Code. Adherence to these guidelines should be demonstrated and documented.

B. Diversity and Changing Needs – Arapahoe County promotes diverse types of housing, lot sizes and densities that are appropriate to meet the changing needs of the citizens of the County and assure options for residents of all income levels, including affordable housing. The County's goal is to promote different sizes of lots as well as single/multi-family housing, and manufactured housing in Growth Areas.

C. Open Spaces and Connectivity:

1. Goals of open spaces in residential areas include:
 - a. Land dedication for parks, open space, buffers, trails, drainage, and other public uses are required to comply with the requirements of the Arapahoe County Land Development Code, as a part of the subdivision process.
 - b. Preserve significant views and create view corridors and open space areas within the development;
 - c. Provide trail corridors within the development and connecting trails between residential and commercial uses;
 - d. Provide focal points, such as artwork and/or landscaping features, at key entrances to neighborhoods;
 - e. Preserve and allow for passive recreational uses along drainage channels;
 - f. Create opportunities for appropriate active recreation;
 - g. Provide buffers and open space between buildings and/or developments; and
 - h. Help provide sense of place within a development.
2. Open space areas are encouraged to be organized so as to create an integrated system that connects with the following types of lands located within or adjacent to the development, dedicated park lands, dedicated school sites, other dedicated open spaces, portions of the regional trail and open space system, and activity centers.

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3. Each required residential open area should be adjacent to or visible from at least one dedicated public street or public site, and be accessible to all residents of the development. The majority of open areas are discouraged from being located in isolated corners of the development, in peripheral strips along the borders of the development, or in unconnected patterns.

4. The Homeowners' Association and/or Metropolitan District should maintain any areas not subject to maintenance by Arapahoe County, a recreation district, or other entity. The ownership/maintenance of such areas is specified and/or dedicated on the Final Plat(s).

5. Retention ponds and detention ponds created to meet storm drainage requirements should be located, designed, and managed to serve as visual amenities, entryway features, or opportunities for passive recreation, whenever possible. However, such areas do not contribute to minimum open space requirements.

D. Entryway Design

1. It is recommended that the entryway features be located at one of a development's primary street entries. The feature should be constructed to be consistent with or complimentary to the predominant building materials used in the overall development.

2. Entryway feature areas may be located in required landscaped areas, and may be included as part of the gross land acreage used in maximum development density/intensity calculations. Entry features may not be located within sight triangles and sight lines.

E. Building Height and Setbacks

1. Building heights and setbacks are established at the time of development application review.

2. Building heights should avoid the perception that individual buildings are out of scale with the size of their lots or with neighboring buildings, and should avoid unnecessary snow shadowing of neighboring buildings and public rights-of-way.

F. Transition – Developments are encouraged to display transitional elements when less-compatible uses are adjacent to one another.

15-106.02 Community Design Guidelines

A. Intent – Community design elements play an important role in a well-planned community. These design elements should be viewed as a whole package, where each element has a particular function. The developer needs to assess all the functions that should be accommodated within the public space areas of the community, and then provide the elements to allow those functions to occur in a safe and effective manner. By pre-planning the community design elements, a theme can be chosen and high quality elements and materials selected. Staying within a theme helps create an identifiable and cohesive community. These guidelines are intended to work in conjunction with the design standards and district-specific standards set elsewhere in this Code.

B. Site Amenities – Site amenities such as gazebos, shelters, arbors, kiosks, benches, tables, etc. are encouraged, especially within parks, open spaces, and along walkways. These amenities should be architecturally consistent with the style and character of the community's architecture.

C. Signage – All signage must, at a minimum, conform to the Arapahoe County Land Development Code. Community identity features and entry features should be simple, and compatible with the overall design of the community. A signage theme is encouraged.

D. Fencing

1. Different types of fencing should be provided to serve different functions. Types and functions of fences are often differentiated by the level of opacity and materials.

2. Residential wooden perimeter fences should be treated with a weather-resistant finish. In addition, all perimeter fences that face a public or private street should include at least one column for every 100 lineal feet, and one column at every fence corner and dead end.

3. It is recommended that the columns be faced with brick, real or artificial stone, decorative iron, stucco or integrally colored concrete masonry units. Other appropriate improvements to a streetscape may be considered, in lieu of the column guideline such as wider and

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varying landscape tracts. Perimeter fencing should have staggers where possible to eliminate monotony of long, linear fencing. This guideline does not apply to fences in side and rear yards between single-family residences.

4. A common fence color, style, and material for each type of fence allowed will be reviewed at time of development plan application review.

E. Lighting – Lighting serves a variety of needs within a development. In addition to residential and commercial street lighting, special consideration needs to be given to pedestrian area lighting, signage lighting, monument lighting, commercial roadway lighting, and any other lighting necessary for the safety of the residents.

F. Mail Boxes – Where group mail boxes are required, such boxes should be located conveniently and safely within a community. Common mail box areas should be illuminated, with lighting compatible with the development's fixtures as well as the lighting requirements of this Land Development Code. The design must conform to A.D.A. and post office requirements.

G. Street Furnishings – The following street furnishings can be used to provide functional, coordinated amenities throughout a development, which would complement the existing architectural and landscaping assets: seating, trash containers, planters, drinking fountains, directories, bike racks, retaining walls, and fences.

H. Entryway Designs – Entryway features should be located at one of a development's primary street entries. A development's thematic style should be incorporated into the entryway design feature.

15-106.03 Single-Family Detached Residential Development

The intent of these Guidelines is to provide a distinctive recognizable style of high-quality architectural character in residential developments that avoids featureless design and repetition of facades. Garage structures should not dominate the building design. The entrance to the home should be the primary element along the street frontage. Design elements which are encouraged to be incorporated into single-family detached dwelling units include:

A. General Site Planning

1. A non-repetitive front elevation design would prevent a monotonous streetscape from occurring. Varied architectural styles shall be encouraged, which incorporate a mixture of different footprints, materials, design, and color palettes. Architectural banding, through the use of a change in materials, design and/or color, can also relieve a monotonous design theme.

2. A minimum 4' variation in the front setback of residences, within a residential development, will further prevent a monotonous 'cookie cutter' appearance.

3. Where provided, porch and deck columns and roofs should be integrated into the overall design of the house to which they are attached, and are recommended to be constructed of materials consistent with those found elsewhere on the house. Front or side porches add to the architectural ambiance of a neighborhood. Front entry gates and sidewalks leading to a side entry may be considered.

4. Porches raised above the sidewalk level are encouraged.

5. Side-use easements are desirable to maximize useable yard space.

6. Recessed front doors add an aesthetically pleasing design element to residential structures.

7. Creativity of building and subdivision design is strongly encouraged.

B. Garages/Parking

1. Minimize garage visibility from the street.

2. A minimum of a one-car garage is recommended for all single-family detached. The County strongly encourages alternative placement of the garage structures to reduce the dominance or front loaded designs. The objective is to have the house as the primary element along the street frontage, with emphasis on the entrance to the home. The garage placements may include but are not limited to:

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front loaded garage structures both attached and detached, rear loaded garage structures both attached and detached.

3. Garages should not obstruct the front entrance to the residence. Garages may be attached, detached, front-loaded, side-loaded, to the side of the residence, or to the rear (alley-loaded).

4. Detached garages should be faced with the same mix and percentage of materials as the primary structures.

C. Architectural Features

1. Roofs with eaves/overhangs, decorative brackets, beams, or exposed rafter ends are encouraged.

2. Decorative shutters, window dormers, bay windows, oversized decorative window heads or window sills that match the building are encouraged to be provided.

3. Walk-out basements.

4. Clay or concrete tile roofs or high-relief (shake appearance – shake roofs do not meet building codes).

5. Front doors with transom windows, side lights, or a double door.

6. Durable patterned paving.

7. The architectural character of the residence should be incorporated into any accessory structure's design.

D. Lighting Design – Soft outdoor pedestrian-oriented lighting at a human scale, in conformance with the lighting standards in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code, is encouraged. Lighting should be designed to ensure the safety of the residents, while minimizing overflow onto the surrounding properties. Lighting should be shielded for glare.

E. Private Yards and Fencing

1. The builder and/or developer should provide front yard landscaping for all homes in small lot developments in accordance with the Arapahoe County Landscaping Regulations.

2. Front yard fencing, where it occurs, should be low (approximately 3 feet), open fencing (not chain-link) compatible with the home. A full stucco or brick wall may be used if part of the architectural theme.

F. Accessory Dwelling Units – *Reserved*

G. Small Lot Guidelines – These guidelines apply to those properties under 5,000 square feet as regulated by the Small Lot Criteria in the Land Development Code. These Guidelines are in addition to other design guidelines for single family development:

1. Wherever possible use open yards or split rail fencing to minimize side and rear yard privacy fencing;

2. Encourage side use easements to maximize useable yard area;

3. A minimum of 400 square foot of useable back yard is encouraged.

15-106.04 Single-Family Attached Residential Development

Design elements which are encouraged to be incorporated into single-family attached units include:

A. General Site Planning

1. Breaks in long buildings are suggested, so as to provide for pedestrian circulation and access to alleys.

2. Where attached garages are used, semi-private front yards and larger decks are encouraged.

3. Staggered front setbacks.

4. Creativity of design is greatly encouraged.

B. Architectural Features

1. A front elevation with the first floor clad in stucco, stone or brick, or other architecturally compatible material.

2. A non-repetitive front façade design can be developed by mixing different window treatments, such as: transom windows, bay windows, roof dormers containing windows.

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3. A front door containing at least one side light, or one transom window over the front door.
 4. Offsets are encouraged between two double garage doors on the same façade.
- C. Private Yard and Fencing
1. A fully landscaped yard and/or an outdoor private patio or deck.
 2. Where townhome designs do not provide private rear yards, a front patio, yard or balcony is recommended such as a 150 square foot patio and/or an eight foot by 10 foot balcony.
- D. Building Entry Locations
1. A unit designed so that the unit's garage door or doors and its "front entry" appear on different sides of a building. A front entry is defined as an entry into a living space.
 2. The facades of single-family attached townhouses should be articulated to differentiate individual units unless the units are designed to look like one large single family home.
 3. Alley-loaded designs.
- E. Lighting Design
1. Soft outdoor lighting at a human scale, in conformance with the lighting standards in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code, is encouraged.
 2. Lighting overflow to adjacent properties is regulated by the Land Development Code and should be minimized. In addition, all lighting should be shielded.

15-106.05 Multi-Family Residential Development

A proposed multi-family residential development should respect the scale of any adjacent residential buildings, and provide for an orderly transition to a different scale of development. These guidelines are intended to work in conjunction with the design standards and district-specific standards set elsewhere in this Code.

- A. Creativity – Creativity of design is encouraged
- B. Specific Guidelines – Design elements which are encouraged to be incorporated into the design of multi-family developments include:
1. All multi-family buildings are encouraged to be designed to provide complex massing configurations with a variety of different wall planes and roof planes. Plain, monolithic structures with long, monotonous, unbroken wall and roof plane surfaces are discouraged.
 2. Horizontal articulation through the use of decorative banding, a change of siding material and/or color, or sloping roof planes are preferred design features.
 3. So as to create variety to a three-story housing type, one and two story units or building elements can be introduced, especially at ends and corners. Garages and carports can also be sited at the ends of buildings to help minimize three story end conditions. This is to help mitigate impacts of multi-family developments when located adjacent to single-family detached and attached residences.
 4. Buildings should be oriented outward towards the street or parks to provide a residential character to the community's streets and parks. Internal to the parcel, buildings should be oriented to create parking courts (areas for parking, carports, and garages), and usable areas of open space. This will also minimize the visual impacts of automobiles on the community experience. Facades with no entries, fenestration or articulation should not be visible from approach streets and property entry.
 5. Building entries should be visible from the street and be clearly signed and lit.
 6. Ground floor units are recommended to have articulated residential entries, which may be shared for multiple units.
 7. On smaller multi-family buildings with less than 4 units, a design option would be to utilize massing and exterior materials to give each building the appearance of a large single-family home.
 8. Building spacing should be optimized so that the structures do not over power the design of the development.
 9. On buildings where sloping roofs are the predominant roof type, distinct roof ridgelines are recommended. Hip and gable roofs are encouraged.

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10. A building's special architectural features and treatments should not be restricted to a single façade, and can be applied throughout the entire community. Massing can be simple, yet allow enough variation to create visual interest and a residential scale.
 11. All elevations on multi-family buildings are recommended to contain windows.
 12. Sensitivity to the proximity and buffering of garages adjacent to buildings is encouraged.
 13. Residential buildings should be set back from parking courts to provide a sufficient transitional landscaping area. When possible, parking courts (area for parking, carports and garages) are preferred to a linear parking arrangement. When parking is organized into courts, the visual impact of parking on internal driveways and buildings is minimized.
 14. To minimize exterior surface parking in multi-family developments, resident parking should be provided in garages, wherever possible.
 15. Garage door elevations can be mixed with non-garage door elevations on the front façade, and the plane of each garage door is recommended to be offset from the plane of the garage door adjacent to it.
 16. Outdoor balcony or patio areas are encouraged. It is advisable to orient these towards interior streets, walkways or parks.
 17. When through wall heating, venting, or air conditioning units appear on exterior building walls, such units are encouraged to be covered by an architectural grille, and be designed in such a manner as to blend in with surrounding wall surfaces. Utilities should be designed to blend in with the architecture and landscaping.
 18. Soft outdoor lighting at a human scale, in conformance with the lighting standards in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code, is required. Overflow lighting should be minimized, and all lighting should be shielded for glare.
 19. All roof top mechanical equipment should be appropriately screened.
 20. Trash receptacles, dumpsters, and recycling bins are encouraged to be located conveniently to residential units, yet thoroughly screened with walls/fences and/or landscaping buffer. Receptacles should be sited to avoid adverse visual, noise, and odor impacts to residential units or public spaces. A central compactor is a recommended amenity.
- C. Amenities – The following amenity features are encouraged:
1. Recreational facility, such as a tennis court, picnic area, or volleyball court;
 2. Swimming pool;
 3. Paved plaza area with benches focusing on a water feature or work of art;
 4. Resident clubhouse;
 5. Adult recreational area;
 6. Children's play area, with benches and trash receptacles.

15-107 GUIDELINES – TRANSPORTATION, DRAINAGE, OPEN SPACE

15-107.01 Open Space Design Guidelines – *Reserved*

15-107.02 Transportation and Drainage Design Guidelines – *Reserved*