

TO: JAMES L. APP, CITY MANAGER  
FROM: BOB LATA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR  
SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS 05-002 ESTABLISHING MULTI-FAMILY DESIGN GUIDELINES  
DATE: APRIL 5, 2005

Needs: For the City Council to consider adopting Multi-Family Design Guidelines.

Facts:

1. The City Council considered the proposed Multi-Family Design guidelines at the Council meeting on March 15, 2005. The Council opened and closed the public hearing, and then continued the item to this meeting.
2. No changes were requested by the City Council regarding the content of the Multi-Family Design Guidelines at the previous meeting.
3. The guidelines were previously proposed in the form of a Zoning Code Amendment to be adopted by ordinance. The guidelines are instead proposed for adoption by resolution.

Analysis  
and

Conclusions: The content of the Multi-Family Design Guidelines, as shown in Exhibit A of the attached resolution, has not been modified, as the City Council considered this item on March 15, 2005. The guidelines are proposed for adoption by the attached resolution.

Policy

Reference: Paso Robles General Plan and EIR, Paso Robles Zoning Ordinance, and CEQA.

Fiscal

Impact: No direct fiscal impacts have been identified.

Options: After opening the public hearing and taking testimony, the City Council will be asked to take one of the following options listed below:

- a. Adopt Resolution No. 05-xx approving the Multi-Family Design Guidelines.
- b. Amend, modify, or reject the above option.

Attachments:

1 - Resolution No. 05-xx

RESOLUTION NO. 05-

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES  
APPROVING THE MULTI-FAMILY DESIGN GUIDELINES

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WHEREAS, the City of Paso Robles General Plan 2003 includes goals, policies and action items that promote the community's image and identity, and encourage architectural excellence for multi-family development; and

WHEREAS, well designed multi-family development projects will complement the community and neighborhoods where they are proposed; and

WHEREAS, to implement the City's objectives for high quality multi-family development, the City of Paso Robles initiated development of Multi-Family Design Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Multi-Family Design Guidelines are intended to provide guidance for the architectural design of industrial buildings and site design; and

WHEREAS, the Multi-Family Design Guidelines provide design criteria for site design and building design; and

WHEREAS, the Multi-Family Design Guidelines are intended to guide new development so that it is designed to provide appropriate transitions to surrounding development and site sensitive locations; and

WHEREAS, these guidelines shall apply to all site and building design for all development proposed in multi-family zoning districts; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on March 8, 2005 and Multi-Family Design Guidelines and to accept public testimony as provided in Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Statutes (Section 21065) and Guidelines (Section 15061 (b)(3)) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City's Procedures for Implementing CEQA, these Multi-Family Design Guidelines are exempt from environmental review.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles does hereby approve these Multi-Family Design Guidelines.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles at a regular meeting of said Council held on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of April 2005 by the following vote:

AYES:  
NOES:  
ABSTAIN:  
ABSENT:

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Frank R. Mecham, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Sharilyn M. Ryan, Deputy City Clerk

## Multi-Family Development Guidelines

### General Multi-Family Development Guidelines

The City's General Plan Land Use Element includes various goals, policies and action items that provide direction to, “. . . *promote the community's image and identity.*” The Plan also aims to, “. . . *promote architectural and design excellence,*” and to “. . . *strive to maintain and create livable, vibrant neighborhoods and districts.*” Action items in the General Plan include strengthening the design and construction regulations that apply to multi-family projects. These design guidelines were prepared to implement these goals, policies, and action items. They are also intended to provide the basis for meeting the purpose of the Multi-Family Land Use Categories, which establishes that multi-family categories are, “*To provide a transition zone between single-family residential neighborhoods and higher-intensity land uses.*” Additionally, in the Multiple Family, High Density land use category (RMF-20), development may be permitted at the high density level, “. . . *where such density can be accommodated through sensitive site and building design.*”

Development guidelines are intended to *guide* applicants in designing high-quality multi-family development projects. These guidelines provide qualitative design criteria that should be incorporated into multi-family development projects, where appropriate. They are provided to help projects fit in with surrounding neighborhoods by creating sensitive site and building design; create projects that would be an asset to the community; and provide multi-family housing that would be more enjoyable to live in.

#### A. Site Design Guidelines

All multi-family development projects need to provide basic features including: residential buildings; parking areas (either in garages, carports, or open parking spaces); driveway access; open space areas; personal storage; trash enclosures; and laundry facilities. How these features are arranged on a site and the building form and materials used can make a significant difference in how well a project meets functional needs as well as community goals.

##### 1. Neighborhood Pattern and Context

New multi-family development should be designed in a manner that fits in with the surrounding neighborhood development pattern and context. This refers to: the spatial relationship between structures and the public right-of-way; vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian circulation patterns; existing vegetation and topography; the architectural elements in surrounding development; and the size and form of new structures in relationship to existing development. Consideration of these design elements assists new development fitting in with and maintaining community character and identity. For instance, if a multi-family project is located across the street from a single family neighborhood, the building(s) should be oriented toward the street with individual entries, patio areas, and landscaping facing the single family homes. Parking lot areas and carports should not be located along these street frontages. Also, the placement of structures on property should maintain the established development pattern in the neighborhood.

Buffers between multi-family development and abutting property, particularly if the abutting property is zoned single family residential or is a non-residential zone, should be incorporated. This will ease the transition between uses. Methods to buffer multi-family projects should include in combination, increased setbacks, landscaping, berms, etc.

## 2. Addressing the Street

Multi-family development should “*engage the public realm - not turning its back*” toward the street. Residences should have their primary pedestrian entrance from the street sidewalk or as courtyards with at least one significant pedestrian entrance along the street sidewalk. Where individual units have access to the street sidewalk, private “front yard” outdoor space may be differentiated from the public right-of-way by a porch or small yard area enclosed by a low garden fence or walls. Distinctive architectural elements and materials should be used to highlight primary entrances.

Residences that are not adjacent to a street should be accessible with pedestrian walkways that area separate from vehicle parking areas and driveways. Entrances should also be visible from at least one other dwelling.

## 3. Open Space

- a. Common Open Space. Common open space should be designed so that it is a usable, safe and defensive space. It should include a focal point and not be designed as a “*left over*” area that appears like an afterthought. In addition, areas that are a “*no-man’s land*” often become degraded and locations for illicit activities because they are not controlled or observed by residents. Common open space should be designed so that windows of frequently used rooms (e.g. living and dining rooms) overlook common open space and child play areas.

Common open space areas should also have safe pedestrian access clearly delineated so that residents do not need to cross in front of driveways and parking lots, to the extent possible. The topography should not have more than 10 percent slope for active open space areas. These areas should also be primarily landscaped with greens or garden areas, with the remaining area in functional hardscape. Common open space areas should be located, to the extent possible, in areas where it would be protected from significant noise such as traffic, railroad lines or other incompatible land uses in the surrounding area.

Common open space areas should incorporate landscaping, building placement and fencing to create gateways to common open space areas. This can create a distinction between the public realm and the semi-private nature of multi-family common open space.

- b. Private Open Space. Private open space should be designed so the individual tenants have usable space that is clearly defined through use of landscaping, garden walls, fences or other means, and to provide a sense of privacy and ownership for residents. These areas should include features

that allow tenants to hang or otherwise set out potted plants, outdoor patio furniture, etc.

4. Parking Facilities, Driveways and Walkways

- a. Parking Areas and Driveways. Parking spaces and driveways should not be the dominant site plan design feature of multi-family projects. For instance, parking areas should not be located in the center of the project site. To the extent possible, they should be located to the rear and/or sides of the site. Parking areas should also be located within a reasonably close distance to residential entrances, and be visible from some of the dwellings on the site.
- b. Walkways. Enhanced hardscape walkways including colored and/or textured cement, brick pavers, or other types of decorative hardscape surfaces should be incorporated into the site design to add visual interest and identify safe pedestrian access. Walkways with covered design elements such as trellis', archways, or other treatments should also be incorporated and be consistent with the architectural design of the residences.

5. Landscaping, Lighting and Site Furniture

- a. Landscaping. Landscaping should be installed between parking lots and buildings to help soften the appearance of parking areas. Landscaping should also be planted along walkways. The area between driveways and property line fencing should also include landscaping to soften the driveway edge.

Common open space areas and parking lots should include deciduous shade trees. Landscaping for parking areas should not include dense, tall shrubs or bushy trees that could be used for places to hide. All areas not covered with structures, driveways, parking spaces, ornamental hardscape or walkways should be landscaped with plant materials.

- b. Lighting. Lighting should be provided for safety and security at all times during evening hours for all common areas including parking lots, walkways, community rooms, and laundry facilities. Lighting should also be provided at front entrances to residences and in private open space areas. On-site light standards should be pedestrian scale and complement the architectural character of the residential structures, and must be shielded per City Zoning Code Standards.

- c. Site Furniture. Benches should be placed throughout the common open space areas, including child play areas, and along walkways. Landscape garden walls are encouraged to be designed to be used for informal sitting, where appropriate.

Picnic tables and barbeque areas should be installed in common areas for multi-family projects with 30 dwelling units or more.

- 6. Trash Enclosures. All trash enclosures should be designed so that they are architecturally compatible with the residential buildings in use of colors and materials. Trash enclosures should use opaque materials that obscure views of the trash

containers. Trash enclosure doors should be constructed from durable materials such as painted metal or chain link with plastic slatting. Trellis and foundation landscaping are strongly recommended. Trash enclosures should also provide adequate space for recycled materials containers. They should also be located away from residences to control potential odor and noise nuisances.

B. Building Design Guidelines.

Multi-family building form and the type of construction materials used are significant factors in creating a development that is attractive and that fits in with the neighborhood. These factors also contribute to whether the design of a multi-family project is acceptable to the community.

1. **Massing.** The height, width and depth of a structure create the overall “*massing*” of a building. Sensitivity to massing can add to the appeal and acceptance of multi-family projects. Achieving attractive building massing for large structures is challenging, and requires extra creativity in architectural design. The larger the massing of a building with unbroken building walls and rooflines, the larger and more bulky it will appear on the site where it is located and in the surrounding area. Appropriate building massing is achieved when it does not dominate building elevations with large blank walls. Massing can be reduced through several methods including, but not limited to:
  - Recessing building floors above the first story;
  - Providing vertical or horizontal offsets in the wall surfaces at regular intervals (e.g. every 10 feet);
  - Reducing the overall size of buildings;
  - Articulating details around doors, windows, balconies, plate lines, providing details such as “belly-bands”, recessing design elements, and interesting cornice treatment details;
  - Reducing overly large and tall roof designs;
  - Use of darker building color and varied wall treatments.
2. **Scale.** The scale of a building refers to the relationship of a particular building mass, to other nearby or adjacent development. The overall scale of building as well as individual design elements and how they are integrated into a building design, affects whether it is “*in scale*” with surrounding development and the landscape. Multi-family projects should be in proportionate scale with development in the neighborhood where it is located.
3. **Building Articulation and Materials.** Building articulation refers to the architectural details on building surfaces and rooflines. All building elevations should incorporate equal articulation and attention to details in multi-family building design. This will help to avoid unattractive massing, the appearance of a “stucco box” or what would otherwise appear as bland building design.

Use of varied building materials for siding and roofing also contribute to well designed buildings. Variation in colors and textures can add interest to plain building walls. Materials should be durable to maintain their quality over time in the local climate. Materials should also be appropriate and authentic for the architectural style of the buildings that they are placed on.

4. Form. Multi-family projects should incorporate design forms and themes from the surrounding community and region. While no single architectural style is suggested, building designs should be reflective of the best of local and regional building forms.
5. Parking Structures. If parking spaces are proposed as carports or garages, the structures should be consistent with and/or integrated into the architectural design of the residential buildings. Subterranean or semi-subterranean parking structures should be designed so that they are integrated with the site and architecture. They should provide security lighting and more than one access for pedestrians.
6. Walls and fences. Walls and fences should be architecturally compatible with the design and materials of the buildings on the site. Use of cinder block walls should be avoided. Fence materials should be durable and suitable for their intended purpose. Private walls or fences for residential patios should not create a “walled in” affect. Use of lower, garden walls or fences with lattice or other non-visually obscuring materials should be incorporated at the top of walls or fences so that occupants can see out over the fences or walls into common areas.
7. Rooflines. Long, monotonous, unbroken rooflines should be avoided. Use of gables, hip roofs, and variation in the placement of rooflines should be incorporated into the design of rooflines.
8. Windows. Front yard windows, balconies, doors or other openings above the first story are encouraged. Windows and doors should match the style, scale and proportion of the structure. Side yard windows, balconies or other openings above the first story should be oriented so as to not have a direct line-of-site into windows or similar openings of adjacent structures. Rear yard windows should be placed where they would have the least impact onto adjacent private yards, patios, etc. Skylights, opaque glass, permanently affixed louvers, inset windows or windows with high sills may be appropriate when other window designs would severely affect the privacy of adjacent property.
9. Building Shadowing. Upper stories should be designed with consideration to not result in a shadowing affect on adjacent property or block solar collection devices.