



Transitional Area Design Standards (Townhomes and Parking Lots)

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SITE DESIGN

Pedestrian Connections

Intent

To create a network of safe, consistent, distinguishable, and convenient linkages for pedestrians, including locating building entrances from the public sidewalks.

Standards

1. A comprehensive system of pedestrian walkways shall link all site entrances, building entries, parking facilities, and common outdoor spaces with the public sidewalk.
2. Clearly defined pedestrian connections shall be provided between public sidewalks and building entrances when building entrances are not located directly adjacent to the sidewalk.

Pedestrian connections shall be reinforced with pedestrian scale lighting, bollard lighting, landscaping, accent lighting, signage, or a combination thereof to aid in pedestrian way-finding.

3. The type and nature of all materials used for pedestrian walkways, including where walkways cross vehicular use areas, shall be consistent within a development, and be distinct from vehicular use areas.
4. Where transit stops occur in the public right-of-way, pedestrian walkways shall provide a clear and direct connection from the main building entrance to the transit stop.
5. Pedestrian walkways within vehicular use/parking areas shall be a minimum four or five feet width of clear, unobstructed passage.
6. Wire chain link, including fencing, shall not be used to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic.

Screening of Site Service Elements

Intent

To reduce the visual impact of and provide screening of on-site trash, service, loading and storage areas, utilities and utility facilities, and mechanical equipment.

Standards

1. On-site service facilities, and equipment such as loading docks, dumpsters, etc., shall be located in an area that is least visible from the public right-of-way or common outdoor spaces.
2. All service and utilities, loading, and trash collection areas shall be screened from view by a visual barrier. Solid screening shall be as high as necessary to fully screen the service element(s).
3. Landscape screening may be used in addition to the solid screening.
4. All screening shall reflect building architecture and shall include consideration of proportion, color, texture, and materials to integrate into the development.

Site Landscaping Areas

Intent

To enhance the character of development in the Transitional Uses District through landscaping.

Standards

1. All areas not otherwise devoted to landscape required by the Transitional Uses District regulations and site design standards shall be retained or replanted.
2. Native, non-invasive vegetation is preferred for planting or replanting.
3. Perennials and/or annuals are encouraged to provide special interest and highlight pedestrian areas such as building and site entrances, public open space, plazas, and major pedestrian connections.
4. Rocks, pebbles, sand, and similar non-living materials may be used as groundcover substitutes, and as accent features provided such features do not exceed a maximum five percent of the total landscape area.

Sidewalks in Right-of-way

Intent

To provide continuous, safe, and consistent street frontage character within the street right-of-way.

Standards

1. Sidewalks shall be at least five feet in width and more* where needed to provide adequate width for all sidewalk uses, including loading and unloading of people from on-street parking, pedestrian traffic, and when applicable, use of street furnishings. Sidewalk width shall be determined as the sum width required by separate functional clearance requirements as determined by the City.
2. Sidewalks shall be adequately lit using pedestrian scale lighting.
3. Sidewalks within the public right-of-way shall be concrete, two and a half foot grid, standard Mountlake Terrace sidewalk color, and finish, per the current Mountlake Terrace Engineering Standards, the grid shall be saw cut.
4. Landscape areas next to a sidewalk shall be designed and maintained with plant material chosen to maintain a clear zone between three and eight feet from ground level within a minimum of three feet abutting the edge of the sidewalk.

*Such as for intersections and other special functions.

Street Trees and Landscaping in Right-of-way

Intent

To provide a consistent street frontage character within the street right-of-way.

Standards

1. Street trees shall be planted in the right-of-way in the landscape zone between the curb and public sidewalk.
2. Street trees shall be spaced approximately 30 feet on center. The tree species type may be specified by the City.
3. Street trees shall be planted in a continuous planting strip with groundcover and shrubs.
4. All landscaped areas shall be properly prepared as directed by the Department (soil mix, planting standards). Tree grates shall be used when deemed appropriate, such as near mailboxes and street furnishings.
5. If a street already has street trees or a distinctive species, then new street trees should match the planting pattern and species.
6. Selected vegetation and street trees should help create continuity within a neighborhood by displaying a strong repetitive form and/or seasonal interest with color, interesting bark, branching pattern, or flowers.
7. Where tree grates are used or required, they shall be ADA accessible and of a similar size and material as tree grates found in adjacent developments.
8. Where on-street parking is provided, the abutting landscaped areas shall have hard surface connections at least two feet in width every 10 feet on-center, unless a larger spacing is deemed more appropriate.

Front Yard/Entrances

Intent

To provide a clear, welcoming, and safe entry for pedestrians from the sidewalk to the front of each townhome.

Standards

1. Primary building entries shall be clearly identifiable from the street, with well-defined walkways from pedestrian routes and sidewalks to building entries.
2. All landscape areas should include a wide range of plant materials including perennials, flowering shrubs and native shrubs and groundcovers. A minimum 40 percent of plant material used shall provide seasonal color or interest.
3. Pedestrian scale lighting and/or bollards shall be provided to create a safe and defensible walkway to the entry.
4. Functional, accent lighting should be used to highlight special focal points, building/site entrances, public art and special landscape features.
5. Four or more of the following elements shall be used to highlight the main entrances to each townhome:
 - a. Open space, plaza, or courtyard
 - b. Special paving
 - c. Ornamental gate and/or fence
 - d. Seating
 - e. Water feature(s)
 - f. Planter boxes or pots
 - g. Functional, accent lighting
 - h. Special landscape treatment with seasonal color, flowering trees, and trees with interesting bark or branching structures.
6. Front yards shall include an entrance sequence between the sidewalk and the building including elements such as, trellises, site furnishings, low hedges, landscaped borders, and special paving.
7. Architectural features used at main pedestrian entrances shall compliment the architectural style of the building.

Outdoor Common Spaces

Intent

To provide a consolidated, usable and comfortable open space gathering opportunity for townhome developments with greater than eight dwelling units. To assure townhome developments do not consist solely of building, vehicular use and landscaping buffer areas.

Standards

1. Ten percent of the parent lot shall be outdoor common space. Private outdoor spaces shall not count toward this outdoor common space provision.
2. Common outdoor spaces shall be easily accessible to townhome residents.
3. Common outdoor spaces shall provide at least four of the following amenities to encourage gathering. Amenities include:
 - a. Site furnishings (benches)
 - b. Gardens
 - c. Patio or courtyard area
 - d. Open lawn with trees
 - e. Special interest landscape
 - f. Pedestrian scale, bollards, or other accent lighting
 - g. Special paving, such as colored or stained concrete, stone, brick, or other unit pavers
 - h. Overhead structure(s) (i.e., picnic shelter, gazebo, arbor over patio/courtyard)
 - i. Water feature(s)
4. Window boxes, container plantings, hanging baskets, or other special interest landscape should be provided to enhance pedestrian areas. When used, window boxes, container planters and hanging baskets shall be made of weather resistant material.
5. Lighting shall be provided within outdoor common spaces to provide visual interest at night and additional security.
6. Common outdoor spaces may be landscaped with plants other than turf or lawn. A minimum of 40 percent of plant varieties shall be perennial varieties to provide year-round color, texture, and special interest.
7. Outdoor common spaces used to meet these standards shall not be located within required landscape buffer areas.

Private Outdoor Spaces

Intent

To provide private, outdoor space that encourages a sense of ownership by residents.

Standards

1. Outdoor spaces such as yards, decks, terraces, and patios should include some visually shielding from each other and from the street. Shielding may consist of walls, fences, berms, hedges, and landscaping.
2. Visually permeable elements, such as open rails, ironwork, or trellis treatment are encouraged to promote interaction between neighbors.
3. Outdoor spaces shall not be located adjacent to dumpster enclosures, loading/service areas, or other incompatible uses, except where site necessitates.
4. Where landscape areas are provided, plant materials should be a mixture of deciduous and evergreen varieties.
5. Each townhome unit shall have a minimum of 75 square feet of private outdoor space that is directly accessible from the unit and not part of the common outdoor space. Private outdoor space may be provided by such features as decks, patios, balconies, porches, walkways, yards, and gardens that are associated with an individual residential unit. Roof surfaces may be used as private outdoor space for each unit.

Storm Drainage

Intent

To integrate stormwater facilities into developments as project amenities.

Standards

1. Stormwater facilities, such as detention ponds and biofiltration swales shall be integrated into the overall project design. Use of a variety of facilities shall be considered in the design, such as rain gardens, street tree detention wells, and bioretention, biofiltration, and infiltration swales.
2. Stormwater facilities shall provide a more naturalistic form and/or appearance through layout, design, and landscape treatment. An effort shall be made to provide facilities that are site amenities, without the need for fencing.
3. Stormwater facilities located within landscape buffer areas shall provide the total required square foot area of the buffer, maintain the minimum width required, and meet planting requirements.
4. Stormwater bioretention, biofiltration, and infiltration swales that are integrated into interior landscape areas within parking lots and that meet square footage requirements, as well as landscaping requirements, shall count toward the interior parking lot landscape requirement.
5. Innovative stormwater treatment solutions should be considered in the site design to treat stormwater on-site.

Building Design

Massing

Intent

To reduce the apparent bulk of townhomes and maintain residential scale by providing a sense of “base,” “middle,” and “top.”

Standards

1. Buildings shall have a distinct “base” at the ground level, using articulation and a combination of at least two or three of the following materials:
 - a. Stone/masonry
 - b. Decorative concrete
 - c. Bays
 - d. Overhangs (in excess of standard overhang)
2. The “top” of the building shall emphasize a distinct profile or outline with elements such as a projecting parapet, cornice, upper level setback, or pitched roofline.
3. The “middle” of the building may be made distinct by change in material or color, balconies, and step backs, in addition to required glazing area.
4. Townhome façades facing the public right-of-way shall include covered porch/landing, minimum 4 feet deep and 24 square feet in area.

Backsides and Blank Walls

Intent

To ensure that townhomes do not display unembellished walls on any building face.

Standards

1. Any side of a building shall be given architectural treatment using six or more of the following:
 - a. Visible rooflines
 - b. Transparent windows
 - c. Balconies
 - d. Textured surfaces
 - e. Surfaces
 - f. Variation in forms
 - g. Masonry (but not flat concrete block)
 - h. Concrete or masonry plinth at wall base
 - i. Belt courses of a different texture and color
 - j. Projecting cornice
 - k. Trellis containing planting
 - l. Opaque or translucent glass windows (in addition to 'b')
 - m. Artwork
 - n. Vertical articulation
 - o. Lighting fixtures (in addition to minimum requirement)
 - p. Recesses
 - q. An architectural element not listed above, as approved, that meets the intent

Articulation of Walls

Intent

To ensure that townhomes maintain and cultivate the pedestrian scale through visual variety.

Standards

1. Buildings shall include articulation on all walls. Flat blank walls are prohibited.
2. Horizontal façades shall be offset articulated a minimum of ___ feet at common wall between each townhome and no less than every twenty feet, whichever provides greater articulation.

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Integration with Site and Building Design

Intent

To ensure that signage is a part of the overall design approach of a project and not an additive element or afterthought.

Standards

1. Monument signs are permitted and shall be no taller than four feet in height including base, and shall incorporate art features or plantings around the base. Maximum sign area is 16 square feet.
2. Rooftop signs are not allowed. Signs shall not project above the rooftop, parapet, or exterior wall.
3. No other signage is allowed for townhomes, except as otherwise permitted in City code for a single-family residential dwelling.
4. Parking lots may have an identifying sign up to four square feet in size.
5. Signs in the Transitional Uses area may not be internally illuminated or use digital imaging. External illumination is permitted when there is no off-site glare or visible luminaire maximum 75 watts.

Parking Lot Design and Standards

Vehicular Use Parking Area Lighting

Intent

To maintain a safe and secure pedestrian environment through the use of adequate lighting, with a minimum of lighting.

Standards

1. Lighting shall be appropriate to create adequate visibility at night and evenly distributed.
2. Night lighting shall be provided where stairs, curbs, ramps, abrupt changes in walk direction, and crossing vehicle lanes occur.
3. All lighting shall be energy-efficient, glare-free and shielded from the night sky and adjacent properties to eliminate or minimize off-site spill-over.
4. Either free-standing or lighting mounted on buildings may be used to satisfy the requirement.

Parking Lot Landscaping, etc.

Intent

To reduce the visual impact of parking lots through the use of landscape areas, trellises and/or other architectural features.

Standards

1. Parking lot landscape shall be used to reinforce pedestrian and vehicular circulation, including:
 - a. Parking lot entrances
 - b. Ends of driving aisles
 - c. Defining pedestrian walkways through parking lots.
2. Landscape areas next to a pedestrian walkway shall be maintained or plant material chosen to maintain a clear zone between three and eight feet from ground level.
3. A setback shall be provided that allows space for all trees and shrubs where vehicle overhang extends into landscape areas, except in the scape planting strips directly adjacent to internal pedestrian walkways within parking areas.
4. For parking lots that contain greater than 50 parking spaces, the location of interior landscape islands shall be allowed to be consolidated for planting of large stands of trees to break up the scale of the parking lot.
5. The number of trees required in the interior landscape area in parking lots shall be dependent upon the location of the parking lot in relation to the building and public right-of-way:
 - a. Where the parking lot is located between the building and the public right-of-way, one tree for every four spaces shall be provided (1:4).
 - b. Where the parking lot is located to the side of the building and partially abuts the public right-of-way, one tree for every six spaces shall be provided (1:6).
 - c. Where the parking lot is located behind the building and is not visible from the public right-of-way, one tree for every eight spaces shall be provided (1:8).
6. The following **TUDS** also apply:
 - a. Street trees and landscaping in right-of-way
 - b. Vehicular use/parking area lighting
 - c. Parking lot screening
 - d. Sidewalks in right-of-way

Parking Lot Screening

Intent

To reduce the visual impact of parking lots through the use of landscape buffers or architectural screening features.

Standards

1. Parking lots that abut the public right-of-way shall be screened with one or a combination of the following treatments:
 - a. Low walls made of concrete, masonry, or other similar material and not exceeding a maximum height of three feet.
 - b. Raised planter walls planted with a minimum of 80 percent evergreen plant materials not to exceed a total height of three and a half feet, including the plant material planted on top, except where necessary to address site geography.
 - c. Landscape planting consisting of 80 percent evergreen trees, shrubs, and groundcovers.
2. All walls and/or raised planters shall be designed to be viewed from all sides.
3. A minimum five foot wide landscape planting area shall be provided between parking lots and adjacent developments to include a year-round sight barrier except where parking lots have been consolidated.
4. Walls and raised planters shall not exceed a maximum height of three feet, except where necessary to address site geography, or unless all of the following are provided:
 - a. Portion of treatment that is above three feet in height is a minimum of 75 percent transparent (i.e., see-through metal railing or other similar treatment).
 - b. Screen treatment does not create a safety hazard.
5. Wire chain link, including fencing, shall not be permitted to screen or enclose parking along a public sidewalk.

Vehicular Entrances

Intent

To provide safe, visible vehicular entrances to townhome developments.

Standards

1. Depending on site characteristics and difficulty of access, developments shall limit the number of vehicular access points to reduce traffic impacts and the site area devoted to roads.
2. Vehicular entrances shall avoid crossing major pedestrian walkways and paths from entrances to common spaces.
3. Vehicular entrances shall be designed in coordination with the pedestrian circulation system. When and where possible, the vehicular entrance shall be coordinated with the pedestrian entrance to the site.
4. If the vehicular entrance is the primary access to the site, signage identifying building address shall be clearly identifiable and visible to maximize way-finding.
5. Vehicle circulation and parking should be integrated into the building design and concentrated on the interior of the development. Circulation design (scale and location) should be compatible with the adjacent neighborhood.

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