

CITY OF LAKEPORT

GUIDE TO NEW COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The City of Lakeport Community Development Department has prepared this guide to provide information and direction concerning new development within the City. The intent is to provide direction without dictating design.

Architectural and Design Review is required for all new proposed commercial, industrial, multi-family residential, institutional, or similar buildings and for the proposed exterior remodel of buildings that result in altered appearances, additions, extensions, or enlargements, and for all proposed residential to office/commercial conversion projects. No building permit or other entitlement for a parking lot, a new structure, or the remodel, alteration, or enlargement of an existing structure, shall be issued until the site plan, the architectural elevations, landscape plan, and related plans have been reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission or Community Development Director as provided for in Chapter 17.27 of the City's Municipal Code.

New commercial and multi-family residential development projects, and large additions to existing projects, must receive Architectural and Design Review approval from the City Planning Commission before construction can begin. The City's Municipal Code sets forth specific criteria regarding this process and this guide is intended to give developers within the community help concerning site planning, building design, and site development.

PREPARATION OF PLANS

1. **PROFESSIONAL HELP.** In the preparation of plans for a proposed new project, the applicant or land owner should consult with a professional in the field of architecture or engineering. The use of plans that are professionally prepared can be of enormous benefit in the Planning Commission process. Generally, plans that are prepared by an architect or engineer contain the correct amount of detail necessary for the Planning Commission to make an informed decision on the project. While it is possible for an applicant to prepare the plans without the use of a professional, it is not as likely that these plans will provide enough information to allow the Planning Commission to fully understand the project and make a decision.

State law requires that a licensed architect or registered engineer prepare the construction plans that are submitted in conjunction with a building permit application for commercial, industrial, or large multi-family projects.

2. **PLAN DETAIL.** The plans submitted for Planning Commission review under the Architectural and Design Review process must include a site plan, building elevations, floor plans, and landscaping plans. At least one colored rendering is also required and a materials board is also recommended. Electronic copies of the project plans are also encouraged to be submitted in addition to standard copies. Detailed plans will allow the Planning Commission to understand the project and its various components.

The site plan must show how the building will function on the property, how the parking and pedestrian circulation will work, how access into the site will be gained, how the site fits in with the surrounding street system, where the various site improvements will be located and how they will function together - as well as other details such as fencing and utility locations.

Landscaping details may be included on the site plan, but it is suggested that they be included on a separate plan. In addition to noting the type, size, and location of proposed landscaping materials, the plan must also provide detail regarding the method of irrigation and other maintenance issues.

The exterior building elevations are a critical component of the process and should provide the following details: door and window locations and specifications; roof design, including material and color; height and width of the structure; and the types of construction materials and exterior colors that are to be utilized. Building elevations also provide an indication of how the building will appear from surrounding properties.

The floor plan is also beneficial as it allows the Planning Commission to understand how the interior of the building will function with exterior improvements such as pedestrian entrances, walkways and parking facilities.

A colored rendering of the building is necessary in order for the Planning Commission to understand how the structure fits in with the surrounding area, or other buildings on the site, and what the materials and overall appearance of the project will look like. An electronic version of the colored rendering is very helpful.

SITE PLANNING

1. **SUITING THE SITE.** Generally, the designer of a new project should plan the project to fit a building site's natural conditions rather than alter a site to accommodate a stock building plan. Existing topography should be preserved if it can make the project more attractive and functional. Modification of the topography is permissible where it contributes to a good appearance, and makes sense in terms of storm drainage and other issues, but excessive cuts or fills should be avoided. Significant existing vegetation should be retained if possible.
2. **FUNCTION.** The various project components should be logically located so that the activities related to the use of the building can be conducted in a safe and efficient manner.
3. **TRANSITION.** There should be a pleasing, natural transition from the street to the project that provides for safe and attractive walkways, parking, and landscaping.
4. **PARKING AREAS.** Parking areas should be screened from public streets with landscaping, walls, fences, berms, or other means. Large parking lots are typically required to provide landscaped islands including trees and ground cover. An adequate amount of parking must be provided and must include handicapped-accessible parking. Motorcycle and bicycle parking areas should also be designated in convenient and safe locations. The 2011 CALGreen building code (Section 5.106.4) requires most new projects to provide permanently anchored racks for short-term bicycle parking. Larger projects must provide long-term bicycle parking facilities. The City's parking regulations are set forth in Chapter 17.23 of the Lakeport Municipal Code.
5. **STORM WATER DRAINAGE.** New construction and the development of paved driveways and parking areas create impervious surfaces which result in additional storm water flows. City policy requires new projects to mitigate this impact so that there is no net increase in the rate and volume of storm water leaving the site. On-site storm water detention structures are sometimes required to adequately mitigate this impact. Downstream storm drainage system improvements may be required if an adequate on-site system cannot be provided.

Storm water quality is also an issue that must be addressed. All storm water in Lakeport ultimately flows into Clear Lake. Storm water runoff generated from parking lots and driveways contains a variety of automobile-related toxins which can alter the quality of the surface water of Clear Lake if discharged into the lake. Federal and State water quality regulations require on-site storm drains to be provided with filters capable of intercepting toxins and other sediments. Vegetated bioswales have also been utilized in our community to mitigate the storm water quality impacts. The City's storm water regulations are set forth in Chapter 8.40 of the Lakeport Municipal Code.

6. **LIGHTING.** Exterior lighting, when used, should be subdued and should enhance the building design and landscaping - as well as providing for the safety and security of the people using the facility. Lights must not create glare for occupants on the site, for neighbors, or for the traveling public on the surrounding street system. Lighting fixtures should be durable and compatible with the building design and, if possible, should be shielded or downlit, and painted to match or complement the color of the building. Tall fixtures that illuminate large areas should be avoided; or, if they are used, designed to confine the illuminated area to the project boundary. The City's General Plan addresses the height of light fixtures and suggests that "light standard heights should be related to the lighting need of the use:

street lights up to 30 feet high, parking areas up to 18' high; walkways and malls up to 15 feet high; planting areas up to 3 feet high."¹

7. **SITE UTILITIES.** Locations of meters, electrical transformers, propane tanks, traffic control boxes, utility poles, and other utility equipment or easements should be shown in the plans early in the Architectural and Design Review process. The City Planning Commission will want to know where these types of facilities are proposed and what measures will be taken to reduce their visual impact. New projects are generally required to provide underground utility connections. Some site features such as mechanical equipment and propane storage tanks should be provided with visual screens in the form of landscaping or small accessory structures.
8. **TRASH COLLECTION AND OTHER SERVICE AREAS.** Trash containers, service areas, and loading docks should be conveniently located and adequately sized but must not interfere with pedestrian or auto circulation or parking on the site. Trash containers should be located away from public streets and building entrances, and they should be completely screened with durable screening materials that are compatible with the building exterior. Trash enclosures must be large enough to store the number of receptacles necessary to accommodate the waste generated by the proposed use, including recycling and yard waste. Enclosures should be designed for long-term use and should be strong enough to withstand a bump from a garbage truck or other service vehicle. Haphazard enclosure design, flimsy construction, and careless placement are not acceptable. Concrete block trash enclosures with durable steel gates are typically required.
9. **EMERGENCY ACCESS.** For larger projects, it will be important for the designer to consider access to the building for emergency vehicles. This may require that there be a roadway completely around the building or the provision of open areas to allow emergency vehicles to access the back of structures. This should be considered in the building design as well. Proposed projects will be reviewed by the Police Department and the Lakeport Fire District to ensure compliance with public safety requirements.
10. **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.** Large projects that generate significant traffic volumes may be required to provide public transportation facilities such as a bus stop or a bus shelter on the project site or in close proximity. Proposed large projects will be reviewed by the Lake Transit Authority and their recommendations are typically required to be incorporated into the project. Preliminary consultation with Lake Transit Authority is recommended.

BUILDING DESIGN

The City has adopted a variety of criteria and guidelines related to building design issues which are set forth in Chapter 17.27 of the Lakeport Municipal Code. This chapter addresses a variety of topics including:

1. **HARMONY.** Different structures and parts of structures should be compatible. When new construction is proposed near existing structures on adjacent lots, or on the same property, the new work should harmonize with the old. In some cases, it may be appropriate that the old work should be remodeled to harmonize with the new work.
2. **MATERIALS.** Authentic building materials should be used. Simulated wood or masonry, for example, is generally not appropriate in many projects.
3. **FINISHES, TEXTURES, COLORS.** Exterior treatment should be restrained, not harsh or garish, and should be selected for its durability, weathering characteristics, and ease of maintenance - as well as for visual beauty.
4. **PEDESTRIAN NEEDS.** At street level, structures should be sensitive to pedestrian needs. A building's design should accommodate the pedestrian through the use of seating, walls, planters, display windows, shade structures, public art, and/or other similar amenities.
5. **MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT AND UTILITIES.** Mechanical and utility service equipment, including meter boxes, should be designed as a part of the structure and should be screened or recessed into the building. Screening should be made a part of the building design. Accessory structures added for

¹ Lakeport General Plan, Community Design Element, Pg. V-17

screening purposes may not be acceptable. Oftentimes, roof-mounted mechanical equipment must be screened or, if possible, located on the back side of the building to reduce the visual impact.

6. **ENERGY CONSERVATION.** New structures should be designed to minimize mechanical heating and cooling. Sunlight should be used for direct heating and illumination where possible. Natural venting and shading can be used to help cool a building. All new construction is subject to compliance with the current California building codes which promote increased energy conservation.

SITE DEVELOPMENT

1. **GENERAL CONSIDERATION.** Site development includes everything outside the building such as parking, walkways, fencing, walls, lighting, landscaping, and irrigation. The design of these elements should be integrated to be compatible with one another, and the building itself, in order to create a unified and pleasing appearance that the community can be proud of.
2. **EXISTING VEGETATION AND NATURAL FEATURES.** Existing healthy vegetation, natural rock formations, or other site features should be retained and incorporated into the site and landscaping plans if they improve the site's appearance or enhance the proposed use.
3. **LANDSCAPING DESIGN.** Proposed landscaping details must be included with an Architectural and Design Review application. Planting areas should be integrated with the building design, enhance the appearance of the project, and soften the effect of the building and paving. Landscaping should include a combination of trees, shrubs, and groundcover. Groundcover alone is not sufficient. The project's landscaping should blend with the vegetation on nearby properties. Innovation in planting design and type of landscape material is encouraged. Because we live in a hot, dry climate, the use of drought tolerant materials is encouraged. Projects located on major thoroughfares are typically required to provide street trees at regular intervals along the street frontage. The City can provide a list of recommended street trees upon request.
4. **EXTENT OF LANDSCAPING.** The site should be adequately planted on all sides and on the interiors. There may also be requirements for trees or landscaping on other parts of the site.
5. **PLANT SELECTION.** Plants should be selected based on their intended purpose: shade, screening, erosion control, or buffering. Thickness, height, color, seasonal characteristics, and ultimate size should be considered. A generous amount of vegetation should be planted. Where planting is intended to perform a function such as screening, its initial size and spacing should be selected to achieve its purpose within two years or else be supplemented by temporary architectural features. Landscape materials and arrangements should be chosen to minimize maintenance and water use.
6. **PLACEMENT.** Plants should be placed with respect to their life cycles. Such factors as their ability to maintain and reproduce themselves, their size at maturity, and their life span should be considered. Placement should also respect the different environmental requirements of different plants. Factors such as temperature, moisture, soil conditions, sunlight, and wind should also be considered.
7. **IRRIGATION.** Most plants need to be irrigated in order to maintain health and look their best. The City encourages the use of drought tolerant plants; however, even those need regular watering to become established after their initial planting. An appropriate irrigation system might include sprinklers, a bubble system, a drip system, or hose bibs. This irrigation system must be shown on the plan in order to be understood by the Planning Commission. As of 2010, many commercial and multi-family residential projects are required to comply with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance adopted by the State of California. Consultation with a landscape architect may be required in order to document compliance with State law.
8. **PARKING AREAS.** Planting and parking areas should be provided at suitable locations throughout the lot, at the ends of parking rows, and should screen parked cars from adjacent streets. The planting must not block a driver's view however. Parking lot design should include walkways and planting to help direct pedestrians to their destinations.
9. **PROTECTION FOR PLANTERS.** Planting areas must be protected by wood, masonry, or concrete curbing where necessary.

10. **SITE FENCING, WALLS, AND OTHER FEATURES.** The design and placement of trees, fences, retaining walls, gates, arbors, foot bridges, or other site features should relate to the building's architectural features and the site's topography. The Planning Commission is especially concerned about these elements and suggests they be of the same quality, in terms of design and materials, as the proposed building.
11. **SURFACE PAVING.** Where it is appropriate in the overall design and project environment, the Planning Commission encourages innovations in surface paving, especially for pedestrian and low traffic areas. Examples are stamped or colored concrete, brick, and quarry tile.
12. **RIGHT-OF-WAY IMPROVEMENTS.** New projects are required to provide City-standard right-of-way improvements including curb, gutter, and sidewalk along all street frontages. In some cases street pave-out is required. Relocation of existing utility poles may also be required if they conflict with the required right-of-way improvements. In some areas the developer may be required to dedicate land to the City to provide for the future widening of the adjoining street or to provide an adequate turning radius at an intersection.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. **METAL BUILDINGS.** Metal buildings are permitted by the City and are evaluated under the same criteria as other buildings. Metal buildings oftentimes present difficult design problems and may require a higher level of review.
2. **HISTORIC STRUCTURES.** The City of Lakeport contains many historic buildings which the General Plan encourages to be preserved. These buildings contribute to the City's character. In working with an historic building, whether it is downtown or within a residential area, a developer must be sensitive to the history of not only the project's site, but also of that of the neighborhood and surrounding properties. On sites where historic structures exist, every effort should be made to preserve and enhance their appearance. Demolition of structures requires a permit by the City. Remodeling of an historic structure should address and adhere to the structure's original design where possible.

CONCLUSION

Projects that are proposed with the City of Lakeport which follow these guidelines usually receive Architectural and Design Review approval in a timely manner. If you have questions on the submittal requirements or this guide, contact the City of Lakeport Community Development Department staff.

Thank you for your interest in the City of Lakeport.

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