

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO  
CALIFORNIA**

Control No.: 060193  
Type: ZOB

**TO:** BOARD OF SUPERVISORS – PROJECT PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM:** PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT:** **ZONING CODE AMENDMENT TO IMPLEMENT A DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS AND ADOPTION OF COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USE COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES**

**CONTACT:** *Tricia Stevens, Principal Planner, 874-6141; [stevens@sacounty.net](mailto:stevens@sacounty.net)*

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

LOCATION: County-wide

APPLICANT:

Sacramento County Planning and Community  
Development Department  
827 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

REQUEST:

1. A **Zoning Code Amendment** to implement a Design Review Process
2. **Adoption** of Commercial and Mixed Use Community Design Guidelines.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT: **CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION** – Section 15305, Class 5

**DESIGN REVIEW ZONING CODE AMENDMENT**

06-ZOB-0193

APN: County-Wide

**Overview:**

The proposed project consists of an amendment to the Zoning Code to implement the Commercial and Mixed Use Community Design Guidelines. The proposed action also includes adoption of the Guidelines. The Board of Supervisors endorsed the Program and initiated the Zoning Code Amendment on March 8, 2006. The intent of the Design Review Program is to provide for high quality, pedestrian friendly, “place-making” commercial, industrial and office development on a county-wide basis.

**Summary of Significant Issues:**

The proposed Zoning Code Amendment establishes Design Review authority and requires compliance with the Community Design Guidelines for discretionary and non-discretionary projects in the County. A Design Review Administrator and a Design Review Advisory Committee are established. The code amendment also provides that the Community Design Guidelines prevail if there is a conflict with Zoning Code standards.

**CPAC Recommendation:**

Not applicable.

**Recommendations:**

Staff is recommending **APPROVAL** of the proposed project.

I.	Project Analysis	3
II.	Staff Recommendations	7
III.	Attachments	8

I. PROJECT ANALYSIS

A. History/Background:

The Board of Supervisors kicked off the Design Review Program for Commercial and Mixed Use Projects in 2002. The major highlights of the development of the program include:

1. Bruce Race, Race Studios, was hired to prepare the guidelines and to guide the public outreach process.
2. A series of focus groups were held from 2003-2005. Representatives from developers, design professionals, and community groups were represented.
3. Workshops on the draft guidelines were held with the Project and Policy Planning Commissions.
4. Mintier and Associates were hired as consultants to help the County determine the best design review process and approval authority.
5. A 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the Community Design Guidelines was presented to the Board of Supervisors in July, 2005. The Board directed that the draft Guidelines be used as a guide for discretionary projects, and to come back with a detailed program to apply to non-discretionary projects.
6. The Board endorsed the basics of the Design Review Program on March 8, 2006, and directed that additional outreach and training occur, and that the final ordinance be set for public hearings before the Project Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.
7. Training sessions have been held with staff, design professionals and developers, and Planning Commissioners, Community Council members and CPAC members.
8. Newsletters have been available at public counters and have been sent to the Chambers of Commerce and professional organizations (AIA, ASLA, CELSOC, etc.).

- B. Discussion: The proposed adoption of this Zoning Code amendment and the Community Design Guidelines is a culmination of three (3) years of outreach, focus groups, research on best practices, and development of the actual Guidelines. Participants in the guideline preparation effort wanted the design review process to

## DESIGN REVIEW ZONING CODE AMENDMENT

06-ZOB-0193

APN: County-Wide

be fair, predictable, and consistent. The participants identified several objectives for the process:

- Provide for concurrent application processing.
- Minimize uncertainty.
- Encourage better design.
- Provide early feedback to project sponsors/applicants.
- Provide for early community input.
- Encourage pre-application communication.

The intent of the Design Review Program is to provide for high quality, pedestrian-friendly, “place-making” commercial, industrial and office development on a county-wide basis. It is anticipated that “Corridor Plans” will have their own set of design guidelines once those plans are developed. The Corridor Plans will replace the county-wide Design Guidelines for those Corridors.

1. Proposed Zoning Code Amendment: The proposed Zoning Code Amendment to implement the Design Guidelines includes the following major components:
  - a. Applicability: Compliance with the Design Guidelines would be required for any commercial, industrial, mixed use, or non-residential project that:
    - (1) Is located in any Commercial, Industrial, or SPA Zone;
    - (2) Requires a General Plan Amendment, rezoning, conditional use permit, variance, exception, development plan review, or special development permit;
    - (3) Requires a building permit for physical construction, including new construction, rebuilding, exterior remodeling, or reconstruction of parking lots;
    - (4) Non-residential (e.g. institutional) projects in residential zones; or
    - (5) Residential uses in commercial zones. *Please note that the earlier versions of the ordinance did not reference that the Guidelines would apply to residential uses in commercial zones; this is a clarification made since March 8, 2006.*
  - b. Exemptions: Building permits for interior remodeling are exempt from compliance with the Design Guidelines. The Design Review Administrator may exempt minor building permits when the proposed improvements have no effect on the public view of the building or site.
  - c. Design Review Administrator (DRA): The staff position of Design Review Administrator (DRA) would be created to review and make determinations of conformance with the Design Guidelines, under the direction of the

## DESIGN REVIEW ZONING CODE AMENDMENT

06-ZOB-0193

APN: County-Wide

Planning Director. On non-discretionary projects, such as building permits, the DRA would make a determination on conformance with the Guidelines in conjunction with the issuance of the building permit. The DRA would consult with the DRAC (see below), as necessary. The proposed process does not require an applicant to seek any new special entitlement. For discretionary permits, such as rezones and use permits, the DRA would provide guidance and recommendations to staff and applicants as the project proceeds through the normal application process. The DRA would consult with the DRAC in providing specific recommendations to the hearing body.

It is anticipated that the DRA function may initially be performed by a contract architect. This function may ultimately be performed by an in-house staff person.

- d. Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC): The Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) would be created to review discretionary projects and make recommendations for ensuring conformance with the Design Guidelines. The DRAC would also review non-discretionary project design review referrals from the Design Review Administrator or applicant requests. The DRAC would be appointed by the Planning Director and would consist of three (3) design professionals plus the DRA. The DRAC would not have any authority over determinations of Guidelines conformance; they would essentially be a “second opinion” and provide advice.

At some of the outreach meetings, design professionals emphasized that it is important that the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commissions, Community Councils, CPAC’s and other community members rely heavily on recommendations and determinations of the DRA and DRAC on design issues in order to assure a greater degree of predictability to the process and to reduce the number of last minute changes to projects.

- e. Relationship to Zoning Code Standards: The proposed amendment to the Zoning Code would provide that the Community Design Standards would prevail in cases where there is a conflict with the Zoning Code. For example, if the Design Guidelines call for a “building forward” design that may not meet the Zoning Code front setback standard, then the Design Guideline would prevail without the need for a variance. This language has been reviewed by County Counsel. Another example of a zoning standard that might be affected by the prevalence of Design Guidelines are openings in

**DESIGN REVIEW ZONING CODE AMENDMENT**

06-ZOB-0193

APN: County-Wide

masonry walls to provide for pedestrian connections.

Staff is acutely aware that many of the Zoning Code standards have been written and adopted in order to provide for compatibility between commercial and residential uses (e.g., height and setbacks next to residential zones). Staff will be cautious and judicious in applying this provision. For discretionary projects, the hearing authority will be making this determination.

2. Commercial and Mixed Use Community Design Guidelines: The Design Guidelines that the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors are being asked to adopt (May 6, 2006 version) are virtually the same as those reviewed by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in July 2005. The two changes that have been made include:
  - a. Minor reformatting and clarifications, including inclusion of process flowchart and description of process.
  - b. Deletion of the reference under Section 1.1.3, Building Setback and Alignments, to “40% of public street frontage defined by building edges”. It was felt that the remainder of the guidelines, under this section, guides the objective to reinforce the pedestrian experience without focusing on a specific percentage.
3. Other Materials to Help Guide the Design Review Process: Planning staff, with the assistance of our consultants, have developed other materials to help guide the design review process. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors are not being asked to adopt these materials; they are provided as reference. The Board reviewed earlier versions of these materials and endorsed the program. A few minor changes to these items have been made since March 8, 2006.
  - a. Design Review Process: The attached “Process Narrative” outlines the basic steps in the design review process for both discretionary and non-discretionary projects.
  - b. Design Review Checklist: Applicants would be required to complete a design review checklist that certifies the applicant has reviewed the Design Guidelines and identifies how their project complies with the guidelines. Checklists will be provided for each type of project described in the Guidelines (Commercial, Industrial and Business Districts, and Village Center) will be provided. A Draft Checklist for Commercial Projects is

**DESIGN REVIEW ZONING CODE AMENDMENT**

06-ZOB-0193

APN: County-Wide

attached. In addition, an Applicant's Guide will be provided. Part of the submittal requirement includes a "context board" that provides the hearing body with information and pictures on surrounding uses to help insure that the proposal fits in with its surroundings.

4. Public Outreach Process: Since the March 8, 2006 Board meeting, several outreach efforts have occurred, including:
  - a. Newsletter outlining program basics and announcing training session. Newsletter sent to professional organizations (AIA, ASLA, CELCOC), Chambers of Commerce, CPAC's, CPC's, as well as being available at the front counter in the Planning and Building Departments.
  - b. Three (3) training sessions have been held with staff, design professionals and developers, and community members.
  - c. Presentation at AIA meeting.
5. Fees and Funding: The Planning Department's FY06 and proposed FY07 budget includes funding for program start-up and initial administration of the Design Review Program. Ultimate funding for Design Review, on a project by project basis, will come from applicant fees, likely as an add-on for discretionary projects and as a surcharge on building permits. Instead of proposed new fees at this time, the Planning Department will incorporate design review fees into our overall Planning fee update expected to occur in summer-fall 2006.
6. Appeals: Currently, appeals of staff determinations are heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals (Project Planning Commission). The proposed ordinance clarifies that design review appeals would be heard by the Community Planning Council located in a CPC district. Otherwise, appeals would be heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

**II. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The overall purpose of Design Review is to provide for sustainable and quality communities by expecting better design, creating a sense of place and making a better pedestrian environment. Indeed, the Design Review Program is one important tool in Sacramento County's path to smarter growth. The process for design review is intended to be fair and predictable. Acknowledging that achieving the intent of the Design Guidelines can involve disagreement and judgment, the Planning Department believes the proposed process achieve the objectives. For these reasons, staff recommends **APPROVAL** of this proposal.

**DESIGN REVIEW ZONING CODE AMENDMENT**

06-ZOB-0193

APN: County-Wide

- A. Recommended Actions:
1. Environmental Documentation: Recognize the **EXEMPT** status of the request under Section 15305, Class 5.
  2. Zoning Code Amendment: **APPROVE**, subject to the findings listed in Section II.B.
  3. Commercial and Mixed Use Community Design Guidelines: **APPROVE**.
  4. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program: **NONE**.
- B. Recommended Findings: The staff recommendations are based upon the following considerations:
1. The request is consistent with the County General Plan Text in that General Plan policies are highly supportive of pedestrian and transit supportive development and high quality development to support economic development.
  2. Identified environmental effects and suggested mitigation measures have been taken into consideration in the recommended actions and conditions of approval.

III. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Proposed Ordinance adopting the Amendment to the Zoning Code for Design Review
- B. May 2006 Final Draft of Commercial and Mixed Use Community Design Guidelines
- C. Process Narrative (Reference Material)
- D. Sample Checklist for Commercial Projects (Reference Material)

This staff report was prepared on May 16, 2006.

**ORDINANCE NO. SCZ 2006-\_\_\_\_\_**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE  
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO TO AMEND THE ZONING CODE  
OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY, ORDINANCE NO. 83-10,  
AS AMENDED RELATING TO DESIGN REVIEW**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Sacramento, State of California, ordains as follows:

SECTION 1: Chapter 10 , Article 11 of the Zoning Code is added as follows:

**ARTICLE 11: DESIGN REVIEW**

**110-120. Generally**

Compliance with the Community Design Guidelines is required for any commercial, industrial, residential, mixed-use, or public works project that meets all the following criteria:

- (a) Located in any one of the following land use zones:
  - Commercial Zones: BP, SC, LC, GC, AC, TC, C-O
  - Industrial Zones: MP, M-1, M-2
  - Special Zones: SPA
  - Non-residential projects in residential zones
  - Residential projects in commercial zones
  
- (b) Requires any one or more of the following discretionary entitlements or approvals:
  - General Plan Amendment
  - Community Plan Amendment
  - Rezone
  - Conditional Use Permit
  - Variance
  - Exception
  - Development Plan Review
  - Special Development Permit
  - County facility or public works projects not already subject to the Pedestrian Master Plan

- (c) Requires any one or more of the following non-discretionary approvals:

Building permits.

Development Plan Approvals – staff level and others that are designated as non-discretionary.

Improvement Plans involving the reconstruction of parking lots.

Building permits for interior remodeling are exempt from this requirement.

**110-121. Purpose**

The purpose of Design Review is to: 1) create a sense of place in Sacramento County’s mixed-use, commercial and business districts; 2) create mixed-use, commercial and business districts that are designed to promote the safety and convenience of the pedestrian; 3) promote high quality design; and 4) promote compatibility between new development and surrounding development.

**110-122. Appropriate Authority to Conduct Design Review**

- (a) Design Review Administrator. For discretionary projects, the Design Review Administrator shall conduct design review and make findings and recommendations to the appropriate hearing body regarding compliance with the Community Design Guidelines. For non-discretionary projects, the Design Review Administrator shall conduct design review and make findings and recommendations to the Planning Director regarding compliance with the Community Design Guidelines.
- (b) Design Review Advisory Committee. If upon initial review the Design Review Administrator determines that a discretionary or non-discretionary project does not meet the Community Design Guidelines, the project shall be referred to the Design Review Advisory Committee. The Design Review Advisory Committee shall conduct design review and make findings and recommendations to staff regarding compliance with the Community Design Guidelines. The Design Review Advisory Committee shall not have any final authority over projects and shall serve in an advisory and technical guidance capacity to the Design Review Administrator and Planning Director. The Design Review Advisory Committee shall consist of the following four members: the Design Review Administrator; and three individuals with a professional background in architecture, landscape architecture, or urban design appointed by the Planning Director. Except for the Design Review Administrator, each member of the Design Review Advisory Committee shall be appointed to serve a one-year term.

**110-123. Application**

In addition to the information required by Section 110-01, the following information shall be submitted as part of the application for any project subject to design review:

- (a) Context analysis board;
- (b) Preliminary concepts; and
- (c) Completed design review checklist.

**110-124. Findings and Recommendations**

The appropriate hearing authority for approval of discretionary projects, or the Planning Director for issuance of non-discretionary permits, shall find that the project: 1) substantially complies with the Community Design Guidelines as proposed or modified; or 2) would substantially comply with the Community Design Guidelines if modified with recommended modifications; or 3) does not comply with the Community Design Guidelines and should, as consequence, not be approved.

**110-125. Conflicts with Other Provisions of the Zoning Code or County Code**

To the extent that any other provision of the Zoning Code or Sacramento County Code conflicts with any provision of this Article or the Community Design Guidelines approved by the Board of Supervisors, the provisions of this Article or the Community Design Guidelines shall prevail.

**110-126. Appeals**

- (a) Non-discretionary projects. Any appeal of the Planning Director for which design review was conducted pursuant to this Article shall be heard by the appropriate Community Council, or if there is no Community Council, by the Board of Zoning Appeals per Section 115-34 of this Code.
- (b) Discretionary projects. Appeals shall be made pursuant to Title I Article 3 of this Code.

SECTION 2. Section 115-34, Chapter 15, Article 2, of the Zoning Code is amended as follows:

Except as provided in Section 110-26, The Board of Zoning Appeals shall hear and decide all appeals from the actions of the Subdivision Review Committee, Zoning Administrator, Chief Building Inspector, Planning Director, or Secretary of the Planning Commission relating to the provisions of this Code. However, the appeal shall be heard by the Board of Supervisors if it is filed on the basis of any of the following:

- (a) The action appealed may have a significant effect upon the environment, or
- (b) An Environmental Impact Report has not been prepared or is deficient in any manner; or
- (c) A decision of the above-named decision-makers relates in any manner to an adult bookstore, adult motion picture theater, adult live theater, or an adult video tape store. (Amended 11/95)

SECTION 2: This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force on and after thirty (30) days from the date of its passage hereof, and, before expiration of fifteen (15) days from the date of its passage, it shall be published once with the names of the members of the Board of Supervisors voting for and against the same, said publication to be made in a newspaper of general circulation published within the County of Sacramento, State of California.

On a motion by Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_, the foregoing ordinance was passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sacramento, State of California, at a regular meeting thereof this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 200 \_\_\_\_\_, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES: Supervisors  
 NOES: Supervisors  
 ABSENT: Supervisors  
 ABSTAIN: Supervisors

\_\_\_\_\_  
 CHAIRPERSON, Board of Supervisors  
 County of Sacramento, California

(SEAL)  
 ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CLERK OF THE  
 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Sacramento County Design Guidelines Implementation

## PROPOSED DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

### ▪ **Applicability**

Compliance with the Design Guidelines is required for any commercial, industrial, mixed use, or public works project that meets the following criteria:

1. Located in any one of the following land use zones:
  - a. Commercial Zones: BP, SC, LC, GC, AC, TC, C-O
  - b. Industrial Zones: MP, M-1, M-2
  - c. Special Zones: SPA
  - d. Non-residential projects in residential zones
  - e. Residential projects in commercial zones
2. Requires any one or more of the following discretionary entitlements or approvals:
  - ✓ General Plan Amendment
  - ✓ Community Plan Amendment and Rezone
  - ✓ Conditional Use Permit
  - ✓ Variance
  - ✓ Exception
  - ✓ Development Plan Review
  - ✓ Special Development Permit
  - ✓ County facility or public works projects not already subject to the Pedestrian Master Plan
2. Non-Discretionary physical construction, including new construction, rebuilding, or exterior remodeling requiring a building permit and/or staff level development plan review. Includes major site work including reconstruction of parking lots.

Projects that are located within the boundaries of a corridor/district plan adopted since 2005 that has incorporated the County's Design Guidelines shall be reviewed for conformance with the design provisions of the corridor/district plan. All other projects shall be reviewed in conformance with the Design Guidelines.

### ▪ **Project Review**

***Non-discretionary Project Review*** – Non-discretionary projects that require design review are those projects that are consistent with the applicable zoning district and propose new construction, exterior remodeling, additions, or parking lot reconstruction. Included are staff-level development plan review applications that are currently considered non-discretionary.

***Discretionary Project Review*** – Discretionary projects that require design review are those projects that meet the following criteria:

1. Located in any one of the following land use zones:

- a. Commercial Zones: BP, SC, LC, GC, AC, TC, C-O
  - b. Industrial Zones: MP, M-1, M-2
  - c. Special Zones: SPA
  - d. Non-residential projects in residential zones
  - e. Residential projects in commercial zones
2. Requires one of the following entitlements or approvals:
- a. General Plan amendments
  - b. Community Plan Amendments and rezones
  - c. Conditional Use Permit
  - d. Variance
  - e. Exception
  - f. Development Plan Review
  - g. Special Development Permit
  - h. County facilities or public works project not already subject to the Pedestrian Master Plan

▪ **Exemptions**

Non-discretionary projects limited to interior remodeling are not subject to the design review guidelines. The DRA can exempt projects that do not affect the public view of a proposed project.

▪ **Appropriate Authority**

***Design Review Administrator (DRA)*** – The Design Review Administrator shall review and make determinations of conformance with the Design Guidelines with jurisdiction over *non-discretionary* projects.

- The Design Review Administrator shall be a staff position in the Planning Department appointed by, and under the supervision of, the Planning Director.
- The Design Review Administrator may delegate review authority to Planning Staff to review and make determinations of conformance with the Design Guidelines subject to his/her review and approval.
- The Design Review Administrator shall chair the Design Review Advisory Committee as a non-voting member.

***Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC)*** – The Design Review Advisory Committee shall review *discretionary* projects and make recommendations to ensure conformance with the Design Guidelines. The Design Review Advisory Committee shall also review non-discretionary project design review referrals from the Design Review Administrator. The DRAC recommendations are advisory to staff. The DRA or Planning Director retain the authority to reject DRAC recommendations. DRAC recommendations will be included in project staff reports.

- The Design Review Advisory Committee shall consist of four members, three of whom shall be appointed by the Planning Director. The fourth member shall be the Design Review Administrator, who will also act as a non-voting committee chair.

- Individuals, not organizations or companies, shall be appointed to the Design Review Advisory Committee and have academic training and professional experience in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, or city planning.
- Committee members shall be appointed for a term of 1 year. Committee members shall not serve more than 3 consecutive terms.
- Appointed members of the Design Review Advisory Committee shall be compensated for their services in an amount to be determined commensurate with professional consultant rates.

- **Fees**

Non-discretionary Project Review shall be subject to a fee proportional to the type of building permit yet to be determined.

Discretionary Project Review shall be subject to a flat fee to be determined.

- **Application Requirements**

The following information shall be required as part of the project application for both discretionary and non-discretionary projects:

1. Context analysis board
2. Preliminary concepts
3. Completed design review checklist

- **Process**

**Non-discretionary Project Review Process**

1. Prior to submitting for a building permit, applicant to request a Pre-application Conference with Design Review Administrator and other staff as necessary. Applicant to submit filled out cover memo, Preliminary Site Plan, Preliminary Building Elevations, Color elevations, Material Board prior to PAC.
2. DRA / staff to make preliminary conformance determination at PAC – a summary sheet would be filled out indicating preliminary findings and recommendations (See “Pre-submittal Context and Concept Review Meeting Summary” prepared by Bruce Race)
3. If the DRA determines that the proposed plans are “not close” to conforming, the applicant has the option to a) either make revisions and request a subsequent PAC, or b) submit for a formal development plan/design review application in order for DRA/staff to make a formal determination. This action of the DRA could then be appealed to the BZA to resolve any disagreements prior to submittal for a building permit.
4. At any point, the applicant could request or the DRA could refer the matter to the DRAC for guidance and a second opinion.
5. If the DRA determines that preliminary plans are “close”, the applicant would then submit for a building permit through the Building Department.

6. Fees for the design review would be built into Building Permit Plan Check fee.
7. A final determination is made by the Design Review Administrator (DRA) for conformance with the Design Guidelines at the time of Building Permit issuance.
8. DRA determinations that are appealed shall be subject to review by the BZA or an appropriate Community Council with such review authority. The BZA or Community Council shall take one of the following actions:
  - a. Determine the project is in conformance with the Design Guidelines;
  - b. Project is referred back to the Building Department for building permits.
  - c. Determine the project does not conform. The project applicant may:
  - d. Redesign/resubmit the project.

#### **Discretionary Project Review Process**

1. Pre-application conference and context review are held between County Planning Staff and the project applicant.
2. Design Review application is submitted to the Planning Department for distribution to the DRA and DRAC.
3. The project is reviewed by the DRA and DRAC for conformance with the Design Guidelines.
4. The DRAC conformance recommendations are included in the project Staff Report to the review authority.
5. The review authority may use the DRAC conformance recommendations as the basis for conditions of approval for the project.

# Applicant Guide and Checklist

*(Non-Discretionary Commercial Projects –Building Permit Applications)*

## Purpose and Objectives of the Design Guidelines

The Design Review applies to all commercial, mixed use, and office development in the County. For building permits, this means new construction, exterior remodeling and parking lot improvements. Design Review does not apply to interior remodels.

The following information provides a brief overview of the Design Review process and what you can do to ensure your project conforms to the Design Guidelines.

### **Design Review Objectives:**

- *Provide for concurrent application processing;*
- *Minimize uncertainty;*
- *Encourage better design;*
- *Provide early feedback to project sponsors/applicants;*
- *Provide for early community input; and*
- *Encourage pre-application communication.*

## **① The most important first step in the process is reviewing the Design Guidelines.**

*Your familiarity with the Guidelines will better enable you to plan and design your project so that it conforms to the Guidelines and proceeds through the review process smoothly.*

## Design Review Steps

*The following steps provide a brief summary of what you can expect to experience during the project review and design review process.*

1. Prior to submitting for a building permit, request a Pre-application Conference with Design Review Administrator and other staff as necessary. Applicant to submit Design Review Submittal Requirements and checklist prior to Conference.
2. Design Review Administrator to make preliminary conformance determination – a summary sheet would be filled out indicating preliminary findings and recommendations.
3. On complex projects that require additional review, the DRA may defer to the DRAC for additional review and determination.
4. Make modifications, if necessary, and submit your project for a building permit through the Building Department.
5. Alternatively, submit formal development plan/design review application in order for DRA/staff to make a formal determination. This action of the DRA could then be appealed to the Board of Zoning Appeals to resolve any disagreements prior to submittal for a building permit.

### **Design Review Administrator**

**(DRA).** *The DRA county staff representatives review projects and make determinations of conformance with the Design Guidelines.*

### **Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC)**

*The DRAC reviews discretionary projects and make recommendations of conformance with the Design Guidelines. The DRAC also reviews non-discretionary design review referrals from the DRA or project applicant.*

## Sacramento County Design Guidelines

### APPLICATION CHECKLIST – NON-DISCRETIONARY COMMERCIAL PROJECTS

**Project Application Control Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

- I have read and understand the commercial and mixed use Community Design Guidelines.

#### SITE DESIGN

**Community Design Objectives (1.1.1)** [Design Guidelines Page: 11]

Renovated and new commercial development should contribute to the implementation of community design principles and concepts for commercial corridors and districts.

**Roadway Design and Streetscaping (1.1.2)** [Design Guidelines Page: 11-12]

**Landscape and signage for every project should contribute to the implementation of streetscape principles and concepts for commercial corridors or districts.**

- Roadways, pedestrian walks, and sidewalks are interconnected within the project and with surrounding neighborhood.
- Lighting and furniture is coordinated as a “family”.
- Traffic calming elements support and promote pedestrian circulation.
- Landscape and streetscape concept plan submitted.
- Street lighting and furniture concept plan submitted.

**Building Setbacks and Alignments (1.1.3)** [Design Guidelines Page: 12-13]

**Buildings in established commercial areas should have setbacks that support streetscape, circulation and image objectives for the district.**

- Street frontage is defined by building edges.
- Building edges are aligned and designed to be consistent with adjacent development.
- The project is sited and designed to reinforce the pedestrian experience.
- Loading areas are screened and landscaped.

**Building Edges and Storefronts (1.1.4)** [Design Guidelines Page: 13]

**Building edges and storefronts should be planned and designed to be an integral part of the district's pedestrian system. Please reference sample drawings on pages 15 and 16 of the Community Design Guidelines.**

- A minimum of 8' of unobstructed sidewalk is provided along storefront edges.
- Display windows comprise at least 33% of the width of the building façade that faces the public street. If blank walls are unavoidable, three dimensional elements are present.
- Storefront and entries are clearly connected. (if applicable)
- Building edges and storefronts reflect both auto-oriented and pedestrian-oriented merchandising needs of the tenants and district without sacrificing pedestrian mobility and comfort. (if applicable)
- Corner or mid-block pad buildings are oriented towards the street. (if applicable)
- Drive-through windows are not isolated from sidewalks or connecting walkways. (if applicable)

**Parking lots and Driveways (1.1.5)** [Design Guidelines Page: 13-14]

**Parking lots and driveways should be planned to reduce the number of curb cuts, provide interconnectivity between sites, and be designed to support pedestrian, safety, connections and comfort.**

- Shared driveways and parking access with adjacent sites is provided.
- Primary driveways designed as streets
- Parking lots and driveways provide for pedestrian connections to storefronts.
- Parking lots have dedicated walkways.
- The parking lot runoff plan complies with the County's storm water control measures.
- Service windows and stacking lanes do not face public streets.

**Landscaping (1.1.6)** [Design Guidelines Page: 14-17]

**Landscaping design should be a defining feature for every project that contributes to the community's health, image, and pedestrian comfort.**

- All areas not covered by structures, walkways, driveways, and parking are landscaped.
- Landscaping includes storm water quality treatment features that are consistent with the County's requirements.
- Landscaping is used to reinforce the overall site and architectural design concept for the project.
- Hardscapes are used to identify pathways and gathering places.
- Landscaping is used to enhance and soften the screening of loading and parking areas.
- Mature trees, rock outcrops, creeks, or other desirable natural site features are preserved and incorporated into the landscape plan.
- Vegetative buffers exist to treat runoff before it reaches a natural area.

### **Integrating Transit (1.1.7) [Design Guidelines Page: 17]**

**New Commercial development and renovation of existing centers and buildings should be planned and designed to facilitate access to transit.**

- Sidewalks provide direct access to transit stops.
- Transit stops and connecting pedestrian routes are well lit.
- Bicycles facilities are designed into the site plan.

### **Transition to Residential Areas (1.1.8) [Design Guidelines Page: 17-18]**

**New and renovated projects should be designed to enhance adjacent residential neighborhoods. Projects should be designed to reduce the visual, noise, and use impacts on adjacent residential areas. Screen walls are generally regarded as mitigation for poor site planning.**

- Adjacent neighborhood residents are able to walk directly route from their homes to the project without traversing parking lots.
- Landscaping plan is contiguous with existing residential streets.
- Building heights acknowledge adjacent residential building heights by stepping down and increasing setbacks.
- Loading and service areas are not located adjacent to residential areas.
- Screening walls are designed as a natural extension of the architectural and landscaping concepts of the project
- Automotive bays are oriented away from any residential development or public street.

## **ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PRINCIPALS**

### **Architectural Design Concepts (1.2.1) [Design Guidelines Page: 19]**

**Projects in specific plan areas or other special planning districts should support existing architectural design policies and concepts. Every renovation and new commercial project should pursue architectural concepts that are compatible and further image and economic goals for the district and adjacent neighborhoods. (Consult with County Planning Staff.)**

- If the project is a freeway or arterial oriented big box center, the design theme includes all buildings/tenants.
- If the project is located next to an aging strip district, new design themes and concepts are included that emphasize pedestrian comfort and connectivity.
- If the project is located adjacent or in a residential context, the architectural traditions, scale, and character of the adjacent neighborhood is reflected in the project design.

**Building Form and Massing (1.2.2)** [Design Guidelines Page: 19-20]

**Building massing and orientation should result in a pleasing and coherent composition of building elements and space.**

- Large Stores are integrated into in-line shops or wrapped around storefront buildings.
- Roof forms or parapets are continuous for the full roof line.
- The project does not include long unbroken blank walls.
- Corner bay articulations, stepped or varied wall planes, varying parapet wall heights, or trellises are used to reduce visual monotony of large buildings.
- Canopies, arcades, reveals, recesses, projections or cornices are pedestrian friendly.

**Architectural Design and Features (1.2.3)** [Design Guidelines Page: 20-21] (if applicable)

**The architectural design of commercial projects should have a vocabulary of design elements that contribute to overall design and image concepts that work at a district and pedestrian scale.**

- Building entrances are designed as a prominent feature
- Fine grained of detail, including wainscoting, cornices, canopies, awnings, and brackets are used.
- “Franchise” architecture is not a dominant feature.
- Unifying vocabulary of design elements included all façades.
- If service station islands or ancillary buildings are included are they architecturally similar to the main building(s).

**Materials and Colors (1.2.4)** [Design Guidelines Page: 21]

**Selection of materials and finishes for new and commercial renovation projects should be of high quality and reinforce overall image and massing concepts.**

- Visible roof materials are not composite shingles, glazed or painted tiles, metal or other sheet metal.
- Exterior walls are not vinyl, metal, plywood, or other sheet material.
- Accent materials are stone, anodized or thermo acrylic materials, or wood with a minimal nominal dimension of 2”.
- Ground floor display windows are transparent clear glass.
- Upper floor windows are clear or lightly tinted glass and not reflective.
- Loud or inconsistent colors are not used.

**Lighting (1.2.5)** [Design Guidelines Page: 21-22]

**Lighting should be an integral part of the planning and design of commercial projects anticipating the needs of the shopping experience, businesses, and adjacent residential areas.**

- Lighting is shielded and downward facing.
- Pedestrian scale lighting is included.

**Service Areas (1.2.6)** [Design Guidelines Page: 22]

**Service facilities should be concealed from public view.**

- Trash bins, compactors, utility meters, transformers, or other service elements are not visible.
- Service elements are designed as an integral element of the architecture.
- All roof mounted equipment is concealed by enclosure(s).

**SIGNAGE**

**District Signage (1.3.1)** [Design Guidelines Page: 23] (if applicable)

**Development and public works projects in specific plan or special planning districts should support signage polices and design concepts. Signage identifying shopping and commercial districts should support both way finding and graphic identity objectives. The signage plan should provide consistency throughout the district.**

- District: \_\_\_\_\_ (n/a if project is not within specific plan or special planning district)
- District sign plan reviewed by applicant.
- Project sign plan prepared and submitted to County.
- District image theme reflected in project sign plan.
- Median, monument, and identity signage located as part of the project sign plan.
- Placement of and maintenance for district signs coordinated with the Department of Public Works (attached confirmation letter from DPW)

**Multi-tenant Project Signage (1.3.2)** [Design Guidelines Page: 23] (if applicable)

**For commercial development with multiple tenants: monument, entry, way finding, tenant, and other signage should be designed as a “family”.**

- Project sign plan does not include pole, large, or garish signs.
- Project sign plan for known and future tenants prepared and submitted to County.

**Single Tenant Building or Pad Signage (1.3.3)** [Design Guidelines Page: 23-24] (if applicable)

**Signage for single tenant buildings should be developed to reflect landscape and architectural concepts of the project.**

- Building signage complements building architecture.
- All signs reflect a single graphic character.
- Cumulative area of signs does not exceed 1 square foot per linear foot of building frontage. (Note: this is less signage than allowed the sign regulations of the Zoning code)
- Signage includes individual characters and does not include cabinet signs.
- Signs affixed to walls are placed on vertical walls below the building eaves or parapet line.