

elk grove design guidelines

chapter 1

introduction

The City of Elk Grove Design Guidelines implement the goals and policies of the General Plan and expand the basic development standards of the Zoning Code. Specifically, the guidelines implement the General Plan land use policies and strategies relative to urban design, pedestrian circulation, community and neighborhood identity, and residential, commercial, and industrial project design. The Design Guidelines also supplement the design provisions of adopted Special Planning Areas and Specific Plans. One exception is the Old Town Special Planning Area. The unique characteristics of Old Town will be addressed separately through an amendment of the Old Town SPA which will include unique design provisions for development within this historic district and the preservation of the City's historic resources.

A. Purpose and Intent

The purpose of design review in the City of Elk Grove is as follows:

- To encourage high quality land planning and architecture;
- To encourage development in keeping with the desired character of the City;
- To ensure physical, visual, and functional compatibility between uses; and
- To ensure proper attention is paid to site and architectural design, thereby protecting land values.

These Design Guidelines are intended to provide design professionals, property owners, residents, staff, and decision-makers with a clear and common understanding of the City's expectations for the planning, design and review of development proposals in Elk Grove.

B. Background

In March 2000, Elk Grove citizens voted for incorporation to fulfill the need/desire for local control over the decisions affecting the quality of life in Elk Grove. As part of the visioning process for the 2002-2003 General Plan Update, the following vision statement was developed.

Elk Grove in the future is envisioned by the residents to continue to reflect the attributes which brought them to the community: a diversity of high quality residential and commercial areas in a rural setting, a high level of public services provided by the City of Elk Grove, and a pleasing environment in which to live and work. The future will also provide more shopping opportunities (including a regional mall), increased employment opportunities, and an increased tax base to support City government and the services it provides.

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On September 4, 2002 the City Council directed staff to establish a discretionary Design Review process for development projects that require additional site and design considerations beyond conformance with minimum standards of the Zoning Code. This direction included the preparation of Citywide Design Guidelines to create the basis for Design Review decisions. Residents, business owners, and members of the development community participated in Design Guideline workshops and focus group meetings. Their input is reflected in these guidelines, which are intended to be clear and concise, without limiting creative design solutions.

C. Organization and Use

This document is organized into different sections based on the proposed type of project. There are separate sections for Single-family Residential Development (Subdivision Maps and Master Home Plans), Multi-family Residential Development, and Non-residential Development. Within each section, there are design criteria for various aspects of site and building design. Each section is structured with an introduction to desirable design concepts, followed by guidelines that reiterate design objectives and establish provisions and options to ensure implementation of desired design concepts. Guidelines are listed in the form of recommended/encouraged provisions (should), specific solutions/requirements (shall), design targets through representative sample, or a menu of design solutions from which to choose. Guidelines also include incentive-based provisions to encourage exceptional design. This approach results in a greater measure of predictability to the Design Review process, while maintaining flexibility and the option for creative design solutions.

The Design Guidelines shall be used in conjunction with other documents adopted by the City that contain goals, development parameters, and more specific regulations relative to a particular type of development. In other words, development projects shall also comply with applicable provisions of the City's General Plan and Zoning Code, applicable sections of the Municipal Code, Specific Plans, Special Planning Areas, and other adopted standards or plans (e.g., street standards, neighborhood livability program/traffic calming guidelines, bikeway and/or trails plan). References to applicable provisions are made throughout the guidelines. The appendix includes a glossary describing the terms and phrases used in these Design Guidelines. Terms and phrases described in the glossary are italicized throughout the guidelines.

The City of Elk Grove has adopted several Specific Plans and Special Planning Areas (Area Plans) with development review processes and/or design guidelines for development within specified boundaries. If a project is located within one of the adopted Area Plans, the more restrictive design requirements of the adopted Area Plan and these guidelines will apply.

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