

Strategic Plan

# DESIGN GUIDELINES

Como/Sunset Heights  
Neighborhood Empowerment Zone

Adopted: January, 2020

## Introduction

Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) Design Guidelines are an important tool for revitalizing and improving neighborhoods. In addition to NEZ Design Guidelines being used by the City to determine whether NEZ incentives will be awarded to projects, the guidelines are intended to be a resource for NEZ applicants, designers, architects, and City design reviewers.

These Guidelines are not intended to be a design instruction manual. Each new development project seeking NEZ benefits should have competent designers who are well versed in such matters. This document is intended primarily to address specific neighborhood concerns, to provide clear guidance on desired design features of new development, and to lay the groundwork for positive communication regarding applications.

Properly applied, the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Design Guidelines will provide guidance and inspiration for each applicant to embrace the concept of neighborhood compatibility as a positive contribution to community revitalization. Adherence to the principles embodied in the NEZ Design Guidelines will improve outcomes, while also enhancing each individual development project.

## Why NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines?

NEZ Design Guidelines are created to help conserve the most valuable design characteristics of the original neighborhood while facilitating new development that supports and improves the existing neighborhood. The Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines are based on the following neighborhood design principals:

- The neighborhood is a distinct place, with a character and a boundary. It can be thought of as an outdoor room in which the community lives. It is a setting for the buildings, composed of the streets, trees, setbacks, and street configuration. It is also composed of the various architectural characters of the original buildings which defined it. That composition includes a pattern of driveways, sidewalks, garages, porches, building types, architectural elements, and landscaping.
- Buildings are the principal objects within the neighborhood and, as such, have an important role to play in further defining the character of the neighborhood. Where the original buildings establish the character of the neighborhood, newer buildings and additions should support and enhance the neighborhood.
- Because of the diversity of architectural character within the Como neighborhood, the neighborhood's architectural identity is based more on common patterns shared by many of the best examples of Como buildings. These patterns include similarities in mass, scale, the complexity of form, relationship to the street, and to each other. The essential nature of the neighborhood is most often embodied by the patterns shared by the original buildings that formed that neighborhood.
- Like community elders, the older buildings and formative elements of the neighborhood offer value to the community. They inform us of our past, define our roots, and connect us to our culture. They warrant respect and emulation.

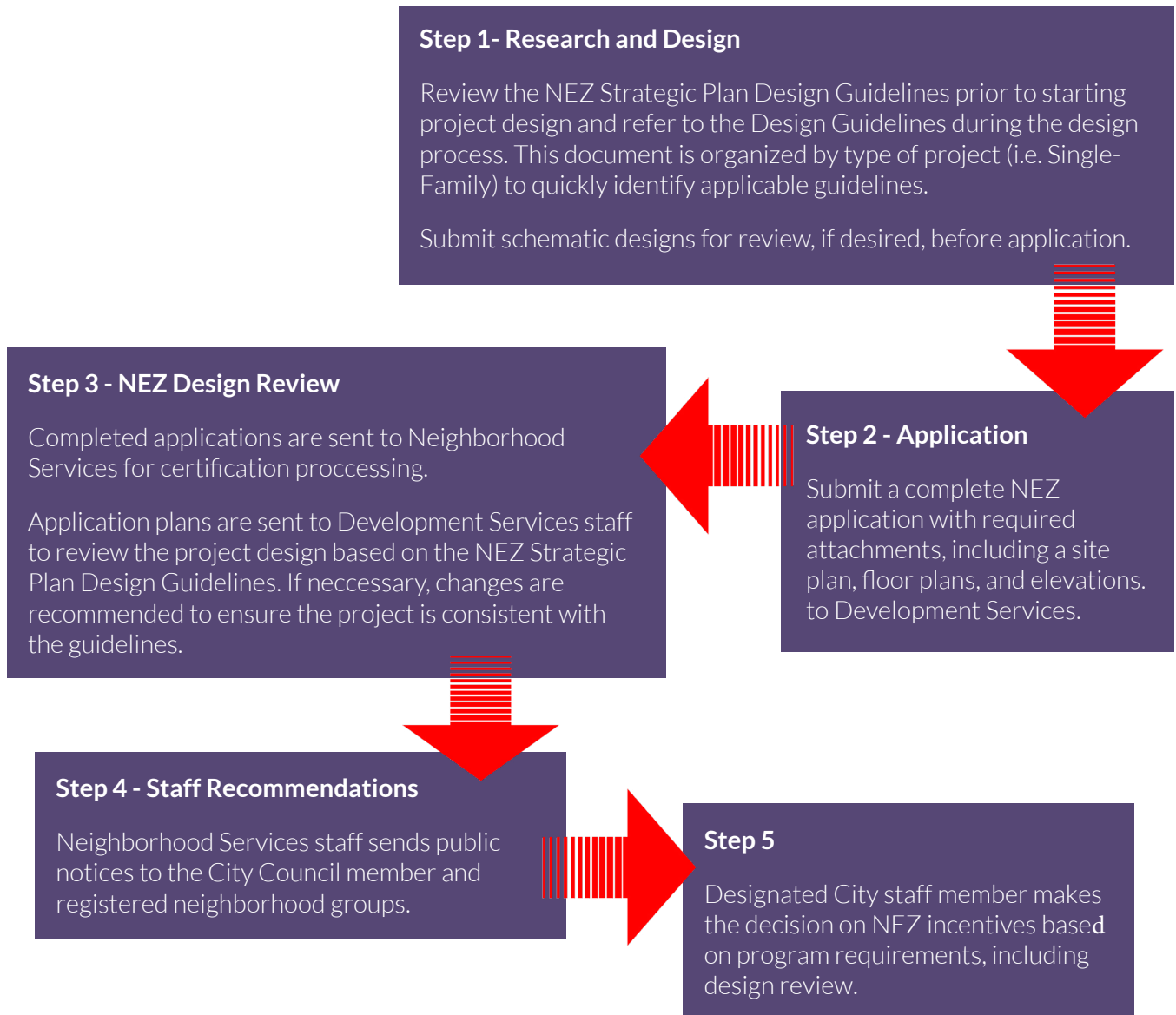




The chart below identifies key steps in the submittal and review of an application for NEZ incentives. To obtain NEZ incentives, each applicant must review the NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines prior to starting project design and refer to design guidelines during the design process. Submitted projects are reviewed against the design guidelines to determine if the projects can receive NEZ incentives. The design guidelines are intended to shape the project design. Early design guidelines review can reduce the processing time for the NEZ application.

Because NEZ applications require construction level drawings, it is recommended that applicants submit schematic designs for preliminary evaluation before submitting a final application. There may be adjustments to the design that arise out of NEZ Design Review and it is usually more efficient and cost-effective to incorporate those adjustments during schematic design rather than after construction drawings are complete.

**NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines Flow Chart**



**Definitions**

This section defines certain terminology used in the design guidelines.

**Building Mass and Composition -**

The manner in which the basic elements and forms of a building are arranged.

**Construction Drawings -**

Construction drawings provide a graphic representation of what is to be built. Construction drawings should be concise and coordinated to avoid, wherever possible, ambiguity and confusion.

**Façade -**

The faces or elevations of a building visible from a public way or space; usually limited to the front face of a building in an urban environment.

**Fascia Profiles -**

The vertical frieze or band under a roof edge, or which forms the outer surface of a cornice, visible to an observer.

**Porte-Cochère -**

A roofed structure extending from the entrance of a building over an adjacent driveway and sheltering those getting in or out of vehicles.

**Schematic Designs -**

A rough drawing of a site plan, floor plans, elevations and often illustrative sketches or computer renderings.

**Setback -**

The required minimum front, side, or rear yard distance between a building or structure and the property line or private street easement line.

**Site Plan -**

A plan showing the location all the protected trees by size and species that are six inches or greater on the site, the location of all easements, the location of all proposed buildings, a grading plan, if applicable; the protected trees desired to be removed, the protected trees that shall remain on the site, and an accompanying document indicating the reason for the proposed removal of any protected tree, and if applicable, a description on how the existing healthy protected trees proposed to be retained will be protected from damage from construction.



### Neighborhood Pattern

These NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines are concerned with conserving and improving upon the beneficial characteristics of the existing neighborhood buildings. We refer to those characteristics as patterns. Although each building will have its own unique features, proposed buildings in the NEZ area must be responsive to the overall neighborhood context. A sudden change in the building and neighborhood patterns can be visually disruptive and detract from the overall character of the neighborhood. New development should build on the common rhythms and elements of architectural expression found in the neighborhood.

Things to look for in identifying and understanding neighborhood patterns:

- The placement and styles of buildings that were part of the formative, original fabric of the neighborhood.
- The extent to which newer buildings are or are not compatible with the neighborhood character.
- Additions and new construction that is consistent with the neighborhood character and that of the best example buildings in the neighborhood.
- The extent to which the neighborhood looks like it is a cohesive and unified whole while exhibiting architectural diversity and visual interest.
- The general location of houses on the street and the ways that those houses address the street, including porches, sidewalks, and landscaping.
- The general height and mass of the houses in the neighborhood.
- The extent of consistent neighborhood fabric, based on the original period of the houses and example residences which define the neighborhood character.
- Parking and garage patterns.



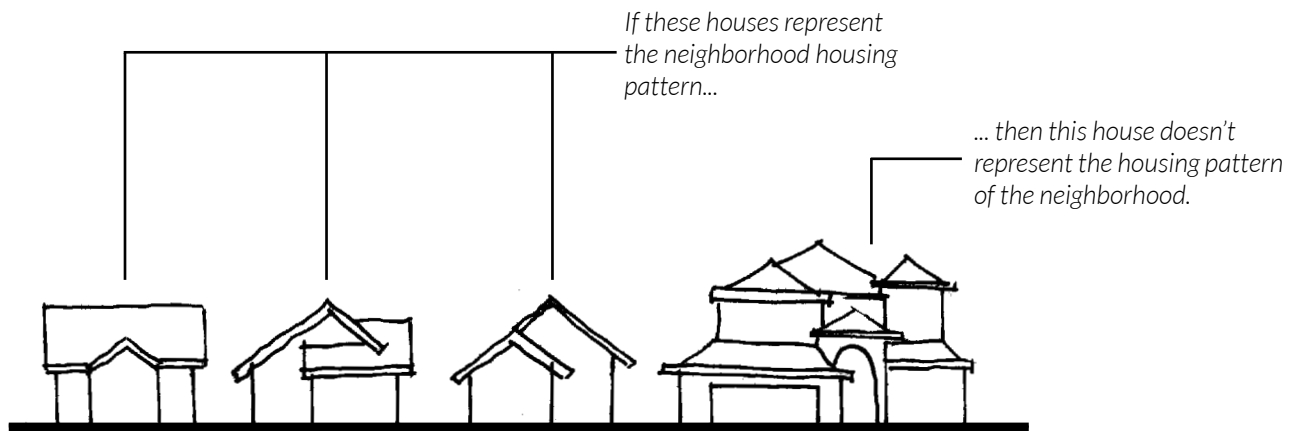
## House Patterns

The term “House Patterns” refers to the key architectural elements and design features of the houses that represent the most positive neighborhood patterns upon which the NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines are based. It will be important for the design professional as well as the design reviewer to identify the best example houses in the neighborhood in order to generate a successful design and perform a meaningful review. Certain houses will stand out from the neighborhood fabric as clearly inconsistent. They will stand out not just because they are different, but because they are more massive, less respectful of impacts on neighbors, or of a markedly inconsistent architectural style. It is important not to consider “mistakes” from the past as important elements of a neighborhood.

When considering additions to existing buildings – whether houses or commercial structures – consistency with the existing architecture will be a critical component of compatibility. New additions should harmonize with their existing buildings and the completed buildings should look like a cohesive design. Ideally, there should only be subtle evidence that an addition was completed.

Things to look for in identifying and understanding patterns in an existing house:

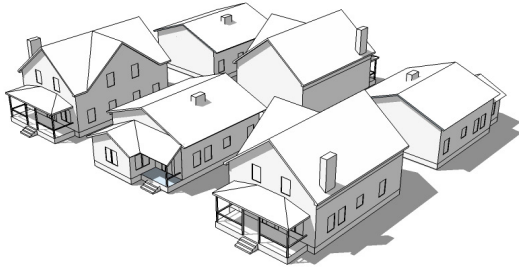
- The general architectural style.
- The level of complexity of the footprint: are there lots of bays, porches, extensions, and appurtenances, or is the house plan simple and plain.
- The type, slope, and configuration of the existing roof system.
- The size, proportion, and style of openings such as doors, windows, and vents.
- The details of the roof, including overhang dimensions, fascia profiles, trims, and supporting construction.
- The details of appurtenances such as porches, including post sizes and configuration, railing details, roof intersections, and decorative components.
- The details and construction of windows and doors, with particular attention to the window casing.



*Housing Pattern Sample*

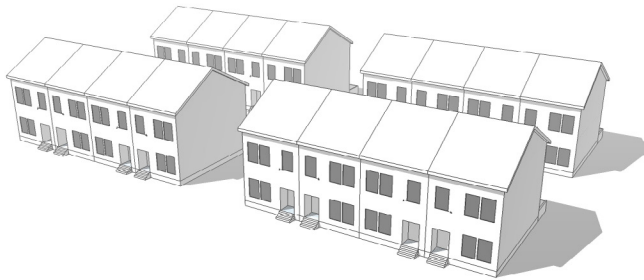
**A - Single-Family Buildings**

Single-family buildings can be either “single-family detached” or “single-family attached” buildings (i.e. townhomes).



**Single-Family Detached**

A single, detached residential dwelling, which addresses the street with stoop or porch entry.

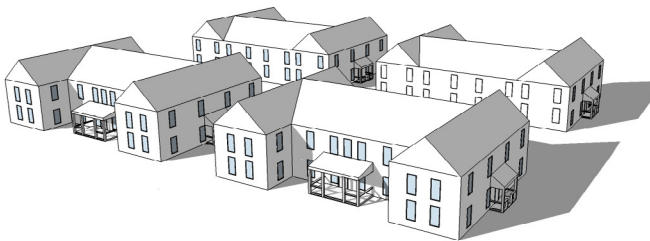


**Single-Family Attached**

A two or three-story building with three or more attached dwelling units consolidated into a single structure with individual unit entrances (i.e. townhomes). An elevated ground floor for residential uses is recommended to increase privacy when the building is close to the street.

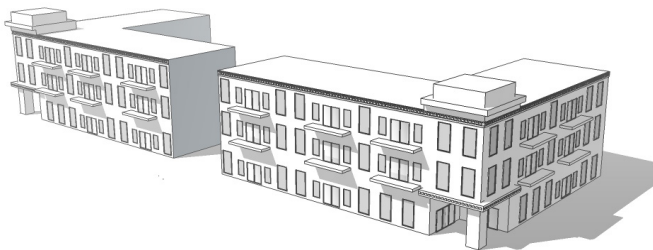
**B – Multifamily Buildings**

Multifamily buildings include apartments, condominiums, and urban manor houses.



**Manor House**

A building with two to five attached dwelling units consolidated in a single structure. Dwelling units within a building may be situated either wholly or partially over or under other dwelling units. Manor houses are designed to look like a large single-family house.



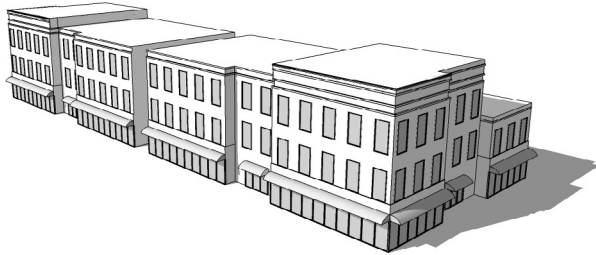
**Apartment/Condominium**

A multifamily residential development type containing more than five units that often shares a common entrance for some or all of the units.



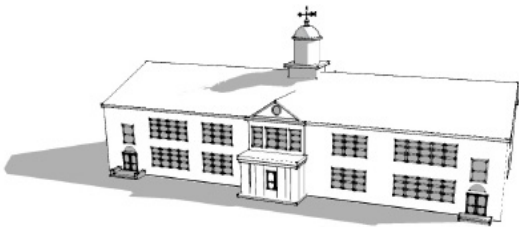
### **C - Commercial, Institutional, and Mixed-Use Buildings**

A commercial, institutional, or mixed-use building is at least one story in height with direct entry from the street. Types can include restaurants, office buildings, or retail. Mixed-use buildings typically include residential uses, often on upper floors.



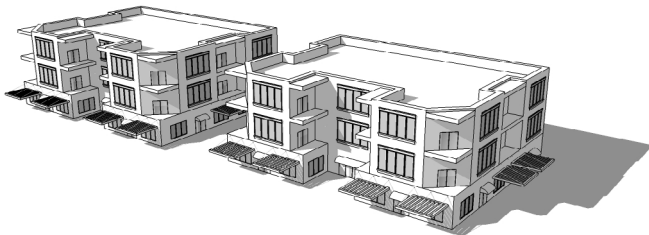
#### **Commercial Buildings**

A development type designed for commercial uses. Ground floor spaces are flexible enough to accommodate a variety of non-residential uses. Upper stories are used for offices and/or other types of compatible non-residential uses.



#### **Institutional Buildings**

A development intended to provide public or privately owned facilities that serve the public, including places for assembly/meeting facilities (e.g., religious assembly), congregate care homes, cultural institutions, health care facilities, museums, schools, community centers, and comparable facilities.

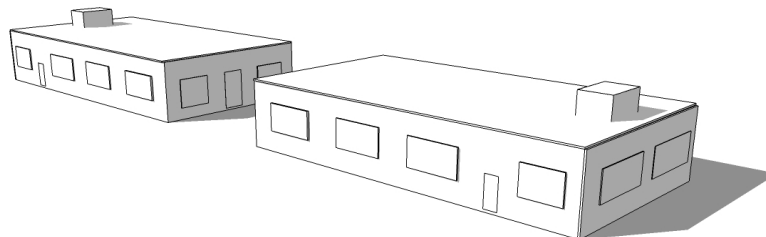


#### **Mixed-Use Buildings**

A development type with ground floor retail or restaurant uses and upper story residential and/or office uses.

### **D - Industrial Buildings**

A one or two-story building used for industrial purposes, including warehouses and manufacturing or assembly facilities.





### Setbacks and Yards

The character of a neighborhood is shaped by the location of buildings on the lots. A particular neighborhood may include large lots with buildings located near the center. Another neighborhood may include narrower lots with homes and front porches set close to the sidewalk. The general feel and walkability of the neighborhood are partly determined by how close homes are to the street and to the other buildings.



### Building Massing and Scale

The term mass refers to the overall appearance of a building and its apparent size and bulk. Mass includes actual and apparent components. The way the forms are sized directly relates to the way building elements are emphasized or deemphasized. Voids, or open spaces in the forms, can change the form's appearance and make the building more interesting and less imposing. Large houses look smaller when set against a large yard. The space between the houses in a neighborhood affects the perception of mass as much as the actual size of the building. Buildings that appear to be too large not only impact the neighborhood in a general way but also can have direct and significant effects on the immediate neighbors. Scale refers to the level of articulation of a building and the suggestion of mass by the inclusion or exclusion of various architectural details and components. Scale is closely related to mass, but its components can have a mitigating effect on the perception of building size.



### Landscaping

Landscaping does have implications for neighborhood compatibility. Since many residents spend time outdoors, the impacts of neighboring buildings and landscaping can become important contributions to the quality and attractiveness of the neighborhood. The important aspects of landscaping include the relationship of the house to the street and the ways in which front yard design support the life of the street. Landscaping is included in design guidelines for several reasons:

- It can be a critical component in framing and positioning a house in a neighborhood setting.
- It can be a critical component in shaping and defining the yard spaces or "outdoor rooms" which form the interface between the house and the neighborhood.
- The combined landscaping on individual lots affects the perception of neighborhood character and quality.



### Garages and Driveways

The location of driveways and garages is a defining factor in site accessibility and vehicle vs. pedestrian focus. New garages and garage additions should be consistent with the best pattern seen in the neighborhood. This will result in positive relationships between houses and consistent resulting outdoor spaces. Garage location affects the neighborhood in three ways:

- It determines the location of drives and curb cuts.
- It defines the quality of open space between residences.
- It enhances or impedes residents' ability to see and participate in street and sidewalk activities.

Garage location has a substantial effect in defining not only the neighborhood but also the character of the individual residences. In general, rear garages offer more positive benefits to the neighborhood, while being more consistent with historical patterns in the neighborhood. They tend to generate a greater separation between buildings, creating a greater sense of space in the neighborhood as well as a sense of greater distance between neighboring houses. Rear garages also improve neighborhood safety and walkability by bringing windows, porches, and doors closer to the street, making it easier for residents to interact with the neighborhood and view street activity. By increasing the number of “eyes on the street,” neighborhood safety and security can be improved.



### **Roofs and Windows**

Roofs and windows can be some of the most notable and formative elements in defining neighborhood character. Numerous precedents exist in the neighborhood for variable roof slopes and forms. Prevalent architectural styles include combinations of sheds and gables, sheds and hips, and sloping and flat roofs.

Typical windows should be observed and noted to understand and appreciate the neighborhood. Of interest should be the type of window, the ways in which window units are combined to make larger openings, and the frequency of exceptional windows. Window locations, sizes, and forms in new development and redevelopment projects should be compatible with the best examples in the neighborhood to enhance the project’s positive impacts on the neighborhood.



### **Porches and Entries**

Porches and entries help to define the personality of houses and often represent a substantial physical component of each house. Porches of usable size serve the functional needs of entry and exit, while also creating an outdoor room in which the realms of public and private can interact in a friendly and visually appealing way. When actively used, they foster a sense of security by serving as the eyes of the neighborhood. They also generate a sense that the houses and the neighborhood are actively engaged. In many cases, they are the places in which we see and communicate with our neighbors most often.





Single-family projects that fully comply with UR zoning, standards (i.e. with no variances or waivers) automatically satisfy the single-family point requirements for the purpose of obtaining NEZ incentives. All other NEZ requirements still apply to obtain certification for a project.

**A. Single-Family Buildings**

**Existing Neighborhood Pattern:**

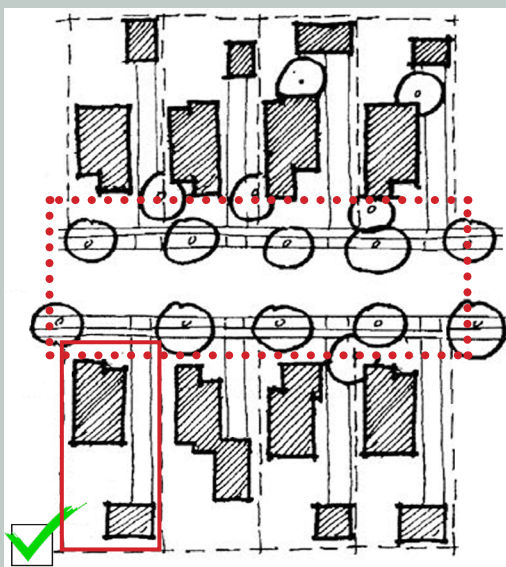
One of the defining characteristics of the Como neighborhood is the sense of space between houses. Historically, this sense of space was one of the original design attributes of this neighborhood. The relatively small building footprints and deep setbacks in Como create the feel of a less urban environment while having access to community amenities.

**Design Guidelines:**

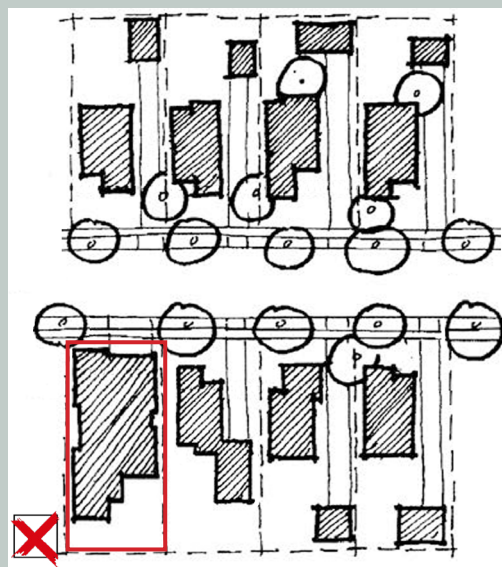
1.1 Avoid designs that fill the spaces between houses. Choose a home design and setbacks that repeat the patterns of space within the neighborhood, so neighbors do not feel crowded by new or next buildings. The result should be the preservation of the existing neighborhood pattern.



1.2 New construction and additions should include front setbacks that are consistent with the neighborhood pattern. Refer to the City of Fort Worth Zoning Ordinance for setback requirements.



Front setbacks consistent with the neighborhood pattern.



New setback does not follow the patterns of space within the neighborhood.



**A. Single-Family Buildings**

**Existing Neighborhood Pattern:**

The patterns in the Como neighborhood serve to achieve a human scale. This supports the health and comfort of the neighborhood by enhancing the sense of ownership and control residents have over their environment. It makes the Como neighborhood seem like a friendly and human place. Older houses in Como, even larger ones, tend to appear less massive and less bulky because of the methods of articulation used in their design and the level of detail on the exterior.

**Design Guidelines:**

2.1 Avoid car-focused scale and vertical emphasis designed to impress rather than house.



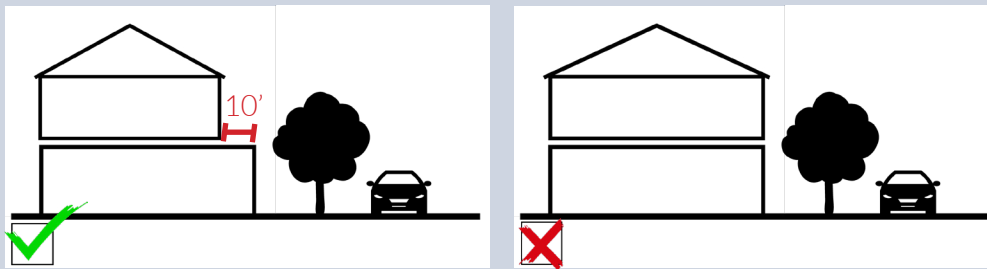
Human scale homes

Car-focused homes

2.2 Avoid creating large boxes that exceed human scale. Instead, use forms that bring the bulk down toward the lower floor and support human scale.



2.3 Additions and new construction of two-story buildings should be designed to have a minimum 10-foot stepback of the second floor facing the street.







**A. Single-Family Buildings**

**Existing Neighborhood Pattern:**

The Como Neighborhood enjoys a climate and green spaces that allow residents to use outdoor spaces comfortably. Most yards are extensions of homes, and residents are able to use them as additional "outdoor rooms" and gathering spaces. This ability greatly extends their living environment and allows them to enjoy a large amount of space without requiring large buildings.

**Design Guidelines:**

3.1 One minimum three-inch diameter tree shall be planted in the front yard and one minimum three-inch diameter tree shall be planted in the parkway between the required minimum 5-foot wide sidewalk and curb.

**Additional Recommendations:**

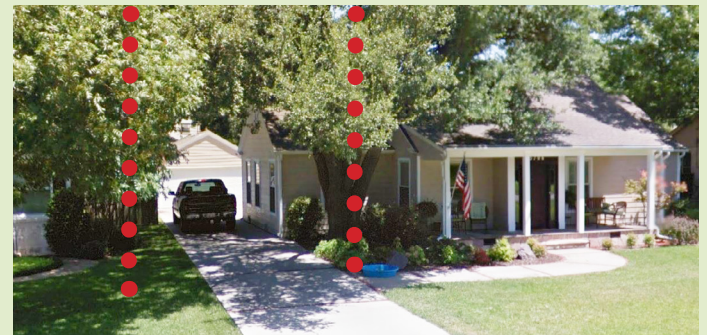
3.2 Use landscaping to shape outdoor spaces. Large plant elements should be placed to help create a sense of separation and privacy. Separation can be desirable at both the rear and front yards as well as at side yards.

*Place trees to give a sense of separation from the neighboring property.*



3.3 Place trees to offer a sense of enclosure to the driveway and separate the curb from the sidewalk with trees, ground cover, low-growing vegetation, or permeable materials that accommodate both pedestrian movement and clearance for car doors.

*Sense of closure to the driveway.*



3.4 Include building entrance plantings that accentuate the front entry, create an inviting entry path, and enhance the functions of access and outdoor recreation.

*Well-chosen plantings accentuate building entrances to create an inviting entry path.*







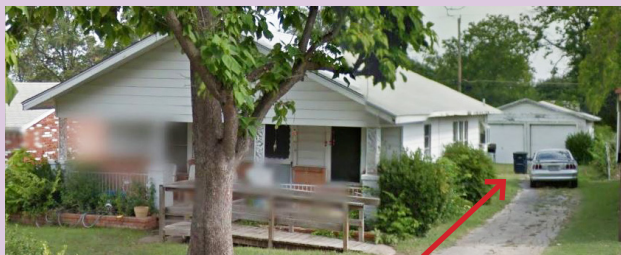
**A. Single-Family Buildings**

**Existing Neighborhood Pattern:**

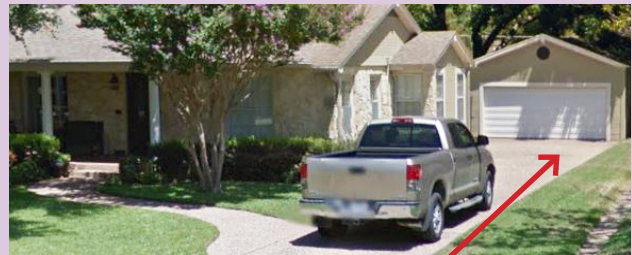
Parking and garage patterns are an important component in defining the character of a residence and the character of a street. Como neighborhood parking and garage patterns include many examples, most of which fall into three categories: 1- Rear garages (detached), 2- Rear garages (attached), 3- Integrated side carports (attached) or porte cocheres.

**Design Guidelines:**

4.1 New construction and major additions should select from these three existing parking and garage patterns of the Como neighborhood.



1- Rear garage (detached)

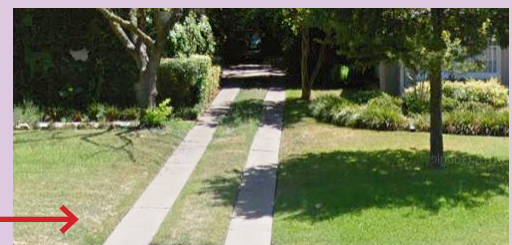


2- Rear garage (attached)

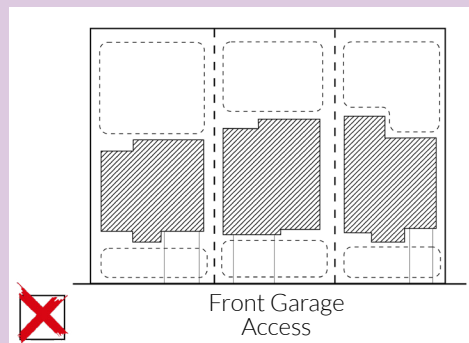
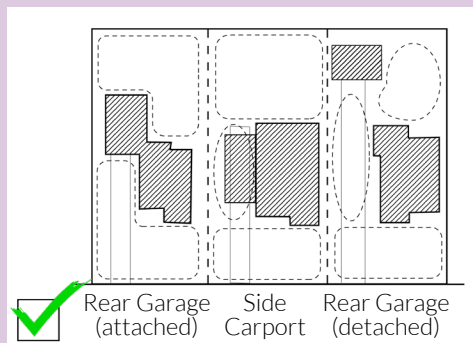


3- Integrated side carports (attached) or porte cocheres

4.2 Garages should be accessed by single car width drives. Often these include planting strips at the center of the drive, allowing the side yard and driveway to appear more like a garden while minimizing impervious surfaces for better stormwater management.



4.3 When the garage is located toward the rear of the house, additional opportunities for side yard and driveway/patio development are created. Avoid designs with an attached garage in front of the building with double width driveways. Garages and carports facing a public street shall be at least 20 feet behind the front wall of the structure.

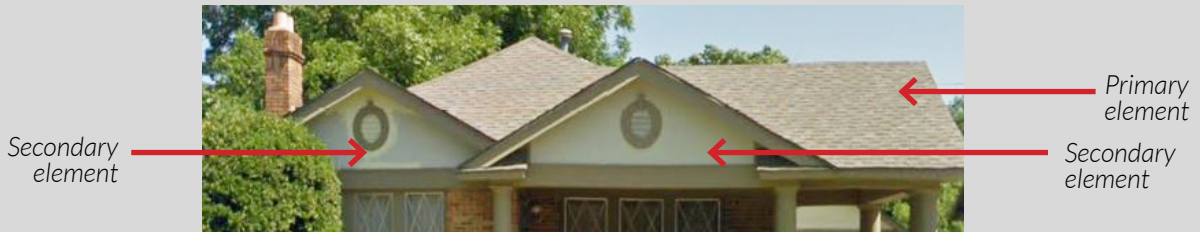




**A. Single-Family Buildings**

**Existing Neighborhood Pattern:**

Como neighborhood roof patterns include simple, sweeping front and side gable roofs. They are articulated into primary and secondary elements, with primary element(s) relating to the mass and scale of the buildings in the neighborhood. The window patterns include a range of window sizes appropriate to the rooms they serve.



**Design Guidelines:**

5.1 Consistent roof slope and materials of secondary and primary roof elements throughout.



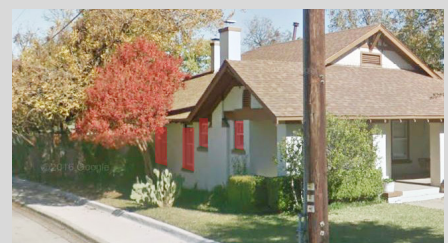
5.2 Secondary elements to the roof form should respond carefully to the mass and scale of the building and should not become too large. Elements which are too large compete with the primary forms of the roof and make the roof look more like trim attached to a two story building.



5.3 Avoid token odd geometric shapes. Variety in the facade should be generated by the use of simple rectangular windows in traditional configurations.



5.4 A corner house should provide a minimum of two windows of at least 8 square feet in size on the secondary side of the house facing the public street.







**A. Single-Family Buildings**

**Existing Neighborhood Pattern:**

Como neighborhood porches mark the entrance to the building, but they also provide usable outdoor living space. Porches are a place for kids to play and a place to visit with neighbors. They expand the space of the house without greatly increasing the mass. Well designed porches create a space where the home and the neighborhood intermingle, supporting the life of the neighborhood and enhancing the resulting components of safety and comfort.

**Design Guidelines:**

6.1 Porches should extend the architecture of the residence.



*Extending the architecture of the residence.*

6.2 Front porches should be consistent with the architecture of the house and be a minimum 8 feet in depth.



*Consistent with the architecture of the house and a minimum 8 feet in depth.*

6.3 Front doors shall face the public street and be visible from the public street. Front door openings shall not be recessed more than 4 feet from the front wall.

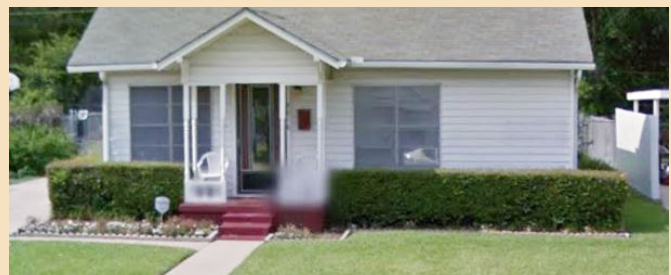


*Front door visible from public street.*



**Additional Recommendations:**

6.4 Front porches should be complemented by landscaping that enhances the entry and clearly denotes the formal entry to the house. Front porches should not loom over the street as a monument.



*Complemented by landscaping.*

## Design Guidelines Illustration for Single-Family Buildings









- ① Front setbacks consistent with the neighborhood pattern.
- ② Large plant elements placed to help create a sense of separation and privacy.
- ③ Trees placed to offer a sense of enclosure to the driveway and to separate the curb from the sidewalk with street trees.
- ④ Landscaping clearly denotes the formal entry to the house.
- ⑤ Attached rear garage.
- ⑥ Single width driveway with a planting strip at the center of the drive, allowing the side yard and driveway to appear more like a garden.
- ⑦ Additive elements to the roof respond carefully to the mass and scale of the building.
- ⑧ Consistent roof slope and materials of primary roof and secondary elements throughout.
- ⑨ Variety in the facade should be generated by the use of simple rectangular windows in traditional configurations.
- ⑩ A minimum of two windows provided of at least 8 square feet in size on the secondary side of the house facing the public street.
- ⑪ Porches should extend the architecture of the residence.
- ⑫ Front porches consistent with the architecture of the house with a minimum 8 feet in depth.
- ⑬ Front door faces the public street and is clearly visible from the public street.

# DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLIST FOR SINGLE-FAMILY BUILDINGS

Indicate which of the following design elements are included in the project. Please see the design guidelines for details.

**Single-family projects that fully comply with UR zoning, standards (i.e. with no variances or waivers) automatically satisfy the single-family point requirements for the purpose of obtaining NEZ incentives. All other NEZ requirements still apply to obtain certification for a project.**

Feature	Questions	Possible Points	Yes	No
 <b>Setbacks and Yards</b>	1.1 Building design provides compatible distance between buildings, based on adjacent neighborhood pattern?	5		
	1.2 Front setbacks consistent with the neighborhood pattern?	5		
 <b>Building Massing and Scale</b>	2.1 Building design avoids vertical and car-focused scaling that is out-of-place in the neighborhood?	5		
	2.2 Building uses forms that reduce mass to support human scale?	5		
	2.3 If the building is more than one story, does it provide a minimum 10-foot step-back of the second floor facing streets?	2.5		
 <b>Landscaping</b>	3.1 One minimum three-inch diameter tree planted in the front yard and one minimum three-inch diameter tree planted between the required minimum 5-foot wide sidewalk and curb/in the parkway?	15		
 <b>Garages and Driveways</b>	4.1 Garage located in the rear, or integrated side carport/Porte Cochere provided?	15		
	4.2 Driveway is single car width?	10		
	4.3 No front facing double-car garage within 20 feet of the front facade of the house?	10		
 <b>Roofs and Windows</b>	5.1 Building provides consistent roof slope and materials throughout?	2.5		
	5.2 Additive elements to the roof form are scaled correctly to the mass and scale of the building?	2.5		
	5.3 Building avoids odd geometric shapes that are not complimentary to the overall design of the building?	5		
	5.4 Corner house provides a minimum of two windows of at least 8 square feet each on the secondary side of the house facing the public street?	2.5		
 <b>Porches and Entries</b>	6.1 Front porch is consistent with the architecture of the residence and is covered by a roof?	5		
	6.2 Front porch is a minimum 8 feet in depth?	5		
	6.3 Front door faces and is visible from the public street and is recessed no more than 4 feet from the front wall?	5		
Does the project meet the overall intent of the Strategic Plan Design Guidelines for single-family buildings? (Minimum score of 75 needed to receive approval recommendations.)  Applicant Initials: _____ Review Staff Initials: _____ Review Date: _____		100 points possible	<b>Total Points:</b>	





Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines  
**1-Setbacks and Yards**

Multifamily projects that fully comply with UR, MU, or CB-TF zoning, standards (i.e. with no variances or waivers) automatically satisfy the multifamily point requirements for the purpose of obtaining NEZ incentives. All other NEZ requirements still apply to obtain certification for a project.

**B. Multifamily Buildings**

Multifamily structures constructed adjacent to single-family homes should reflect the setbacks of the adjacent homes. When multifamily residential structures are constructed on mixed-use, urban residential, or commercial streets, smaller setbacks that locate the building closer to the street are the norm.

**Design Guidelines:**

1.1 Building should be set back in a similar manner to the surrounding context and oriented to face public/private streets and open space to encourage an active relationship with the street.

*Landscaped front yards help provide pedestrian scale along the street and create an attractive neighborhood character.*



1.2 For small and medium size multifamily sites, pedestrian connections should be provided that connect the project to surrounding neighborhoods where new public street connections are not possible.



Connect neighborhoods with pedestrian walkways where new public street connections are not possible.



Auto and pedestrian access points should not be gated or closed off to the public.

1.3 Develop a well-connected network of streets, paved alleys, and pedestrian walkways on larger multifamily sites that provide multiple pedestrian and vehicle connections to surrounding neighborhood streets.





**B. Multifamily Buildings**

Multifamily development should use design and construction methods that minimize the appearance of mass with multiple roof lines, articulated facades, and architectural detailing that break up the facade.

**Design Guidelines:**

2.1 Multifamily structures that are constructed as infill adjacent to an existing single-family residential neighborhood should provide a street side facade that is complementary to these single-family homes in style and massing.



*The facade of this multifamily structure has been designed with architectural detailing to add interest, reduce mass, and ensure compatibility.*



*The facade of this multifamily structure has not been designed with architectural detailing.*

2.2 Structures larger than two stories should be articulated to break up the facade and minimize the appearance of mass.

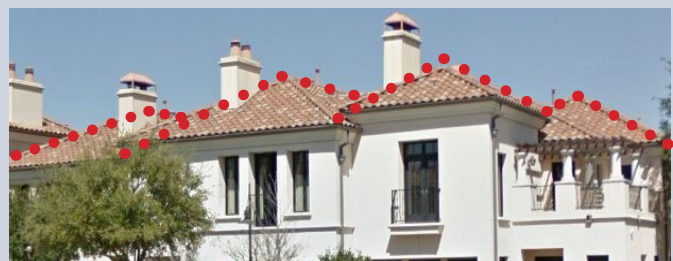


*Upper stories articulated to break up the facade and minimize the appearance of mass.*



*The lack of setbacks in this townhome project results in a tall, flat facade with a more bulky appearance.*

2.3 Multi-story structures within single-family neighborhoods should have multiple roof lines with corresponding gables or secondary roof components that are consistent in style and materials with the overall structure.



*Multiple roof lines can reduce the appearance of mass in larger multifamily structures.*





**B. Multifamily Buildings**

Landscaping and interior common spaces should foster a sense of community. This can be facilitated by building facades that allow residents to see, interact with, and easily use common spaces. Common spaces should offer amenities that invite use, such as seating, shade, and play areas.

**Design Guidelines:**

3.1 Combine common open space to make a large usable area that serves as the central focus.



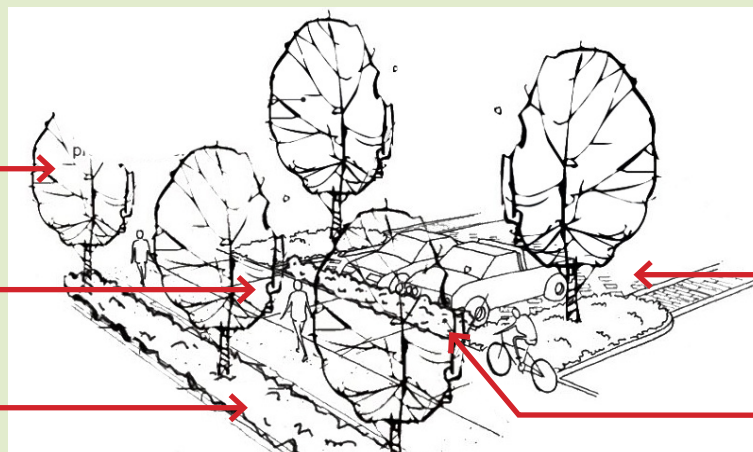
*Interior common spaces can offer seating and areas for informal activities.*

3.2 Common open spaces should provide adequate areas for playgrounds, tot lots, and open play areas for children.



*Playgrounds and open play areas for children.*

3.3 Provide trees and other landscaping in parking lots, driveways, and other auto circulation areas to improve stormwater management and the appearance of circulation and parking areas from residential units, from the common areas of the project, and from adjacent properties.



*Integrate trees with a high, dense canopy into parking lots to provide shade.*

*Reduce impervious surface area with porous pavements.*

*Landscaped parkway with street trees.*

*Lattice blocks permit grass growth for fire lanes and overflow parking.*

*Headlight blocking berm or hedge.*



**B. Multifamily Buildings**

Multifamily residential structures should encourage residents to have an active relationship with the street(s) adjacent to the development. To this end, parking lots should be located at the rear or in the interior of the development so as not to interfere with access to the street or interior common spaces. Also, to minimize the visual prominence of garages, they should be placed underneath or at the rear of multifamily structures. Unattached garages or carports should be grouped in small clusters rather than in unbroken lines and should not be visible from the street.

**Design Guidelines:**

4.1 Parking areas should be internal to the development and away from public street view. Do not locate parking between the building and the street or access driveway.



*Parking wrapped with living space. Parking is behind the building and wrapped with residential units.*



*Excessive paving in this front yard creates a barren, undesirable street.*

4.2 Provide sufficient shade trees in parking areas and along the driveway to shade vehicles, improve stormwater management, and create an attractive neighborhood appearance.



*Decorative paving in the driveway signals to drivers that the driveway is shared with pedestrians and that pedestrians have priority.*

4.3 Access to internal streets and parking areas should be from side streets rather than primary streets.

4.4 When viewed from the street, garages should be subordinate to the main living area. The garage should be located behind the dwelling unit and not be located between the main living area and the street.



*Locate the garage door behind the dwelling unit, preferably accessed from an alley or internal driveway.*





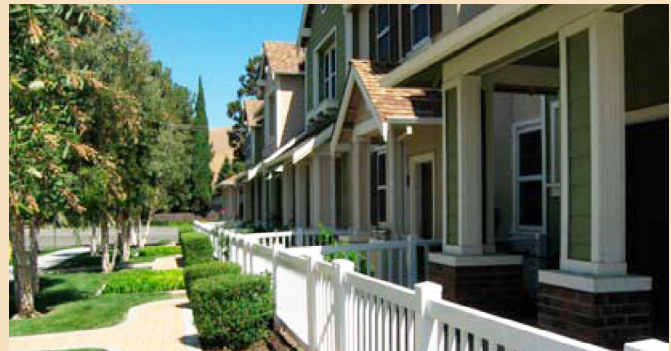
**B. Multifamily Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

5.1 New multifamily buildings should incorporate projections and recesses throughout the façade design to add architectural interest and to create a visual play of light and shadow that improves the pedestrian scale of the building. Examples include bay windows, visible chimneys, front porches, balconies, overhangs, brackets, and cornices.



5.2 Shallow front yards should provide semi-private space that may be enclosed with low (no taller than 36 inches) fences or walls. Multifamily structures that present a blank wall to the street detract from the neighborhood.



5.3 Incorporate variable roof forms into the building designs, to the extent necessary to avoid a boxy appearance. This may be accomplished by changes in roof height, offsets, change in direction of roof slope, dormers, parapets, etc.

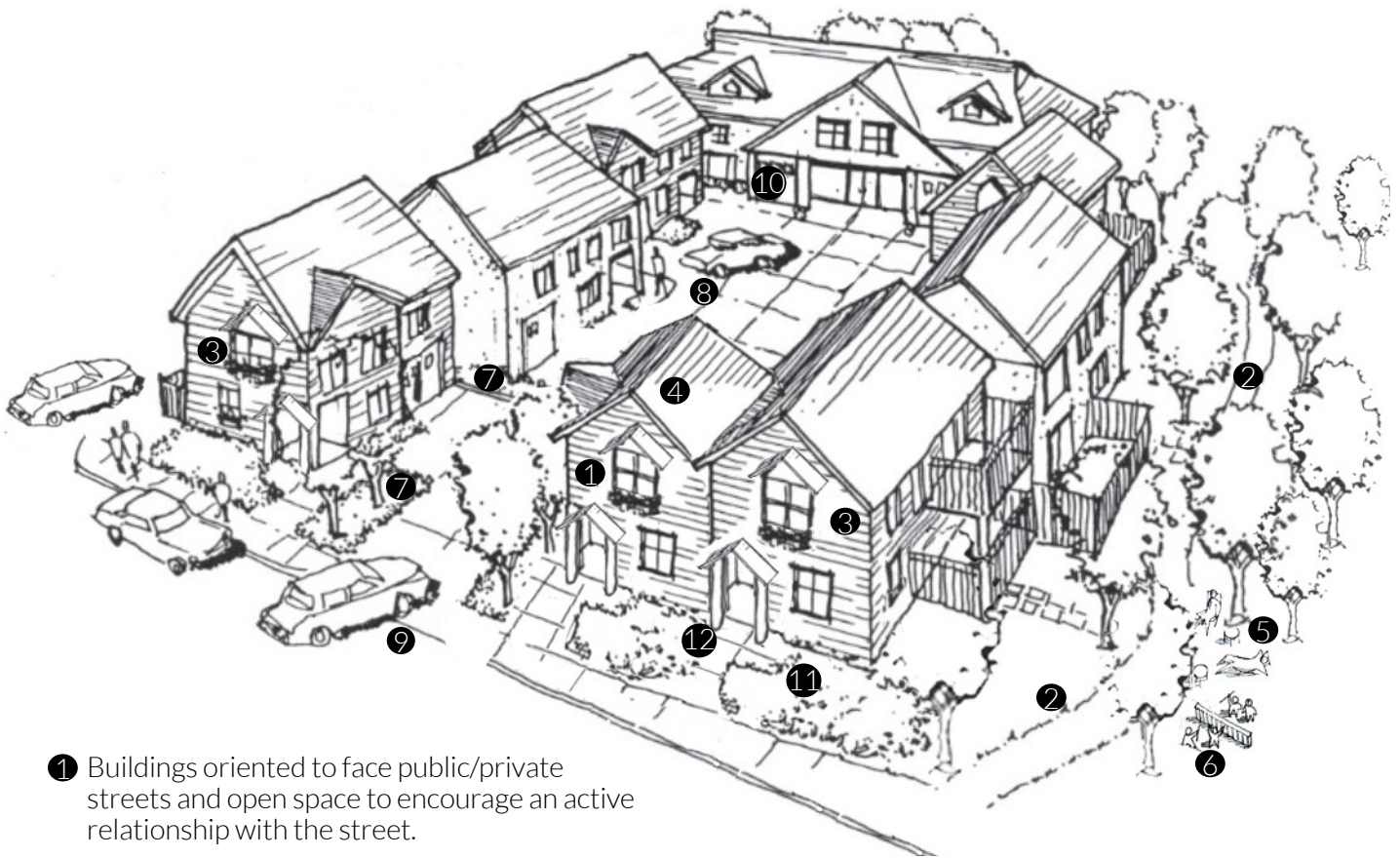


5.4 Building entries should face a public street, private street, or common space. To enhance privacy, front entrances may be elevated somewhat above the sidewalk level and have front porches or stoops connected to sidewalks.





## Design Guidelines Illustration for Multifamily Buildings








- 1 Buildings oriented to face public/private streets and open space to encourage an active relationship with the street.
- 2 Pedestrian connections are provided that connect the project to surrounding neighborhoods where new public street connections are not possible.
- 3 Provide a streetside facade that is complementary to nearby single-family homes in style and massing.
- 4 Multiple rooflines with corresponding gables that are consistent in style and materials with the overall structure.
- 5 Combine common open space to make a large usable area that serves as the central focus.
- 6 Common open spaces should provide adequate areas for playgrounds, tot lots, and open play areas for children.
- 7 Provide trees and landscaping in parking lots and driveways to improve stormwater management and the visual appearance of circulation and parking areas from residential units.
- 8 Parking areas should be internal to the development and away from public view. Parking areas should not be located between the building and the street or public access driveway.
- 9 Access to internal streets and parking areas should be from side streets rather than primary streets.
- 10 Garages should be subordinate to the main living area. The garage should be located behind the dwelling unit and not be located between the main living area and the street.
- 11 Shallow front yards should provide semi-private space that may be enclosed within low fences or walls no taller than 36 inches.
- 12 Building entries should face a public street, private street, or common space and have front porches or stoops connected to sidewalks.

# DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLIST FOR MULTI-FAMILY BUILDINGS

Indicate which of the following design elements are included in the project. Please see the design guidelines for details.

**Multifamily projects that fully comply with UR, MU, or CB-TF zoning, standards (i.e. with no variances or waivers) automatically satisfy the multifamily point requirements for the purpose of obtaining NEZ incentives. All other NEZ requirements still apply to obtain certification for a project.**

Feature	Questions	Possible Points	Yes	No
 Setbacks and Yards	1.1 Building set back in a similar manner to the surrounding context and oriented to face public/private streets?	10		
	1.2 Pedestrian connections provided to connect the project to surrounding neighborhoods?	5		
	1.3 Project contributes to a well-connected network of streets, paved alleys, and pedestrian walkways?	5		
 Building Massing and Scale	2.1 Building streetside facade is complementary to nearby single-family homes in style and massing?	15		
	2.2 Structures larger than two stories articulated to break up the facade and minimize the appearance of mass?	5		
	2.3 Structures larger than two stories have multiple rooflines with corresponding gables or secondary roof components consistent with the overall structure?	5		
 Landscaping	3.1 Open space combined to make a larger usable area that serves as the central focus?	5		
	3.2 Common open spaces provide areas for playgrounds, tot lots, and open play areas?	5		
	3.3 Trees and other landscaping provided in parking lots, driveways, and other auto circulation areas?	5		
 Garages and Driveways	4.1 Parking areas internal to development and away from public street view?	10		
	4.2 Shade trees provided in parking areas exceed the standard canopy cover requirement?	5		
	4.3 Parking and private drives accessed from side streets rather than primary street?	5		
	4.4 Garages subordinate to the main living area and located behind the dwelling unit?	10		
 Porches and Entries	5.1 Façade design includes projections and recesses that enhance pedestrian scale?	2.5		
	5.2 Front yards provide semi-private space?	2.5		
	5.3 Variable roof forms incorporated that avoid a boxy appearance of residential buildings?	2.5		
	5.4 Building entries face a public street, private street, or common space and are connected to the public street with well defined pedestrian walkways?	2.5		
Does the project meet the overall intent of the Strategic Plan Design Guidelines for multifamily buildings? (Minimum score of 75 needed to receive approval recommendations.)		100 points possible	<b>Total Points:</b>	
Applicant Initials: _____ Review Staff Initials: _____ Review Date: _____				



**1-Setbacks and Yards**

Projects that fully comply with MU or CB-TF zoning, standards (i.e. with no variances or waivers) automatically satisfy the commercial, institutional, or mixed-use point requirements for the purpose of obtaining NEZ incentives. All other NEZ requirements still apply to obtain certification for a project.

**C. Commercial, Institutional, or Mixed-Use Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

1.1 Orient the long side of large-format retail establishments parallel to the public street to physically define the street edge.



1.2 Create a strong street wall by locating building facades with a front setback of 0-20 feet to promote a multimodal, pedestrian-friendly environment while reducing the visual dominance of large surface parking lots.



1.3 Where additional setback is necessary or a prevailing setback exists, activate the area by incorporating pedestrian amenities such as restaurant seating, reception and waiting areas, lobbies, and retail along street-facing walls where they are visible to passersby.







**C. Commercial, Institutional, or Mixed-Use Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

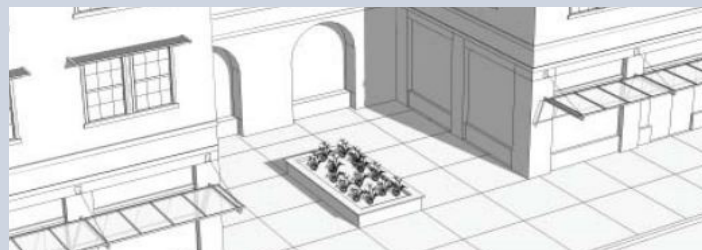
2.1 Additions and new construction should reflect the scale, massing, style, and/or best architectural features and materials of existing structures in the surrounding neighborhood.



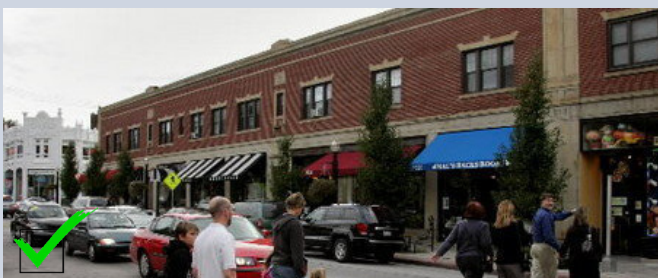
2.2 Where new commercial buildings are to be built adjacent to single-family homes, provide a sensitive transition to a height compatible with adjacent residential buildings. Mitigate negative shadow and privacy impacts by stepping back upper floors and avoiding direct views into neighboring single-family yards, where possible.



2.3 In pedestrian-oriented commercial areas with predominantly smaller storefronts (especially when a project is built over two or more lots), apply vertical breaks and pedestrian-scaled storefront bays to prevent monolithic “box-like” buildings and maintain a storefront rhythm consistent with surrounding buildings.



2.4 Differentiate the ground floor from upper floors. Changes in massing and architectural relief add visual interest and help to diminish the perceived height of buildings.







**C. Commercial, Institutional, or Mixed-Use Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

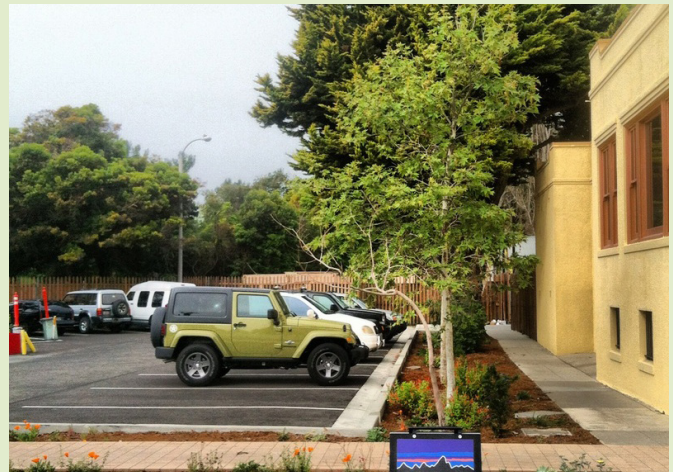
3.1 Projects should contain adequate landscape material to provide summer shade, improve building values, and help manage stormwater runoff.



3.2 Trees and other landscaping are required in parking areas to provide shade, improve stormwater management, and provide a buffer between autos and pedestrians.



*Provide trees and other landscaping as a buffer between autos and pedestrians.*



*Include sufficient trees and other landscaping to provide shade and to improve stormwater management for surface parking located behind the building.*

3.3 Use landscaping to create a sense of enclosure so that open spaces and plazas feel like outdoor rooms where people can comfortably and safely gather to sit, eat, or people watch.







**C. Commercial, Institutional, or Mixed-Use Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

4.1 No on-site surface parking is permitted between the building and the street. Locate on-site parking to the side or rear of buildings so that parking does not dominate the streetscape.



4.2 Parking and driveways adjacent to a public street should be screened from the public right-of way with landscaping.



*Climbing vines and landscaping soften an otherwise plain parking structure.*



*Parking structure lacks landscaping, creating a harsh and uninviting environment for pedestrians.*



*Parking area adequately screened by landscaping.*



*No visual screen provided to separate parking lot from sidewalk.*

4.3 Install required bicycle racks in a safe, convenient, and well-lit location to encourage alternative modes of transport for employees and consumers with small purchases.







**C. Commercial, Institutional, or Mixed-Use Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

5.1 Building facades facing streets should be lined with windows, entries, and openings that provide indoor and outdoor views to the public rights-of-way and sidewalks.



*Use windows as character defining feature.*



*Lack of architectural style and sense of permanence in building design and materials.*

5.2 New construction and additions to commercial, institutional, and mixed-use buildings should avoid any continuous blank wall surfaces.



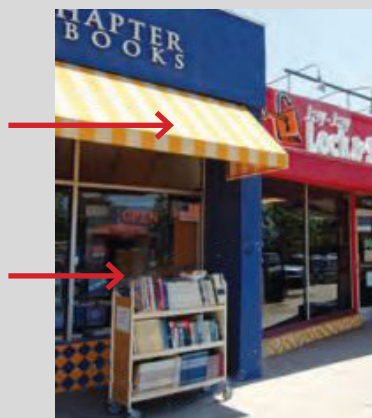
*Commercial facades that invite pedestrians.*



*Blank wall is not pedestrian-friendly.*

5.3 Canopies, awnings, arcades, and overhangs are encouraged over window displays and entries along public sidewalks on the ground floor of commercial or mixed-use buildings.

*Awning provides shelter for patrons and a sense of rhythm along the street.*



*Traditional storefront elements such as large display windows and landscaping create an inviting space for pedestrians*

*Pedestrian shelter contributes to articulated storefront character.*





**C. Commercial, Institutional, or Mixed-Use Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

6.1 Provide a logical sequence of arrival and entry as part of the site’s design. Special entry treatments such as stamped or colored concrete and special plantings and signage can be used to enhance entries and guide pedestrians.

*Enhanced entryway with signage, lighting and special planting*



*Undefined entrance*



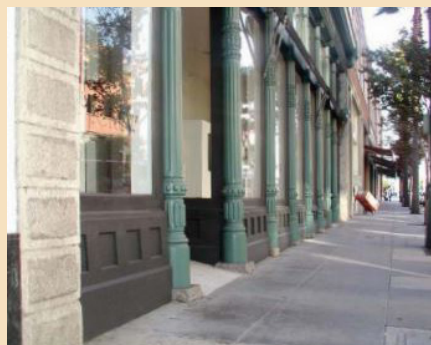
6.2 New construction and additions to commercial, mixed-use, or institutional buildings located at intersections should provide a strong corner treatment that clearly marks the building entrance and establishes visual prominence.



6.3 Building facades should be designed to create a recognizable “base” and “top.” Building bases and tops can be created with variations in building wall thickness; use of special materials; changes in colors and materials on window trim; cornice treatments; roof overhangs with brackets; and use of ornamental building lines.



*Create a recognizable “base” and “top”.*



*Strong facade rhythm reinforced by defining architectural features of the building.*



*Ground floor commercial businesses are differentiated using vertical breaks and changes in building color and materials.*



## COMMERCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL, OR MIXED-USE BUILDINGS









- 1 Create a strong street wall by locating building facades with a front setback of 0-20 feet to promote a multimodal, pedestrian-friendly environment while reducing the visual dominance of large surface parking lots.
- 2 Differentiate the ground floor from upper floors. Changes in massing and architectural relief add visual interest and help to diminish the perceived height of buildings.
- 3 Projects should contain adequate landscape material to provide summer shade, improve building values, and help manage stormwater runoff.
- 4 Use landscaping to create a sense of enclosure, so that open spaces and plazas feel like outdoor rooms where people can comfortably and safely gather to sit, eat, or people watch.
- 5 Install bicycle racks, especially in multi-tenant commercial or mixed-use buildings located on major or secondary streets.
- 6 Building facades facing streets should be lined with windows, entries, and openings that provide indoor and outdoor views to the public rights-of-way and sidewalks.
- 7 Canopies, awnings, arcades, and overhangs are encouraged over window displays and entries along public sidewalks on the ground floor of commercial or mixed-use buildings.
- 8 Provide a logical sequence of arrival and entry as part of the site's design.
- 9 Activate the area by incorporating pedestrian amenities such as restaurant seating, reception and waiting areas, lobbies, and retail along street-facing walls where they are visible to passersby.



# DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLIST FOR COMMERCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL, OR MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

Indicate which of the following design elements are included in the project. Please see the design guidelines for details.

Projects that fully comply with MU or CB-TF zoning, standards (i.e. with no variances or waivers) automatically satisfy the commercial, institutional, or mixed-use point requirements for the purpose of obtaining NEZ incentives. All other NEZ requirements still apply to obtain certification for a project.

Feature	Questions	Possible Points	Yes	No
 <b>Setbacks and Yards</b>	1.1 Long side of building oriented to the the public street?	10		
	1.2 Building facade located close to street to create street wall?	5		
	1.3 Building activates existing setback, side, or rear yard by incorporating pedestrian amenities?	10		
 <b>Building Massing and Scale</b>	2.1 Building reflects scale, massing, style, and/or architectural features and materials of existing structures in the surrounding neighborhood?	5		
	2.2 Height transition compatible with adjacent residential buildings?	5		
	2.3 Vertical breaks and other pedestrian scaling features prevent monolithic building and maintain storefront rhythm?	5		
	2.4 Differentiation between the ground floor and upper floors?	2.5		
 <b>Landscaping</b>	3.1 Project contains adequate landscape material to provide shade?	5		
	3.2 Project provides landscaping in parking areas to provide a buffer between autos and pedestrians?	2.5		
	3.3 Project uses landscaping to create a sense of enclosure, so open spaces and plazas feel like outdoor rooms?	2.5		
 <b>Garages and Driveways</b>	4.1 Project locates on-site parking to the side or rear of buildings so that parking does not dominate the streetscape?	10		
	4.2 Parking and driveways adjacent to public street are screened from the public right-of way with landscaping?	10		
	4.3 Bicycle racks included?	2.5		
 <b>Roofs and Windows</b>	5.1 Building facades facing streets are lined with windows, entries, and openings to provide indoor and outdoor views?	5		
	5.2 Building avoids any continuous blank wall surfaces?	2.5		
	5.3 Canopies, awnings, arcades, or overhangs are provided over window displays and entries along public sidewalks?	5		
 <b>Porches and Entries</b>	6.1 Project provides a logical sequence of arrival and entry as part of the site's design?	5		
	6.2 Strong corner treatment provided that establishes visual prominence at intersection?	5		
	6.3 Building facade includes architectural features that define building base, top, and stories?	2.5		
Does the project meet the overall intent of Strategic Plan Design Guidelines for commercial, institutional, or mixed-use buildings? (Minimum score of 75 needed to receive approval recommendations.)		100 points possible	<b>Total Points:</b>	
Applicant Initials: _____ Review Staff Initials: _____ Review Date: _____				



Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines  
**1-Setbacks and Yards**

Projects that fully comply with MU or CB-TF zoning, standards (i.e. with no variances or waivers) automatically satisfy the commercial, institutional, or mixed-use point requirements for the purpose of obtaining NEZ incentives. All other NEZ requirements still apply to obtain certification for a project.

**D- Industrial Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

- 1.1 Orient industrial buildings to maximize natural light within interior work spaces. Provide operable clerestory windows to allow for ventilation and indirect lighting.
- 1.2 Large industrial buildings with multiple tenants should provide multiple entries on all street frontages to improve site design flexibility and options for tenant location.
- 1.3 Provide direct paths of travel to pedestrian destinations within larger developments. Especially near transit lines, create primary entrances for pedestrians that are safe, easily accessible, and a short distance from transit stops.



Strong street edge and creative use of setback area to create an "outdoor room".



Poor use of setback area; blocked path to sidewalk; and cars dominate streetscape.



Blocked alley access.





**D- Industrial Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

2.1 Visual and acoustic buffers should be installed within the industrial site when locating adjacent to residential structures or zoning districts.



2.2 Natural features such as existing mature trees and drainage ways within the site should be utilized in creating attractive buffers and physically separating industrial activity from adjoining uses.



2.3 Incorporate shaded open space, such as plazas, courtyards, pocket parks, and terraces in new large-scale industrial developments. Design open areas to be easily accessible to employees and comfortable for a substantial part of the year.







**D- Industrial Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

3.1 Place on-site parking to the side or rear of buildings so that parking does not dominate the streetscape. Adjoining properties should share access driveways to minimize the number of driveways along public streets.



3.2 Locate loading facilities to the rear of buildings. When loading facilities must be located at the front entrance, ensure that docks and doors do not dominate the frontage and are screened from the street.



3.3 Service vehicle driveways on an industrial property should be sited to minimize traffic impacts on the neighborhood.





**D- Industrial Buildings**

**Design Guidelines:**

4.1 Large service openings in the façade should be well composed to create an aesthetic façade elevation.



*Colors, well-designed trim and detail, and ground floor windows facing the street provide visual interest.*



*Lack of windows, architectural detail, or facade treatment creates dull and monotonous façade.*

4.2 Integrate varied roof lines through the use of sloping roofs, modulated building heights, stepbacks, or innovative architectural solutions.



*Varied roof lines and architectural rhythm.*





**D- Industrial Buildings**

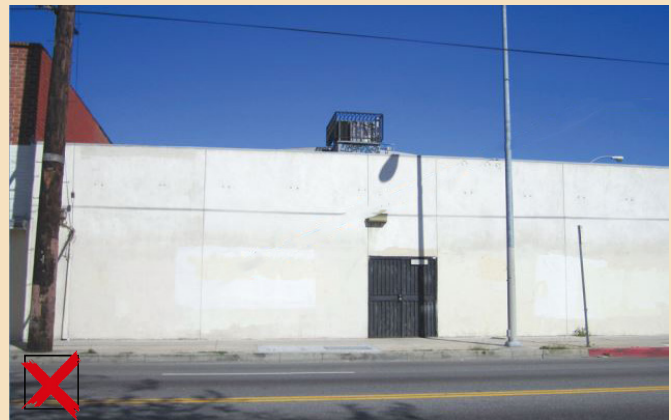
**Design Guidelines:**

5.1 Where the building mass cannot be broken up due to unique use constraints (i.e. manufacturing or warehouse space constraints), building walls should be articulated through the use of texture, color, material changes, shadow lines, and other façade treatments.

5.2 Entries should be designed according to simple and harmonious proportions in relationship to the overall size and scale of the building. Ensure that pedestrian entries are properly sized to provide shelter year-round.



*Sheltered entry, with logical entry progression.*



*Lack of pedestrian shelter or special entryway treatment creates an unclear entry sequence.*

5.3 Promote pedestrian activity by placing entrances at ground level or slightly above, with unobstructed view from the public right-of-way. Avoid sunken entryways below street level.








*Unobstructed and architecturally coherent entry, with visible and attractive stairs.*

# DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLIST FOR INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

Indicate which of the following design elements are included in the project. Please see the design guidelines for details.

**Projects that fully comply with MU or CB-TF zoning, standards (i.e. with no variances or waivers) automatically satisfy the industrial point requirements for the purpose of obtaining NEZ incentives. All other NEZ requirements still apply to obtain certification for a project.**

Feature	Questions	Possible Points	Yes	No
 <b>Setbacks and Yards</b>	1.1 Buildings oriented to maximize daylighting opportunities?	5		
	1.2 For large industrial buildings with multiple tenants, multiple entries provided on all street frontages?	5		
	1.3 For large industrial sites, direct paths of travel to pedestrian destinations provided?	5		
 <b>Landscaping</b>	2.1 Project provides visual and acoustic buffers within the industrial site when located adjacent to residential structures or zoning districts?	10		
	2.2 Project uses natural features such as existing mature trees and drainage ways within the site in creating attractive buffers and physically separating industrial activity from adjoining uses?	10		
	2.3 For large-scale industrial developments, the project incorporates shaded open space, such as plazas, courtyards, pocket parks, and terraces?	10		
 <b>Garages and Driveways</b>	3.1 On-site parking located to the side or rear of buildings?	15		
	3.2 Project locates loading facilities to the rear of buildings?	10		
	3.3 Service vehicle driveways located to minimize traffic impacts on the neighborhood?	10		
 <b>Roofs and Windows</b>	4.1 Large service openings in the façade composed to create an aesthetic façade elevation?	5		
	4.2 Buildings integrate varied roof lines through the use of sloping roofs, modulated building heights, setbacks, or innovative architectural solutions?	5		
 <b>Porches and Entries</b>	5.1 Building walls articulated through the use of texture, color, material changes, shadow lines, and other façade treatments?	2.5		
	5.2 Entries designed to simple and harmonious proportions in relationship to the overall scale of the building, and pedestrian entries are properly sized to provide shelter year-round?	5		
	5.3 Entrances placed at grade level or slightly above?	2.5		
Does the project meet the overall intent of Strategic Plan Design Guidelines for industrial buildings? (Minimum score of 75 needed to receive approval recommendations.)		100 points possible	<b>Total Points:</b>	
Applicant Initials: _____ Review Staff Initials: _____ Review Date: _____				