

Residential Design Guidelines Conversion

Introduction

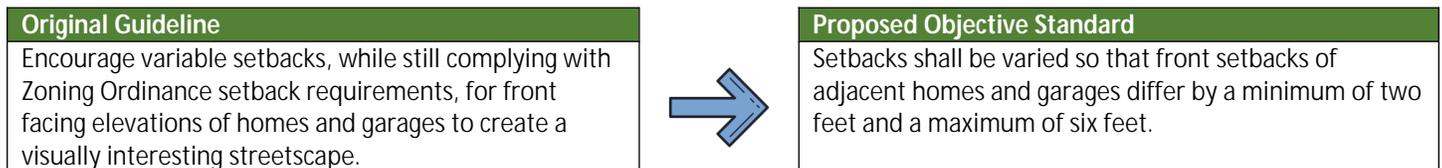
California is in the midst of a housing crisis in which communities throughout the State are challenged with accommodating their fair share of housing production. The housing shortage has prompted California to enact new laws requiring cities and counties to streamline housing development projects by establishing some by-right, ministerial approvals and some streamlined or otherwise discretionary approval processes for single family and multifamily residential development. In certain instances, local agencies are precluded from denying housing development projects based on subjective design and development standards, when a project otherwise complies with the General Plan and other zoning standards.

In reviewing its existing design standards, the City of Pleasant Hill has a unique opportunity to revisit existing design guidelines, consider conversion of existing subjective residential guidelines to objective standards that will put housing developers on notice irrespective of the project’s approval process, and create new standards that further enhance the City’s character and family-oriented way of life.

Residential Design Guidelines Conversion

This document organizes residential design guidelines in two tables, *Draft Design Guidelines for Single Family Residential Development* and *Draft Design Guidelines for Multifamily Residential Development*. With each design guideline, our team has provided a suggestion for a proposed objective standard that works to achieve the same goal.

Example



Please note that the table is a first step in the objective standards process and should be viewed as an evaluation of the City’s guidelines, rather than a final set of standards. The team will reevaluate the graphics, photos, and illustrations provided in the original guidelines and, if necessary, revise at a later date once the proposed objective standards have been fully vetted, including legal review to ensure State law compliance.

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Draft Design Guidelines for Single Family Residential Development

This section is an initial attempt to convert some of the City’s single family residential guidelines to objective design and development standards (ODDS). The ODDS serve as minimum requirements for new single family residential developments and will be mandatory for any qualifying residential project for which a streamlined approval process is contemplated by state law provisions that require conformance with certain objective design standards. For any applicant seeking exceptions to these standards, applicable, discretionary entitlements shall apply.

Single Family Development Definition

The standards in this section will apply to all new residential development of detached single family homes. Individual residences with an attached ADU or JADU are considered single family developments, as are subdivisions of single family detached homes.

Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Site Placement		
Front Setback	Encourage variable setbacks, while still complying with Zoning Ordinance setback requirements, for front facing elevations of homes and garages to create a visually interesting streetscape.	Setbacks shall be varied so that front setbacks of adjacent homes and garages differ by a minimum of two feet and a maximum of six feet.
Garage Setback	Set back garages or de-emphasize garages from the front of the dwelling.	Front-loaded garages shall be setback from the front wall plane by a minimum of six feet.
Site Development		
Structure Placement	Development on hillsides should have an adequate buffer from the peak of hilltops and other prominent natural features.	The total height of structures on hillsides (with a project site greater than an average of 15 percent slope) shall not reach an elevation within 25% of the peak as measured from mean sea level (MSL).
	Hillside structures should be clustered together to provide maximum open space.	The side setback of new structures on hillsides (with a project site greater than an average of 15 percent slope) shall not differ from neighboring structures positioned at the setback by more than five feet. Structures within a single family development (home, garage, and any detached structures) shall be a maximum of 10 feet apart and positioned so that a minimum of 75 percent of the rear yard area is provided in a single continuous area.
Orientation	New dwellings should have a strong relationship to the street.	Structures at the street shall have a front entry oriented to the street.
Alignment of Features	The scale of the building should relate to the pedestrian with complementary ground floor elements including, but not limited to, canopies, porches, awnings, and through the use of varied pavement surfaces.	Front entries shall include a covered projection (porch) with a minimum area of 48 square feet. Porches may be a combination of projection and recess but shall not be completely recessed within the building footprint. At minimum, the entry doorway shall be covered within one foot of either side of the door and three feet of the face.

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Grading	(i) Projects should be designed to avoid disturbing natural slopes and preserve existing open spaces and scenic views. (ii) Development should follow existing contours (i.e. structures should be “stepped” on hillsides). c. Grading and fill should be minimized for hillside developments [Pleasant Hill Municipal Code (PHMC) Section 18.35.040.B].	Structures on hillsides (with a project site greater than an average slope of 15 percent slope) shall be stepped so that no more than 50 percent of the primary structure lies within a single grade. Accessory structures shall be positioned on a grade that differs from the primary structure by at least five feet in elevation.
Lot Coverage	Larger land area is needed in the hillsides compared to comparable development in areas that are flat.	On parcels with 15% to 29.9% slopes, the grading is limited to no more than 30% of the gross site area. On slopes in excess of 29.9%, the grading is limited to no more than 15% of the gross site area.
Architecture		
Articulation	Architectural elements of new residential buildings should be designed to reduce the mass of large structures and provide a pedestrian scale to the buildings. Facades should be varied and articulated to provide visual interest to the street and pedestrians.	Structures shall be vertically and horizontally articulated along the front elevations. Vertical articulations, including a change in total height of a minimum of 2 feet, change in roof pitch or form, or inclusion of a gable or dormer, shall occur at intervals of a maximum of 15 feet. Horizontal articulations shall include a change of wall plane by a minimum depth of 2 feet at intervals of a maximum of 20 feet.
Massing	The scale and mass of new single family residential buildings or additions should be harmonious and visually compatible with the physical condition of the existing neighborhoods. The scale and mass of new infill buildings should transition appropriately to the street and adjacent smaller structures.	Two story structures shall step back the upper floor from the first floor wall plane by a minimum of ten feet from the ground floor wall plane along sides adjacent to single story residential structures.
Massing	Infill Development Technique: Limiting second floor area and volume.	Second floors shall include an area, measured in square feet, equivalent to no more than 80 percent of the area of the first floor.
Air, Light, and Privacy	Second floor balconies and decks should respect the privacy of adjacent neighbors.	Second floor balconies shall not be positioned along any side elevation within 15 feet of the required side or rear setback.
Design	Buildings should be designed to reinforce the relationship to streets. This can be accomplished through the use of front porches and windows at the front of the building.	Windows and entryways shall occupy a minimum of 30 percent of the wall surface area for each front elevation.

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Design	Buildings should include architectural details that may include, but not limited to: porches, bay windows, balconies, railings, fascia boards, and trim to enhance the character of the building. Architecture should treat the structure entirely and finish appropriately on all sides of the building to provide continuity.	<p>All facades of the structure shall have an equal level of detail and articulation. Architectural details shall be provided on all sides and shall include at least one of the following for each side:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porches, decks, and/or balconies with decorative railings. • Decorative building materials such as masonry, tile, shingle or other materials other than stucco that add decorative or textural qualities to the building. • Decorative accessories that may include, but not be limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pot shelves; ○ Landscape trellises; ○ Decorative accent tiles; ○ Wood grain texture finish false shutter; ○ Decorative gable end vents and corbels; ○ Window Awnings. • Variation in wall plains by incorporating a projected feature such as a bay window or other projected feature with a minimum depth of four inches. • Decorative trim that projects a minimum of three-quarters of an inch from the wall plane.
Design	Shutters and vents [should be] placed, sized, scaled to the building.	Roof vents shall not be positioned along any street facing elevation except for architectural gable end vents. If used, shutters shall be sized to cover 100 to 105 percent of the window and match the exact window shape. Shutters shall be installed flush to the outermost edge of the window trim or flush with the window where trim is absent. In no circumstance shall the shutter be offset any amount of distance from the trim and/or window.
Roof Form	Rooflines and pitch of new residential buildings and additions should be harmonious and consistent with the building as well as to surrounding development.	Design rooflines and pitch of new residential structures to be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood by matching the roof pitch, roof pattern or eave line with the surrounding properties.
Wall Modulation	No building façade should consist of an unarticulated blank wall or an unbroken series of doors.	Walls shall be articulated at maximum intervals of 10 feet along all sides using a minimum of one of the following: a window or door; a bay window or other projected feature with a minimum depth of four inches; or railing, fascia boards, or trim that project a minimum of three-quarters of an inch from the wall plane.
Accessory Structures	The attached or detached accessory dwelling unit shall be designed to be compatible with the main residence, through the use of complementary colors, materials and overall design.	Accessory structures shall be constructed of the same materials, colors, roof type as the primary structure.

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Sustainable Design	<p>Green Building Techniques</p> <p>(i) Using landscape to reduce energy costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of trees to cool buildings in the summer. • Use of deciduous trees to take advantage of shade during the summer and allow the sun to shine through during winter months. 	<p>Trees shall be planted along the street frontage at intervals of a maximum of 30 feet and a minimum of 50 percent shall be of deciduous variety. Trees shall be a minimum box size of 36 inches at the time of planting.</p>
	<p>Implement advanced building techniques and materials, including some listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of web floor trusses. • Consider the use of recycled steel material, rather than lumber. • Use of structural insulated panels (SIP). • Use engineered lumber. 	<p>Projects shall use a minimum of one of the following advanced building materials: web floor trusses, recycled steel, structural insulated panels (SIP), engineered lumber.</p>
	<p>Projects should incorporate electric/alternative fuel vehicle charging facilities within new/remodeled development projects, consistent with zoning ordinance requirements. Furthermore, the vehicle charging facilities should be located close to the garage’s electrical panel and should “blend in” with the house design/color to provide architectural compatibility.</p>	<p>Projects shall incorporate alternative fuel vehicle charging facilities consistent with zoning ordinance and building code requirements. Furthermore, the vehicle charging facilities shall be housed within a garage or screened from view from the street by a fence or landscaping.</p>
Materials		
Windows and Doors	<p>Recessed windows should be used where appropriate.</p>	<p>Windows shall be recessed by a minimum of two inches from the wall plane or shall include wood, metal, or engineered wood trim with a minimum width of three inches and minimum depth of three-quarters of an inch.</p>
	<p>High quality doors and windows should be used with style and placement that is consistent with the architectural design of the building. Design windows that are harmonious and respect the character of the neighborhood.</p>	<p>Windows shall be rectangular, square, half round, or rectangular with an arched top. Windows that are shaped in a trapezoid are allowed if the angle of the top edge of the window runs parallel to the roof eave line.</p> <p><i>Optional Approach for ARC to consider:</i> More stringent standards could include: Two panel horizontal sliders and deadlites (fixed window with no frame) are prohibited. White vinyl windows shall not be used along the front elevations.</p>
Color and Texture	<p>For most architectural styles, the number of colors on the exterior should be minimized with additional contrasting color for accents.</p>	<p>Single family subdivisions with two or three units shall provide a minimum of two color schemes. Single family subdivisions with more than three residential structures shall provide a minimum of three color schemes and shall not use a single color scheme on more than 40 percent of the residential structures. Structures shall incorporate a color scheme that contains a maximum of four distinct colors per building. A color scheme is defined as (body 1 and/or body 2, trim, and a contrasting accent color).</p>

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Lighting		
Required Lighting	<p>Lighting should be provided in balance with neighborhood concerns. Use of exterior lighting in the hillside should be minimized. Lighting should be minimized where possible and should only be used for safety reasons.</p> <p>Use alternative fixtures/luminaires sources for illumination rather than typical street lights including pedestrian scale lighting where appropriate.</p>	<p>All entryways, porch areas, pedestrian pathways, and gates shall include lighting for safety and security. Lighting shall be fully shielded and directed downward (not above the horizontal plane). Light fixtures shall be a maximum of eight feet from the ground plane. Lighting shall use light emitting diodes (LEDs) with a maximum temperature of 3000 kelvins. Second floor accent lighting is prohibited.</p>
Lighting Design	<p>Lighting should be located and designed to minimize glare and spillage onto adjacent properties and should be consistent with the maximum allowed foot-candle levels cited in Section 18.55.140b of the Zoning Ordinance.</p>	<p>Lighting shall not spill beyond the property line (footcandle measurements shall not exceed 0.0 fc at property lines) and shall be directed downward and fully shielded. A photometric plan shall be provided to show compliance.</p>
Landscaping		
Street-frontage Landscaping	<p>Hardscape should be minimized in the front yard.</p> <p>At least 50% of the front yard should have live landscaping consistent with Zoning Ordinance provisions (PHMC Section 18.20.040.G.).</p>	<p>A maximum of 50 percent of the front yard area may be paved or hardscaped. A minimum of 50 percent of the front yard area shall be landscaped with live plantings consistent with Zoning Ordinance provisions (PHMC Section 18.20.040.H).</p>
Plant Selection	<p>Native, drought tolerant plant materials and other plant species which are well adapted to local climatic conditions should be strongly considered as they can preserve water resources and can better achieve compliance with the City's water efficient landscape requirements (PHMC Chapter 18.52 of the Zoning Ordinance).</p>	<p>A minimum of 90 percent of the plants selected for planting in non-turf areas shall be categorized as low or very low water use by the WUCOLS classification systems. Low water use plants are characterized by a plant factor of 0.0-0.1. Very low water use plants have a plant factor of 0.0-0.1.</p>
Landscape Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runoff should be detained on-site prior to discharge into the creek. 	<p>Runoff shall be detained on-site prior to discharging to any creek or storm drain facility. Outfalls shall be used to discharge water to creeks.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed improvements should not cause an increase in erosion or cause instability of the creek banks. • Outfalls to creeks should minimize creek erosion. <p>Development adjacent to creeks should minimize impacts to the riparian habitat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements should be kept away from riparian corridors. Improvements within creeks are discouraged; however, when proposed, should be limited to outfalls, infrastructure improvements, and landscaping approved by local, state, and regional agencies. 	<p>All areas not occupied by structures or pavement shall be landscaped. Landscaped area shall consist of plantings, lawn/turf, mulch, decorative bark, or gravel. Artificial turf may be used if it and its substrate is permeable and has a minimum pile height of 1.25 inches.</p> <p>Graded areas shall be replanted to protect them from soil erosion and to eliminate visual scarring, per PHMC 18.35.050C.</p> <p>Development adjacent to creeks shall position structures along setbacks opposite the creek setback, so that open yard areas, rather than structures, are positioned along creek setbacks.</p> <p>Improvements within creeks shall be limited to outfalls, infrastructure, improvements, and landscaping approved by local, State, and regional agencies.</p>

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
	<p>Creek stabilization should incorporate soil bio-engineering and plant-based methods.</p> <p>To provide for better fire protection, landscape plans for properties in close proximity to open space areas should reflect the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District's guidelines for "Defensible Space</p> <p>Landscaping should be an integral part of the overall site design. Landscaping should be used to complement good design, not hide substandard architecture.</p> <p>The scale and nature of landscaping materials should be appropriate to the site, structures, and neighborhood.</p> <p>Landscaping should avoid creating a green wall of vegetation (typically greater than three feet in height) at the front yard.</p>	<p>To provide for better fire protection, landscape plans for properties adjacent to open space areas shall reflect the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District's guidelines for "Defensible Space."</p> <p>Front setback areas shall be landscaped with a combination of: grasses or plantings 2 to 18 inches in height; bushes, shrubs, or medium plantings 18 to 36 inches in height; and trees with a minimum 36 inch box size at time of planting. Bushes and shrubs taller than 36 inches shall be a maximum of 48 inches in width.</p>
Water Efficient Landscaping	Ensure compliance with City Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance provisions (Per PHMC Chapter 18.52).	Landscaping plans shall comply with City Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance provisions (Per PHMC Chapter 18.52).
Conservation	<p>Removal of existing heritage or protected trees is limited to circumstances where the tree is dead or dying, poses a life/safety hazard, in situations that renders the site undevelopable, or in other exception cases as noted Pleasant Hill Municipal Code (PHMC) Section 18.50.110.</p> <p>(ii) An arborist report is required to be submitted with any project resulting in loss of heritage or protected trees and is subject to peer review.</p> <p>(iii) Encroachment into existing tree canopies should be minimized.</p> <p>(iv) Any encroachment into/beneath a heritage or protected tree canopy should include an arborist report to ensure that new construction does not negatively impact the long-term survivability of the tree.</p> <p>(v) Balance the needs of the property owner with the City's goals of mature tree preservation.</p> <p>Trees are determined to be mature based on different standards including species, health, and age of tree.</p> <p>Replacement of removed trees should be replaced at a higher ratio than the number removed. In addition, native and indigenous trees should be replaced with like trees, while non-native trees may be replaced by a broader palette of tree species.</p>	<p>Existing heritage or protected trees shall only be removed when the tree is dead or dying, poses a life/safety hazard, renders the site undevelopable, or in other exception cases as noted Pleasant Hill Municipal Code (PHMC) Section 18.50.110. An arborist report shall be required with any project resulting in loss of heritage or protected trees and may be peer reviewed for accuracy by the City.</p> <p>Any encroachment into/beneath a heritage or protected tree canopy shall include an arborist report to ensure that new construction does not negatively impact the long-term survivability of the tree.</p> <p>Heritage trees are those that have been enrolled in the City's Heritage Tree Program and must have a trunk diameter of 16 inches or more or any tree grouping in the City with at least one tree of this diameter. (per Municipal Code Section 18.50.110.E.).</p> <p>Protected trees are identified as a native or indigenous tree with a trunk diameter 9 inches or greater at a height of 54 inches from the ground, or any non-native tree with a trunk diameter greater than 18 inches at a height of 54 inches from the ground (per Municipal Code Section 18.50.110.A.).</p> <p>Developments shall plant (on-site) a minimum of one new tree for every existing tree removed from the site. Trees native to the Bay Area, as identified by the California Native Plant Society (calscape.org), shall be replaced with like species.</p>

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
	<p>When selecting plant materials, the following design guidelines should be followed: When replacing existing mature trees, new trees should be 36-48 inch box size to quickly replace the lost tree canopy or smaller trees should be planted in numbers that replace the lost tree canopy.</p>	<p>When replacing existing protected categorized trees, new trees shall be a minimum 36-inch box size and a minimum height of 15 feet to quickly replace the lost tree canopy.</p>
Fences and Walls		
Height Restrictions	<p>To keep scenic corridors in its natural appearance, the use of walls and fences should be minimized to preserve scenic corridors along designated corridors.</p>	<p>Walls and fences shall not be placed in the front yard in hillside areas (with a project site greater than an average of 15 percent slope) and along scenic corridors, as defined by the General Plan Land Use Element.</p>
Materials	<p>Chain-link fences are discouraged.</p>	<p>Chain-link fences are prohibited.</p>
Fence and Wall Design	<p>Front yard fences should have a transparent appearance, such as the use of picket, rail, grid or wire type of fencing. The design of fences and walls in the front yard should create a visual openness. Fences and walls that isolate the front of the dwelling from the streetscape are strongly discouraged.</p>	<p>Front yard fences shall be transparent. Pickets or shall be separated by a minimum width equivalent to 50 percent of the width of the picket Fences, mailboxes, walls, and other landscape structures are prohibited in the public right-of-way.</p>
	<p>Vertical elements, fence height changes, or change in plane should be incorporated into the design of fences and walls especially for long runs.</p>	<p>Fences and walls visible from the public street shall incorporate one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vertical elements with a minimum width of 4 inches at intervals of no more than 6 feet; • Height changes of more than 6 inches at intervals of no more than 12 feet; and/or • Changes in plane of more than 12 inches at intervals of a maximum of 8 feet.
Utilities and Service Areas		
Utility Placement	<p>Mechanical, electrical, and all other building equipment should be concealed from all public rights-of-way, pedestrian paths and adjacent buildings. Mechanical equipment should not be located along the ground floor street frontage.</p>	<p>Utilities, transformers, and other mechanical equipment shall not be placed in any area between the front or street side of a residence and a public street or vehicular or pedestrian accessway.</p>
Screening	<p>Utilities, transformers and other mechanical equipment should be designed to be shielded from public views as per PHMC Section 18.50.090.</p>	<p>Equipment placed within side yards shall be screened from public view or behind a structure, fence or wall, or opaque landscape screen with a minimum height one foot in excess of the equipment to be screened.</p>
	<p>Air conditioning/mechanical equipment should be placed out of view from the public right-of-way through the use of landscaping or walls/fences (PHMC Section 18.50.090).</p>	<p>Excluding solar panels, roof-mounted equipment shall be hidden from view from the public street behind roof peaks or parapets. Utility and mechanical equipment shall not obstruct pedestrian pathways.</p>

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Design Guidelines for Multifamily Residential Development

This section is an initial attempt to convert the City’s multifamily residential guidelines to objective design and development standards (ODDS). The ODDS serve as minimum requirements for new multifamily developments and will be mandatory for any qualifying residential project for which a streamlined approval process is requested pursuant to state law provisions that reference objective design standards. For any applicant seeking exceptions to these standards, discretionary design review shall apply.

Multifamily Development Definition

The standards in this section will apply to all new residential development with two or more attached residential dwelling units, excluding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units. Individual residences with an attached ADU or JADU are considered single family developments, as are single family subdivisions.

Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Site Placement		
Front Setback	<p>Setback patterns within the immediate vicinity should be maintained.</p> <p>Buildings should relate to the street and be located on the site to reinforce street frontages.</p>	<p>Structures shall relate to the street by orienting the structures to the street with individual entries, patio areas and landscaping facing the street. Corner structures that face two public streets shall include individual entries oriented to the street along each street-facing side. All entries facing a public street shall have a pedestrian pathway that connects to the public sidewalk.</p>
Site Development		
Structure Placement	Buildings should be oriented to promote privacy to the greatest extent possible.	<p>No window shall be placed within five feet of a window on the same elevation of an adjacent structure. Windows within 15 feet of an adjacent structure window shall be positioned, obscured, or screened so that visual access into the adjacent dwelling unit is completely obstructed.</p> <p><i>Optional Approach:</i> More stringent standards could include: Second floor balconies shall not be positioned along any side elevation within 15 feet of the required side setback.</p>
	Development on hillsides should have an adequate buffer from the peak of hilltops and other prominent natural features.	The total height of structures on hillsides (with a project site greater than an average of 15 percent slope) shall not reach an elevation within 25% of the peak as measured from mean sea level (MSL).
	Hillside structures should be clustered together to provide maximum open space.	Structures within a single family development (home, garage, and any detached structures) shall be a maximum of 10 feet apart and positioned so that a minimum of 75 percent of the rear yard area is provided in a single continuous area.

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Grading	(i) Projects should be designed to avoid disturbing natural slopes and preserve existing open spaces and scenic views. (ii) Development should follow existing contours (i.e. structures should be “stepped” on hillsides). c. Grading and fill should be minimized for hillside developments [Pleasant Hill Municipal Code (PHMC) Section 18.35.040.B].	Structures on hillsides (with a project site greater than an average slope of 15 percent slope) shall be stepped so that no more than 50 percent of the primary structure lies within a single grade. Accessory structures shall be positioned on a grade that differs from the primary structure by at least five feet in elevation.
Lot Coverage	Larger land area is needed in the hillsides compared to comparable development in areas that are flat.	On parcels with 15% to 29.9% slopes, the grading is limited to no more than 30% of the gross site area. On slopes in excess of 29.9%, the grading is limited to no more than 15% of the gross site area.
Public Improvements	a. All public property that fronts a project should be improved to current standards. (i) Improvements include streets, sidewalks, and landscaping.	All public property that fronts a project shall install and dedicate street improvements including, but not limited to, curb and gutter, sidewalk, driveway aprons, street paving, storm drainage facilities, sewer and water, fire protection, undergrounding of utilities and street lighting.
Architecture		
Height	Overall height of new structures should be in scale with other buildings in the neighborhood. New multifamily buildings should be designed with pedestrian scale architecture, emphasizing the pedestrian entrance over the vehicular, stepping back multi-level buildings from the street, and visually breaking up facades into smaller components. (see figs 3.a)	Multi-story structures shall step back the floors above the ground floor by a minimum of four feet from the ground floor wall plane along the street and all sides adjacent to single story residential structures.
Articulation	Buildings should be articulated to help minimize the appearance of bulk and provide a more pedestrian scale. The finished architecture should treat the whole structure and finish appropriately on all sides to provide continuity.	Structures shall be vertically articulated at maximum intervals of 20 feet along the structure front and any neighbor-facing sides. Vertical articulations shall include: a change in total height of a minimum of two feet, a change in roof pitch or form, or the inclusion of a gable or dormer. Structures shall treat all sides with architectural details including recessed or trimmed doors or windows, balconies, stairs and railings, structure trim, or changes in wall materials. Changes in color alone are not sufficient to meet this standard.

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Massing	Appropriate buffers and transitions should be used when locating multi-story buildings adjacent to single story buildings. <i>(Stepbacks so wall height matches adjacent property before increasing)</i>	Multi-story structures shall step back floors above the ground floor by a minimum of ten feet from the ground floor wall plane along sides adjacent to single family residential structures. Structures elements within ten feet of a required side setback shall reach a maximum height of 16 feet.
	Facades of horizontal buildings should be broken into smaller components through use of vertical elements or recessing of the building.	Structures shall be horizontally articulated at maximum intervals of 20 feet. Horizontal articulations shall include modulating the entire wall plane by a minimum depth of four feet, incorporating a projection or recess with a minimum width of four feet and a minimum height of eight feet and a minimum depth of two feet, or stepping back the floors above the ground floor by a minimum of four feet.
Variation	Designs should be visually appealing and include varied facades and pleasing exterior elevations. (ii) Structures should have varying height, color, setback, materials, texture, landscaping, trim and roof shape. (iii) Facades should be varied and articulated to provide visual interest to the street and pedestrians.	Structures within each project shall not repeat the same combination of materials, colors, and roof form on adjacent structures and the structures shall differ in height or width by a minimum of four feet. Developments with three or more structures shall include a minimum of three-color schemes. Structures shall incorporate a color scheme that contains a maximum of four distinct colors per building. A color scheme is defined as (body 1 and/or body 2, trim, and a contrasting accent color). Adjacent structures at the street shall differ in setback by a minimum of two feet and a maximum of six feet.
Corner treatments	(i) Special architectural treatment should occur at the ends/corners of buildings. (See figs 3.b(i))	Structure corners along the street shall incorporate a minimum of one of the following within fifteen feet of the edge of both associated sides: a change in primary wall material and color, an increase in height of more than four feet, a change in wall plane of a minimum depth of two feet.
Entries	All building entries should be prominent and visible.	Structure entries shall not be screened from view from the street, pedestrian pathways, parking areas, common spaces, or the entryway of an adjacent structure by landscaping, wall, or fence taller than three feet.

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Air, Light, and Privacy	Buildings and structures should be sited to allow maximum sunlight onto private and community open spaces. Buildings should be sited so that sunlight directly enters each dwelling unit during some part of the day year-round. New buildings/structures should be sensitive to existing structures and minimize obstruction of existing outward views where possible.	A minimum of 75 percent of the open space areas (passive and active landscaped areas, outdoor common spaces, and shared amenities) shall be provided in a single continuous area that is not separated by a structure or parking area. Landscaped areas shall have a minimum width of ten feet and shall occupy a minimum area of 60 square feet. Structures adjacent to open space areas shall orient windows to the open space area.
Design	Plans submitted to the City should be prepared by a licensed professional. Architectural features (such as awnings, shutters, tile, and metal elements) should be used on the exterior to provide increased visual interest to the building where appropriate. (See fig 3.j)	Plans submitted to the City shall be prepared by a licensed professional. Two or more of the following architectural features shall be incorporated along all front and neighbor-facing sides: awnings, shutters, balconies, bay, bow, or garden windows, porches, decorative tile or stone accents, or metal elements shall be used on the exterior to of all front and neighbor-facing sides.
Roof Articulation	Long rooflines should be broken up and provided with articulation.	Horizontal roof eaves shall be a maximum length of 20 feet along the structure front.
Wall Modulation	No building façade should consist of an unarticulated blank wall or an unbroken series of garage doors.	Walls shall be articulated at maximum intervals of 20 feet along all sides using a minimum of two of the following: a window, a door; a garden, bow, or bay window or other projected feature with a minimum depth of one foot; or railing, fascia boards, or trim that project a minimum of three-quarters of an inch from the wall plane. Unbroken lines of garages doors are prohibited.
Sustainable Design	Implement advanced building materials and techniques, including some listed below: (i) Use of advanced framing design. (ii) Consider the use of recycled steel material, rather than lumber. (iii) Use of structural insulated panels (SIP). (iv) Use engineered lumber.	The project shall use a minimum of one of the following advanced building techniques or materials: optimum value engineering, recycled steel, structural insulated panels (SIP), engineered lumber. The project shall incorporate alternative fuel vehicle charging facilities consistent with zoning ordinance and building code requirements. Furthermore, the vehicle charging facilities shall be housed within a garage or screened from view from the street by a fence or landscaping.
Materials		
Secondary and Accent Materials	The use of foam for trim should be minimized and only used when natural materials are not feasible.	Foam trim is prohibited along front elevations.
Windows and Doors	Windows should be recessed to the building façade to provide increased visual interest to the building.	Trim surrounds shall be provided on all exterior window and door openings. In lieu of window trim, windows shall be recessed from the wall plane by a minimum of two inches.
Color and Texture	To help reduce the appearance of bulk, building body colors should be lighter than trim colors.	Structures shall incorporate a color scheme that contains a minimum of three distinct colors per building (body 1, trim, and a contrasting accent color).

Residential Design Guidelines Conversion

Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Parking and Circulation		
Parking Location and Design	Parking areas should be well-designed and safe, located away from public views. Parking lots should be sited at the rear or side of the site to allow a majority of the dwelling units to front the street.	A maximum of 25% of total project parking is allowed to be located in the front setback area. Parking areas that are visible from the street shall be screened by landscaping or fencing with a minimum height of six feet, unless located within front or street side yards area, where the maximum height is three feet.
	Garages/carports should be architecturally integrated with the main building and be architecturally consistent with the style/design.	Garages and carports shall be constructed of the same materials and colors as adjacent residential structures.
	Multiple small parking lots should be built in-lieu of one large lot.	Projects with more than 10 units shall provide a minimum of two parking areas. No more than 60 percent of the parking stalls may be sited in a single parking area unless in a multi-level structure.
	When parking structures are proposed, blank and unarticulated walls should be avoided or decorated with artwork and/or vegetation.	Exterior facing walls of parking structures shall be articulated with artwork and/or landscaping at minimum intervals of 10 feet. The articulation shall occupy a minimum area of 16 square feet of wall surface area.
	Parking lots should be sited in proximity to dwelling units to allow for casual surveillance. Parking spaces off of main vehicular entryways should be at least one car length (15' minimum) away from the street to allow safe ingress and egress for the first parking space.	Parking areas shall be oriented to interior common spaces, structure entries, and windows and shall not be separated from these areas by a fence, wall, or landscaping in excess of four feet in height. Parking spaces located off main vehicular entryways shall be a minimum of 15 feet away from the street to allow safe ingress and egress for the first parking space.
Parking Area Landscaping	Trees and shrubs should be planted to soften the impact of parking areas and provide shade for parking to the greatest extent possible. Perimeter landscaping should be provided around parking lots as per Pleasant Hill Municipal Code (PHMC) Section 18.50.140. Trees should be provided to allow for 50% canopy coverage of parking lots at tree maturity to the greatest extent possible.	Parking areas shall be lined with shade trees planted every 30 feet, on average. Perimeter landscaping shall be provided around parking lots as per PHMC Section 18.50.140. Parking areas, excluding those with carport mounted solar panels, shall include one tree for every three stalls. Trees shall be a minimum of 24-inch box size at the time of planting.
Parking Lot Access	The number of driveways should be minimized and located an adequate, safe distance from street corners.	Parking areas shall be interconnected and shall use shared driveways within the development.
	Driveway entrances (from streets) should receive special landscape and paving treatments to break up paving expanses and to define the site entrance.	Driveway entrances (from streets) shall be highlighted using landscape and paving treatments. Paving treatments shall differ in material or color from the public street and sidewalk. Landscape treatments shall include plants of evergreen variety to provide colorful accents throughout the year.

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Pedestrian Circulation	<p>Facilitate pedestrian access and circulation.</p> <p>Direct access from public streets should be provided to entries. Entry design should incorporate sidewalks on <i>both sides of the driveway</i>. Access is encouraged to adjacent uses.</p> <p>Pedestrian walkways should be safe, visually attractive, and well defined by landscaping and lights. Use of decorative pavement is encouraged in hardscape areas, at a minimum it should be used to delineate crossings</p> <p>Walkways should be at least 4 feet clear in width.</p> <p>ADA requirements need to be addressed in the early stages of project design as they often have an impact on site design. Compliance with current California Building Code (CBC) and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements is required</p> <p>CBC and ADA requirements affect various project areas including common areas and most exterior areas.</p>	<p>All structures, amenities, parking areas, building entries, and common spaces shall be connected by pedestrian pathways with minimum width of four feet. Pedestrian pathways shall be connected to the public sidewalk along each street frontage.</p> <p>Pedestrian entries shall incorporate decorative paving accents that differ in material or color from the public sidewalk. Decorative paving shall cover a minimum of 10 square feet of surface area.</p> <p>Vehicular access points (driveways) at the project entry shall incorporate sidewalks on a minimum of one side of the driveway.</p> <p>Developments shall comply with current California Building Code (CBC) and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements."</p>
Shared Open Space		
Location	<p>Common facilities should be centrally located on the project site. Open space areas should have easy access and clear visibility. Common open space and amenities should have access from any dwelling unit in the project.</p>	<p>Common facilities and open spaces shall be centrally located and accessible to all residents. Open space areas shall not be separated from primary residential entries by parking, a fence, wall, or landscaping in excess of three feet in height.</p>
Minimum Open Space Area	<p>The amount of space and amenities should be larger in size and quantity in proportion to the size of the project.</p>	<p>This requirement shall be met by providing private open space, shared open space, or a combination of the two, per PHMC Section 18.20.040F.</p>
Amenities	<p>Projects should provide common amenities to enhance the livability of the project, including, but not limited to pools, exercise rooms, play facilities, and community rooms.</p> <p>Play areas should be centrally located, and designed in a manner that allows for adult supervision and child safety.</p> <p>Visual focal points such as fountains, sculpture, and art are strongly encouraged to be integrated into landscaping.</p> <p>Seating options in landscaped areas should be provided.</p>	<p>Developments will provide amenities as follows <i>[totals to be refined by staff and ARC]</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 to 5 dwelling units shall provide one amenity. • 6-15 dwelling units shall provide two amenities. • 16-30 dwelling units shall provide three amenities. • 30+ dwelling units shall provide one amenity for each 10 units or fraction thereof. <p>Approved amenities include: <i>This list will be refined by staff and ARC.</i></p> <p>In addition to play structures, play areas and tot lots shall include a minimum of two benches.</p> <p>Paseos, courtyards, and passive recreation facilities shall incorporate a fountain, sculpture, or commissioned art piece, and shall include minimum seating capacity of eight people.</p>

Residential Design Guidelines Conversion

Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
Private Open Space		
Space Requirement	Each unit should have some amount of private open space.	Each unit shall include private open space.
Location	Private open space should be easily accessible from individual units	Private open space shall be directly connected to the associated unit.
Design	Balcony walls should be designed to allow outward visibility.	Balconies shall not be completely recessed within the wall plane.
	Fencing and walls should be provided to define private open spaces and to enhance security and privacy.	Ground floor private open spaces shall be separated from common areas by an opaque fence or wall between three and seven feet in height.
Lighting		
Lighting Design	All pedestrian and vehicular areas should be well-lit for safety and security. Lighting levels should be minimized to preserve the night (dark) sky. Dark areas within pedestrian and vehicular areas should be avoided for safety purposes.	All entryways, porch areas, pedestrian pathways, parking areas, and gates shall include lighting for safety and security. Lighting shall use light emitting diodes (LEDs) with a maximum temperature of 3000 kelvins and shall be consistent with the maximum allowed foot-candle levels cited in Section 18.55.140b of the Zoning Ordinance.
	As a general rule, the height of the light poles should be lower than the main building height. (ii) Pedestrian scale lighting should be appropriate to the setting.	Light fixtures shall be a maximum of eight feet from the ground plane in pedestrian areas and 16 feet in parking areas. Upper floor accent lighting is prohibited.
	Shield light sources to prevent any glare or direct illumination on adjacent properties. i. Wall pack glare should be shielded and minimized.	Lighting shall be fully shielded and directed downward (not above the horizontal plane). Lighting shall not spill beyond the property line (footcandle measurements shall not exceed 0.0 fc at property lines and shall be directed downward and fully shielded. A photometric plan shall be provided to show compliance.
Landscaping		
Required Landscaping	Provide shade at hardscape areas Hardscape areas should be naturally shaded.	Pedestrian pathways, hardscapes, front setbacks, and parking areas shall be shaded with trees at intervals of a maximum of 30 feet. A minimum of 50 percent of the trees selected shall be of deciduous variety. All areas not occupied by structures or pavement shall be landscaped.

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
	<p>Landscaping should be used as a unifying element within a project to obtain a cohesive appearance and to help achieve compatibility of a new project with its surroundings.</p> <p>Landscaping should be incorporated into projects to create an inviting and comfortable environment for residents.</p>	<p>Front setback areas shall be landscaped with a combination of grasses or plantings 2 to 18 inches in height; bushes, shrubs, or medium plantings 18 to 36 inches in height; and trees with a minimum 36 inch box size at time of planting. Bushes and shrubs taller than 36 inches shall be a maximum of 48 inches in width.</p> <p>Trees shall be planted along the street frontage at intervals of a maximum of 30 feet and a minimum of 50 percent shall be of deciduous variety. A deciduous tree shall be provided in the rear yard or along a side yard to the west of the primary structure. Trees shall be a minimum box size of 36 inches at the time of planting.</p> <p>To create a more natural appearance, trees along side and rear yards shall not be planted at uniform distances (within 10 percent).</p> <p>A maximum of 25 percent of the front yard area shall be paved or hardscaped.</p>
	<p>Landscaping should be protected from vehicular and pedestrian encroachment through the use of curbs and raised planting surfaces.</p>	<p>Landscaping shall be protected from vehicular and pedestrian encroachment through the use of curbs and raised planting surfaces with a minimum height of six inches.</p>
<p>Landscaping Plant Selection</p>	<p>Select landscape materials and plants that are appropriate in scale and function with the site and for the site conditions.</p> <p>When selecting plant materials, the following design guidelines should be followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) When replacing existing mature trees, new trees should be 36-48 inch box size to quickly replace the lost tree canopy or smaller trees should be planted in numbers that replace the lost tree canopy. (ii) Trees species and sizes should be selected that best fit the planting areas. (iii) Shrubs species and sizes should be selected that best fit the planting environment. (iv) Ground cover should be planted using spacing and sizes that will accomplish ground coverage within a short amount of time. 	<p>A minimum of 90 percent of the plants selected for planting in non-turf areas shall be categorized as low or very low water use by the WUCOLS classification systems. Low water use plants are characterized by a plant factor of 0.0-0.1. Very low water use plants have a plant factor of 0.0-0.1.</p> <p>When replacing existing mature trees, new trees shall be a minimum 36-inch box size and a height of 15 feet to quickly replace the lost tree canopy</p> <p>Graded areas shall be replanted to protect them from soil erosion and to eliminate visual scarring. (This came from 18.35.050C, but should be applied to all areas of the city)</p>
<p>Landscaping Design</p>	<p>To ensure successful and attractive landscaping on multifamily sites, landscape plans should be prepared by a landscape designer, licensed landscape architect, or other qualified professional.</p>	<p>Landscape plans shall be prepared by a landscape designer, licensed landscape architect, or other qualified professional.</p>

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
	<p>Stormwater impacts need to be addressed in the early stages of project design as they often have an impact on site design. See City Engineering website for additional information - http://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/379/NPDES-Program.</p> <p>Runoff should be detained on-site prior to discharge into the creek.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed improvements should not cause an increase in erosion or cause instability of the creek banks. • Outfalls to creeks should minimize creek erosion. <p>(iii) Development adjacent to creeks should minimize impacts to the riparian habitat.</p> <p>Creek stabilization should incorporate soil bio-engineering and plant-based methods.</p> <p>To provide for better fire protection, landscape plans for properties in close proximity to open space areas should reflect the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District's guidelines for "Defensible Space."</p>	<p>Stormwater impacts shall be addressed in the early stages of project design as they often have an impact on site design. See City Engineering website for additional information - http://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/379/NPDES-Program.</p> <p>Runoff shall be detained on-site prior to discharging to any creek or storm drain facility. Outfalls shall be used to discharge water to creeks.</p> <p>Development adjacent to creeks shall position structures along setbacks opposite the creek setback, so that open yard areas, rather than structures, are positioned along creek setbacks.</p> <p>Creek stabilization shall incorporate soil bio-engineering and plant-based methods.</p> <p>To provide for better fire protection, landscape plans for properties adjacent to open space areas shall reflect the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District's guidelines for "Defensible Space."</p>
Sustainability and Conservation	<p>Removal of existing heritage or protected trees is limited to circumstances where the tree is dead or dying, poses a life/safety hazard, in situations that renders the site undevelopable, or in other exception cases as noted Pleasant Hill Municipal Code (PHMC) Section 18.50.110.</p> <p>(ii) An arborist report is required to be submitted with any project resulting in loss of heritage or protected trees and is subject to peer review.</p> <p>(iii) Encroachment into existing tree canopies should be minimized.</p> <p>(iv) Any encroachment into/beneath a heritage or protected tree canopy should include an arborist report to ensure that new construction does not negatively impact the long-term survivability of the tree.</p> <p>(v) Balance the needs of the property owner with the City's goals of mature tree preservation.</p> <p>Trees are determined to be mature based on different standards including species, health, and age of tree.</p>	<p>Existing heritage or protected trees shall only be removed when the tree is dead or dying, poses a life/safety hazard, renders the site undevelopable, or in other exception cases as noted Pleasant Hill Municipal Code (PHMC) Section 18.50.110. An arborist report shall be required with any project resulting in loss of heritage or protected trees and may be peer reviewed for accuracy by the City.</p> <p>Any encroachment into/beneath a heritage or protected tree canopy shall include an arborist report to ensure that new construction does not negatively impact the long-term survivability of the tree.</p> <p>Heritage trees are those that have been enrolled in the City's Heritage Tree Program and must have a trunk diameter of 16 inches or more or any tree grouping in the city with at least one tree of this diameter. (per Municipal Code Section 18.50.110.E.).</p> <p>Protected trees are identified as a native or indigenous tree with a trunk diameter 9 inches or greater at a height of 54 inches from the ground, or any non-native tree with a trunk diameter greater than 18 inches at a height of 54 inches from the ground (per Municipal Code Section 18.50.110.A.).</p>

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
	Replacement of removed trees should be replaced at a higher ratio than the number removed. In addition, native and indigenous trees should be replaced with like trees, while non-native trees may be replaced by a broader palette of tree species.	Developments shall plant (on-site) a minimum of one new tree for every existing tree removed from the site. Trees native to the Bay Area, as identified by the California Native Plant Society (calscape.org), shall be replaced with like species.
Drainage	Development and redevelopment projects will be required to incorporate drainage elements in site design as specified in the Subdivision Ordinance, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, Pleasant Hill Municipal Code (PHMC) Section 15.05 Stormwater Management and Drainage Requirements, and Public Works Standards. See City Engineering website for additional information - http://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/379/NPDES-Program .	Development and redevelopment projects shall incorporate drainage elements in site design as specified in the Subdivision Ordinance, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, San Francisco Bay regional Water Quality Control Board, Pleasant Hill Municipal Code (PHMC) Section 15.05 Stormwater Management and Drainage Requirements, and Public Works Standards. See City Engineering website for additional information - http://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/379/NPDES-Program .
	Projects should incorporate landscape elements to reduce pollution from urban runoff.	Runoff from impervious areas shall be routed into landscaped areas for treatment and detention.
	Dry swales and infiltration planters should be lined or covered with cobbles that blend in with the landscape	Dry swales and infiltration planters shall be lined or covered with cobbles.
Fences and Walls		
Design	The design of fences and walls should be architecturally compatible with the primary structures.	Front yard fences shall be transparent. Pickets or shall be separated by a minimum width equivalent to 50 percent of the width of the picket
	Walls with public views should be decorative, include vertical elements, and change in elevation.	Fences and walls visible from the public street shall incorporate one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vertical elements with a minimum width of 4 inches at intervals of no more than 6 feet; • Height changes of more than 6 inches at intervals of no more than 12 feet; and/or Changes in plane of more than 12 inches at intervals of a maximum of 8 feet.
	Fences and wall should not be placed within the public right-of-way.	Fences, mailboxes, walls, and other landscape structures are prohibited in the public right-of-way.
Restrictions	To keep scenic corridors in its natural appearance, the use of walls and fences should be minimized to preserve scenic corridors along designated corridors.	Walls and fences shall not be placed in the front yard in hillside areas (with a project site greater than an average of 15 percent slope) and along scenic corridors, as defined by the General Plan Land Use Element.
Utilities and Service Areas		
Refuse	All multifamily projects should provide for adequate storage of trash and recyclable materials in enclosed areas (PHMC Section 18.50.070). Typically, for any enclosed area, 40% of the floor space should be allocated for trash, 40% for recycling, and 20% for organics. Where an enclosure contains both carts and bins, an area that is 150% of the sum of bin and cart footprints is recommended. Enclosure should be covered to prevent storm water contamination	Trash, recycling, and organic waste bins and dumpsters (trash containers) shall be housed within covered refuse enclosures. Refuse enclosures shall be constructed of the same materials and colors as the residential structures within the development. Refuse enclosures shall screen trash containers on all 4 sides to the full height of the container, consistent with PHMC Section 18.50.070 and shall occupy an area that is 150 percent of the sum of the waste bins.

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Category	Original Guideline	Proposed Objective Standard
	Provide a pad durable enough (i.e. reinforced concrete pad, reinforced paving) to withstand garbage collection activities in front of and within enclosures.	Refuse enclosures shall be placed on reinforced concrete pad or reinforced paving.
	Enclosures should be in rear and side yards.	Refuse enclosures are prohibited in the required front setbacks and shall be screened from view from the street by landscaping with a minimum height of six feet.
	Enclosure gates should be equipped with a mechanism (i.e. self-latching/self-closing gates) to secure the doors in the open and closed position.	Refuse enclosures shall include an opaque gate mechanism (i.e. self-latching/self-closing gates) to secure the doors in the open and closed position.
Utility and Equipment Screening	Utilize landscaping to provide screening of above ground equipment, trash facilities, and parking lots. Where possible, air conditioning and mechanical equipment should be located on the north and east sides to minimize stress during warmer months. Fully screen all service facilities from the public street and adjoining properties. Screening should match the design and material of the main building.	Utilities, transformers, and other mechanical equipment shall not be placed in any area between the front or street side of a residence and a public street or vehicular or pedestrian accessway, and shall be screened from view from the street or neighboring residence by a fence, wall, or landscaping with a minimum height that exceeds the equipment height by a minimum of one foot.
	Fully screen roof top equipment from public views as per PHMC Section 18.50.090. (see fig 12.e(iii,iv,v)) Screening for roof top equipment should use architecture that matches the overall building design. Avoid multiple roof screens; all equipment should be within one cohesive screen.	Roof-mounted equipment shall be screened from view from the street or neighboring residences behind parapets or architectural screening, or within roof hips or gables.
Utility Undergrounding	When new transformers are required within public views and within the front yard setback, they should be undergrounded. In all other locations it should be screened from views consistent with Pleasant Hill Municipal Code (PHMC) Section 18.50.090.	New transformers required to be in the front yard area shall be undergrounded.