



CITY OF
ELK GROVE

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CIVIC CENTER
Design Guidelines

OCTOBER 2011

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Introduction/Background

In 2006, the City released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for architects for the site layout and design of the Civic Center site, located in the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan area of the City. The RFQ was posted on numerous websites that are monitored by designers from around the world. The City received 23 responses to the RFQ from qualified firms and, after review of every submittal, four firms were asked to continue to the next stage in the selections process.

Each of the four firms submitted a proposal for design services for the future Civic Center. Following interviews of all four firms, the City Council considered and approved the selected firm, Zaha Hadid Architects from London, England in March 2007. Between March 2007 and June 2008, staff put together a work plan for the initial steps to plan the Civic Center, including community engagement, exploration of public/private partnerships, and design study of Civic Center alternatives. The City Council approved these initial steps in June 2008 and the community engagement activities began in August 2008.

The financial picture changed dramatically between 2006 and 2011 and the work commissioned to Zaha Hadid Architects was reduced and limited to the site layout. This work was completed in March of 2011. Consequently, the City has not yet commissioned a design firm to develop plans for the Civic Center. The valuable work done by Hadid has been referred to by the Council and is being used for creating a framework for the RFP.

On March 23, 2011 the Elk Grove City Council recommended a series of actions relating to the report from Zaha Hadid architects on the Civic Center site plan design. The City's work plan to develop the Civic Center involves a series of steps that will lead to a financing plan for the ultimate design and development of the Civic Center.



Among the steps directed by the City Council was the creation of a "Design Manual" for the Civic Center to guide the development of detailed plans and architecture for individual buildings and uses and ensure that the City's vision for the Center is maintained over the multi-year construction process.

To that end, we have created a methodology that is not a "design manual" per se, but rather a design guideline for the Civic Center Development. This design guideline is based first and foremost on the agreed-to goals and vision for the City. This design guideline is intended to be performance based and not prescriptive. The City has clearly stated that in terms of the Civic Center development, this guideline cannot foreclose on creativity of prospective proposals by prescribing site design, architectural treatment, building "style" or prescribe the details inherent in a design project of this scope. That said, the Elk Grove City Council has provided some direction and guidance relevant to the design framework for the Civic Center, which has been incorporated herein.

Design Guidelines

This design guideline will outline:

- Goals and vision for the Civic Center;
- Minimum program to be contained in the ultimate configuration of the Civic Center;
- City Council direction and preferences for location and distribution of land uses on the project site;
- Specific guidelines to address an approach to designing particular elements of the site and building; and
- Performance criteria which should be addressed in any final design.

Vision Statement and Goals for the Civic Center

City Council Goals for Fiscal Years 2009-10 and 2010-11

Reflect Community Interests - The components of the Civic Center will be determined in part by the citizens of Elk Grove through an active and engaged public outreach process. The outreach process included public workshops and intercept, telephone and web-based community preference surveys.

Create a New Image for the 21st Century - The planning and development of the Civic Center with the adjacent park provide an unparalleled opportunity to create a new city-defining image for Elk Grove.

Generate Economic Activity and Tax Revenue - It is the City's desire to develop facilities, activities and amenities that promote the Elk Grove Civic Center as a regional cultural, tourist and entertainment destination.

Use Municipal Fiscal Resources Efficiently - Private capital, accessed through public/private partnerships will be part of the implementation strategy to accelerate the funding of the Civic Center construction. Earned income will be an important consideration in sustaining Civic Center operations.

And finally, from the recent State of the City Address: (Mayor Steve Detrick on March 25, 2011):

" .. This state-of-the-art complex will feature a library and community center, a children's discovery center and Veterans Hall, a commercial development complex, government facilities, beautifully landscaped open space and sports facilities. When complete, this new complex will be a bustling center of activity and a unique place for the community to come together. That's why public outreach has been so critical and really at the heart of this project. We've reached out and we've been given tremendous input on how this Civic Center can best serve Elk Grove. In the end, I'm confident it will."

Civic Center Program Elements

The future Civic Center site is located on the south side of Elk Grove Boulevard between Big Horn Drive and Laguna Springs Drive. The project site is approximately 76 acres in size and is anticipated to encompass a future civic center complex as well as extensive park amenities. The site was dedicated to the City as part of the approval of the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan, approved by the City Council in June 2004.

The following programmatic elements are based on a February, 2010 report prepared by ERA/AECOM entitled " Elk Grove Civic Center Market and Financial Planning: Phase 1 - Market Report and Program

Design Guidelines

Recommendations". The project elements or "Program" were originally approved by the City Council on March 10, 2010 and ratified on August 10, 2011.

The following facilities and improvements will establish the Civic Center location and set the tone in terms of quality of design and construction for future public and private development.

The primary programmatic components of the Civic Center are:

- Main Library (80-100k sf)
- Community Center (23-35k sf)
- Government Offices (city and other; as part of the Community Center)
- Children's Discovery Center (22-24k sf)
- Veterans Hall (with flexible space)
- Attractive, Usable Outdoor Areas
- Commercial Complex (12-26K sf) - Reservation of easternmost 5 acres for the development of:
 - Full Service Hotel
 - Conference Center
 - Full Service Dining Restaurant
 - sufficient adjacent land area for large tents to house occasional larger events and exhibits
- Other commercial (pizza parlor/sports bar; 20k sf)
- Sports Facilities
- Performance Arts Center
- Associated Parking

How to Use These Design Guidelines

As a firm responding to the RFP for the Civic Center design you are being asked to use these design guidelines as the basis for the design decisions in your proposal. You will see that the design guidelines are performance based and not prescriptive except where certain preferred locations for program elements occur acknowledging the validity of design decisions made by the City Council in the Hadid site design.

The goal of establishing the Design Guidelines is to encourage both the designers and developers to appreciate and enhance the character of the physical environment of the City by preserving its most valuable design elements, both in terms of aesthetics and function, and by using those attributes in the design of new buildings and public spaces.

The purpose of creating Civic Center Design Guidelines is to create a distinct focal point and central gathering place in the City that provides an authentic identity for the community. The Elk Grove Town Center Design Guidelines of the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan call for a well designed, pedestrian friendly and community-oriented Civic Center. These Civic Center Design Guidelines support (supplement) the Town Center Design Guidelines and are intended to help new projects contribute to the community and complement adjacent development.

The Civic Center Design Guidelines described in this document were created to fulfill the following purposes:

Design Guidelines

- Outline a comprehensive design framework that will guide public and private development of the Elk Grove Civic Center project site.
- Guide the character of development to ensure high-quality improvements reflecting the aspirations, goals and concerns of the community.
- Establish the appropriate location of certain building functions, configurations, and entries.
- Determine the size and location of vehicular and pedestrian circulation improvements.
- Determine the appropriate size and character of proposed open spaces.
- Determine the appropriate size, character and features of proposed buildings and site improvements.
- Provide the basis for evaluating proposals for Civic Center buildings and site improvements.

You are asked to comply with the all pertinent provisions in the Elk Grove Town Center Design Guidelines, pertinent development regulations in Division IV - Site Planning and General Development Regulations of the Elk Grove Zoning Code. Those provisions, coupled with the Civic Center program and these design guidelines, will assure a minimal compliance for the preparation of a design proposal for the Elk Grove Civic Center.

Variance

A developer may apply for and receive a variance from a mandatory design standard if the Zoning Administrator or other deciding body finds that the applicable standard cannot be achieved due to special circumstances related to the site, and that the proposed design substantially complies with the intent and purpose of the Civic Center Design Guidelines.

Civic Center Design Guidelines

The Civic Center Design Guidelines have been created with an eye toward encouraging quality design, the use of best practices for both site and building design and development and an approach that will create a compatible, sustainable center for all citizens and visitors. As stated, the Civic Center Design Guidelines have been developed with the intention of suggesting design direction without being prescriptive.

The City of Elk Grove is intent on encouraging a creative approach to the Civic Center while protecting the interests of the community in having a Center that will reflect the values and aspirations of the community. Implicit in this charge is a desire for a practical and reasonable approach to the design of the Civic Center, a creative and imaginative solution to the program requirements and a design process that will allow for a phased approach for the development of all the Civic Center components.

Section 1. General Design Principles

The following Design Principles guide key design components for the Elk Grove Civic Center and reflect the Elk Grove City Council direction regarding design framework to date.

- a. The Civic Center Project Site will be developed in a coordinated manner, complementing adjacent structures through placement, size and mass.
- b. Achieve unity through variety – employ a variety of building types, sizes and shapes while paying attention to a sense of spatial and street-front unity.

Design Guidelines

- c. Paving, street trees, pedestrian lights, benches, signage, etc., along streets will be consistent to help create an identifiable character for the Elk Grove Town Center and the City's Civic Center.
- d. Building grouping to be configured mainly on northern portion of site with strong connections to sports complex and open space on the southern portion. Grade-separated connections may be considered.
- e. Development should consider the needs of pedestrians by providing well-defined pedestrian walkways that link to public sidewalks and walkways with enhanced improvements. Pedestrian amenities such as seating, street trees, landscaping, seasonal flowers, banners, and lighting are encouraged to create interest.
- f. Primary building pedestrian entrances and retail storefront windows will face onto the primary street, not the parking lot.
- g. Whenever possible, utilities should be located underground.
- h. Surface Parking areas should be partially screened from view of adjacent streets.
- i. Shared parking should be encouraged with either parking located on the side or rear of structures.

Section 2. Site Design

2.1 Overall Use of the Site
Using the Hadid plan as a point of departure for determining the location and distribution of particular program elements, the City Council has determined general locations for these elements with a concentration of buildings at in the northern portion of the site as shown in the image below. There were some very specific feedback on the details of the Hadid plan that the council would like you to carefully consider in your approach:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Distribution of program elements on the north and south parcels.b. Limited structures on the south parcel.c. Open views through the site.d. Test alternatives to massing of buildings along Elk Grove Blvd.e. Introduce large canopied areas to provide shade and comfort in the summer.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• While final site planning will be up to the respective proposals, the distribution and location of some of the program elements has been carefully considered by the City. Still, this is only a suggested approach to the location of these program elements. If the proposer has a better solution and can justify that solution fulfilling the requirements of the program and these guidelines, that solution will be considered. (See Section 3.5(d) on page 13)

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2.2 Street Presence

How buildings meet and interact with the street is a prime urban design consideration. The scale, articulation, transparency and ease of understanding the location of entries to buildings is critical in creating a street front that is approachable. Blank walls and utility buildings and spaces at the street level create "fortress" like, impenetrable buildings. These need to be avoided as much as practicable on the active street frontages of the Civic Center. Design guidelines regarding street presence are listed below.

- a. Buildings should meet the street creating lively, transparent (where appropriate), and articulated street frontages.
- b. Blank wall surfaces at street frontages are to be kept to a minimum.
- c. Pedestrian scaled building facades.
- d. Entries and doorways are clearly marked and defined either with signs or building elements.
- e. Weather protection (sun and rain) is to be provided along sidewalks next to buildings - this can be accomplished with the use of canopies, awnings or colonnades.
- f. Public spaces are to be well marked, defined and easily accessible.
- g. Appropriate landscaping to be used throughout the Civic Center.
- h. Site elements are to be arranged to best address climatic impacts - e.g. providing shade and shelter from harsh summer sun; taking advantage of solar access to warm spaces in winter.
- i. Landscape elements are to be blended with adjacent landscape treatments where practicable.
- j. Streetscapes are to be blended with and/or conform to existing streetscape standards.



**Weather protection/
shade elements**



Clearly marked entrances



Pedestrian scaled facades

2.3 Site Circulation/Parking Areas/Sidewalks/Transit

Moving around and through the Civic Center site will require a clear and defined set of circulation networks. These will be designed to accommodate vehicles and pedestrians. Vehicular traffic will be for patrons as well as for service and events. Pedestrians and non motorized vehicles should be able to move freely throughout the development. Visual screening of surface parking is important but visual isolation should be avoided for public safety purposes.

- a. Site circulation for vehicles and pedestrians should be designed to eliminate auto/pedestrian conflicts. Where practicable, pedestrian precincts should be developed, well defined, clearly signed and easily accessible.
- b. Curb cuts for parking areas and driveways should be minimized through shared entrances, exits and/or driveways, whenever possible.
- c. Reduction of impervious surfaces for surface parking lots will be encouraged through vegetated islands and Low Impact Development guidelines.
- d. The perimeter of all surface parking lots should be screened with trees, shrubs, and/or berms, thus reducing negative visual impacts.
- e. Site amenities such as sidewalks, street trees, landscaping and street furniture will be required.
- f. Public streetscaping is addressed in the Elk Grove Town Center plan. New construction should follow the recommendations of that plan for public rights-of-way.
- g. Paving, street trees, pedestrian lights, benches, signage, etc., along streets will be consistent to help create an identifiable character for the Civic Center.
- h. Where applicable, planting strips with the addition of trees to separate the sidewalk from the street are encouraged.
- i. Integrate transit on the west side of the civic center (LRT or BRT). To be located on Big horn Boulevard.



Integrate Transit



Create Pedestrian Precincts



Sustainable practices for site features

Design Guidelines

2.4 Signs/Wayfinding

Wayfinding encompasses all of the ways in which people and animals orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place. Providing a comprehensive sign program can facilitate way finding along with a clearly defined hierarchy of spaces on a site. Buildings themselves need to be "readable" with clearly articulated entrances and paths of circulation.

Provide a comprehensive sign program that is consistent for the Civic Center. This sign program should be part of a well-designed "way-finding" system for all areas of the Civic Center development.

- a. Clearly identify building and venue entrances.
- b. Create clearly site lines across the site for ease of orientation.
- c. Create landmarks and nodes with distinguishing features - "I'll meet you under the clock tower..."
- d. Utilize color and symbol coding across the site - "We parked on the Almond Tree level..."
- e. Provide site maps at kiosks at strategic locations.



Well-designed Sign Program



Clear directional signs



Landmarks and features



Way-finding Kiosks

2.5 Usable Outdoor Spaces/Landscaping

Outdoor spaces in the Civic Center development should provide a variety of venues to be used by a wide range of patrons. From a large central gathering space used for casual and formal events, to smaller intimate, quiet spaces used for privacy and solitude. Landscaping should reflect the lush, native flora of the central valley but should be designed with water conservation in mind. Landscaping should be used strategically to screen utility uses and buildings from public view as well as to enhance the design of public spaces. Design guidelines regarding usable outdoor spaces and landscaping are listed below.

- a. A major outdoor plaza/gathering place is to be sited amidst the major building composition on the northern parcel of the Civic Center site. This plaza is to be a significant feature of the Civic Center development allowing for casual and formal/planned gatherings and events.
- b. The Civic Center development should consider the needs of pedestrians by providing well-defined pedestrian walkways that link to public sidewalks, plazas and open spaces.
- c. Pedestrian amenities such as seating, street trees, landscaping, seasonal flowers, banners, and lighting are encouraged to create interest.
- d. ADA compliant curb ramps are required for all sidewalk construction to City Standards.
- e. Where feasible, any existing bicycle routes through the site should be preserved and enhanced.
- f. Usable, as well as decorative water features integrated into major public spaces.
- g. The use of native trees and other native plantings with special qualities (e.g. spring flowers or remarkable fall color) is strongly encouraged to unify the Civic Center and create unique character. Along with colorful seasonal plantings, Xeriscaping for large planting areas is encouraged utilizing drought resistant, native plant materials.
- h. A variety of native landscape materials, trees, evergreens, shrubs, groundcovers, and seasonal flowers should be provided for color and visual interest. Creative use of plant materials such as climbing vines or trellises is also encouraged, as are individual planting beds, trees and hanging baskets.
- i. Landscaping improvements should include amenities such as street furniture, civic art, fences, stone walls, fountains and courtyards.
- j. Street furniture (benches, kiosks, trash receptacles, etc.) should be consistent and/or complimentary throughout the Civic Center providing a cohesive design motive for all outdoor spaces.
- k. Whenever possible, utilities should be located underground.



Major outdoor open space



Usable water features



Spaces for large gatherings

Design Guidelines

Section 3. Architecture

3.1 Building Design

Buildings, in any context, tell a story about a city's history and development. The architectural treatment of building structures, including materials and style, should be compatible with a city's historical architectural character and the contemporary context as well. Like most California cities, Elk Grove has a reasonable recent history and the styles that were built over a period of 150 years have varied with the eras. The underlying guideline for new development and redevelopment is to consider one's neighbors and nearby structures and reinforce the existing historic character through sensitive, compatible design.

The intention of the Elk Grove Civic Center is to have a unique, yet compatible, Center that reflects the heritage of the City and the optimistic, progressive view into its future growth and development. An attempt here has been made to be performance based and not prescriptive, and while that is possible with most architectural considerations, there are certain preferences put forth in this guideline that might be considered prescriptive, such as acceptable and unacceptable materials. Be that as it may, this guideline addresses architectural treatment, materials, color and lighting in such a way that the major design decisions are left to the proposer. Design guidelines regarding architectural treatment are listed below.

- a. Architectural treatment of building structures, including materials and style, should be compatible with the Elk Grove Town Center's architectural character and context but should also project the City's optimism for growth and progress into the 21st century.
- b. Create a unified appearance, a sense of place and community identity in the Civic Center.
- c. Promote a coordinated approach to the architectural treatment of the Civic Center buildings aiming for high-quality site and building design.
- d. In order to give the Civic Center a strong sense of place and unique character different from its general context, certain buildings should be designed and developed as "landmark" buildings identifiable as particularly special structures/places.
- e. Unacceptable styles or themes include:
 - Corporate or office building style or imagery;
 - Overtly historical;
 - Residential scale; and
 - Commercial or retail imagery.
- f. Roofs shall be articulated from the building mass. Parapet roofs should be avoided on landmark buildings.
- g. Program the Civic Center buildings for phased development, over time, and the likelihood of public/private partnerships.
- h. A building's mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems should be concealed completely from view from the street or sidewalk. If such equipment cannot be concealed, efforts should be taken to minimize their visual impact on building façades. All rooftop mounted mechanical and communications equipment must be concealed or screened behind finished architectural elements.

3.1 Building Design



Avoid overtly historical motifs



"Landmark" buildings in the composition



Comprehensive approach to the Civic Center development



Unified Composition



A "timeless" quality



A look to a bright future

3.2 Building Scale, Massing and Articulation

Scale is a relative comparison of elements to some standard or point of reference. There is mechanical scale which is something of relative proportion compared with a given standard; visual scale - the size or proportion a building element has relative to other elements of a known size; and human scale, where the proportion is relative to the dimension of the human body. Massing has to do with the composition of two-dimensional shapes or three dimensional volumes. Articulation is a method of joining united parts of a building so the parts are clear, distinct and precise in relation to one another.

- a. Utilize an approach to massing that reduces the height of buildings along Elk Grove Blvd. and on the site borders, and concentrates building density to the center of the northern site.
- b. Architectural scaling elements should be used to break down the appearance of large building facades into architectural patterns and component building forms
- c. Variation in building scaling may include changes in wall plane or height and may relate to primary building entries, important corners or other significant architectural features.
- d. Assure appropriate scale for all buildings facing and bordering public spaces; buildings fronting on streets should have a pedestrian scale and not overwhelm the sidewalk. Maintain a maximum height at street fronts to three stories where practicable.
- e. On the street frontages, stepping building elevations back after three stories is recommended.
- f. Provide appropriate scale and articulation to all building elevations facing public streets and public spaces. Articulated building "bases" should have a pedestrian scale. Entry points should be clearly defined and easily understood.

Design Guidelines

3.2 Building Scale, Massing and Articulation



Pedestrian scaled buildings



Articulated facades



Stepped-back upper floors

3.3 Colors and Materials

The architectural materials and colors used in the Civic Center should respect the architectural and climatic context of the Elk Grove Town Center. Materials used in the construction of the Civic Center need to respond to the climate of the Central Valley. They need to be durable, sustainable and easily maintained. Building systems and assemblies should meet a sustainability criteria and be selected on the basis of the most usable life cycle value. Color selection should address the prominent nature of the Civic Center while creating a sophisticated response to the building type and use. Design guidelines regarding color and materials are listed below.

- Color Strategy
 - o Bright and sunny looking center;
 - o Light colors predominate;
 - o Strategic use of other complementary colors on accent features; and
 - o Neutral shades on roofs and special wall surfaces.
- Acceptable Materials - (at a minimum)
 - o Stone, brick or concrete masonry;
 - o Cast-in-place or precast concrete;
 - o Metal panel systems;
 - o Stucco or EFIS above first floor (pedestrian level) only;
 - o Metal, concrete, or clay tile (flat profile) roofing for landmark buildings; and
 - o Parapet bordered, ballasted membranes for flat roofs.
- Unacceptable Materials
 - o Wood or asphalt shingles or other residential scale roofing materials;
 - o Mirrored glass;
 - o Bare, unfinished metals;
 - o Wood siding; and
 - o Chain link fence.



Colorful buildings



Durable materials like brick and concrete



Avoid Residential-scaled materials

3.4 Lighting

Aesthetically pleasing lighting will not only increase the overall appearance of the Civic Center, it will also enhance safety for both pedestrians and motorists. Street lighting must be provided on all streets surrounding the Civic Center district, which will create a distinctive character and provide a valuable aesthetic function. Lighting within the Civic Center complex should be consistently designed with eye toward the provision of visually pleasing fixtures, dramatic and aesthetic rendering of buildings at night, and pedestrian safety after dark. Design guidelines regarding lighting are listed below.

- a. Avoid lights which glare onto streets, public ways, or onto adjacent properties.
- b. All efforts to reduce glare from street and parking area lights should be taken.
- c. Diffusers and refractors should be installed to reduce unacceptable glare, particularly adjacent to residential areas.
- d. Accent lights on architectural and landscape features are encouraged to add interest and focal points.
- e. Lighting in all public spaces and in parking lots will be designed to prevent glare or spill-over to adjacent properties.
- f. Pedestrian-scale lighting along the street and in public places is encouraged.
- g. Pedestrian-scale lighting should be of a character compatible with the architecture and open space design of the Civic Center.
- h. Fixtures should exhibit an aesthetic as well as functional purpose.



Parking lot lighting



Pedestrian- scaled lighting



Accent lighting of buildings



Well-designed and functional

Design Guidelines

3.5 Building Function and Sustainability

This guideline has to do with the ultimate use of the building. How the building is constructed, how the building operates and functions. It is the intent of the City of Elk Grove to build a Civic Center that will utilize the most up-to-date systems, assemblies, and materials. One that will perform at a high level of efficiency and sustainability. One that will be memorable and create a unique sense of place in the community.

- a. Create a Civic Center that will be memorable and identifiable as a distinctive "place" in the Elk Grove Community.
- b. Design a center that will address the impact of climate with passive and active systems.
- c. Create a Civic Center that will be welcoming and accessible, open to the community and expressive of this openness in its design and function.
- d. The design of the Civic Center will acknowledge and address the functional relationships outlined in the site plan diagram to the right.
- e. All buildings should be constructed of durable materials.
- f. Recognize and address the three tenets of sustainability - Economy, Equity and Environment in the design of the Civic Center.
- g. The use of sustainable materials, equipment, assemblies, processes and finishes are recommended to a level meeting a LEED silver or similar industry acceptable standard.



Memorable, Identifiable, Unique



Active and Passive Systems



Open, Welcoming, Accessible