elk grove design guidelines

site planning for non-residential development
V. NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

This section of the Design Guidelines applies to all non-residential development including retail and service commercial, office, industrial and quasi-public development unless otherwise specified. Non-residential guidelines also apply to mixed-use development including any combination of the aforementioned uses and residential use consistent with the allowed use of the underlying zoning district. Guideline applicability is based on the type of use/development proposed and not on the zoning district. As identified in the introduction, guidelines in this section include a mix of menu, target, required and encouraged provisions as appropriate and desired.

A. Site Planning for Non-Residential Development

The site planning section is separated into two parts: 1) design concepts, and 2) guidelines. Design concepts for site planning identify desirable characteristics of non-residential site development. Design guidelines reiterate specific objectives and establish provisions and options to ensure implementation of desirable design concepts. Guidelines herein are intended to supplement the minimum development standards in the Zoning Code. Where useful, development standards from the zoning code have been restated in the guidelines.

1. Design Concepts

Through adoption of these guidelines, the City establishes the requirement for quality design of non-residential development. Desired characteristics for non-residential projects are listed below.

a. Ensure that new development contributes to the character of a community by providing opportunities for integration of the project with the adjacent properties, neighborhood and City. The design of new development should pay particular attention to design compatibility between non-residential and adjacent residential use/property and the predominant characteristics of non-residential corridors.

b. Encourage projects to have a unified design theme and discourage the use of corporate architecture that is not compatible with the established design theme.

c. Design projects to be pedestrian-friendly. As appropriate, incorporate pedestrian and outdoor gathering places into the project design with consideration given to the climate and planned use of space.

d. Ensure that new development establishes a streetscape appearance that defines the pedestrian and
vehicle corridor and presents an appealing and continuous theme along a sidewalk or street.

e) Design parking lots with smaller parking fields and parking dispersed throughout the development. This will avoid the visual and functional detriment associated with a single sea of parking along a non-residential street frontage.

f) Provide design flexibility for mixed-use development that ensures compatibility of use types and promotes beneficial relationships among uses.

2. Design Guidelines for All Non-Residential Development

Site Planning

For the purposes of these guidelines, site planning is the analysis and resulting design of land that takes into consideration site conditions, surrounding uses, and development opportunities to determine the physical, functional, and visual plan for the development of said property. Evaluation of site conditions includes, but is not limited to, soils, topography, watershed, vegetation, climate, and access. Site design must adhere to the development standards set forth in the Zoning Code in regard to allowed uses, setbacks, landscaping, parking, and lighting. The following guidelines are supplemental to the Zoning Code and are intended to facilitate good design practices for non-residential development. The following guidelines apply to all types of non-residential development. Additional site design guidelines for specific types of non-residential development are listed in Section 3.

1) Building placement and configuration on all non-residential sites shall take into consideration the physical use, functionality of users (both vehicle and pedestrian), and visual impact and experience for users and passerbys. The City encourages all new non-residential development to be pedestrian friendly – designed with the pedestrian in mind. Pedestrian access and circulation is more important for a retail or service commercial development than an industrial development that will have fewer users. Design attributes of pedestrian friendly non-residential development are listed below.

   a) Building(s) located along and oriented towards the street frontage.

   b) Clearly delineated pedestrian access within the development and from adjacent residential uses with the use of special pavers/scored surfaces, raised pedestrian areas, or other similar treatments.

   c) Parking lot design with smaller parking fields and parking dispersed throughout the development. This will avoid the visual and functional detriment associated with a single sea of parking along a non-residential street frontage.
d) Incorporation of public plazas and outdoor spaces.

e) Landscaping throughout the development to enhance project aesthetics, provide relief from the elements, and soften the hardscape of the project.

2) For retail and service commercial, office, community facilities, and mixed-use development with multiple structures or tenants, the City encourages incorporation of the “village” or “campus” design concept. This type of creative design solution integrates clusters of buildings with a combination of walking, landscape, and public space to achieve a desirable pedestrian experience. Site circulation for such developments should consider the functional relationship between buildings, as well as the access and movements of both vehicles and pedestrians, with the goal of providing a safe, convenient, and desirable experience for the user. The City recognizes that this type of development may not be feasible on small or narrow properties.
3) The design of new development should integrate with the surrounding neighborhood and enhance the look of the existing neighborhood. However, not all established development patterns present opportunities for a desirable interface. Applicants should be prepared to address such situations with respect to the current design proposal and how the departure from the existing pattern benefits the community.

4) The City encourages project design that incorporates existing significant natural features of the site. Significant natural features include, but are not limited to, protected trees/tree clusters, topography and creeks (see Photos V-1 and V-2). Projects located along natural creek corridors or wetland areas have a unique opportunity to enhance the natural environment and aesthetic as a unique design attribute to the project (e.g., buffers, vegetated wetland drainage corridor, active or passive recreational improvement, and/or interpretive area for a riparian or habitat area).

5) As previously mentioned, the City encourages pedestrian friendly development, particularly for integrated developments with multiple tenants and/or buildings. The design objective is to provide convenient and desirable pedestrian access between the street, parking lot, and uses within the integrated development. The incorporation of public gathering places is also desirable for most integrated non-residential developments. The number, size, location and particular pedestrian amenities will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration the proposed use and development of the site, as well
as the relationship to surrounding neighborhood and street network. Where incorporated, the following objectives apply to the design of pedestrian gathering places (see Photos V-3 through V-5):

a) Design of public plazas should emphasize the active nature of these spaces and incorporate some combination of accent items such as: site furniture (tables, umbrellas, benches, trash receptacles), shade structures, interesting colors and materials, or other focal elements.

b) Design and layout of plaza areas shall consider the local climate and seasonal conditions and provide protections from the sun, wind, and rain.

c) Site furniture should be selected not only for its functional and aesthetic qualities but also for the quality of materials and finishes that provide long term durability and resistance to vandalism and climate/sun damage.

Photo V-3: Outdoor seating area in Laguna Gateway with site furniture including tables, umbrellas, and decorative pots.

Photo V-4: Pedestrian connection between multi-tenant buildings along Laguna Boulevard to a commercial center in Elk Grove.

Photo V-5: Pedestrian plaza with fountain and employee/visitor seating area in an office development.
6) Where non-residential development abuts residential uses/land, site planning should carefully address the potential undesirable impacts associated with non-residential development (traffic, noise, light and glare) by utilizing appropriate buffering and siting techniques listed below (see Photos V-6 and V-7).

   a) Solid wall. The Zoning Code requires that a minimum six-foot-tall solid masonry wall be installed between non-residential and residential uses. The design of all proposed walls and fencing along property lines, delineating uses, storage, or outdoor seating will be reviewed as part of the non-residential Design Review application. The location, height, materials and finishes should be appropriate for the purpose of the barrier and should complement the building design. When required, the design of solid walls abutting residential development or property shall include a trim cap. Solid walls shall be designed to be resistant to graffiti (e.g., material, paint finish/seal, landscape) and be able to withstand local climate conditions.

   b) Landscape. Landscaping along the adjoining property lines can be an effective buffering tool by utilizing berms, and the planting of fast-growing evergreen trees, plants, and shrubs.

   c) Strategic site planning can help reduce potential nuisances to adjoining residential property by locating trash enclosures, loading areas, and restaurant vents away from residential uses and by proper screening of utilities and equipment.
7) Generally, fencing between non-residential uses and open space is discouraged. When necessary, such fencing shall be open view (e.g., wrought iron, metal tube). However, on a case-by-case basis, the designated Approving Authority for Design Review may determine that solid fencing is appropriate (see Photo V-8).

![Photo V-8: Openview fencing behind a commercial center in Elk Grove.](image)

8) The City encourages innovative designs that mitigate the potential adverse environmental effects of stormwater runoff through minimization of impervious surfaces, use of design measures to prevent pollutants from contacting runoff, and integration of stormwater quality treatment filters, including infiltration, where feasible, into site landscaping. Grassy swales, pervious pavement, diversion to sanitary sewer, and water quality basins are examples of how to mitigate or reduce adverse environmental effects.
9) Non-residential development projects should be designed to provide connections between neighborhoods, adjacent compatible uses and area-wide trail systems. When adjacent residential and/or non-residential uses can mutually benefit from connection rather than separation, connective elements shall be incorporated into the project design. Benefits, location, and specific improvements will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Examples of connective elements include: (see Photo V-9)

   a) Pedestrian walkways;
   b) Pedestrian gates;
   c) Common landscape areas; and
   d) Other design features that allow/encourage two-way access between uses.

10) On-site circulation systems for non-residential development shall be designed to avoid conflicts between vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic.
11) Access drives for all non-residential developments with more than 25 parking spaces shall have a minimum driveway throat depth of 25 feet (colored and textured pavement), measured from public right-of-way along adjacent roadway. The City may increase this minimum throat depth on a case-by-case basis considering use and scale, as well as the vehicle trip generation and distribution of the proposed project.

12) Pursuant to requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all non-residential developments shall be designed with a minimum of one designated pedestrian path from each abutting street to the primary entrance(s) of the development. The City encourages the design of large non-residential projects with multiple points of pedestrian access. Such access shall be distinct from the vehicle access and visibly delineated. Appropriate locations for pedestrian access points include signalized intersections, other designated pedestrian crossings (e.g., crosswalk, pedestrian bridge), and transit stops. Internal pedestrian walkways shall be distinguished from driving surfaces through the use of raised sidewalks, special pavers, bricks, and/or scored/stamped concrete/asphalt and shall comply with ADA requirements.

13) Generally, the use of special paving is encouraged to enhance project design. However, special paving should be used as an accent, rather than as fill-in material, where it serves some purpose (see Photo V-10). Preferred locations for special paving include:

a) Traffic calming at project driveways and crossings;

b) Pedestrian crossings/sidewalks;

c) Pedestrian plazas;

d) Pedestrian walkways to distinguish between paths of travel and designated sales and/or seating areas;

e) Primary building entrances;

f) Traffic circles; and

g) Promenades.

Photo V-10: Special pavement used to highlight pedestrian walkways and for traffic calming within a commercial center in Elk Grove.
14) All non-residential developments with multiple buildings or tenants shall be designed with one or more pedestrian features. Potential pedestrian features are listed below. Proposed improvements will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as part of Design Review (see Photos V-11 through V-13).

   a) Pedestrian walkways along storefronts connecting all entrances. Such walkways shall be primarily covered with building overhangs, trellises, awnings, or a combination thereof;

   b) Pedestrian courtyard(s) and/or plaza(s); or

   c) Other pedestrian design features that meet the intent of this guideline.

   Photo V-11: Covered pedestrian walkway along storefronts in Elk Grove.

   Photo V-12: This development utilizes a trellis over the sidewalk and landscape plantings connecting the freestanding pad buildings abutting the street with primary building on this site.

   Photo V-13: Pedestrian courtyard with outdoor seating area including umbrellas, benches, tables, statues, and a water feature located centrally within a commercial center.
15) In order to minimize conflicting vehicle turning movement along major roadways, the City encourages shared access drives within and between integrated non-residential development. This reduces the number of driveway curb cuts. The City also encourages reciprocal access between non-residential developments to provide for convenience, safety, and efficient circulation. If incorporated, a reciprocal access agreement shall be recorded with the land by the owners of abutting properties to ensure that there will be continued availability of the shared access.

16) Bicycle racks shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Zoning Code. Bicycle racks shall be located in a highly visible location, near the primary entrance(s) to the development, and shall not obstruct the designated pedestrian walkways.

Parking Lots
In order to ensure the success of non-residential development, the City recognizes the need for sufficient vehicle parking. However, the City has to balance those needs with the desire to minimize the negative aesthetic associated with a vast sea of parking between non-residential buildings and the street. The Zoning Code establishes the minimum number of vehicle parking spaces required by use type, along with parking lot and space development standards. Guidelines herein restate applicable parking lot development standards from the City’s Zoning Code and supplement those standards to reflect the desires of the City.

17) The City discourages development where the surface parking area dominates the frontage of the development and visual character of the site. Design attributes that minimize the appearance of parking lots are listed below. Also see parking lot landscape provisions herein.

a) Large surface parking areas and other expansive areas of paved surfaces should be designed with a series of smaller parking fields. Smaller parking fields can be incorporated by physically separating parking areas with buildings or plazas, and may also be delineated with an on site circulation system that utilizes uninterrupted drive aisles, mostly contiguous landscape planters, pedestrian walkways, or any combination thereof (see Figure V-1 and Photos V-14 and V-15).
b. Siting parking areas away from the street frontage can minimize the visual impact and presence of vehicles. In non-residential developments with multiple buildings, one or more buildings or portions thereof should be located along the landscape corridor abutting the street. This type of design creates more visual interest and pedestrian appeal.

c) The City encourages the use of pervious and alternative pavements that promote infiltration in parking areas where feasible. For example, turf stone pavers and other pervious paving surfaces could be utilized for trails, sidewalks, parking spaces, or portions thereof (see Photo V-16 and the Appendix for additional resources).

d) All parking lot areas not used for vehicle storage, access or circulation should be landscaped.

18) Parking lots should have a direct pedestrian connection to the building entry points, especially if the parking is located along the side and/or behind the buildings. Designated pedestrian access shall be provided from all public parking fields to the primary building entrances (see Photo V-17).

19) Electric refueling stations in parking areas are encouraged.
Landscaping should be designed as an integral part of the overall site plan with the purpose of enhancing building design, public views and spaces, and providing buffers, transitions, and screening. Landscaping can also serve to filter and infiltrate stormwater runoff to reduce adverse environmental effects of urban runoff. Guidelines herein include landscape corridors, parking lot, and other site landscaping.

20) Landscape Corridors. Landscape corridors along non-residential developments should enhance surrounding improvements, create a pedestrian-friendly environment, and establish year-round and seasonal landscape to soften the appearance of streets. Except as otherwise vested for an adopted Specific Plan or Special Planning Area, landscape guidelines for thoroughfare, arterial, and collector streets throughout the City are listed below. Street designations, as listed herein, are consistent with the City’s adopted street improvement standards.

a) Minimum width of landscape corridors along thoroughfare and special thoroughfare streets shall be 36 feet. The City may allow reductions in the corridor width to ensure continuity with an existing approved corridor. The landscape corridor shall include a minimum six-foot-wide meandering sidewalk, separated from the back of the curb by no less than 10 feet.

b) Minimum width of landscape corridors along arterial and collector streets shall be 25 feet. The City may allow reductions in the corridor width to ensure continuity with an existing approved corridor. The landscape corridor shall include a minimum four- to six-foot-wide sidewalk (depending on the width of the street as listed in the City’s adopted improvement standards), separated from the back of curb by no less than six feet.

c) Street trees are the primary delineators within the landscape corridors, which aesthetically create rhythm and soften the environment along street corridors (see Photo V-18 next page). Street trees commonly serve to provide shade, to Scale the environment to the pedestrian, and to define an image. Trees also provide the benefit of water absorption and reduction in the temperature of runoff. A dominant scheme of street trees will unify all the elements within the landscape corridor. Street trees shall be planted in a single row at a maximum spacing of 50 feet, set back a minimum of five feet from the back of the curb and concrete sidewalks/driveways. However, when located within the six-foot planter area between the back of the curb and sidewalk or in a narrow planter strip between the sidewalk and soundwall, street trees shall be planted centrally in the planter. Trees with shallow and/or invasive roots planted in the six-foot-wide planter strip may require root barriers. Minimum street tree planting size is 15-gallon container. One-third of the street trees shall be at least 24-inch box trees or larger. Street trees shall be selected from the City’s adopted street tree list.
d) Accent trees are intended to supplement and enhance the street trees. Accent trees should have distinguishing characteristics to highlight significant areas within the landscape corridors (e.g., points of entry, pedestrian access points, intersections, transitional areas, bus shelters). Minimum planting size for accent trees is 15-gallon container.

e) Both street trees and accent trees should include a combination of evergreen and deciduous trees for screening, canopy, and seasonal change.

f) Shrubs and groundcover shall be designed to enhance the character of the non-residential development. Landscape considerations should include visual appearance, parking lot screening, clear sight visibility at driveways and pedestrian connections, absorb stormwater runoff, and implement the City’s current Water Conservation Ordinance.

21) Landscaping should blend with the dominant existing or planned streetscape and character of the area.

22) Parking Lot Landscape. Landscaping shall be provided adjacent to and within parking areas to screen vehicles from view and to minimize the expansive appearance of parking lot fields. Landscaping within and around parking areas should also be designed in a manner to reduce urban runoff. Planter areas and plantings shall comply with minimum requirements in the Zoning Code for parking lot planting, along with landscape guidelines listed below.

a) As required in the City’s Zoning Code, tree planting along the front and street side yards shall be spaced a maximum of 50 feet apart (on center). Tree planting along the interior property lines shall be spaced a maximum of 30 feet apart (on center).
b) At a minimum, the City’s Zoning Code requires landscape along the perimeter of non-residential parking lots to be designed with plants, berms, low walls, or any combination thereof, to create a partial visual screen for the parking lot from adjoining streets to a minimum height of three-feet. Within the required clear visibility area at the intersections of streets and driveways, the maximum height shall be reduced to two-and-a-half feet. The City also encourages the design of perimeter planter areas with intermittent swales to capture stormwater runoff. Where swales are incorporated, ensure that runoff flow to drainage areas is not obstructed (e.g., retaining walls). (See Photo V-19)

![Photo V-19: Perimeter planter area designed with a drainage swale to capture urban runoff from the parking area.]

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c) Pursuant to zoning requirements, a minimum percentage of the total parking area in each parking lot shall be landscaped. The required landscape area is based on the number of required parking spaces listed below. Perimeter landscape planters and in-ground planter areas along buildings may be included in this calculation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parking Spaces Required</th>
<th>% of Total Parking Area to be Landscaped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 – 24 spaces</td>
<td>5 % minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 49 spaces</td>
<td>7.5 % minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 + spaces</td>
<td>10 % minimum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
d) Pursuant to zoning requirements, tree planting in parking lots shall be designed so that within 15 years of initial installation, a percentage of the total parking area will be covered with tree canopies (see Photo V-20). Shade coverage requirements are listed in the table below, based on the number of required parking spaces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parking Spaces Required</th>
<th>% of Total Parking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 – 24 spaces</td>
<td>30 % minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 49 spaces</td>
<td>40 % minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 + spaces</td>
<td>50 % minimum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo V-20: Tree planting throughout this parking lot has been designed to meet minimum shade requirements.

e) Required parking lot landscape should be designed to provide visual relief from long expansive rows of parking aisles, particularly in larger parking lots. The City encourages the intermittent use of contiguous landscape planters along parking aisles and/or pedestrian walkways throughout the parking lot. Contiguous planters should be designed with periodic “cut throughs” at grade to allow pedestrian and shopping cart crossing (see Photo V-21 on next page).
“Design is the contrast of the core of limitations therefore there are no boundaries. It is simply an interpretation of creativity.”

Richard Feynman

Site planning for non-residential development

Photo V-21: Contiguous pedestrian walkway in a commercial center that incorporates both landscaping (shade trees and shrubs) and intermittent cut-throughs at parking lot grade for shopping carts.

f) Trees and landscaping installed in parking lots shall be protected from vehicle damage by a minimum six-inch tall concrete curb surrounding the planter area. Planter barriers to protect landscaping should also be designed with intermittent curb cuts to allow parking lot runoff to drain into landscape areas (see Photo V-22).

Photo V-22: Parking lot planter with intermittent curb cuts to allow parking lot runoff to drain into landscape area.
23) Landscaping should be provided along/against all building facades facing a parking lot or street to anchor it to the surrounding environment and to soften the appearance of the structure. In-ground landscaping should comprise the majority of the landscaping requirement. Raised planters are acceptable when designed to accentuate the architecture and or enhance pedestrian areas (see Photos V-23 and V-24).

Photo V-23: Landscaping along the side of a building to soften the appearance of the structure with both in-ground landscaping and raised planters.

Photo V-24: Landscaping along this street frontage includes in-ground tree plantings and permanent trellis structures along the wall to soften the appearance of the structure from the street.

24) Dense landscaping and/or architectural treatments should be provided to screen unattractive views and features such as storage areas, trash enclosures, utility cabinets and other similar elements. The intent is to visually screen the equipment from the street and not to preclude access to the equipment on all sides.

25) The site design for projects located at street corners should provide special landscape treatment at street intersections to anchor the corner, enhance the pedestrian environment, and establish continuity along landscape corridors for community identity. Improvements should complement driveway entry landscape and enhance the character/design of the development. (see Photo V-25 on next page).
26) Project Entry Landscape. The use of landscaping and accent paving can help define and beautify a project entrance as viewed from the street. The vehicular entrance to the project should be clearly defined and provide adequate sight distance for vehicles and pedestrians. Entries to multi-tenant projects shall be designed as special statements reflective of the character and Scale of the project in order to establish identity for tenants, visitors, and patrons. Landscape design at project entries shall compliment the special landscape treatment at street corners with common elements. Flowering accent plantings and specimen trees shall be used to reinforce the entry statement. Planting design should have focal points at project entries, plaza areas, and other areas of interest using distinct planting and/or landscape features.

27) All pedestrian routes adjacent to landscape planters should be designed to be visible and convenient in order to eliminate “short cuts” which damage landscape areas (see Photo V-26).
28) Landscape for Public Plazas and Building Fronts. Encourage, as appropriate, that building and site design include use of pots, vases, wall planters, and/or raised planters, as well as flowering vines both on walls and arbors. All planting materials shall be sized so that landscaping has an attractive appearance at the time of installation and an established appearance within approximately three years of planting.

Storage, Loading and Service Areas

29) Outdoor storage and loading/service areas shall be screened from public view through a combination of building design, location, landscaping, berming, and/or fencing. This provision does not apply to light industrial development.

30) Permanent outdoor sales and displays shall not be located within any required yard in the corresponding zoning district on which it is located. Outdoor sales and displays shall be located in a designated area immediately abutting the associated building(s). At a minimum, designated permanent and temporary sales areas or seating areas shall be delineated with special paving to distinguish such area from required paths of travel. Within this designated area, only those goods and materials associated with the existing on-site use may be stored, sold, or displayed. Design of screening/enclosure for permanent outdoor storage or outdoor dining shall be compatible with the design, colors, and materials of the associated building(s) and will be considered on a case-by-case basis (see Photos V-27 and V-28). Chain link is not generally considered an acceptable screening material for outdoor storage/sales areas. However, the designated Approving Authority may authorize vinyl clad chain link fencing (including hardware).

Photo V-27: This permanent outdoor sales and storage area abuts the indoor sales area and the enclosure is designed to match the primary building

Photo V-28: An outdoor seating area delineated by special paving.
31) Except as otherwise approved in conjunction with a Temporary or Conditional Use Permit, the use of mechanically produced sound, amplified sound or live music shall be prohibited for outdoor uses. Any such noise proposed with a permanent outdoor use shall require a noise analysis with appropriate mitigation measures to ensure compliance with the City’s Noise Ordinance.

Trash/Recycling

32) Trash enclosures and containers shall be sized to accommodate the volume of refuse but should also take advantage of opportunities to centralize enclosures where there are multiple buildings or users. The City discourages use of hydraulic compactors except where entirely enclosed within a building. If located outside, compactors shall be visually and acoustically screened to minimize hydraulic noise impacts to surrounding and nearby residents.

33) Trash facilities shall be enclosed pursuant to the requirements in the Zoning Code. Trash enclosure materials and colors shall be consistent with and complimentary to the building materials and finishes (see Photo V-29).

34) The City encourages placement of trash enclosures adjacent to landscape planters to provide the opportunity for landscape screening, particularly where visible from adjacent residential property.
35) Where required or desired, storage and/or recycling centers should be incorporated into the initial site planning for non-residential developments. Storage and recycling centers may not permanently reduce the number of required parking space for a development and shall not obstruct drive aisles or pedestrian walkways. These areas need to be taken into account during the initial site design so that circulation and screening may be properly addressed and incorporated.

Utility Placement

36) In addition to other utility equipment screening guidelines for integrated design screening and landscape screening, the City encourages the undergrounding of all utility equipment as feasible. The City will work with local utilities to reduce constraints for underground placement. Where it is not feasible to place large equipment cabinets underground, the City encourages placement of such cabinets in less prominent locations not readily visible from public rights-of-way.

Lighting of Parking Areas, Drives, and Pedestrian Walkways.

Exterior lighting includes streetlights and lighted walkways within a non-residential development project. This lighting is important for safety reasons and for the architectural enhancement of the development. See additional lighting provisions in the architecture section of the guidelines for non-residential development.

37) Exterior site lighting shall be designed so that light is not directed off the site and the light source is shielded downward from direct off-site viewing.

38) Exterior lighting shall be architecturally integrated with the building style, material and colors and be of a human Scale (refer again to Photos V-3 and V-4).
39) Light features shall be located and designed with cut-off lenses to avoid light spill and glare on adjacent properties. In order to minimize light trespass on residential structures directly abutting a non-residential site, illumination measured at the nearest residential structure or rear yard/side yard setback line shall not exceed the moon’s potential ambient illumination of one-tenth (0.1) foot-candle. This measurement is not taken at the property line, but at the nearest location of a residential structure (required rear yard or side yard setback line).

40) Except as otherwise exempt, all outdoor lighting for non-residential development shall be constructed with full shielding. Where the light source from an outdoor light fixture is visible beyond the property line, shielding shall be required to reduce glare so that the light source is not visible from within any existing or future residential dwelling unit.

41) Outdoor light fixtures used to illuminate architectural or landscape features should use a narrow cone of light for the purpose of confining the light to the object of interest and minimize light trespass and glare. Appropriate level of illumination will be determined during the required design review.

3. Additional Design Guidelines for Specific Types of Non-residential Development

Retail Commercial Centers

42) Commercial centers should be designed to have variety in location and placement and orientation of buildings relative to the street and one another. The intent of this guideline is to encourage creativity and more visual interest in site design and to prevent the proliferation of simple linear footprints and building elevations along the City’s roadways (see Photos V-30 and V-31).

Photo V-30: This smaller commercial center on a corner lot was designed in an L-shape and a single pad building. The pad building and building ends directly abut the adjoining streets with a pedestrian-friendly building design.

Photo V-31: This photo represents variation in sidewalk width and improvements that complement the offsets in the wall planes and front improvements to enhance this otherwise linear commercial development.
43) Where a commercial building abuts the landscape corridor along the adjoining street(s), the building should be designed so that the visual and functional rear of the building is not facing the street. Ideally, the building would have an entrance and/or windows facing the street. However, where the site design or planned use of the building does not lend itself to a functional storefront along the street, the building façade facing the street shall be designed with enhancements comparable to that of a primary facade. Design enhancements may include real and/or faux windows, awnings/pedestrian arcades, outdoor seating/public plaza, landscape features/plantings, or other design element that meets the intent of this guideline (see Photos V-32 and V-33).

Photo V-32: This commercial development in Elk Grove has a streetside façade containing windows and awnings to create visual interest from the street.

Photo V-33: The rear building facades facing the street include substantial offsets in the wall planes, variations in roof plans, and a combination of windows, landscape structures, and contrasting colors.
44) Multiple buildings in a single project shall create a positive functional relationship to one another. Where possible, multiple buildings shall be clustered to achieve a “village scale”. This creates opportunities for plazas and pedestrian areas while preventing long “barracks-like” rows of buildings. When clustering is impractical, a visual link shall be established between buildings with the use of an arcade system, trellis, colonnade, enhanced paving, building articulation and detailing, or similar features (see Figure V-1 on page 73 and Photo V-34).

Photo V-34: This retail center has clustered buildings to create a “village scale” with pedestrian interest between and among buildings through the use of pedestrian plazas, walkways, and delineated crossings.

45) Outdoor dining areas are encouraged where determined appropriate for the specific non-residential project. Where incorporated, outdoor dining areas should be used to bring activity to plazas/courtyards, and should be placed at the edges of open space, or located along building and street frontages. Outdoor dining areas should be oriented away from off-site uses that are sensitive to noise or nighttime activity.
46) Storefront areas should incorporate significant landscaping (including canopy trees). Frontage design and signage locations should be coordinated with the placement of plant materials to ensure plantings do not obstruct visibility of signage in designated locations.

47) Commercial uses, such as auto repair, service stations, car washes, and fast food drive-throughs should be oriented so the service bays and drive through aisles do not directly face the primary street frontage. Where such facilities do face an adjoining street, an immediate three-foot-tall screening shall be incorporated into the perimeter landscape planter. Screening may include berming or mounding of the earth, planting of shrubs or tall ground cover, low walls, or other decorative feature that achieves the visual screen. The City encourages innovative design of service stations located on the corner (e.g., locating enclosed building(s) along the street with pumping stations at the interior side and/or rear of the site).

48) Generally, the City encourages loading and service areas to be located away from the storefront and vehicle and pedestrian circulation areas. Design alternatives are necessary for projects with unique site orientation (e.g., courtyard developments with public entrances along the traditional front and rear of the building or tenant space) or unique circumstances related to the use of the building.

49) Where necessary or desired, shopping cart return areas located in parking lots should be adequately spaced, conveniently located and easy to find in order to encourage their use and avoid conflicts with pedestrian and vehicle circulation. Such areas shall be shown on the site plan submittal for Design Review (see Photo V-35 on next page).
All fine architectural values are human values else not valuable.

Frank Lloyd Wright

Photo V-35: This photo represents shopping cart return areas that are conveniently located throughout the parking lot.

50) Design and configuration of fencing and other proposed barriers between commercial developments will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as part of the Design Review.

**Big Box Retail**

Big box retail outlets are typically housed in large single-story structures more reminiscent of warehousing versus retail. Most big box businesses occupy more than 50,000 square feet of floor area as they derive their profits from large sales volumes, rather than price mark ups. The primary design issues related to big box retail is the need to successfully accommodate large parking areas and to provide architectural interest to an otherwise plain, unadorned “big box” structure. The following guidelines are intended to address these design issues and apply to both freestanding big box developments and big box retailers that are part of an integrated development.
51) The City recognizes the unique development constraints for big box retailers to accommodate the sales volume and vehicle parking demand of its users. The City encourages creative design solutions for big box retail development to minimize the visual mass of the large structure(s) and to allow convenient parking that is aesthetically pleasing. One option for consideration is to line the big box building with smaller tenant spaces along the perimeter and corners of the building to create a more human Scale and setting (see Figure V-2).
52) As previously identified in the general non-residential guidelines, the City discourages development where the surface parking area dominates the visual character of the site. In order to encourage big box retail developers to distribute parking in the front as well as the sides and/or rear of the building(s), the designated Approving Authority may grant deviations to other applicable guidelines where at least 10 percent of the parking is located at the side(s) and/or rear of the structure(s) (see Figure V-3).

53) Projects that share a common boundary with any single-family residential zoning district or use shall have a setback distance from the common boundary to match the height of the nearest building(s). Within the required setback area abutting the common boundary, a minimum 10-foot-wide landscape planter shall abut the property line to accommodate a landscape buffer. Additionally, as required by City’s zoning regulations, a minimum six-foot-tall masonry or similar solid wall shall be constructed along this common boundary (see Figure V-3).
54) Each project shall contribute to the enhancement of the community and public spaces by providing at least one pedestrian amenity such as a covered pedestrian arcade (walkway) along most of the primary building frontage, outdoor seating area, or pedestrian plaza with benches.

55) The base of the big box building shall include landscape planters and/or enhanced pedestrian pathways on all sides facing a parking lot or street. Landscape planters shall be a minimum 20 square foot area, spaced at a maximum distance of 50 linear feet along the base of the building.

Mixed Use

The City of Elk Grove General Plan identifies several land use designations for “mixed-use” development, including any combination of retail and service commercial, office, and/or residential uses. Specifically, mixed-use land use designations in the Draft General Plan are listed below.

- **Commercial.** Generally characterized by the retail sale of goods and services; may include ancillary office uses. No residential uses permitted.
- **Commercial/Multi-Family.** Generally characterized by the retail sale of goods and services; may include ancillary office uses. Also high-density residential development.
- **Office.** Generally characterized by office and professional land uses; may include ancillary retail sales. No residential uses permitted.
- **Office/Multi-Family.** Generally characterized by office and professional land uses; may include ancillary retail sales. Also includes high-density residential development.
- **Commercial/Office.** Generally characterized by office, professional, and retail uses in any mix. Residential uses are not permitted.
- **Commercial/Office/Multi-Family.** Generally characterized by office, professional, and retail uses in any mix. Also includes high-density residential development.

Currently, in the City of Elk Grove, mixed use involving retail and service commercial with office use is not uncommon. However, residential development in combination with retail and service commercial and/or office use does not currently exist in the City. The General Plan encourages the combination of any such uses. Thus, for the purpose of these guidelines, mixed-use projects are defined as developments which combine retail and service commercial, office, and/or residential uses or structures on a single lot, or as components of a single development. The uses may be combined either vertically within the same structure, or spread horizontally on the site in different areas and structures. The primary design issue related to mixed-use projects is the need to successfully balance the requirements of residential uses, such as the need for privacy and security, with the needs of commercial uses for access, visibility, parking, loading, and possibly extended hours of operation. The following guidelines are intended to address some of the unique issues associated with mixed-use developments.
56) Where mixed-use development includes residential use, the following guidelines apply:

a) Vertical integration of uses is preferred. Under those circumstances, development of the ground floor level of a building should encourage pedestrian activity. However, a horizontal separation of uses (e.g., commercial or office development along the front of a property and residential development to the rear) may be appropriate or desirable depending on the size of the site, access, and surrounding property.

b) Separate site access drives and parking facilities shall be provided for residential and non-residential use.

c) When residential and non-residential uses are provided in the same structure, separate entrances shall be provided for each use.

d) Site access drives should incorporate distinctive architectural elements and landscape features to differentiate access to commercial parking areas from residential areas.

57) Loading areas and refuse storage facilities should be located as far as possible from residential units and should be completely screened from view of adjacent residential portions of the project. The location and design of trash enclosures should account for potential nuisances from odors.

58) Open space intended exclusively for residential use should not be accessible from commercial areas. Open space and courtyards in commercial areas should be accessible to residential occupants, employees, and visitors.

59) Public spaces should be designed to encourage the attention and presence of people at all hours of the day and night.

Light Industrial/Business Parks

Light industrial and office developments come in many shapes and sizes, depending on the type and/or pairing of use(s). The difference in operational requirements and function begin to suggest what form the building and site plan will take and what qualities it will exhibit. For example, industrial spaces tend to be monolithic singular volumes with minimal window openings, limited material palette, and relatively simple compositions of unarticulated wall planes. This image contrasts sharply with that of higher-end professional office buildings which tend to have a more refined human Scale structurally and aesthetically. Office use exhibits a much higher ratio of window to wall area, variations in finish materials, and more complex spatial relationships. The City recognizes the variety of light industrial and office development types and intends to establish the design flexibility necessary to accommodate all such types of development.
60) Generally, guidelines for industrial development are intended to protect adjoining uses from excessive noise, odor, objectionable views and unrestricted vehicular circulation. Sound industrial site development practices include controlled site access, service areas located at the sides and rear of buildings, convenient public access and visitor parking, screening of storage, work areas, and mechanical equipment, storage and service area screen walls, and an emphasis on the main building entry and landscaping.

61) Light industrial and office developments should respond to the natural and built site characteristics of the site and surrounding area including, but not limited to topography, drainage patterns, existing vegetation, and desirable views. The intent is for new development to be designed and adapted to the specific site as opposed to altering the character and form of the site to accommodate development (see Photo V-36).

62) Placement of building(s) shall consider the existing context of the surrounding area. New development shall respect the privacy and solar access of adjacent uses through appropriate siting of structures. The orientation of buildings and outdoor spaces should consider the effect of sun angles/climatic conditions and existing desirable views. Specifically, Design Review for new office and industrial development greater than three stories or 50 feet in height shall include an evaluation of impacts on surrounding structures and property (see Photo V-37).
63) Integrated development of campus-like office/industrial projects are strongly encouraged and shall be designed with functional relationships between buildings using similar architectural styles and a system of usable indoor and outdoor public areas (see Figure V-4 and Photo V-38).

**Photo V-38:** This office development is designed with multiple buildings integrated with one other in a campus-like setting.
64) New office and industrial development should build upon the established development pattern of the surrounding area. While a diversity of individual design solutions is encouraged, an overall sense of visual continuity should be reinforced through similar relationships to the street and a general compatibility of Scale and materials.

65) Unless constrained otherwise, buildings should have a strong relationship to the street including a functional public entrance that is also a visual focus for the building. In place of street oriented public entrance, a strong pedestrian connection that establishes a sense of a formal public entry may be substituted (see Photo V-39).

66) Light industrial and office developments should feature an enhanced pedestrian area(s) scaled accordingly to the size and demands of the particular user or facility. Examples of enhanced pedestrian areas include plazas, patios, courtyards, linear promenades, walking/jogging paths, terraces, or usable landscaped areas. Whatever its configuration, enhanced pedestrian areas should add value to the site as a usable amenity located to provide the greatest benefit to the majority of users (see Photo V-40 and V-41 on next page).
67) While business and light industrial parks may primarily be served by vehicles, attention should be given to the pedestrian environment, including provision of sidewalks, planter areas with both low vegetation as well as trees to soften the parking areas, and buffering from vehicles and provide shade.

68) Industrial and office project sites shall be designed with landscaping on all sides of the building(s). Landscaping may include perimeter plantings, planter areas within the parking lot or public plazas, and landscaping along the building (in-ground landscape areas and/or potted planters). The City encourages in-ground landscaping against the building along frontages with pedestrian walkways to the primary building entrance(s). The intent of this guideline is to ensure that views of the development are softened and screened as appropriate, particularly where visible from the street or other public areas.

69) The City encourages applicants to install public art in accordance with Chapter VI, Voluntary Public Art Design Guidelines, which details incentives available for public art.