

APPENDIX F  
QUALITY HOUSING DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

## **Recommendations for Quality Housing Design**

In an effort to encourage the compatibility of new construction, rehabilitation, or renovation of existing housing units with surrounding structures and their setting the County has developed a set of design recommendations. These recommendations are intended to maintain or enhance harmony and balance in the community. The recommendations should be used to influence the design of new residential development in areas of the unincorporated County that lack specific design guidelines which were established as part of the community planning process.

### ***Quality Design Recommendations:***

**Design Recommendation 1:** To the maximum extent feasible, affordable units shall be architecturally compatible in bulk and scale with market rate units in the same development and blend in as effectively as possible to be in harmony with any surrounding residential development. Projects should integrate and disperse affordable units throughout the development.

**Design Recommendation 2:** Housing designs should increase compatibility with the surrounding area by identifying the best qualities, including materials and details, of the surrounding neighborhood and blending these characteristics within the project.

**Design Recommendation 3:** The design of new single-family and multi-family dwellings should recognize the setting and character that define the adjacent neighborhoods. Innovative and creative residential design concepts should be used to enhance the social and aesthetic qualities of the community.

**Design Recommendation 4:** To the maximum extent feasible, the bulk and scale of new structures shall blend in as effectively as possible to be compatible with adjoining properties. Appropriate transitions should be provided between established neighborhoods and newer ones, recognizing that in certain instances bulk and scale of development may be different but should be designed to be as compatible as possible. Design features should reduce visual prominence.

**Design Recommendation 5:** Front, side, and rear yard setbacks should be compatible with adjoining neighborhoods transitioning to other standards in portions of projects that may be denser.

**Design Recommendation 6:** Housing designs should take into account public view sheds when considering new developments.

**Design Recommendation 7:** Housing designs should take into account solar and daylight access and views when considering new developments.

**Design Recommendation 8:** Housing designs should take into account the rhythm of the streetscape between existing and new developments when considering new development.

**Design Recommendation 9:** Housing designs should consider preservation and incorporation of unique and/or historical features of the area in the design of projects when considering new development.

**Design Recommendation 10:** Projects are encouraged to incorporate universal design standards to accommodate persons with disabilities.

**Development Incentives for Special Needs & Affordable Housing Projects**

As noted in Policy 1.1 and Program 1.4 of the 2009-14 Housing Element, the County will continue to provide development incentives for housing projects which include affordable units or project designs and operation procedures that cater to special needs groups (such as the disabled and homeless). These incentives are delineated in Table F-1 below.

**Table F-1 Incentives for Housing Projects**

Project Type	Development Incentives				
	Density Increase	County Marketing of Affordable Units	Fast-track Permit Processing	Exempt from the Inclusionary Housing Program	Design Standard and Zoning Requirement Modifications
Complies with State Density Bonus Program	X	X	X	X	X
Includes Affordable Housing as required by the Inclusionary Housing Program	X				
Mixed Use Development				X	X
In-fill Development					X
Includes Housing Specifically Designed for Persons with Disabilities			X		X
100% Rental Housing Constructed at 10 Units per Gross Acre or More			X		X
Emergency shelters, transitional housing, and SROs designed to serve the homeless population			X	X	

**Applicable Development Incentives are implemented as follows:**

**Density Increase:** Both the State Density Bonus Program (SDBP) and the County's Inclusionary Housing Program (IHP) offer a density increase over the maximum allowed by the designated land use. The SDBP offers a minimum 20% increase for very low and low income housing and a minimum 5% increase for moderate income housing; the guaranteed increase can go up to 35% over base density for projects that provide a higher percent of affordable units as specified by the program. The IHP offers a 1:1 increase for moderate and/or workforce units built on-site to meet inclusionary requirements.

**County Marketing of Affordable Units:** Developers may request that the County market rental and for-sale affordable units built under the State Density Bonus Program. The County's Housing and Community Development Department (CHCD) prepares a Marketing and Lottery Plan designed to provide prospective buyers or renters with accurate and complete information. It includes newspaper ad copy and developer & prospective buyer information packets. These describe the affordability terms of the project and individual affordable units, income certification and lottery procedures, current income and price guidelines, and other information prospective buyers or renters need to determine their rights and responsibilities and to make informed decisions.

**"Fast-track" Permit Processing:** Housing projects that build affordable units on-site are given priority for case review even during times of increased case load. The County's Planning & Development Department (P&D) strives to process all applications in a timely manner; however, when case loads exceed available staff time, affordable and special needs housing projects continue to receive priority assignment. When new applications arrive, P&D assigns affordable and special needs housing projects a priority rating. This information is passed on to other departments with regulatory responsibilities for the project.

**Inclusionary Program Exemption:** Certain projects that are affordable by their design or meet other County goals are exempt or have reduced requirements for Inclusionary Housing Program. Refer to Appendix A of the 2009-14 Housing Element for further information regarding exemptions to the IHP.

**Design Standard Modifications:** These include a number of modifications to required setbacks, parking, and open space standards. Allowed modifications vary by program. They include:

- Reduce **common open space** requirements from 40% to a minimum of 25% of gross acreage for projects in the Design Residential (DR) Zone District.
- Reduce the number of **parking spaces** required for attached residential units and/or allow **tandem parking** (only for spaces that serve the same unit) to meet parking requirements for attached or detached residential units. The appropriate reduction will vary depending on the type of project and/or anticipated residents (e.g. housing specifically for people with disabilities or senior housing may require fewer parking spaces than other types of projects).
- Allow **"shared parking"** for mixed use and infill projects. Shared parking assumes that some residents will use vehicles to travel to their jobs during the day, leaving those spaces

available for customers or employees for businesses with daytime hours. Mixed use projects, by their nature, may have staggered hours of peak demand. Therefore more than one user—the resident and the customer or employee—may be permitted to share the space allowing parking facilities to be used more efficiently. In cases where adequate parking exists in close proximity to infill projects, shared parking may be allowed.

- Reduce **front setbacks** down to 10 feet from right-of-way.
- Reduce **side yard setbacks** down to zero. This could allow structures within a project to be shifted to the edge of the lots, resulting in greater usable private outdoor space for each unit.