Design Guidelines for Small Towns & Rural Communities

Inside Out Design

Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission
What is “Inside Out Design”?

- Context sensitive design for small towns and rural areas
What Happens

• Many rural areas experience rapid growth
• Losing the sense of place
• Need to respect the past, while acknowledging change is coming
The Key Issue

• How to balance sustainable growth and aesthetics in a rural environment?
Design for Rural Areas

- Typical design focuses on density, intensity, scale and form, etc.
  - Rural roadways – two lanes, soft shoulders, trails, etc.
  - Larger residential bldg setbacks
  - Less dense
• What is the difference between "urban design" standards and "rural design" standards?
Preparing Rural Design Standards

- What are rural design standards/guidelines?
  - Regulations that establish an aesthetic framework in the rural context
- Associated with zoning standards, overlay districts, redevelopment areas, or strategic plan study areas (Community Plans)
Major Considerations

- Uses
- Right-of-way treatment
- Building placement
- Landscape setting
- Architectural Character
- Signage
1. Right-of-Way Treatment

- Limit lanes, roadway widths, and shoulders
- Restrict turn lanes where appropriate
- Plant native vegetation and wildflower
1. Right-of-Way Treatment

- Highlight places of interest through roadway design
- Trails vs. sidewalks for pedestrians/horses
- Impervious surfaces
2. Building Placement

- Cluster nonresidential development
- Leverage common parking and infrastructure
2. Building Placement

- Create central public space “village square”
- Generate “critical mass” for economic viability
- Create market as a destination
3. Landscape

- Create rural ambience using landscape buffers
- Plan major parking to sides/rear of buildings
3. Landscape

- Cluster landscape planting for greater impact
- Integrate natural features such as rivers
- Integrate man-made features such as trails
4. Architectural Design

- Determine built space massing
- Formulate solid-void ratio
- Stipulate roof design
4. Architectural Design

- Consider lighting design to reduce “spill”
- Require quality architectural elements
- Focus on materials and finishes
5. Signage and Character

- Create a collective visual impression
- Leverage signs to generate theme
5. Signage and Character

- Restrict total copy area
- Stipulate size and number
- Determine allowable sign types and lighting
Putting Rural Design into Practice in Hillsborough County

Keystone-Odessa Community Plan, Rural Design Standards and Rural Activity Center
Keystone-Odessa Community Plan

Implementation

• Adopted Keystone-Odessa Rural Development Standards (LDC effective August 2002)
• Adopted Community Activity Center Overlay (LDC effective June 2004)
• Updated 2010-2012
Planning Process

• Reviewed community plan’s design requirements
• Defined Rural Activity Center area
• Addressed existing conditions
• Defined area character
• Prepared changes to Land Development Code
The Keystone-Odessa Community Plan

Rural Activity Center Strategy

- The overlay district will incorporate specific design guidelines that include:
  - staggered building orientations, with interruptions in roof lines and structures;
  - public courtyards or open space(s) with shade trees;
  - architectural features to emphasize the location of the center;
  - connected structures with covered walkways made of pavers, brick or boardwalks;
The Keystone-Odessa Community Plan

Rural Activity Center Strategy

- residential style pitched roof lines;
- external facades made of wood siding, brick or vinyl material;
- signage in scale and related to architectural character of the center (externally illuminated monument signs not pole signs)
- nighttime lighting that mimics gaslights or kerosene lights
The Keystone-Odessa Community Plan

Rural Activity Center Strategy

- drought tolerant tree and vegetation plantings for shade, screening and buffers along roadways
- preserved natural areas to act as buffers along perimeters
- irregular vehicular circulation and parking patterns to accommodate existing trees
Keystone-Odessa
Rural Activity Center

- Issues addressed
  - build-out potential
  - traffic circulation and parking
  - pedestrian circulation
  - infrastructure requirements
  - community character and special features
Keystone-Odessa Rural Activity Center

- Conceptual illustrated plan
- Overlay zoning district
  - table of uses and densities/intensities
  - design guidelines
Scenario with Existing Development Standards
• Conventional Development or Sprawl

Versus

• Traditional Development or Smart Growth
As part of planning, planners use photo imagery to show how different parts of the roadway network could be brought in line with a community’s vision.

- walkable
- equestrian-friendly
- pedestrian-friendly
- connected
- Traditional Neighborhood Development
- Form-Based Codes
- Smart Growth
- healthy community design
- active living by design
- senior friendly
- family/child friendly

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South Side Community Plan

Redevelopment of Existing Highway
At another, more rural section of Hurley Way, pedestrians lacking sidewalks walk in bike lanes.
Sacramento County, CA
Hurley Way

The planners propose sidewalks and a grassy median, removing roadside brush and installing a fence.
Sacramento County, CA
Hurley Way

Painting the bike lane a different color makes it more noticeable to drivers and pedestrians.
South Side Community Plan

Redevelopment of Intersection
Sacramento County, CA
Hurley Way and Fulton Avenue

The original photo of the intersection of Hurley Way and Fulton Avenue, east of downtown Sacramento, shows a narrow sidewalk, street-front parking lots, poorly marked crosswalks and no protection from the sun.
Clearer crosswalks, wider sidewalks, bike lanes and streetlamps make for a safer pedestrian experience.
Trees bring needed shade.
South Side Community Plan

New Roadway with Typical Intersection
Roseville, CA
Market Ave and Road “B”

Existing conditions
Interconnected through streets define small walkable blocks. Sidewalks are separated from travel lanes by parking lanes, bike lanes, and/or planting strips. Crosswalks are striped for good visibility. Lighting is scaled to pedestrian needs. Local thoroughfares are designed for pedestrian safety—no larger than four travel lanes, no double left turn pockets, no acceleration, or deceleration lanes.
Street trees are planted close to roadway so as to cast shadows, thus breaking up visual expanse of asphalt and reducing heat island effect.
With addition of higher density development, walking and bicycling becomes natural.
South Side Community Plan

New Roadway with Roundabout
Roseville, CA
Market Ave and Road “B”
Roseville, CA
Market Ave and Road “B”
Roseville, CA
Market Ave and Road “B”
Roseville, CA
Market Ave and Road “B”
• **Agricultural Rural**

Example: 1 unit per 5 acres
Examples of Clustering Conservation Subdivisions
Design Guidelines for Small Towns & Rural Communities

Inside Out Urban Design

For more information:
www.theplanningcommission.org or www.hccommunityplanning.com