



## Open Space and Common Areas

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## OPEN SPACE AND COMMON AREAS

Vital to the enhancement of the City of Surprise’s character, image, and quality of life, is the development of a comprehensive open space system to provide structure to the growing urban form and connectivity of residential, commercial and civic uses as set forth in the General Plan 2020. For purposes of this Manual, open space is defined as either natural or developed public and private lands and water areas that are utilized for active and passive recreation purposes. Common areas are defined as passive private and public open space utilized as plazas, terraces, courtyards, patios, and pedestrian ways located within and oriented toward the interior of a site. These guidelines provide ideas and suggestions for developing and integrating environmentally sensitive land areas; floodways; washes; floodplains; retention basins; streets; regional, community and neighborhood parks; greenways; bicycle and equestrian trails; pedestrian plazas; common areas and access ways into a continuous, comprehensive open space system linking all parts of the City.

**OPEN SPACE** – Guidelines address the location, orientation, use, and landscaping character of natural or developed open space in and around new residential and non-residential developments in order to provide accessible and useable open space as a means to connect all areas of the City with one another; and to create an open space system whereby pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians can move freely and uninterrupted throughout the City.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LAND AREAS

- At the pre-application meeting with City Staff, any proposed development should depict how potential set-asides for open space will be integrated into the development; its intended use and developed character; how the open space will connect physically, functionally and visually with adjacent development; what fire and safety measures are to be provided; and if developed open space, what water conservation approaches will be taken for new landscape materials.

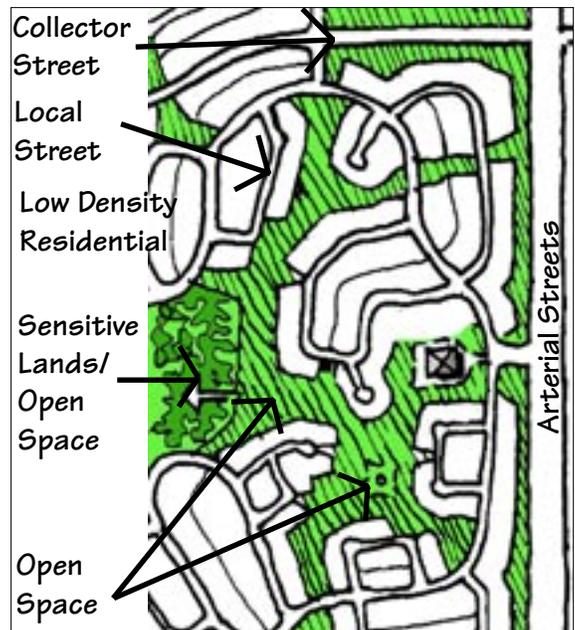


figure 3.1: Pre-Application Illustrative Development Concept

- At the pre-application meeting with City Staff, a proposed residential or non-residential development should identify and quantify any environmentally or view sensitive areas of the site, including land areas having a slope of ten (10) percent or greater, for possible set aside as open space in the development.
- In the event evidence of a significant historic, pre-historic or archeological nature is unearthed during construction on a site proposed for development, all work on the site should be halted immediately, and until such time a professional archeologist has been retained by the developer to confirm or deny the evidence, as well as the extent of land coverage of the find. In the event evidence that is unearthed is determined to be of archeological significance, the developer should be required to make arrangements to either remove the archeological find from the site using acceptable archeological standards and practices, or restore the site to its original condition and set aside the area as open space.
- Environmentally sensitive land areas of a development site should be preserved in their natural state and integrated into the development in a manner that makes such land areas accessible and a part of the development's overall open space system.



## **FLOODPLAINS, WASHES AND RETENTION BASINS**

- Any development site, or portion thereof, that is located within, or immediately adjacent to, a defined floodplain area should be engineered and improved to ensure that structures on the site have their lowest floor elevation above the base flood elevation for the area.
- In the event costs of engineering improvements for flood protection of a development site, or portion thereof, exceed the benefits to be accrued from the improvements; or the improvements would significantly affect flooding beyond the site, then the site, or portion thereof affecting flooding beyond the site should be considered as possible permanent open space land.
- Residential and non-residential structures or improvements should not be permitted in floodways and washes; and structures adjacent to floodways and washes should be set back from the high water mark a minimum of seventy-five (75) feet.



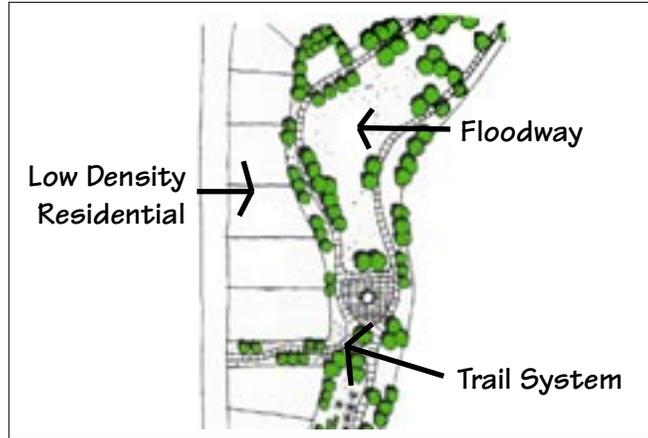


figure 3.2: Developed as Usable Open Space.

- Floodways and washes throughout the City should be developed as linear parks containing pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian ways, all of which should connect to, and be an integral part of, the community open space system.

- Where a floodway or wash traverses a development site, the floodway or wash should be set aside as open space and improved using environmentally sensitive channel and bank stabilization techniques to provide a naturally appearing restored, enhanced and stabilized floodway or wash. Under no circumstance should the channel or sides of a floodway or wash be paved over in concrete.

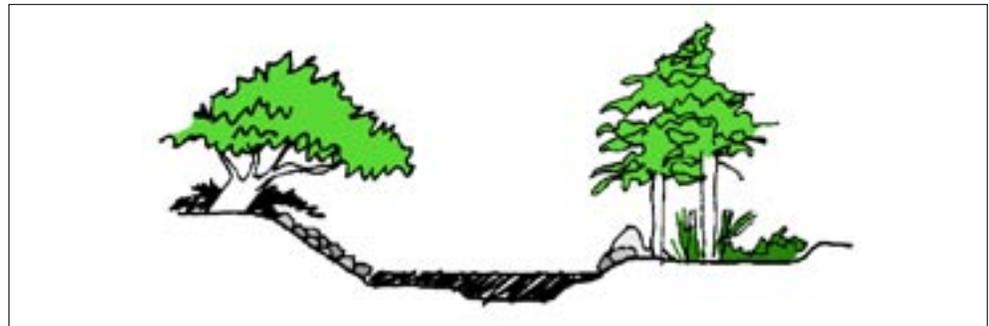


figure 3.3: Environmentally Sensitive Bank Stabilization Treatment

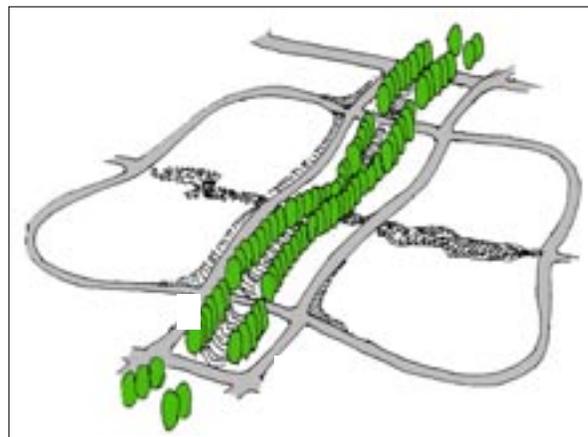


figure 3.4: Floodway/Wash Set Aside for Open Space

- New developments traversed by a floodway or wash, the developer should be encouraged to landscape and develop a floodway or wash as a linear park containing pedestrian, bicycle and/or equestrian trails that tie to and connect with adjacent open space and trail systems

- Upper edges of floodways and washes should be stabilized and landscaped and developed with pedestrian and bicycle paths and equestrian trails that connect to adjacent open space and trail systems.

- New residential and non-residential development should require a drainage analysis to determine the need, and the extent of the area required, for retention basins on the site.
- In the event retention basins are required for developed and landscaped to accommodate active or passive recreation; and located and oriented to tie to other open space areas of the development and connect either physically, functionally, and/or visually with open space in adjoining developments.



### PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE, AND EQUESTRIAN TRAILS

- New development should incorporate, where appropriate, pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths and equestrian trails as an integral element of the open space system of the development, as well as that of the total community.

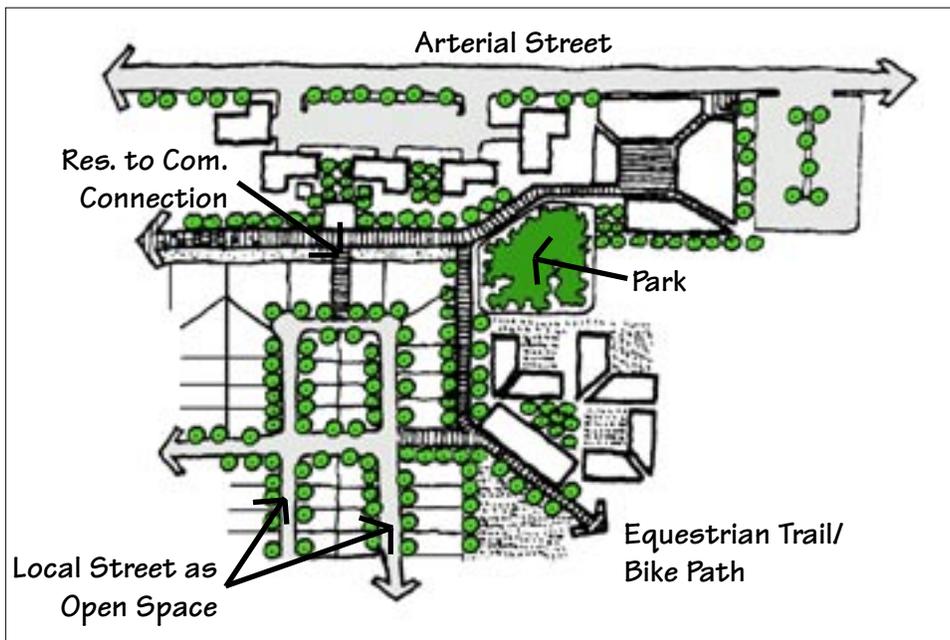
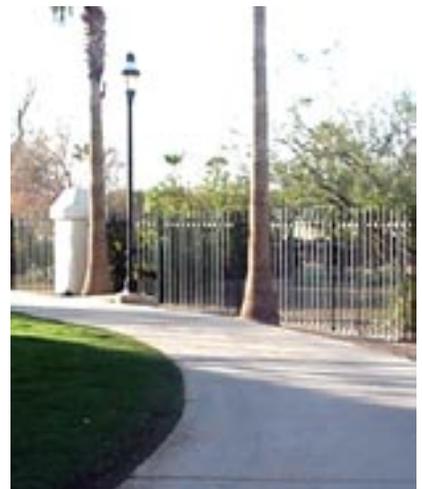


figure 3.6: Street and Trail System as Part of Community Network of Open Space



- The pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trail network should provide physical and visual structure to the design of the development, and be located and oriented to connect with and reinforce the continuous community open space system.
- Pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trails should be a part of the linear park and open space system of the community, and landscaped, lighted and furnished to provide shade and rest areas in order to encourage their extensive use as a secondary mode of travel and access throughout neighborhoods and the City.





### REGIONAL, COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- Regional, community and neighborhood parks should be located and developed as the principal components of the City’s overall, interconnected, community open space system.
- Parks should be interconnected by the community open space system and located along and adjacent to principal pedestrian ways, bicycle paths and equestrian trails. (see figure 3.6)
- The open space component of new residential and non-residential development should, where applicable, tie to the City’s broader open space system, and ultimately, to the hierarchy of parks planned throughout the City.

### STREETS AS OPEN SPACE

- Streets should be planned And designed to reflect the image and character of the community; serve as the primary means of bringing order and structure to new urban development; and serve as the principal element with which to link all open space areas of the City into a fully integrated and comprehensive open space system.

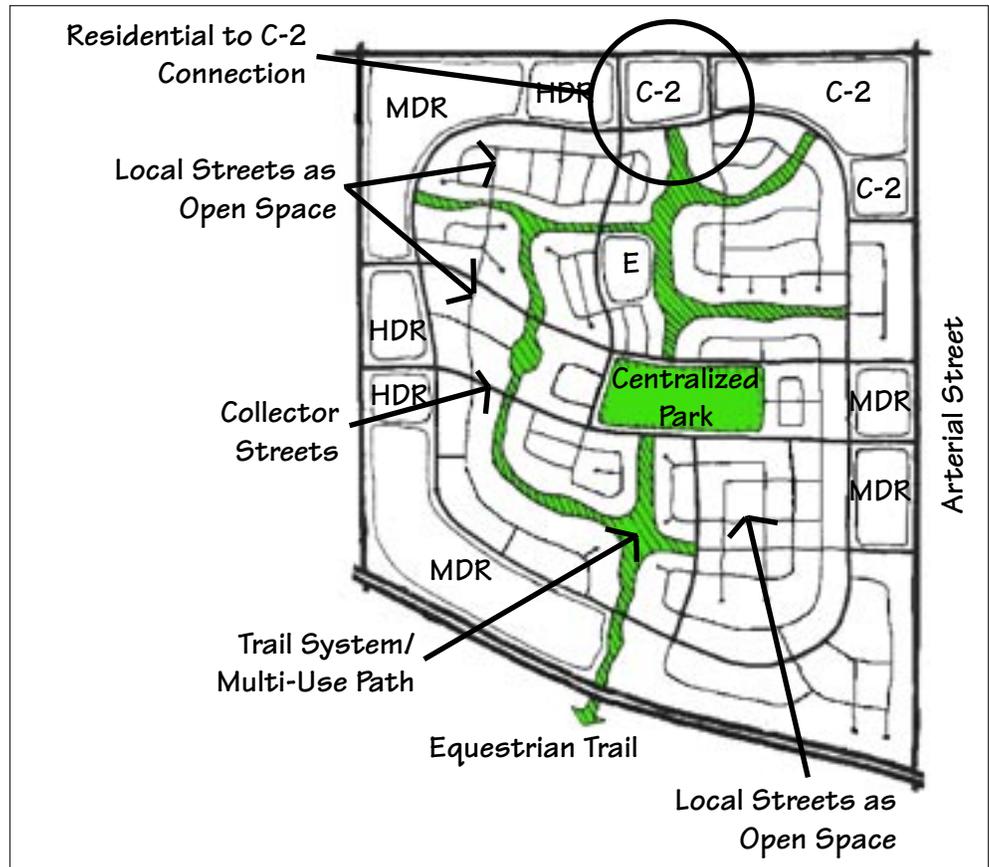
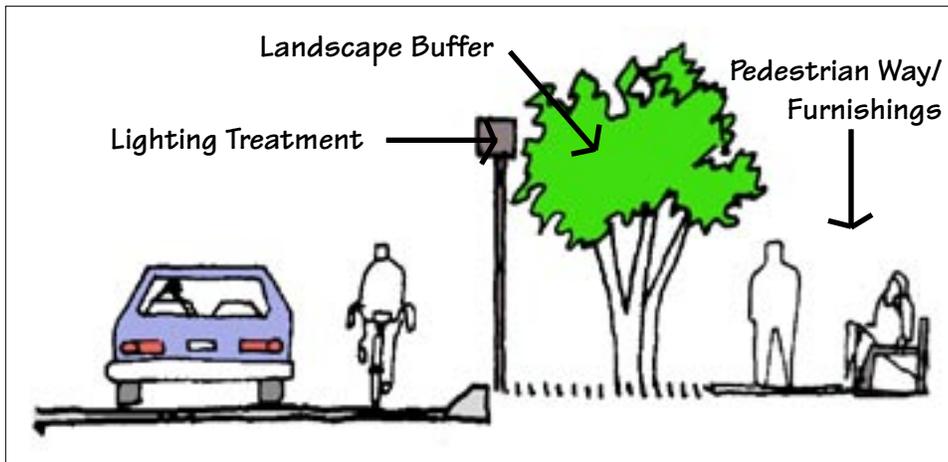


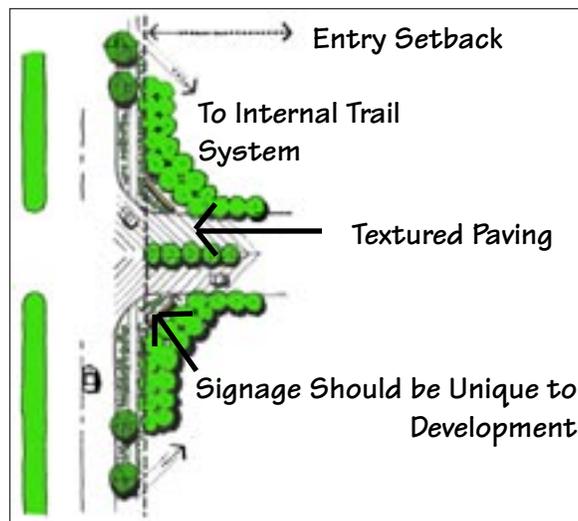
figure 3.7: Interconnected Community Open Space System in a Development

- New development should reflect a knowledge and awareness of the community's desire to plan, design and construct new major streets and thoroughfares that abut, surround or lie within a development, so that they provide a more intimate street scale that is visually enhanced by reduced pavement widths, and the addition of landscaped medians, and landscaped and furnished, pedestrian and bicycle ways.
- Street rights-of way should be planned and designed incorporating landscaping, furnishing and lighting techniques to encourage high pedestrian usage and reinforce the community's continuous open space system.



**figure 3.8:** Narrow Streets and Landscaped Curb-Separated Sidewalks Create an Intimate Streetscape

- Major entryways providing access to new residential and non-residential development should be designed and constructed using decorative block paving patterns, landscaped open space set back areas and lighting to enhance the identity and character of the development and provide linkage to the community open space system.



**figure 3.9:** Landscape and Paving Materials Create Entry Identification for Development



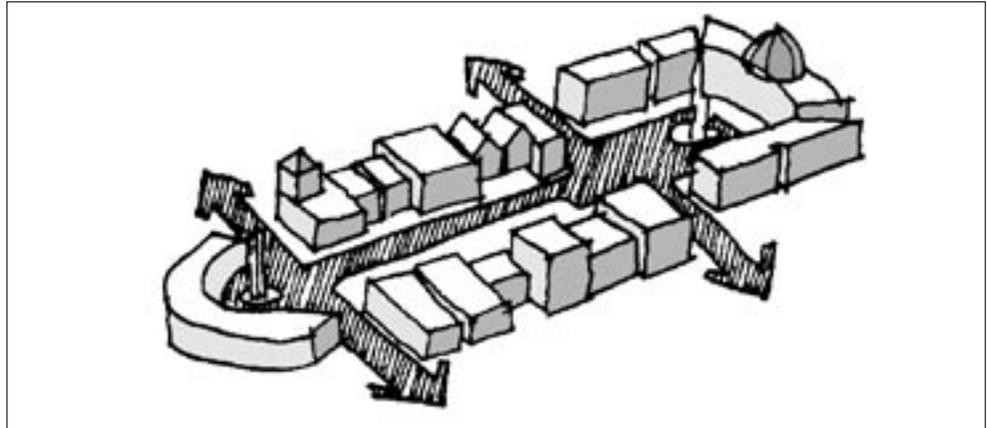
- Major new large acreage commercial and civic development should incorporate decorative paving patterns, traffic "calming" devices, landscaping, street furnishings, lighting and open space set backs at onsite street intersections.

**COMMON AREAS** – Guidelines provide approaches and techniques for the planning and design of plazas, terraces, courtyards, arcades and other common area open space in higher density residential, mixed use, and commercial/office/civic developments that can be constructed and furnished to enhance the character and identity of the development; create a pedestrian/user friendly environment; allow access in and around the common area and provide connectivity to surrounding and adjacent external open space areas.

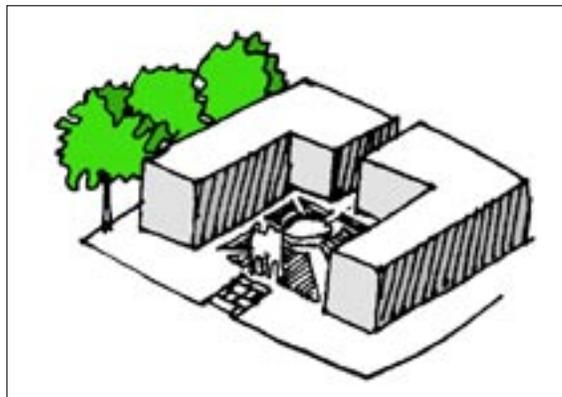
**PLAZAS AND COURTYARDS**



- Paved and landscaped plazas should be incorporated in all new high density residential, mixed-use and commercial/office/civic/institutional developments as a critical element in establishing a “sense of place”; entry setting, identity and character for a building, or group of buildings; the core of pedestrian activity for the development; and providing a tie to adjoining public open space areas.



**figure 3.10:** Plaza Provides Unifying Design Element and Pedestrian Linkage for Commercial Center



**figure 3.11:** Entry Courtyard to Commerical Structure Links Building to Community Space

- Plazas in nonresidential areas should be designed with uninterrupted lines-of-sight to and from public sidewalks; with physical access provided from the public sidewalk or adjoining open space to plazas.

- Plazas should contain broad multi-level planes and such visual features as fountains, water gardens, garden areas and public art.

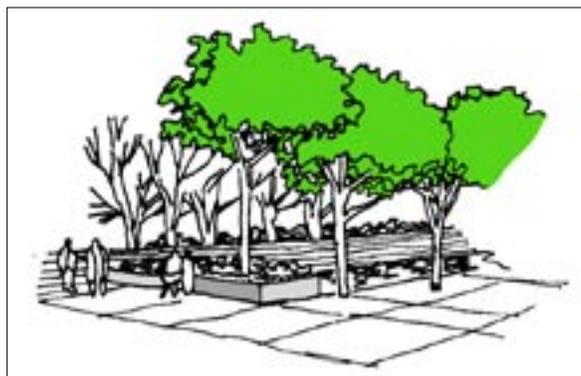
- Mixed-use and commercial/office developments should locate and orient retail shops, restaurants, offices or other activity-generating uses at the edges of plazas.



**figure 3.12:** Variety and Character of Plaza Landscape Encourage High Pedestrian Use

- A minimum of twenty (20) percent of a plaza's surface area should be set aside as landscaped area. The landscaped area should include non-reflective paving materials, and a combination of water and plant materials that generate visual interest through the use of a variety of foliage and floral displays, fountains, ponds and water sculpture.

- Shadetrees,arbors and/or other techniques that provide relief from the sun should be incorporated into the design of plazas, but in a manner that does not impair pedestrian movement.



**figure 3.13:** Extensive Shade Encourages Use of Plaza Seating Area

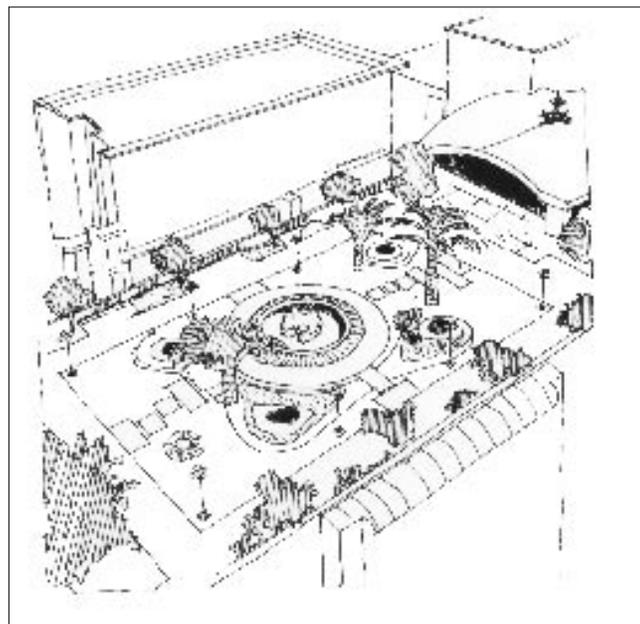




- As the center of pedestrian activity for a development, plazas in non-residential developments should provide adequate seating in the form of benches or low seating walls in addition to any seating areas that may be provided in association with dining areas.
- When appropriate, paving materials and furnishings used in private plazas, should complement the streetscape elements used in public rights-of way.
- Plazas, including their entrances and exits, should be fully illuminated ½ hour before sunset to ½ hour after sunrise to facilitate natural surveillance opportunities and discourage unsafe activities. All lighting in plazas should be an integral part of the total building and plaza design; and designed in a manner that brings definition, order and a sense of security that welcomes pedestrian use.



- Courtyards accessible to the public should be planned and designed as intimate, reflective spaces of lesser scale than plazas; and provide restful transition areas that are separate and apart from main pedestrian circulation areas.
- Courtyards should provide a rhythmic progression of open space from the exterior of a building complex toward and around the center of the building complex.
- New high-density residential and non-residential developments utilizing courtyards should locate and orient the courtyard along and toward the internal pedestrian access system of a development.

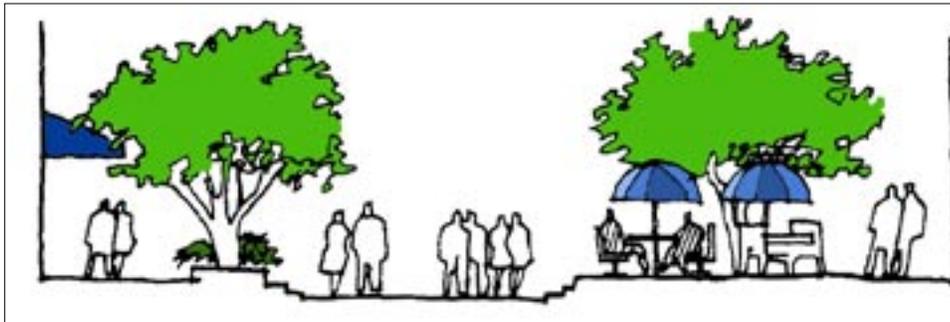


- Courtyards should be open to the sky and include a simple combination of focal points, including a water feature, seating niches, paving patterns and/or simple plantings.

**figure 3.14:** Landscape Courtyard Provides Quiet Pedestrian Relief from Surrounding Activities

## TERRACES AND ARCADES

- Unlike plazas, terraces, as more private and restricted open space areas, should be located in higher density residential or non-residential development as an integral part of a particular use; and oriented to provide the user overviews of surrounding parts of the development.

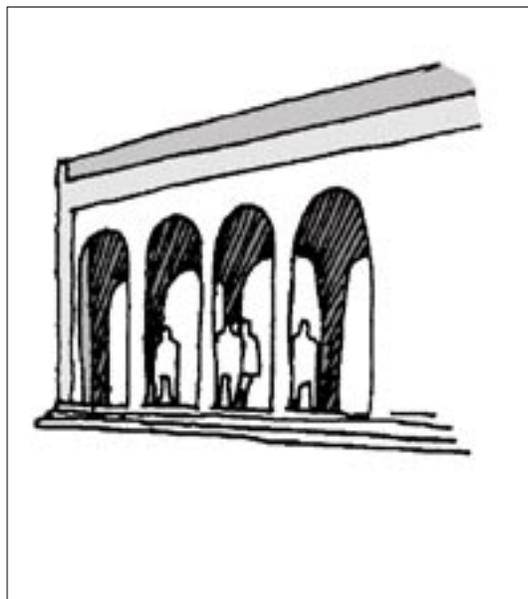


**figure 3.15:** Terrace Features Provide Additional Retail Use as well as Encourage Pedestrian Activities



- Terraces should be developed on the site as unobstructed, paved, open space areas to serve as internal gathering places for residents and/or client users of a development.
- Terraces should be paved with tile or other decorative materials and remain free of landscaping, fountains or any other improvement that would impede the terraces full unobstructed use for internal gatherings on the site or dining in connection with an adjacent restaurant use.

- The use of arcades in developments should be associated with internal courtyards; and should be utilized for pedestrian circulation in and around the courtyard and provide shaded areas for seating.



- An arcade should have sufficient openings onto the courtyard to ensure visual contact at all times with seating areas, as well as storefronts or entryways of buildings around the courtyard.

**figure 3.16:** Arcades Provide Protection from Hot Sun and Add Visual Interest to the Design of the Building



- In the event an arcade is to be used along the front of a building as a primary pedestrian way, the arcade should be designed as an integral part of the overall architecture of the building; located and oriented to connect with adjacent open space areas of the development; and of sufficient height and width to accommodate the anticipated unobstructed pedestrian traffic to be generated by uses in the development.

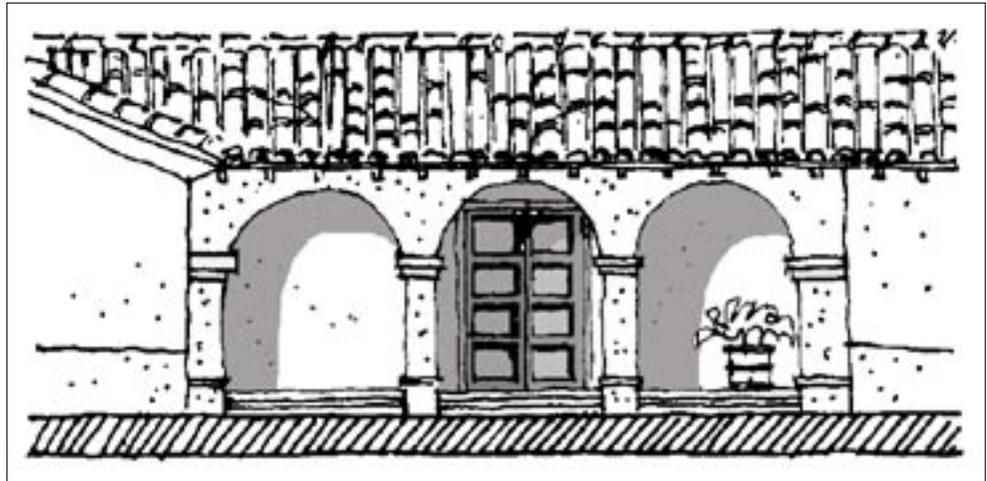


figure 3.17: Arcade as an Element of Building Design

### LANDSCAPING, PAVING, FURNISHING AND PUBLIC ART



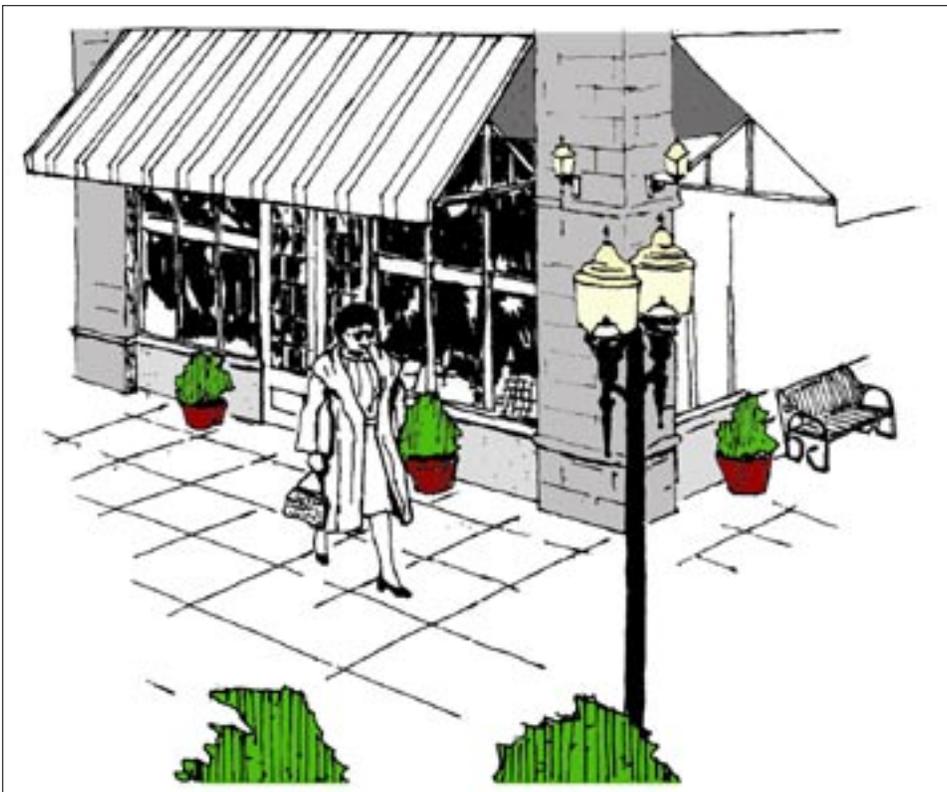
- Common Area open space should be landscaped, lighted and furnished in accordance with the scale, character and use of the particular common area to be utilized in the development.
- Fountains and other water features should be located and sized according to the scale and use of the Common Area selected for a particular development; with smaller water features utilized in smaller, more intimate Common Areas.



figure 3.18: Fountain as Focal of Public Open Space

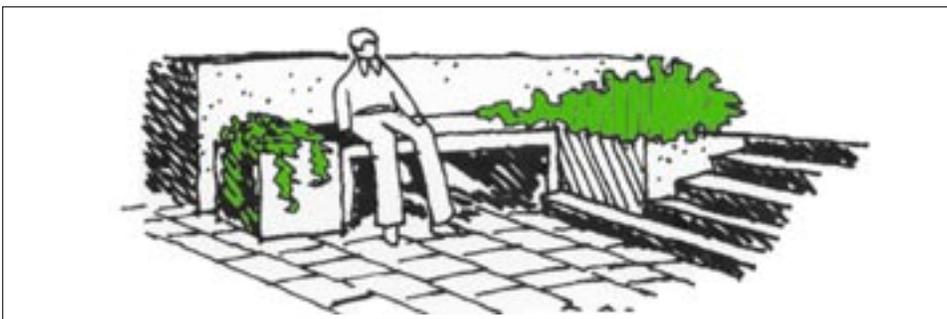
- Paving patterns in Common Area open space should complement paving patterns and colors utilized in adjoining public sidewalks and other public rights-of-way.

- Plant materials utilized in Common Areas should reflect the intensity of pedestrian use of the area, and be of a scale consistent with the size of the Common Area(s) selected for the development.
- Lighting in Common Areas should complement the scale, character and use of the area and meet both architectural compatibility, aesthetic and security needs of the development.



**figure 3.19:** Common Area Lighting Provides Unique Pedestrian Character

- Seating areas should reflect the size and character of the Common Area, and consist of a combination of sun and shade seating areas containing a combination of benches, low walls, planter areas and steps.



**figure 3.20:** Seating Area as an Integral Part of Common Area Design





- Public art that invites participation and interaction; adds local meaning; interprets the community by revealing its culture and/or history or reinforces the unique character and “sense of place” of a development, should be encouraged in Common Area open space.
- Art in Common Area open space should be in harmony with the character and scale of the Common Area in which it is placed.
- The selection and placement of art should be a part of the initial design process rather than an add-on at the completion of construction of the development.