



COMMUNITY CHARACTER ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Community Character Element builds on the positive existing qualities of Live Oak. This Element also reflects Live Oaks cultural history, which has been shaped by agriculture and the railroad. It introduces policies aimed at protecting the natural resources of the City and enhancing its livability in the future. Within the city, this Element advances a model (carried through the entire General Plan) of neighborliness, environmentally and economically sustainable design, and freedom in transportation mode choice.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

“Community character” refers to the physical characteristics that lend shape, form, and identity to a community. Concepts such as “small town,” “quality of life,” “living environment,” “neighborhood,” and “community” are, to a large extent, expressions of familiar physical characteristics—landmarks, streets, buildings, parks, and natural features that create a unique identity in every community. “Community design” refers to the architectural and development design principles that create the shape, form, and appearance of both new development and the redevelopment of existing districts and neighborhoods. Community design principles and policies are intended to ensure that the community character of the future reflects the vision and goals of residents and decision makers.

Live Oak envisions itself as a livable place with the character and qualities of a traditional small town. As envisioned in the future, neighborhoods in Live Oak help support a sense of community, with homes arranged and designed to encourage healthy interaction between neighbors. Commercial centers, employment centers, and schools will be located conveniently for residents and visitors. All of the elements that make up Live Oak will be connected by a well-designed circulation network. Streets will be safe, walkable, and accommodate all modes of travel. An open space system includes enjoyable parks that are well-connected by greenbelts and trails. Through its planning policies, Live Oak will be a livable place that can sustain itself well into the future.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The goals and policies in this Element complement goals and policies from other elements of the General Plan that affect community character, particularly the Land Use and Circulation Elements. City goals for air quality, transportation, and land use require more efficient use of land, mixing of land uses, a high-quality multi-modal transportation system, and other planning concepts that will shape Live Oak’s character in the future. The City recognizes that design is very important for ensuring public acceptance for more compact and land efficient development patterns, neighborhood centers, mixed-use development, and other concepts introduced in this General Plan. This Element is the basis for guiding the appearance and aesthetic considerations of public and private land development.



While the Land Use Element describes the location and distribution of uses within the City, the Community Character Element emphasizes:

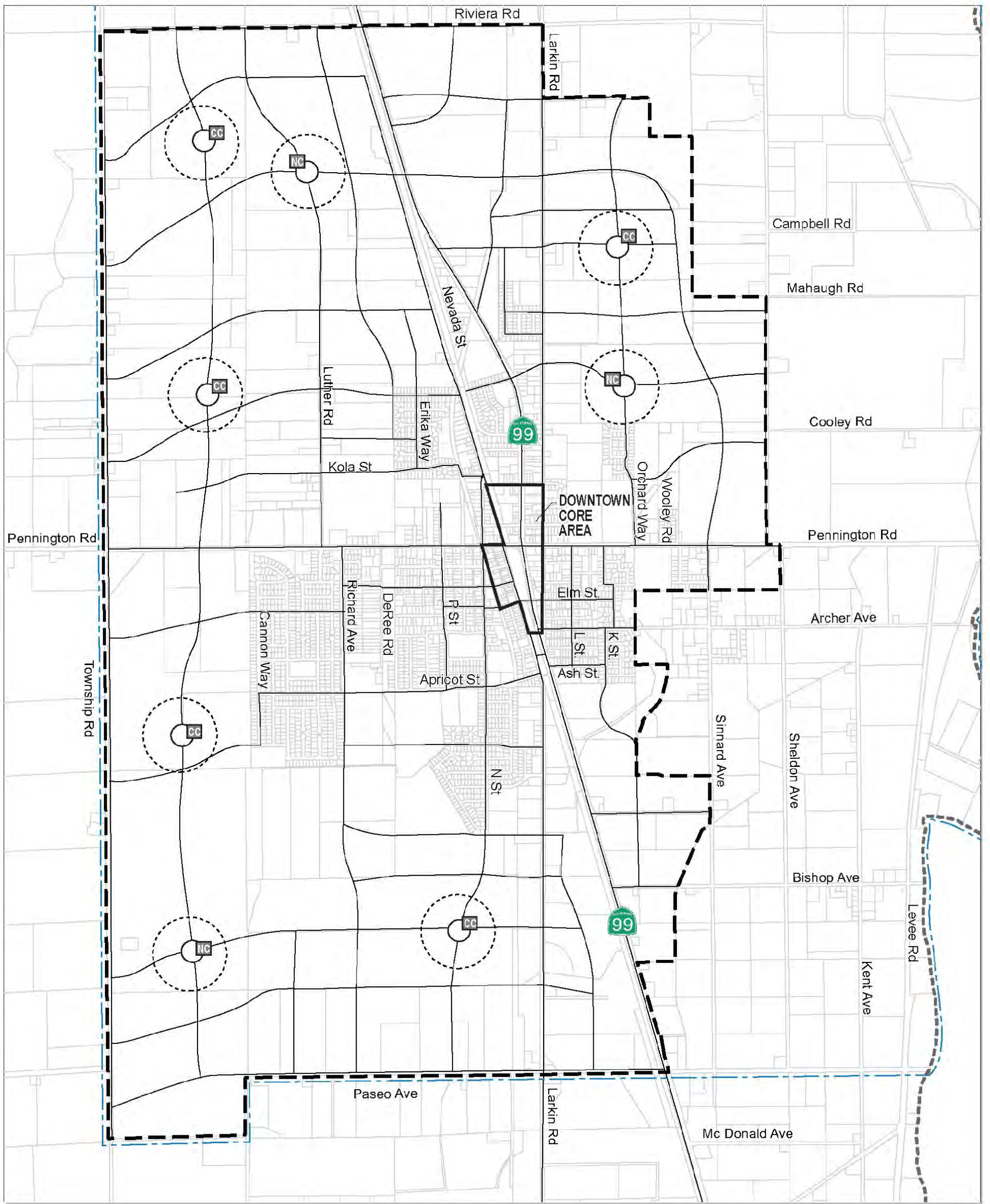
- ✓ how development should relate to the user;
- ✓ how development can contribute to the City's visual character and create an attractive place for residents, workers, and visitors; and,
- ✓ how buildings and other improvements should function in relation to one another, to streets and other public places, and in the greater context of the community.

COMMUNITYWIDE POLICIES AND FOCUS AREAS

The Community Character Element provides general design guidance through policies and examples of design concepts regarding the form and character of development and public improvements citywide. The Element also provides guidance for areas of particular importance in the City, such as (see Figure DESIGN-1):

- ✓ Downtown core area;
- ✓ Highway 99/Live Oak Boulevard;
- ✓ the Pennington Road corridor; and,
- ✓ Neighborhood Centers and Civic Centers (Centers).

Unless specified otherwise, the goals and policies that follow apply citywide.



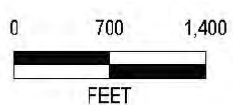
LEGEND

Boundaries

- Study Area
- Planning Area
- Downtown Core Area
- Sphere of Influence
- Parcels

Centers

- Civic Center
- Neighborhood Center



**Figure DESIGN-1
Downtown Core Area and Centers**



GOALS, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

STREETS AND STREETSCAPES

Streets comprise the majority of the accessible public spaces in most communities and can be the liveliest and most memorable public spaces. Streets are the main way that we connect physically between homes and the broader community. The quality of the streetscape environment substantially affects the quality of interactions with a community.

The Circulation Element provides guidance for the circulation network itself. This Element focuses on streetscapes and the overall layout of neighborhoods, of which the circulation system is an important part. Goals, policies, and design guidelines provided in this Element are aimed at balancing the need for motor vehicle movement and parking with the community's desire to create a sense of place. This can be accomplished by improving the connectivity of the street network; by providing amenities for people using the streets; and by making streets pleasant and attractive places to be. Thoughtful street layout and high-quality streetscapes will improve the character of Live Oak and make travel through the city more pleasant and convenient for drivers, transit users, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Goal DESIGN-1. Provide connected streets with features and amenities that accommodate many travel modes.

Policy DESIGN 1.1 Streets should be located and oriented to define the edges of neighborhoods, frame scenic views, and provide civic landmarks as focal points.

Policy DESIGN 1.2 Civic Centers and Neighborhood Centers; parks; civic landmarks; and schools shall be connected by streets, multi-use trails, and pedestrian paths, so that people may comfortably and conveniently reach these destinations by foot, bicycle, car, and bus.

Policy DESIGN 1.3 New development shall provide a well connected street system with simple and direct routes and connections to existing roadways and neighborhoods (see also the Circulation Element).

Policy DESIGN 1.4 If cul-de-sacs are used, they should allow pedestrian and bicycle through connectivity to adjacent trails or streets.

Policy DESIGN 1.5 The City will require block sizes based on location and land use to encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel, shorten vehicle trips, and ensure adequate emergency access (see also the Circulation Element). Shorter blocks and greater connectivity are appropriate in Neighborhood and Civic Centers and other areas where a high volume of pedestrian travel is anticipated (see also the Circulation Element). Larger blocks are appropriate in industrial and some commercial areas where uses are not expected to attract large numbers of pedestrians.



Policy DESIGN 1.6 If any soundwalls are used, they should provide frequent breaks for pedestrian and bicycle access to adjacent areas and incorporate screening and landscaping to minimize their visual impact.



Figure DESIGN-2
Where used, cul-de-sacs should allow for through connections

Policy DESIGN 1.7 Alleys may be used in new development to provide access to nearby uses, to minimize street congestion, and to allow for the potential location of residential garages, secondary units (“granny flats”), and waste collection services off public streets.



Figure DESIGN-3
Alleyways may be provided for garage access, second units, and services

Policy DESIGN-1.8 Street intersections in areas with high pedestrian traffic or high vehicle traffic should have distinctive crosswalks with different paving patterns, painting, landscaping, and other aesthetic/safety enhancements.



Figure DESIGN-4
Example of a pedestrian-friendly intersection

Policy DESIGN-1.9 The City encourages the use of traffic calming devices, such as bulb-outs, crosswalks, pedestrian refuges, planted medians, speed humps, traffic circles, and other passive speed control measures, where appropriate.

Policy DESIGN-1.10 As funding permits, the City will seek to install traffic calming and pedestrian and bicycle improvements in existing neighborhoods and commercial areas where high traffic speeds are a problem.

Policy DESIGN-1.11 The City will coordinate with Union Pacific and the Public Utilities Commission to install and improve safe and accessible railroad crossings.

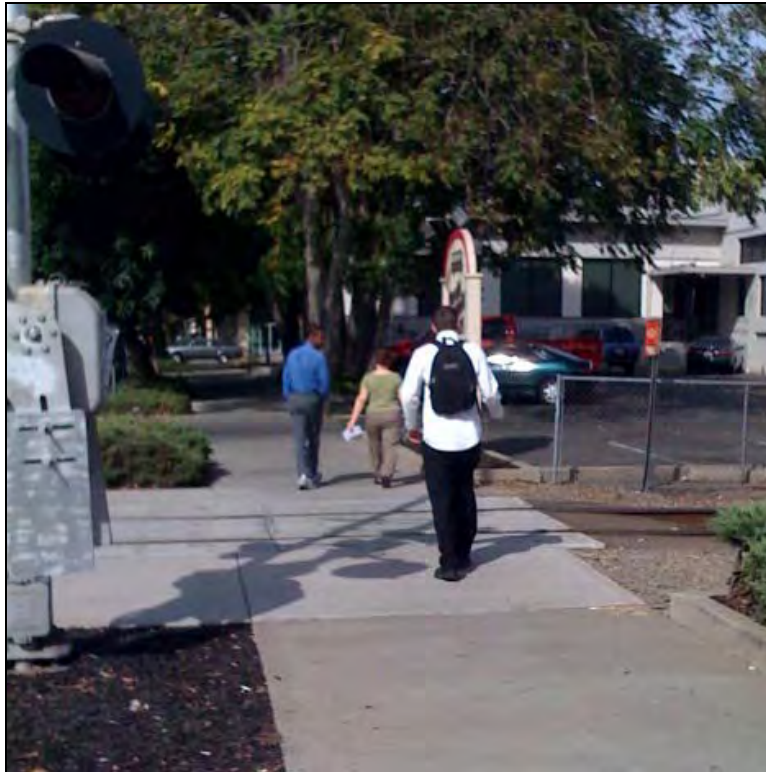


Figure DESIGN-5
Example of accessible pedestrian train crossing

Goal DESIGN-2. Design streetscapes to create attractive and comfortable spaces for people.

Policy DESIGN 2.1 New streets shall provide comfortable travel areas for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers to facilitate multi-modal travel.

Policy DESIGN 2.2 Local and minor collector streets should have narrower travel areas for vehicles than arterial streets in order to provide safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Policy DESIGN 2.3 Local streets and setbacks should not be overly wide. Street width should be proportional with building setbacks and heights to create “outdoor rooms,” emphasizing comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists.



Figure DESIGN-6
Excessively wide local street with little pedestrian appeal should be avoided (Left);
Narrower street that provides better aesthetic value (Right)



Figure DESIGN-7
Overly wide collector streets should be avoided (Left);
Collector streets can function well with narrower travel lanes for vehicles (Right)

Policy DESIGN-2.4 New developments should attempt to preserve as many existing mature trees as feasible and plant additional street trees to eventually create a complete canopy.

Policy DESIGN-2.5 The City will add street trees in existing developed areas, as feasible, with the goal of a complete tree canopy.

Policy DESIGN-2.6 Trees in commercial areas should be located and selected to shade sidewalks.

Policy DESIGN-2.7 Trees in residential areas should shade both the sidewalk and the street and provide a visual buffer between streets and homes.



Policy DESIGN-2.8 Benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, bus shelters, signage, and other improvements should be located and designed to enhance the visual environment.



Figure DESIGN-8
Collector street with landscaped median and planting strip, street trees, and separated sidewalk



Figure DESIGN-9
A well-designed transit shelter enhances community character and the transit experience for users



COMMUNITY GATEWAYS

Gateways are important entry points distinguished by a combination of natural features, landscaping, buildings, streetscapes, signage, and/or other physical clues that one has entered a community or neighborhood. Community gateway points to the City along Highway 99 from the north and south at Paseo Road and Riviera Road, and on Pennington Road at Township Road to the west and Metteer Road to the east are important visual gateways to the community. Gateway points at Nevada Street and Allen Street are important visual gateways to the downtown core area (See Figure DESIGN-10.)

Goal DESIGN-3. Provide a visual environment at important gateways that gives visitors to Live Oak an immediate positive impression of the community.

Policy DESIGN 3.1 Important visual gateways should be designed to:

- ✓ Provide an attractive streetscape environment for visitors;
- ✓ Preserve vegetation and add new landscaping to enhance aesthetics;
- ✓ Preserve or enhance views of the Sutter Buttes, where possible;
- ✓ Visually “announce” to the visitor their arrival in Live Oak and the downtown core area;
- ✓ Have attractive civic landmarks and public spaces; and,
- ✓ Ensure, for developed properties, the visual prominence of attractive building façades rather than surface parking or signage.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Live Oak’s residential areas include older, traditional residential neighborhoods east and west of the downtown core area and newer development to the north and west. Older neighborhoods generally have tree-lined streets with sidewalks and detached garages. More recently constructed single-family neighborhoods have wider streets and cul-de-sacs and homes with garage doors that are very prominent as viewed from the street.

The character of residential neighborhoods is a product of the design of their public and private elements. In addition, the quality of homes and the relationship they have to each other have a strong impact on the character of the community. Public spaces, including streets and parks, should provide a pleasant and safe atmosphere for neighbors to walk, to meet, and to gather. Private homes should provide overlook, or “eyes” on the street and should be designed with quality materials and at a scale and orientation that is pedestrian-friendly.

A sense of community can be fostered within the public spaces of a neighborhood (such as streets, sidewalks) and in the transition spaces that are located between public and semi-public spaces and private homes (such as front yards and front porches). These spaces can provide opportunities for neighbors to meet and create their own communities.



One part of the vision for Live Oak is to provide for a variety of housing types in each neighborhood, including multi-family housing. Such housing, if well designed, can be an asset to a neighborhood. Through careful design, multi-family projects can add value to a community through its architectural character and through site planning that respects its surroundings and provides a safe and pleasant environment for residents and neighbors. The safety of a neighborhood can be enhanced when its design provides opportunities for residents to watch over its public and semi-public spaces.

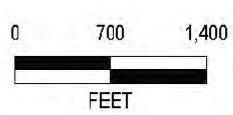
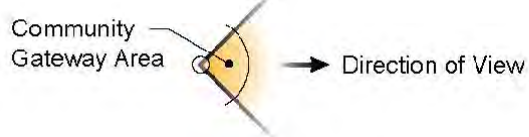
Goal DESIGN-4. Neighborhoods that foster a sense of community and support pedestrian activity.

- Policy DESIGN-4.1 Residential sites and building frontages should create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment along neighborhood streets.
- Policy DESIGN-4.2 Residential developments should incorporate porches, stoops, active rooms, and operable windows that face and are visually prominent from the street.
- Policy DESIGN-4.3 The City will be flexible in allowing reduced front-yard setbacks with recessed garages, rear-lot garages, alley-loaded garages, and other approaches that promote an inviting human scale.



LEGEND

- Boundaries
- Study Area
 - Planning Area
 - Sphere of Influence
 - Parcels



**Figure DESIGN-10
Important Visual Gateways**

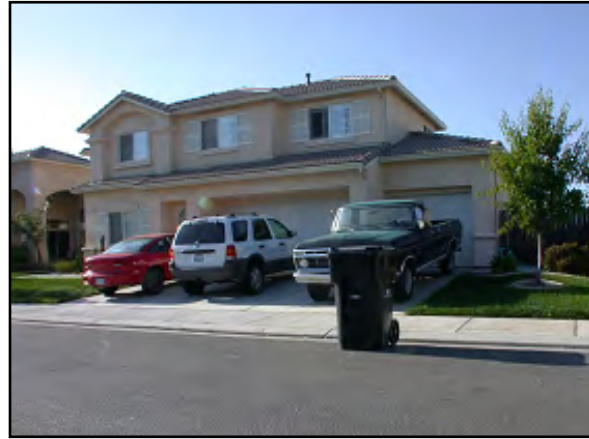


Figure DESIGN-11
An inviting street frontage enhances neighborhood character and sense of community (Left);
A garage-dominated façade with no porch provides little social space and is less attractive (Right)



Figure DESIGN-12
Examples of residential design with pedestrian friendly frontages

Policy DESIGN-4.4 Residences should be designed and configured to integrate with open spaces, such as parks or greenbelts, using design methods such as those described below.

- ✓ Parks and open space in residential neighborhoods should provide convenient and safe pedestrian access.
- ✓ Residential development should front onto parks and open space whenever possible. If homes must back onto open spaces, the homes should be designed to allow for community surveillance of the park or open space.



Figure DESIGN-13

Houses facing open spaces should be encouraged (Left);

Houses with sides or rears facing onto open spaces should allow for surveillance (Right)

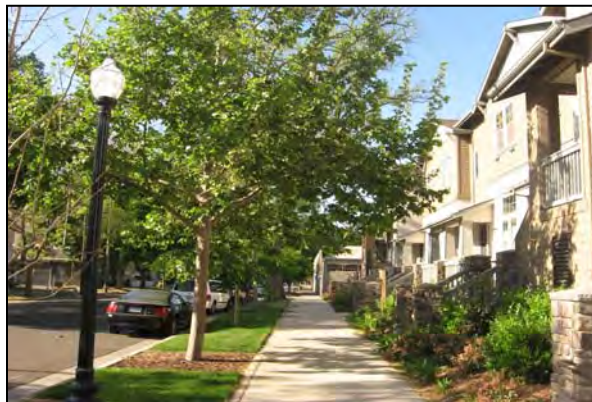


Figure DESIGN-14

Clockwise (top left): cottage homes, attached single-family homes, "6-Pack" homes, and rowhomes

Goal DESIGN-5. Encourage quality single-family residential site design and architecture.

Policy DESIGN-5.1 The City will allow a variety of lot configurations that accommodate higher densities and preserve yards and privacy.

Policy DESIGN-5.2 The City will allow cottage, cluster, and attached single-family housing and will ensure that the development of such housing is in scale with the neighborhood context.

Policy DESIGN-5.3 New residential projects should provide diversity among dwelling units in the use of color, building materials, floor plan layouts, square footages, and roof-lines. Projects should maintain continuity of overall design features to provide context between individual units and the neighborhood.

Policy DESIGN-5.4 The architectural style, exterior materials, roof form, and other design features of accessory buildings, including garages and dwelling units, should be compatible with the primary structure.



Figure DESIGN-15
Diversity among dwelling units in color, materials, floor plans, and size

Goal DESIGN-6. Encourage high quality multi-family residential site design and architecture.

Policy DESIGN-6.1 Multi-family housing should incorporate building forms and architectural features that are consistent with or complementary to adjacent single-family houses.

Policy DESIGN-6.2 Multi-family developments should complement residential neighborhoods and surrounding single-family development through high-quality site and building design, pedestrian connectivity, and landscaping.



Figure DESIGN-16
Multi-family projects with varied massing, projections, recesses, and color to mitigate their size

Policy DESIGN-6.3 Multi-family development projects should break up and distribute surface parking around the project site, wherever possible. Surface parking should be located and landscaped to reduce its visibility from streets and other public



areas.

Figure DESIGN-17
Parking designed to reduce its visibility from public areas (Left);
Pedestrian walkway that provides safe passage and reduces conflicts with cars (Right)

Policy DESIGN-6.4 For multi-family projects, the City will require convenient vehicular access and parking that neither limits pedestrian access nor endangers pedestrian safety and integrates parking areas with residential structures.

Policy DESIGN-6.5 Multi-family housing projects should be located next to or near parks. On larger properties, multi-family projects should include open spaces, such as plazas, courtyards, or small parks, where residents can interact with one another and the community at large.



Figure DESIGN-18
 Internal open space in a multi-family project (Left);
 Multi-family project next to a public park and integrated into the park design (Right)

Goal DESIGN-7. Neighborhood design promotes safety and surveillance of public and semi-public spaces.

Policy DESIGN-7.1 The City will incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies in new developments and in existing neighborhoods to improve safety for residents and visitors. CPTED principles emphasize traditional surveillance, territoriality, defensibility, access control, and target hardening to reduce opportunities for criminal behavior.



Figure DESIGN-19
 Balconies in this multi-family building provide “eyes on the street” to improve safety (Left)
 Second units with windows facing the alley and low fences for a visually defensible space (Right)



Policy DESIGN-7.2 The City will encourage the use of porches, stoops, and other elements that provide a place to comfortably linger and thereby provide “eyes on the street,” helping to maintain a sense of security within neighborhoods.

Policy DESIGN-7.3 Windows and active rooms in new buildings should allow occupants to view yards, corridors, entrances, streets, alleys, and other public and semi-public places.

Policy DESIGN-7.4 Bicycle and pedestrian paths shall be well lit and located where there is casual surveillance.



Figure DESIGN-20
Pathways benefit by surveillance from adjacent buildings

DOWNTOWN CORE AREA

A city with a thriving downtown has the potential for bolstering community spirit and contributing to a healthy local economy. Through innovative design programs, as well as various land use and economic strategies, Live Oak could create a more vibrant and attractive downtown core area. The downtown core area could be an attractive place for businesses to locate, as well as for residents to live. The City will plan for increased development downtown, promote design that enhances the public realm, improve streets and sidewalks, and encourage better building and site design in the downtown built environment. The downtown core area has some good historic remnants, but in the future, it will become a more vital, active, and economically successful place through the implementation of this General Plan. Please refer also to the Land Use and Economic Development Elements.

Goal DESIGN-8. Promote Downtown as a vital, people-oriented place.

Policy DESIGN-8.1 The City will maintain and enhance a strong pedestrian orientation downtown through the design of buildings, streets, and open spaces.

Policy DESIGN-8.2 Durable, high quality building materials should be used in buildings downtown to lower maintenance and replacement needs and ensure the aesthetic appeal of new development and rehabilitation.

Policy DESIGN-8.3 The City will encourage construction of continuous building facades downtown with minimal or no setback from sidewalks for most buildings.

Policy DESIGN-8.4 The City will encourage multi-story buildings downtown.



Figure DESIGN-21
Multi-story buildings help create a sense of enclosure

Policy DESIGN-8.5 The City will require ground floor building façade treatments and activities that generate pedestrian interest and comfort. Large windows, canopies, appropriate signage, arcades, plazas and outdoor seating are examples of such amenities.

Policy DESIGN-8.6 The City will design streets and other public spaces downtown that can be used for seasonal celebrations and special events.

Policy DESIGN-8.7 The City will support connectivity between public spaces and semi-public spaces on private land in the downtown core area.



Figure DESIGN-22
Public and semi-public spaces can enhance a downtown experience



Figure DESIGN-23
Establish a portion of downtown streets that can be closed for special events

Policy DESIGN-8.8 The City will support efforts to reduce the visual impact of surface parking in the downtown core area by providing on-street parking spaces throughout the area and making this parking available for use by adjoining properties.

Policy DESIGN-8.9 The City will promote the installation of public art within the downtown core area to enhance its character and to support local artists.



Goal DESIGN-9. Preserve historic features so they can continue to add to the character of downtown Live Oak.

Policy DESIGN-9.1 The City should retain as many key character-giving features as possible in the restoration or renovation of historical buildings. Wherever possible, maintain or restore original proportions, dimensions, and elements. Historic preservation techniques and Secretary of the Interior standards should be used to maintain the historical integrity of buildings that are designated as city, state, or federal landmarks, wherever feasible.

Policy DESIGN-9.2 New buildings in the downtown core area shall be compatible with the scale, proportions, massing, general architectural elements, and materials of neighboring buildings of historical quality or significance.



Figure DESIGN-24
Existing historical buildings should be preserved and adaptively reused



Figure DESIGN-25
Example of infill buildings that are compatible with a historical fabric

Policy DESIGN-9.3 The City will encourage preservation and upgrades of the physical appearance and usability of buildings and sites with special historic and/or architectural interest, insofar as these improvements maintain the historical registry status of subject buildings and sites.

Policy DESIGN-9.4 The City will celebrate the history and cultural diversity of Live Oak by encouraging buildings, uses, and events that reflect that history and cultural diversity.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS, CIVIC CENTERS, AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The City of Live Oak seeks to grow in a pattern that allows many residents to be within walking distance of daily destinations (school, shops, parks, etc.). To achieve this goal, new growth areas of Live Oak will cluster higher-activity land uses, such as schools, parks, retail and commercial services, small offices, civic uses, and apartments, into Centers (Neighborhood Centers and Civic Centers – see the Land Use Element for more details). Some Centers will have commercial uses surrounded by higher density housing, while other centers will have civic uses surrounded by higher density housing. Centers will represent “nodes” of development where intensity and density is increased relative to the surrounding area. For example, the neighborhood center may contain apartments or condominiums. Surrounding areas will contain medium-density housing types, such as townhomes or small lot homes. These areas will, in turn, be surrounded by lower-density housing. Neighborhood Centers will be small in scale, but sized according to the needs and size of the surrounding neighborhood. Centers will be pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly areas, and will provide the opportunity for transit access.

There are widely used design approaches for larger-scale commercial areas, also, to make them more pedestrian friendly, while also ensuring vehicular access. To become more inviting for pedestrian and transit users, both community commercial and Neighborhood Centers will need wider sidewalks and pedestrian ways furnished with benches and street trees. These areas should also have well-marked

crosswalks and transit stops, buildings that are oriented to the streets rather than to parking lots, and compact development patterns which decrease walking distances between retail outlets.

Commercial centers are often the largest and most noticeable buildings within a community. As such, their character can contribute to or detract from the overall image of the city. Live Oak seeks to enhance its character by encouraging high standards of quality for the architecture and site planning of its commercial centers.

Highway 99 is the spine of the community and is currently the primary commercial corridor in Live Oak. Highway 99 is populated with multiple uses and architectures, including historical buildings, public buildings, industrial properties, commercial buildings, and even housing. Many of these properties are amenities to the community and should be preserved and enhanced. Other properties demand more attention as they are redeveloped so that they can add more to the character of Live Oak.

Goal DESIGN-10. New and existing commercial centers accommodate multiple travel modes.

PolicyDESIGN-10.1 The City will require a strong pedestrian orientation through the design of buildings, streets, and sidewalks in neighborhood centers and commercial and mixed-use projects.

PolicyDESIGN-10.2 Site and building access for pedestrians and bicyclists should be provided as directly as possible from sidewalks and parking areas to building entrances, while minimizing conflicts with motor vehicle traffic.

PolicyDESIGN-10.3 The City will encourage connected streets and shorter blocks in Neighborhood Centers and Civic Centers in order to create a pedestrian-scale street environment.

PolicyDESIGN-10.4 The City will require new development to incorporate design amenities into parking lots, including landscaping to screen views of parking areas, trees to provide shade, pedestrian paths to provide safe and convenient access, and treatment of surface parking areas.



Figure DESIGN-26

Parking areas should include generous landscaping and features that accommodate pedestrians



Figure DESIGN-27
Commercial building with a front entrance and parking on the side (Left);
Neighborhood center with reduced parking between the street and commercial buildings (Right)

PolicyDESIGN-10.5 In Neighborhood and Civic Centers, encourage construction of continuous building facades with attractive window treatments, shade awnings, and minimal, or no, setback distance from sidewalks.

PolicyDESIGN-10.6 New development should encourage ground floor building façade treatments and activities that generate pedestrian interest and comfort. Large windows, canopies, arcades, plazas and outdoor seating are examples of such amenities.

PolicyDESIGN-10.7 New development should encourage seating areas, such as plazas within new commercial projects. Commercial projects and commercial development in Neighborhood Centers should provide sheltered seating areas at plazas and other appropriate locations, such as along pedestrian walkways.

PolicyDESIGN-10.8 Commercial projects and commercial development in Neighborhood Centers shall provide awnings and other forms of pedestrian shelter along building faces that front on sidewalks.

PolicyDESIGN-10.9 The City will require incorporation of architectural and landscape features that allow for secure locking of bicycles in locations easily observed from indoors. These features must be located to minimize interference with pedestrian areas, evacuation routes, cargo loading areas, and utilities accesses.

PolicyDESIGN-10.10 As demand for transit increases, the City will coordinate with Yuba-Sutter Transit to locate and provide attractive and distinctive shelters and seating for transit stops serving mixed-use areas.

Policy DESIGN-10.11 The City will encourage the use and viability of transit by surrounding transit stops with activity-generating land uses.



Figure DESIGN-28
 Retail uses should face and open onto sidewalks and plazas



Figure DESIGN-29
 Create environments that generate pedestrian interest and comfort

Goal DESIGN-11. Site design and architecture of commercial projects and centers enhance the character of the City.

Policy DESIGN-11.1 New commercial projects should be designed with a scale, massing, and architectural detailing that is complementary to the scale of the adjacent neighborhood.

Policy DESIGN-11.2 New commercial projects shall screen utilities, air conditioning units (HVAC), and waste collection service areas from street frontage.

Policy DESIGN-11.3 Signage shall be designed to provide wayfinding and visibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists, while remaining consistent with the design theme and scale of the community.



Policy DESIGN-11.4 The City will encourage the development of recreational and quasi-public facilities such as, but not limited to, gymnasiums, community centers, recreation centers, libraries, post offices, within mixed-use areas in order to establish these places as community destinations.

Policy DESIGN-11.5 Small parks will be focused in and around Neighborhood and Civic Centers and other high activity areas, to allow pedestrians to rest and interact.



Figure DESIGN-30
Provide small parks and neighborhood town squares

Goal DESIGN-12. Improve the Live Oak Boulevard/Highway 99 corridor and existing commercial areas to provide attractive focal points of community activity.

Policy DESIGN-12.1 The City will work with Caltrans, the business community, and residents to make aesthetic and functional improvements to the highway corridor, including landscaping, trees, accessible sidewalks, automobile and pedestrian-scaled lighting, bus shelters, trash receptacles, crosswalks, and other streetscape amenities.

Policy DESIGN-12.2 The City will establish flexible setback requirements, including zero setbacks, to promote sidewalk activity in the downtown core area and to allow retail uses to face and open up to front sidewalks and plazas.

Policy DESIGN-12.3 Buildings and other structures along Highway 99 should have windows or decorative treatments in order to maintain the pedestrian's interest.

Policy DESIGN-12.4 The City will encourage, through incentives, streamlining, flexibility in development standards, and other means, infill buildings along vacant or underutilized sections of the highway designed to improve the environment for pedestrians.



Figure DESIGN-31
Street that is able to carry traffic but is scaled to the pedestrian (Left);
Live Oak Boulevard/Highway 99 is unattractive and inhospitable to pedestrians (Right)

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

The following policies encourage the development or redevelopment of employment centers (office, business park, and light industrial developments) that relate positively to the surroundings and are of a scale and character that are attractive and accessible by all applicable modes of travel.

Goal DESIGN-13. New employment centers address the human scale.

- Policy DESIGN-13.1 Large buildings should decrease perceived size and scale through building articulation, breaking up building massing, organization of buildings, the use of different color and materials, and the use of landscape screening.
- Policy DESIGN-13.2 New employment buildings should be designed with a scale and building massing that is complementary to the scale of the adjacent neighborhood.
- Policy DESIGN-13.3 New employment buildings should screen utilities, air conditioning units (HVAC), and waste collection service areas from the street frontage.



Figure DESIGN-32
 Reduce the perceived scale of buildings through massing, articulation, and color (right)
 or through landscape screening (left)

Policy DESIGN-13.4 The City will encourage the use of public art, in particular murals and integrated designs in wall architecture, to add visual interest and to break up the monotony of unarticulated walls of large buildings.

Policy DESIGN-13.5 When new development or re-development of employment areas occurs, the City will require landscaping improvements that will maintain or strengthen existing aesthetic qualities and environmental functions.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The preservation and enhancement of the natural environment is of vital importance as Live Oak grows. Citizens place a high priority on preserving the rural character and believe it is a major component of Live Oak's identity. The natural landscape that surrounds Live Oak contributes to the character of the community. It should be enjoyed by residents and visitors. The City will continue to protect sensitive environments and habitats, as well as provide open spaces for passive and active recreation.

Goal DESIGN-14. Incorporate Live Oak's natural amenities into the community's built environment.

Policy DESIGN-14.1 New developments shall retain and enhance scenic views of the Sutter Buttes to the extent possible.

Policy DESIGN-14.2 The City will encourage the preservation of healthy, attractive vegetation during land development. Significant existing trees shall be preserved whenever possible.

Policy DESIGN-14.3 The City will encourage the use of site landscaping that uses appropriate native plant materials in order to enhance the natural character of the region; to reduce water and pesticide use; and to provide habitat to native species.



Figure DESIGN-33
Maintain views of the Sutter Buttes

Implementation Program DESIGN-1

Following adoption of the 2030 General Plan, the City will adopt changes to Municipal Code and revisions to the Public Works Improvements Standards for consistency with the 2030 General Plan, including any changes needed to be consistent with the Community Character and Design Element. Such changes may include revising the maximum block size to encourage pedestrian and bicycle convenience, shorten vehicle trips, and ensuring adequate emergency access. Standards for cul-de-sacs may need to be revised to show pedestrian and bicycle through connections. The City will adopt standards for alleyway design that provides flexibility for creative project design. Landscaping standards will be revised to encourage the use of drought-tolerant, low-maintenance plants. Street tree standards may also be revised according to the direction in this Element.

The Zoning Ordinance will be revised to provide flexibility in setbacks and other components of development standards in order to accommodate zero-lot line projects, z lots, zipper lots, and other creative site design approaches. The Zoning Ordinance will also be revised to implement new land use designations, such as Downtown Mixed Use and Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use. Within these designations, the Zoning Ordinance will include development standards that encourage outdoor seating. The City will also establish more flexible setback requirements along Highway 99 to promote sidewalk activity and site retail uses facing and opening up onto sidewalks and plazas.

Implementation Program DESIGN-2

Following adoption of the General Plan, either as a part of the Zoning Ordinance update or as a separate process, the City will consider drafting a design manual or design guidelines. The design manual will specifically implement goals and policies of this Community Character Element. The City's intent with respect to the design manual is to provide certainty for landowners and the



development community, as well as ensure compliance with the City's community character and design policies. The City's Design Review Board currently consists of the Planning Commission. The City will consider whether a discretionary or administrative process will be used for design review and ensuring compliance with the Community Character and Design Element.

Implementation Program DESIGN-3

Following adoption of the 2030 General Plan, the City will explore funding opportunities for a downtown strategic plan to implement the General Plan. This follow-on planning effort could have many different components, including but not limited to:

- ✓ Analyze parking that could be provided in diagonal and parallel parking spaces on-street downtown and compare to anticipated future residential and nonresidential buildout to determine what, if any, surface parking may be needed to meet future demand (including an analysis of different peak demand periods for different land uses);
- ✓ Implement downtown core area improvements, including street tree planting, landscaped planters, street furniture, Highway 99 re-design elements, sidewalks, enhancements to pedestrian crossings; downtown theme for signage and other streetscape amenities; and other improvements.

Implementation Program DESIGN-4

Following adoption of the 2030 General Plan, the City will consider preparation of a plan for improvements along Highway 99. This plan will describe improvements, including landscaping, trees, accessible sidewalks, automobile and pedestrian-scaled lighting, bus shelters, trash receptacles, crosswalks, and other streetscape amenities. Where appropriate opportunities and sufficient right-of-way exists, the City will work with Caltrans to modify Live Oak Boulevard/Highway 99 with landscaped strips between the roadway and sidewalks to visually and functionally enhance streets for pedestrian use. The City will coordinate with Caltrans on this plan, as well as the business community and property owners along Highway 99. If appropriate, this improvement plan may become a part of the City's Public Works Improvements Standards and/or Capital Improvements Programming.

Implementation Program DESIGN-5

The City will actively seek funding to assist in the preservation and upgrades of the physical appearance and usability of buildings and sites with special historic and/or architectural interest. If funding is available, the City will explore opportunities to provide property owners with matching funds to help facilitate historic-resource-sensitive rehabilitation projects, and will seek other opportunities to upgrade historic properties.

Implementation Program DESIGN-6

The City will pursue streetscape improvements including sidewalks, street trees and additional landscaping throughout the existing developed community.



Implementation Program DESIGN-7

Following adoption of the 2030 General Plan update, the City will seek funding to prepare comprehensive streetscape plans for Pennington Road. Plans will include elements such as street trees, distinctive crosswalks and sidewalks, traffic calming elements, street lighting, benches, shelters, fountains, bike racks, trash receptacles, and public art. Existing plans for improvements to Pennington Road would be included in this comprehensive streetscape planning process.



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