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The Town of Gilbert

Medium High Density Framework Guidelines

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INTRODUCTION

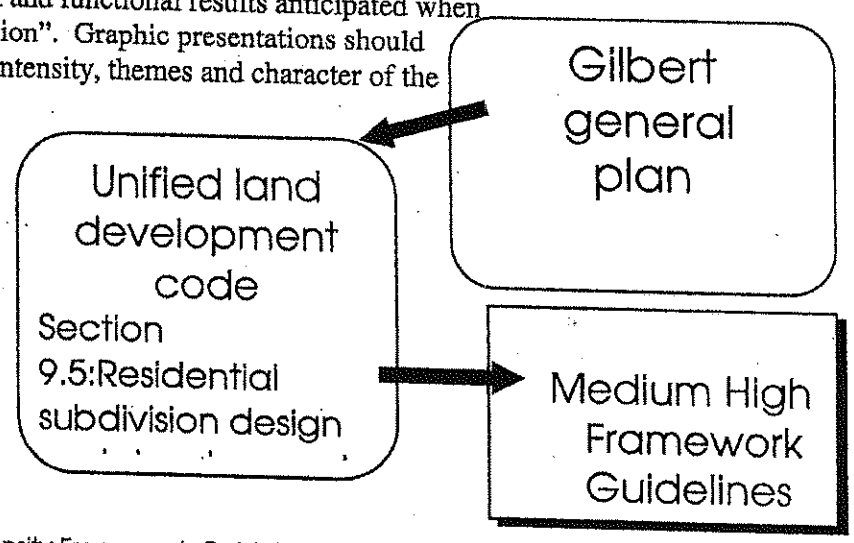
These Guidelines should be used by applicants, architects, planners and developers of property within the Town of Gilbert to assist them in obtaining approved plans for development in Medium High Density Residential developments. They will also be used by the planning staff, Boards, Commissions and Town Council to evaluate Medium High density developments in a fair and consistent manner. The Guidelines do not in any way modify the General Plan of the Town of Gilbert, or any applicable zoning ordinance or requirements.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT: The General Plan is quoted throughout the Guidelines to set the basis for guiding Medium High density development (MH: 4-8 du/acre, target density = 6 du/acre). The vision for each element, Open Space, Diversity through Community Character and Circulation, is stated at the beginning of each section. Next, is a box that will include references to the existing Subdivision Design Guidelines that will provide further direction. Then there are concepts provided in bold that may be illustrated with photos or diagrams that are examples of how the Medium High density vision may be implemented. These Guidelines are designed to reward innovative design solutions. Therefore, the last section, Incentives for Innovation, gives examples of what are some of the incentives that may be granted, if there is a direct connection to the design solution.

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Development applications shall include a Project Description that explains the proposed development's goals in relation to the goals of the Medium High Density Residential Framework Guidelines. A written description must clearly explain the overall theme and character of the proposed community and how its open space, circulation, diversity elements and project's character reinforces the overall theme. The Project Description shall describe the target population and eventual residents of the project. The community character description should also include a discussion of the social and functional results anticipated when the plan is implemented and any requested "Incentives for Innovation". Graphic presentations should be presented which support the description and communicate the intensity, themes and character of the community.

The Gilbert General Plan sez:
Agree on project design standards prior to granting land use allocations, to aid in the beautification and improvement of living conditions in the community.



B. COMMUNITY CHARACTER THROUGH DIVERSITY

There should be a diversity of housing types and commercial uses within Medium High Density Residential areas. A mix of housing units may have the positive social effect of fostering a diverse population and the return of extended families to neighborhoods. Medium High Density developments may use architectural forms, proportions, materials, colors and other features to recall the historic or rural context of Gilbert. However, all development must be designed to address the context of its surroundings and market area.
For new Medium High Density developments, the Guidelines promote:

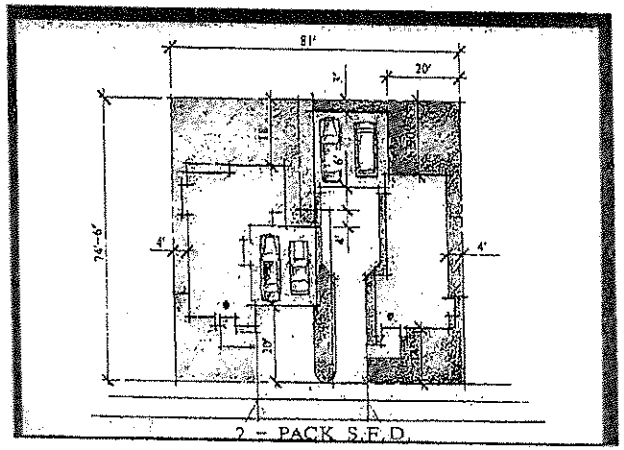
- The inclusion of convenient retail, cultural and public uses developed at an appropriate scale within a village center;
- Encourage developments which maintain land use compatibility, thereby reducing the need for physical buffers;
- The inclusion of several residential types in neighborhoods that respond to the market;
- A variety of lot widths and building setbacks within every lot size;
- Diversity of housing types and sizes on the same street;
- Discourage a singular approach to treating the garage of single-family homes;
- A variety of architectural vernaculars within alternate elevation designs;
- Articulation of the front elevation of houses as well as the rear elevations facing the back yard.
- Design of housing products that utilize energy efficient and design.

Implementation Standards:
Reference the requirements found in Section 9.53, Lot and Street Design Guidelines; Section 9.55, Community Character Guidelines and Section 9.57, Building Design and Architectural Character Guidelines of the Town of Gilbert Unified Land Development Code.

The Gilbert General Plan sez:

Encourage the development of a range of housing types and densities based upon orderly development patterns. Housing types can include single family, patio, townhouse and multi-family type units. Design Community, General and Regional Commercial facilities to address neighborhood, community and regional retail service needs respectively.

1. **Discourage a singular approach to treating garages.**



The Gilbert General Plan sez:

Promote well designed development which reflects Gilbert's character and differentiates it from surrounding communities.

Establish an image for each district within the community (ie., downtown, industrial/business park, residential).

Require the use of comprehensive design principles to maintain a standard of excellence.

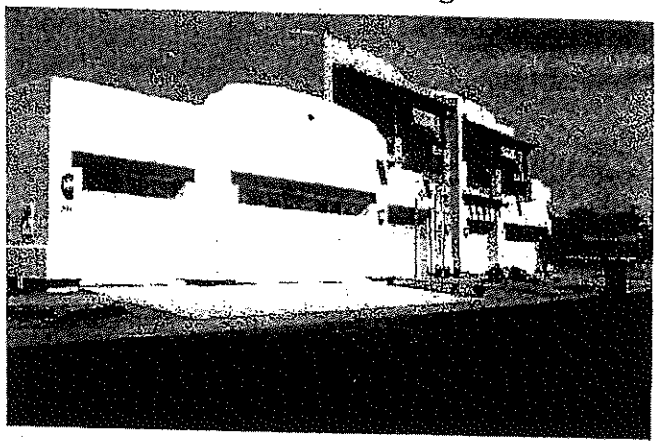
Promote the appearance and design of Convenience Commercial facilities to portray a scale appropriate to adjoining areas, emphasizing the individuality of shops or offices.

2. **The articulation of houses shall address the front as well as the back of the product proposed.**

FRONT OR STREET ELEVATION

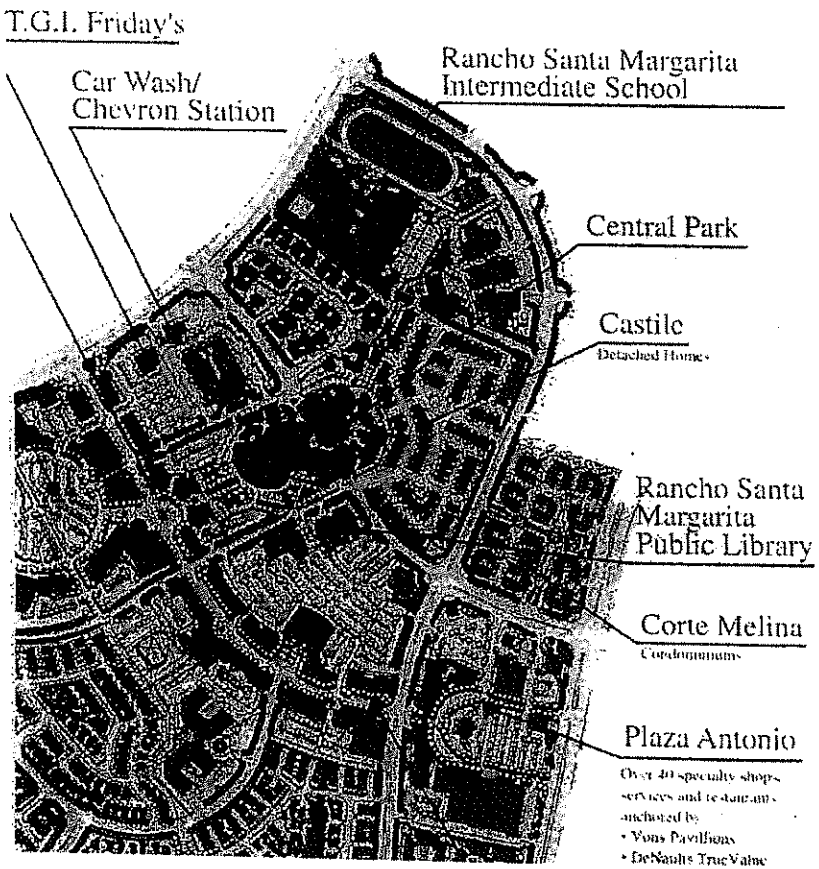
REAR VIEW (Articulation of Rear Elevations)

3. **Housing products shall provide a variety of architectural vernaculars within alternate elevation designs.**

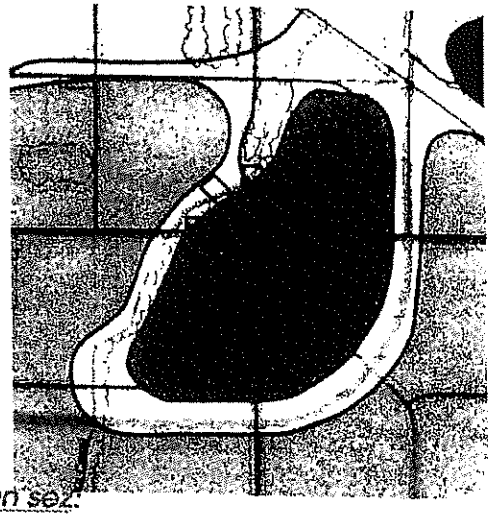


4. **Other housing options within the Medium High Density may include rental apartments, attached and detached condominiums and fee simple townhouses.**

5. **Retail, commercial services and public uses may be grouped to serve neighborhoods and be accessible to pedestrians. The scale of architecture and the size of the neighborhood centers should match the proposed market area and character of the adjacent neighborhood.**



Possible locations of Village Centers are shown in Section A.4 of the Gilbert General Plan. The Santa Margarita Town Center in California includes schools, retail, residential and a central park.



The Gilbert General Plan says:

Design Community, General and Regional Commercial facilities to address neighborhood, community and regional retail service needs respectively.

Promote with an emphasis on pleasant pedestrian experiences, interesting building elevations with varying setbacks, use of shade devices, landscape, sculpture, and public seating.

Discourage large massing, singular roof structures, repetitive architectural features, long horizontal elements, and typical "L" shaped shopping center designs.

CIRCULATION

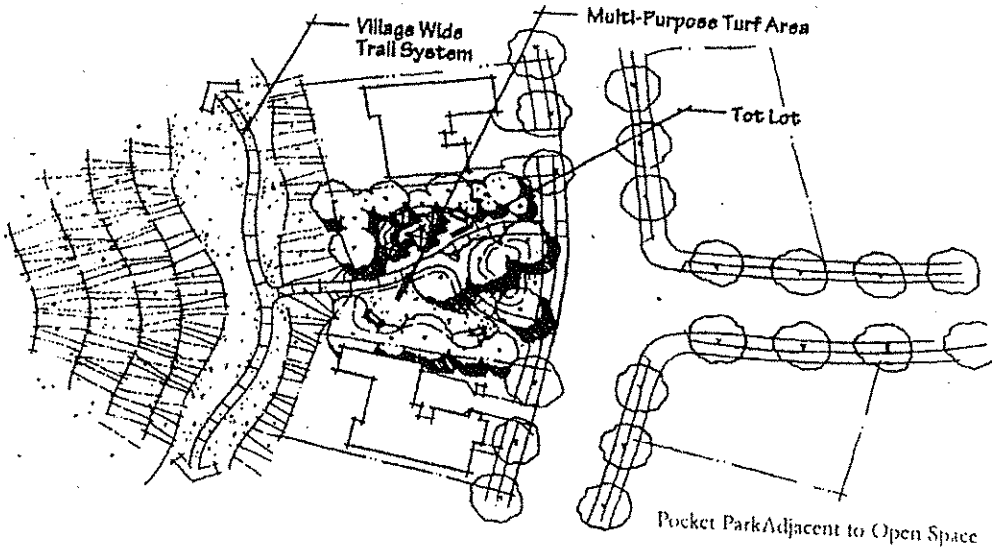
The street circulation system, like the use of open space, shall provide several functions. The less obvious functions of a street system would be as a secondary means for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel throughout Medium High density neighborhoods. Medium High density projects should raise the importance of these other functions by:

- Promoting street patterns that are safe and hospitable to people;
- Promoting narrower streets with larger parkways;
- Including a street tree program along all through-streets;
- Encouraging a variety of street patterns (alleys, cul-de-sacs, courtyards);
- Extending walkways between non-through streets;
- Acknowledging that collector roadways, or boulevards are corridors that visually frame important landmarks in a neighborhood;
- Encouraging connectivity, both pedestrian and vehicular, between residential, commercial and recreational uses.

Implementation Standards:
Reference the requirements found in Section 9.53.B.1-4, Lot and street design guidelines, of the Town of Gilbert Unified Land Development Code regarding street patterns. Street cross sections are located in Chapter III. Improvement Details of the ULDC.

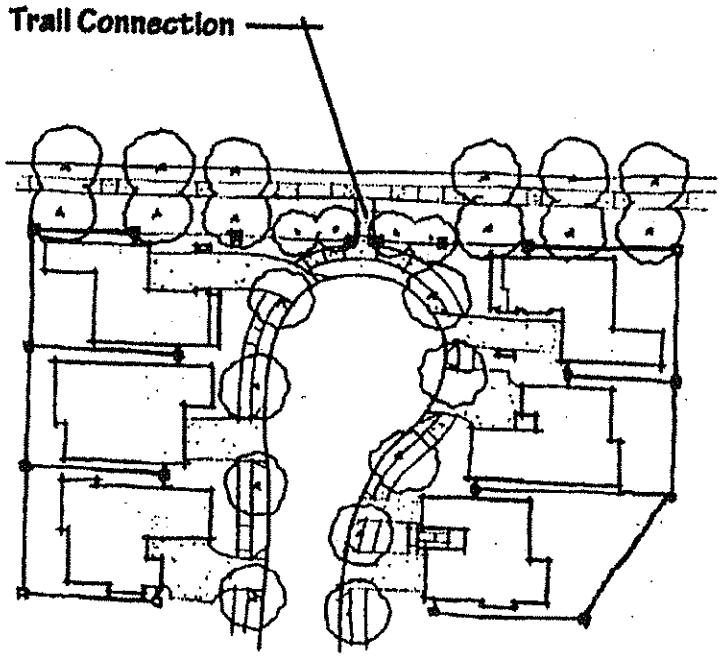
1. **Collector streets shall provide short, direct routes with a terminus at a central feature of the neighborhood, such as a park, school or other neighborhood activity center.**

2. **Rows of street trees shall be provided to shade the roadway and pedestrian walk, and to create a corridor to frame the central terminus described above. Street trees should be introduced between the curb and sidewalk where there is sufficient room along local streets.**

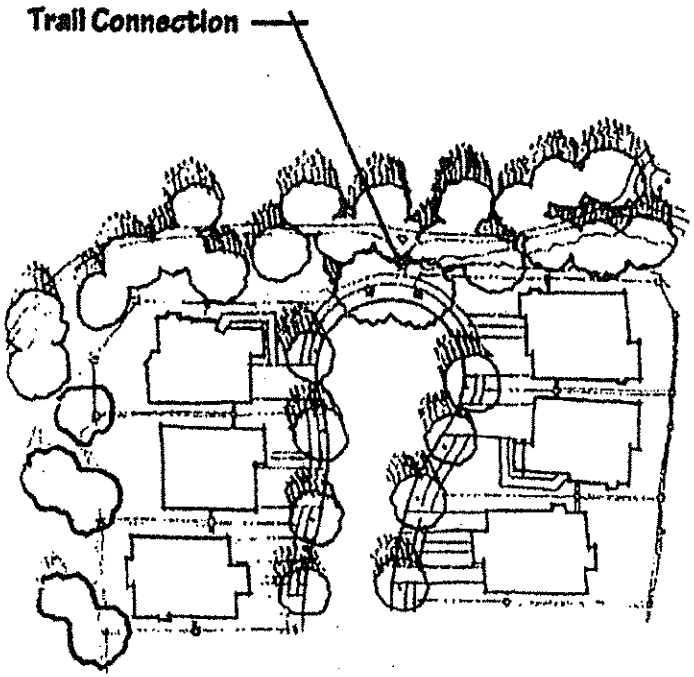


3. **Opaque screen walls on both sides of a collector street shall be broken up.**

4. **If cul-de-sacs are designed in a way that end up adjacent to a street or an open space element, they shall allow for continuous pedestrian movement to connect the proposed project with adjacent uses and trails in a safe manner.**



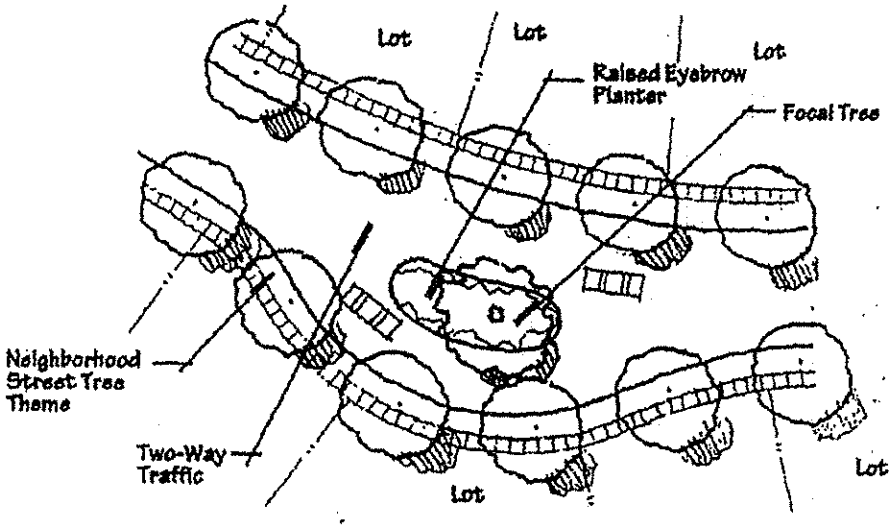
Trail Connections to Street



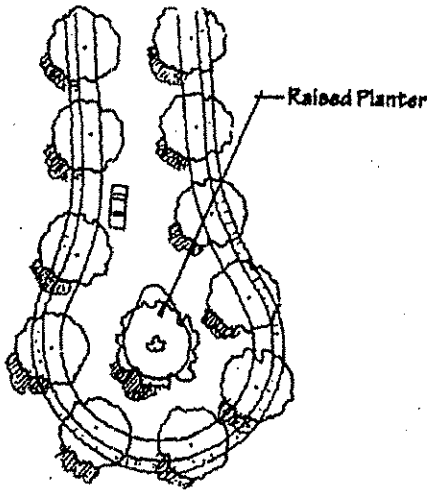
Trail Connections to Spine

5. Local street designs shall feature some of the same traffic calming devices described in Section 9.53.B.1-4 of the ULDC.

Neighborhood Raised Landscape Median



Raised Landscape Planters



Raised Landscape Planters Cul-De-Sac

The Gilbert General Plan sez:

Plan for streets that serve the characteristics of each neighborhood with consideration given to the manner in which streets enhance appearance, safety and function.

Design collector streets to carry local traffic.

Discourage through traffic in neighborhoods between community arterials.

OPEN SPACE

The design and use of open space shall be the armature of the development of any Medium High Density Residential areas. Open space must:

- Be functional;
- Be evaluated qualitatively, not quantitatively but in no case less than 18% of the gross area of the project;
- The Design of the open space should allow for 5% (target) of the gross acreage to be shaped for play/active areas;
- Provide passive and active areas to encourage social interaction;
- Cluster home projects should be designed to surround the open space common area. Said space should be visible, accessible, and useable to the community of residents;
- Be designed to incorporate visual and/or physical connections between open space areas;
- Act as a center of community identity and pride; and
- Provide a linkage to employment areas or Village Centers, but not at the cost of meeting the above objectives.

Implementation Standards:
Reference the requirements found in Section 9.54, Open Space and Landscaping Design, of the Town of Gilbert Unified Land Development Code.

1. **A combination of open space and amenities shall exceed requirements in Section 9.54 and shall provide benefits to the project's population as well as the larger community.**

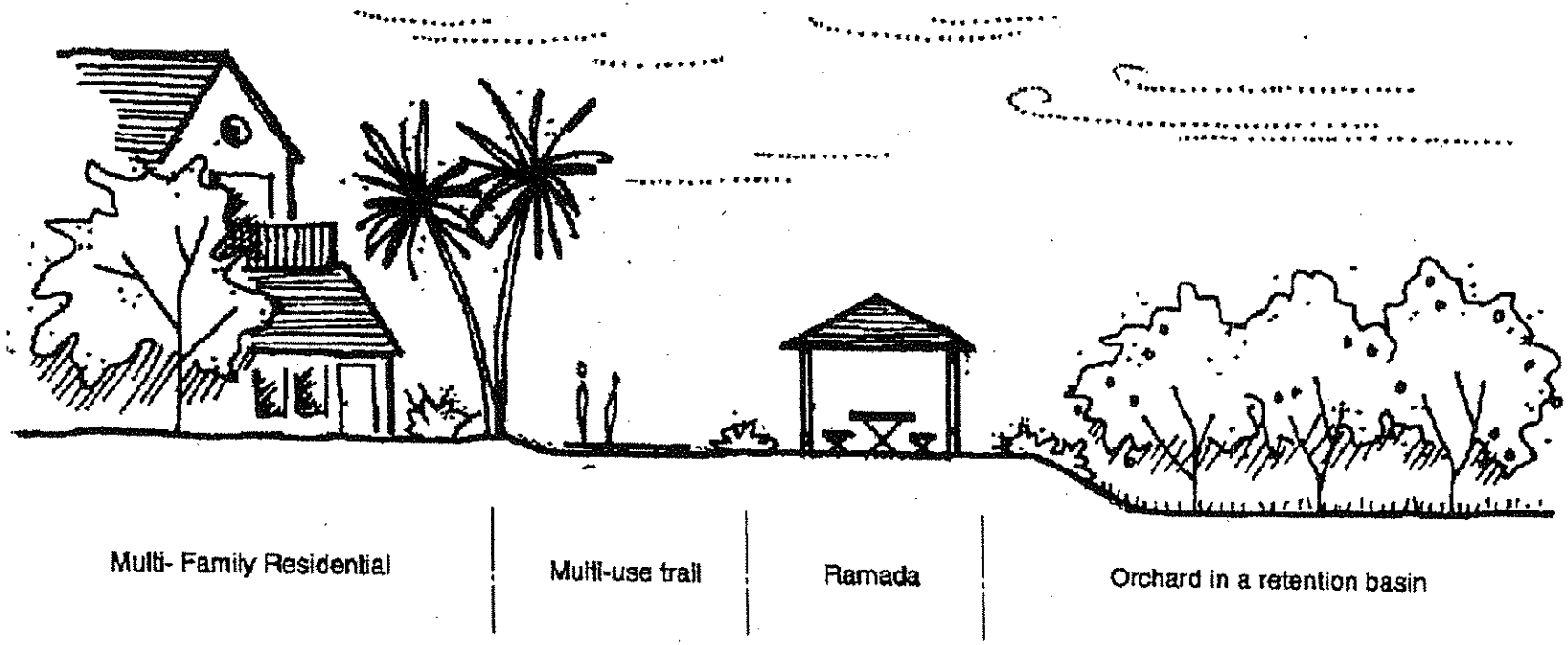
The Gilbert General Plan sez:

Design neighborhoods as safe and friendly environments which encourage informal interaction through the provision of pedestrian and equestrian scaled amenities, including pathways, parks, and other common facilities.

Link residential areas to schools, parks, commercial services and other neighborhoods with landscaped pedestrian walkways and bikeways.

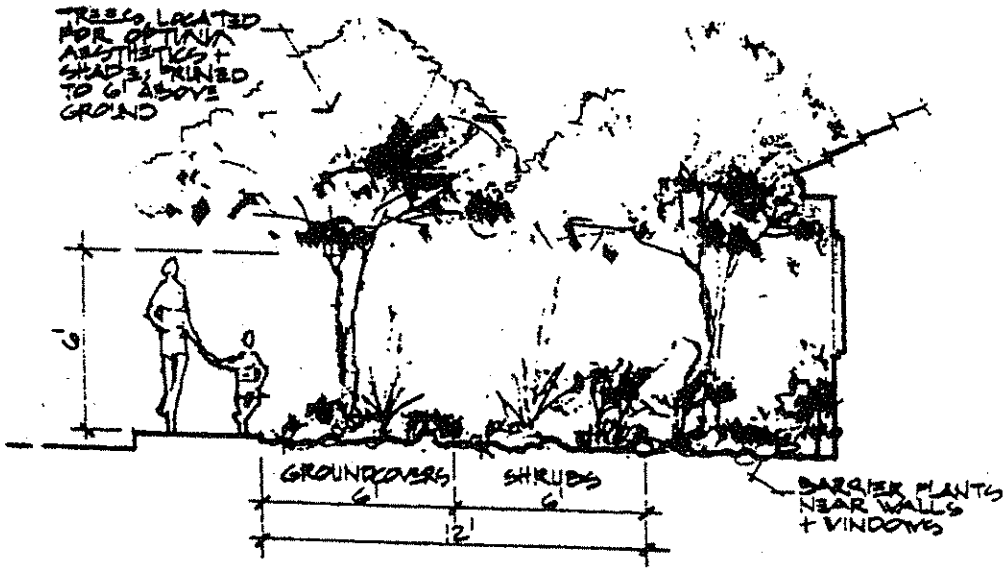
Plan for adequate open space in the form of mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks and school sites that are

2. **Open space shall be centered to create a centrally located public space and links to neighborhoods, commercial centers, village centers and work. It shall not be less than 18% of the gross acreage.**



3. **The project shall exhibit creativity in the reduction of impervious surfaces and glare through creative site planning and the use of upgraded paving materials such as pavers, exposed aggregate and colored concrete. Said materials should be used to create character and identity for the project and should be used as a minimum at the entrance to the project and at areas that constitute focal points. Design of shade structures in common areas shall take in consideration sun incidence and prevailing winds, and shall be situated in a manner to support the landscape design to achieve the desired effects.**

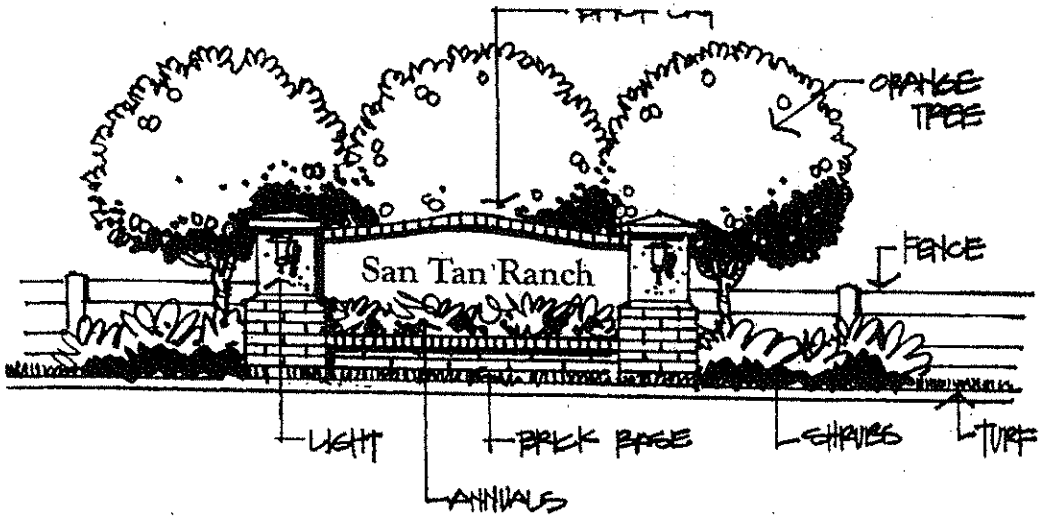
4. **Open space areas shall be safe and secure through the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) site planning techniques and appropriate lighting. (See Appendix)**



PLANTING ADJACENT TO WALKS AND WALLS

5. **Formal and informal planting patterns shall be used to accentuate the planned use of the area. An example may be: trees in soldier course in buffer areas; rows for collector streets and public spaces; and natural patterns for and active and passive recreation areas.**

6. **Open space plan for Medium High projects shall include a well planned identity and signage program to carry on the theme of the Medium High density neighborhoods. Signage shall provide directional information to community services or educational opportunities about the Town's culture, history or indigenous landscape (i.e.: farming practices, names of plant materials and their uses).**



The Gilbert General Plan sez:
Develop cultural opportunities for residents of all ages.
Preserve sites and buildings of local cultural significance and develop new sites for cultural activities.
Encourage the provision of art in public places and enhance cultural development within the community.

INCENTIVES FOR INNOVATION

The following is a partial list of possible incentives for the design of superior and innovative living environments. Other incentives may be considered. There must be a rational nexus, or relationship between the incentive requested and a specific aspect of the project that meets the intent of the "Performance Measures" stated.

POSSIBLE INCENTIVES

- Allow an overall density above the General Plan target density.
- Allow narrower streets, sidewalks on one side of street.
- Modify setbacks or coverage requirements.
- Dedication of open space for Town maintenance.
- Reduce total amount of open space requirement if other amenities such as swimming pools, club houses, community centers, fitness centers, etc. are provided.
- Allow Medium High densities in other land use categories if site is considered an "infill" parcel as defined in the R-CH zoning district.
- Project meets the majority of the Guidelines.
- A large tract is centrally located and developed as a community park.
- Use of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles of creating visible and safe outdoor spaces.
- Mixed-use buildings, such as homes above storefronts, and public areas are provided to reduce reliance on the automobile.
- Use of treated effluent to irrigate landscaping.
- Retain agricultural uses.
- Creation of livable communities.

DESIRED INNOVATIONS AND OUTCOMES