

# INTRODUCTION

## GUIDELINES & STANDARDS



## Preface

As a prelude to the Design Guidelines and Standards document, the Introduction Chapter sets the stage for the community's vision that drives the physical form of the City of Soledad. This design document has been prepared to promote structures, urban spaces, and landscapes that are enjoyable to view, inhabit, and experience.

The City of Soledad is a unique and vibrant community located in the rural Salinas Valley of the Central California Coast, characterized by rich farmlands and framed by the rugged Santa Lucia Mountains, to the west, and the Gabilan Range, to the east.

Strategically situated in this scenic setting, Soledad is anchored by its historic downtown reminiscent of "Main Street" America.

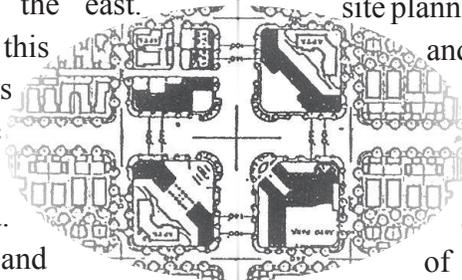
With this central core and its rich cultural history, the citizens of Soledad aspire to a high quality of life which includes preserving and expanding upon this traditional community image.

Past planning and design efforts have focused on enhancing Soledad's downtown

to create an inviting place to socialize and shop. However, with the significant growth sustained during the early 2000's, it is now time for the City to expand its recognition of the quality and defining character of new development in terms of site planning, architecture, landscape,

and community design. To this end, the adopted General Plan for Soledad identifies the completion and implementation of Community Design

Guidelines & Standards (referred to as "the Guidelines", hereafter) to ensure that development projects incorporate the quality and character desired by Soledad residents. As such, the Guidelines are an important component of the City's General Plan and Municipal Code. ♦



## COMMUNITY VISION

The community vision for Soledad originates from a desire to create a compact pedestrian-oriented environment consistent with traditional California pre-1950 towns. In the past, classic long-established communities stood out clearly from their surroundings, both in terms of building design and landscape.

Traditionally, architecture could be unmistakably identified as belonging to a specific culture, region, and locale. Thus, Soledad's community vision promotes classic indigenous development patterns, architectural styles, and landscape statements firmly rooted in the traditional design vernacular of the California Central Coast Region. It is envisioned that future community development will follow time-honored settlement patterns influenced by early California Spanish mission villages and classic turn-of-the-century (20th Century) California towns. Architecture will be designed to respond to past precedents, regional climatic influences, and indigenous building materials.

The landscape vision promotes both formal (urban oriented), and informal (rural oriented) patterns, influenced by Soledad's traditional downtown and rich agrarian heritage. Through the implementation and interpretation of long established design traditions, it is envisioned that Soledad will develop its own distinct design identity, with development patterns, buildings, and landscapes that distinguish and set apart Soledad as a unique and dynamic community.

## ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Existing architectural styles found in Soledad reflect the variety of influences derived from particular periods of growth over the last 140 years. Architectural styles associated with Soledad are influenced by the surrounding Soledad Mission and adobe structures, farm and ranch buildings, and the in-town collection of various residential, commercial, and institutional structures. From its early settlement days, associated with the

1872 arrival of the railroad, Soledad's growth has resulted in no single singular architectural style. Instead, Soledad is composed of a handful of styles rooted in the architectural heritage of the region. Although it is not the intent of the Guidelines to require any particular architectural style related to new construction, the City strongly encourages architectural expressions that represent traditional architectural styles found within the region. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the architectural styles found locally can be helpful in considering various architectural design alternatives.

Historically, architectural styles found within Soledad's older residential neighborhoods include Craftsman, Mission Revival, Queen Anne Victorian, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Spanish Eclectic. During the 1950's and 60's, the City experienced an influx of California Ranch homes and less-descript "builder style" homes. From that time forward, residential development became highly production-oriented, based on interpretations of stucco sided Mediterranean and wood sided contemporary styles. These tract homes are often repetitive, commonly associated with tract developments located in high growth areas of California.

## PURPOSE AND INTENT

Design Review is required for most development constructed within Soledad. The Guidelines are intended to respond directly to the Goals, Policies, and Programs established within the City's General Plan, emphasizing that new development, major remodels, and building rehabilitations preserve and enhance the qualities that make Soledad a unique and desirable place to live, visit, and conduct business. Specific General Plan and Redevelopment Agency Goals, Policies, and Programs include the following:

### GENERAL PLAN LAND USE VISION:

*"New neighborhoods are distinct and recognizable and possess a uniquely pedestrian character in which schools, parks, and shopping are all*

*within easy walking distance. And yet each new neighborhood is integrated with the fabric of the town. The downtown area along Front Street attracts locals and visitors alike with its eclectic mix of traditional markets, restaurants, and open plazas, and the numerous festivals held there each year.”*

The main General Plan Goals, Policies, and Programs in support of the Guidelines include:

Land Use Goal 1 - *“To provide effective standards for the location, amount, rate, type and quality of new development so that the local economy remains healthy, attractive residential neighborhoods can expand, the small town character of the town is preserved, and the natural environment is protected.”*

Land Use Policy L-42 - *“The City shall use Community Design Guidelines as a decision-making tool to ensure that new development incorporates the qualities and character desired by Soledad residents.”*

Land Use Program 2.10 - *“The City shall prepare and adopt Community Design Guidelines as a decision-making tool to ensure that new development incorporates the qualities and character desired by Soledad residents.”*

2009 Housing Program 2.1.3 - *“In formulating Community Design Guidelines, the City will include guidelines that provide direction on attaining quality architectural design and housing diversity (with respect to type and size) in new subdivision neighborhoods.”*

#### SOLEDAD REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Goal A: Provide for the development of distinct commercial districts to enhance economic viability.

Objective A1 - Attain a constant image and character in the commercial district in order to achieve an environment reflecting a high standard of architectural, landscape, urban design principles and to preserve the unique cultural,

historical, and aesthetic qualities of the Project Area.

Goal F - Establish and implement design standards and environmental quality and other design elements which provide unity and integrity to the entire Project Area.

Objective F2 - Complete Community Design Guidelines to include a review and improved look for the Downtown Commercial Historic Area on Front Street.

The Guidelines have been prepared concurrent with a comprehensive conventional zoning code update, providing consistency between the two documents. In addition, each chapter of the Guidelines was thoroughly reviewed and refined by the City of Soledad Planning Commission and Architectural Review Committee prior to City Council adoption.

The Guidelines encourage a distinct pattern and quality for new development in the City of Soledad. This comprehensive approach represents a more understandable and predictable role in shaping the City’s physical future by emphasizing community form, scale, landscape, and architectural design.

The Guidelines are drawn from the desirable qualities of the City’s historic character and enhanced with a contemporary vision to meet the needs of a growing community. The contents are purposely visual and educational for ease of understanding, with the overall intent to provide a greater measure of predictability when related to the City’s design review process.

All projects subject to design review are expected to incorporate the Guidelines in a manner that responds to the unique characteristics of Soledad, the individual site, and surrounding area. They are intended to both guide (discretionary) and require (mandatory) the City’s design expectations related to the quality and character of infill development as well as new expansion areas identified in the General Plan.

Application of the Guidelines applies to each of the City’s zoning districts, as follows:

GUIDELINE CHAPTER	ZONING DISTRICT
1 - Introduction	All Districts
2 - Community Design	All Districts
3 - Community Commercial	C-1, C-2, C-C, C-R, H-C, BP
4 - Traditional Commercial	C-1, C-2, C-C, C-R, H-C; Downtown Specific Plan
5 - Single Family Residential	R-1, R-1.5, R-2
6 - Multi-Family Residential	R-2, R-3, Downtown Specific Plan
7 - Office/Light Industrial	C-1, C-2, C-C, C-R, H-C, M, BP

NOTE: All future Specific Plan/General Plan Expansion Areas are subject to the Guidelines.

This document is utilized as the primary basis for building and site development design review. Depending on the type, location, or complexity of development, design review may be administered by City Staff, Architectural Review Committee, Planning Commission, or the City Council. A project that is consistent with the Guidelines is likely to be well-received and expedited through the design review process. The City encourages applicants to become familiar with this document and meet with Staff to discuss the design review process prior to submitting a formal development application.

Development application forms are available from the City of Soledad’s Community and Economic Development Department or the City’s web site at [www.cityofsoledad.com](http://www.cityofsoledad.com). Application forms contain a detailed checklist of items required in order to expedite the design review and project approval process.

## HOW THE GUIDELINES ARE ORGANIZED

The Guidelines provide a clear statement of the design direction for development within the City of Soledad. The description of Guidelines, coupled with specific Standards, are intended to assist in the identification and implementation of a clear and consistent design direction and level of quality. A variety of drawn images and photographs of building details, materials, and landscape elements has been assembled to assist architects, developers, and builders in the design of site, architecture, and landscape plans. After reviewing this document, architects, developers, and builders will have a clear and concise design direction and the knowledge necessary to produce creative, enduring, and aesthetically pleasing projects that produce high quality site planning, architecture, and landscape developments.

This document is divided into seven major chapters and glossary, that include:

### CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION:

This chapter outlines Soledad’s Community Vision, Architectural Heritage, Purpose and Intent, and describes how the document is organized. Included is an explanation of legal provisions including Conflicts with Other Regulations, Exceptions, and Amendments and Supplements.

Chapter One’s design review process is intended to promote aesthetic quality while creating and preserving value throughout Soledad’s existing and future residential neighborhoods and commercial, industrial, and office districts. The design review process is also intended to assure compliance with this Guideline document, while encouraging design expression, creativity, and diversity.

### CHAPTER TWO - COMMUNITY DESIGN

This chapter presents various broad design techniques intended to enhance the City’s

appearance, definition, and identity. It promotes development that is appropriate to the community through the identification of traditional California town and village configurations, Central Coast settlement patterns, and the utilization of design guideline tools.

**CHAPTER THREE - COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL:** This chapter is composed of commercial development patterns that accommodate both pedestrian and vehicular movements. It presents site planning, architecture, and landscape design guidelines and standards designed to successfully balance the placement of buildings, with on-site parking, meaningful open space features, and indigenous landscape patterns, all intended to integrate into the fabric of the surrounding community.

**CHAPTER FOUR - TRADITIONAL COMMERCIAL:** This chapter relates to traditional “Main Street” configurations of buildings located immediately adjacent to streets, plazas, and courtyards, and the use of formal landscape patterns. Site planning, architecture, and landscape design guidelines and standards are identified to promote traditional development patterns whereby commercial storefronts frame the streetscape. Formal landscape patterns are intended to reinforce Soledad’s customary “Main Street” image, ultimately creating a pedestrian friendly environment.

**CHAPTER FIVE - SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED RESIDENTIAL:** This chapter includes single family detached, duplex, and triplex units, and is designed to be all encompassing, containing design guidelines and standards related to site planning, architecture, and landscaping. It provides design criteria tailored to street patterns that promote the concept of connectivity between adjacent neighborhoods and commercial centers, while promoting home

styles that are defined by architectural heritage of the region.

**CHAPTER SIX - MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL:** This chapter relates to single family attached and multi-family units and includes design guidelines and standards related to site planning, architecture, and landscaping. It integrates attached and multi-family dwellings into the fabric of the neighborhood, and promotes usable and defined common open space features, such as village greens and interior courtyards, to create functional and pleasing people places for the benefit of residents.

**CHAPTER SEVEN - OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL:** This chapter is oriented towards the composition of office and light industrial buildings designed to create a balance of building placements coupled with meaningful open space features and vehicular parking areas. It contains various design guidelines and standards related to site planning, architecture, and landscape intended to orient the placement of human-scaled buildings which frame and enclose open space features, while landscape elements screen employee parking areas, storage yards, and distribution facilities.

**GLOSSARY:** The glossary provides a better understanding of the words and terms used in the Guidelines and ensures the precise use of technical terms. Many of the definitions included are common technical terms used in the architecture, landscape architecture, construction, planning, and urban design professions.

## CONFLICTS WITH OTHER REGULATIONS

In addition to the Guidelines, applicants are required to meet the criteria established by the City of Soledad related to the City's General Plan and Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance. New development requiring Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&R's) shall incorporate the Guidelines by reference, where applicable.

This Guidelines document may be more restrictive than, but does not supersede or modify, any existing City or State codes, regulations, or ordinances. In the event of conflict or discrepancy, or for subjects not addressed herein, the more restrictive standards shall apply.

## EXCEPTIONS

The City of Soledad Planning Commission or City Council shall have the right to approve exception to, any standards of the Guidelines document as may be applied to any specific site, architectural, or landscape plan with a special finding of substantial conformance with the Guidelines. No such exception shall be construed or held to be an exception of any other provisions of the Guidelines, or of the same provisions of any other development plan or proposal.

## AMENDMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTS

This Guidelines document may be amended or supplemented by the City at its sole discretion. Any such amendment shall be applicable to all development plans that are subsequently both submitted and deemed complete by City Staff for review and approval by the City of Soledad.