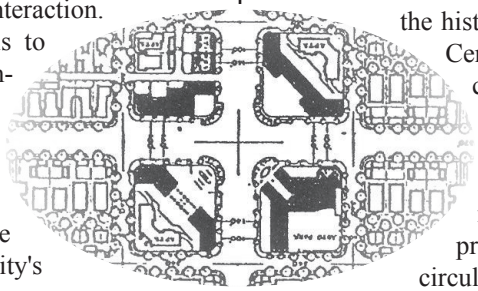
STRUCTURE & FORM
GUIDELINES & STANDARDS

Community Image

The purpose and intent is to establish a community design framework for the development, enhancement, and preservation of the City of Soledad, based upon traditional planning and urban design patterns, and historical precedents that drive the physical form of the City.

The over-arching community image for Soledad is rooted in the promotion of various environments that range from urban to rural. Commonly referred to as "Transect Zones", these distinct areas of the community display various characteristics - urban/rural, formal/informal, and man-made/natural. When assembled in a comprehensive fashion, the community benefits in terms of efficient infrastructure, public and private services, and social interaction.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a palette of form-giving elements: historical precedents; neighborhood unit; circulation pattern; and open space, designed to guide the structure and form of the community, consist with the City's General Plan.



Historical precedents are provided to establish a basis for the development patterns and forms rooted in the context of American and Spanish design principles. These traditional development patterns - including the classic American Township Grid, Anglo Baroque Axis, and Spanish Gridded Plaza Network - have each had an influence, either explicit or implied, upon past and present California Central Coast communities.

The Neighborhood Unit is the basic building block of the community, based upon a comfortable quarter-mile or five-minute pedestrian walk from edge of the neighborhood to it's center. The Neighborhood Unit is designed as a self-sufficient area containing all the needs - social, commercial, residential, educational, recreational - of the immediate neighborhood.

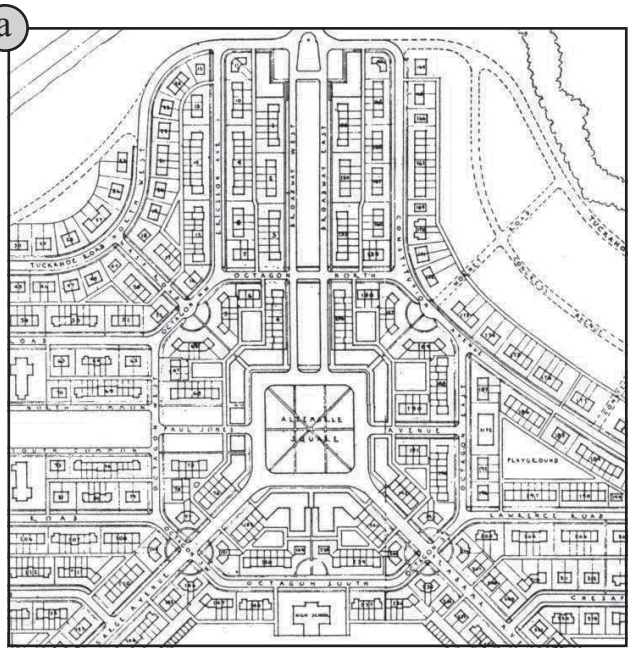
Circulation Patterns provide a wide range of circulation networks, as commonly found in the historical context of the California Central Coast region. The circulation patterns, range from formal urban-oriented grids, diagonals, and radials to informal curvilinear country roads and lanes. The Guidelines promote a wide variety of circulation networks for development within Soledad.

Open Space forms range from formal urban-oriented plazas and squares to village greens and rural-oriented ranch compounds. These open space features, coupled with the varied circulation elements, help form the backbone of the community, all designed to evoke a memorable, unforgettable, and cherished city form. ◈

HIST. PRECEDENTS

AMERICAN & SPANISH

a



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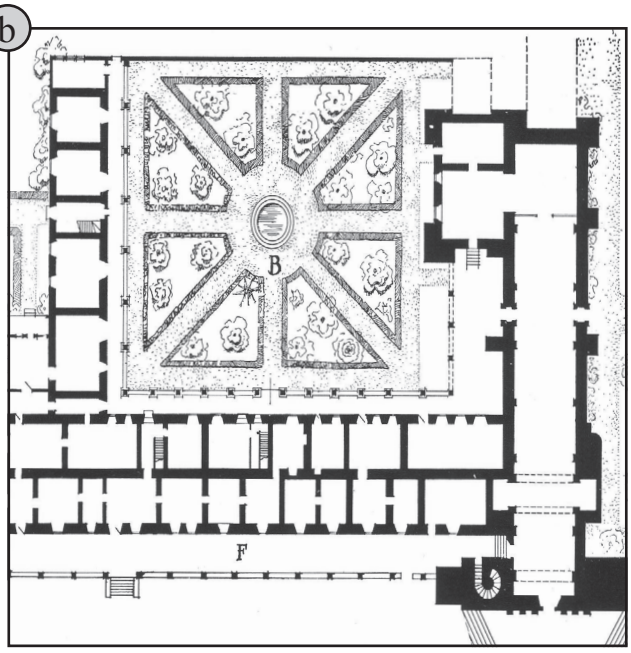


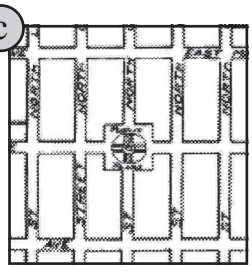
American settlement patterns have had a substantial influence upon community form in California as demonstrated by the variety of grid oriented town developments throughout the Golden State. Bolstered by the Land Ordinance of 1785 which segmented the entire country into a series of townships, sections, and sub-sections, the American grid became the paramount land division mechanism, projecting a formal rectilinear urban image that is manifested in many early California towns and cities. These urban patterns consist of parallel circulation alignments and simple geometrical shapes of blocks and open space features.

American urban patterns are inspired by European Baroque town planning that advocates a hierarchy of circulation features (boulevards, avenues, streets, lanes, alleys) designed to highlight the presence of significant civic buildings, monuments, and urban spaces. Beginning with the Garden City movement in Great Britain and spurred on by the City Beautiful movement in the United States, the Baroque town planning paradigm gained an important, yet brief, foothold that manifested itself in many early California towns and cities.

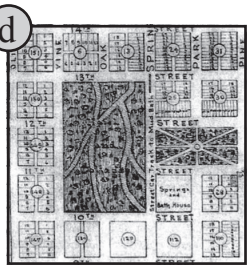
Settlement by Spain of early California began in 1769 when two expeditions, one by land and the other by sea, left Mexico to establish a series of presidio, mission, and pueblo outposts that dotted the California coastline, each within a day's horseback journey. Of greater importance was the composition of these outposts identified as three unique settlement patterns - The Presidio, The Mission, and The Pueblo.

The Presidios, primarily designed as military garrisons, were configured as stockaded or walled quadrangles commonly containing barracks, stores, shops, and stables. These military outposts (San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and San Francisco) were established to expand Spain's colonial empire further north from Mexico. The Missions (b) of early California, were predominately designed as large enclosed compounds containing dormitories, shops, schoolrooms, infirmary buildings, and living quarters, dominated by the church building. The Pueblo's (e) (San Jose and Los Angeles) were primarily designed as merchant towns, supplying foodstuffs to military garrisons while ultimately maturing as self-contained urban-rural units. These settlements included rectilinear tracts of land for houses, farm plots, and the requisite town plaza that were based upon the Spanish Law of the Indies. ◈

THE HIST. PRECEDENTS TOOLBOX

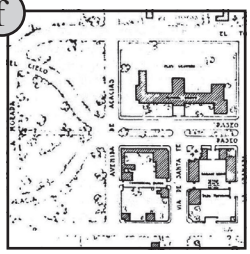


c Old Town Orange, CA

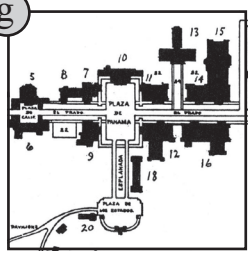


d Paso Robles, CA

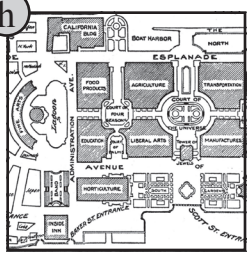
e Publo de Los Angeles, CA



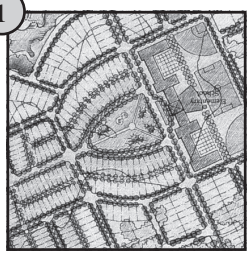
f Rancho Santa Fe, CA



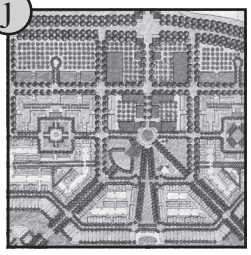
g San Diego Expo, CA



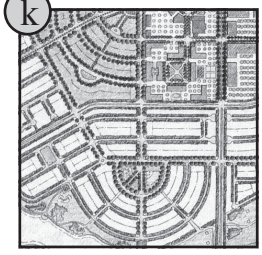
h San Francisco Expo, CA



i Gold Country Ranch, CA



j Laguna West, CA

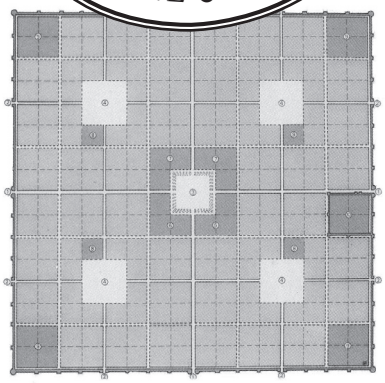


k Placer Villages, CA

The pattern of development within Soledad should reflect regional and local historical precedents in an effort to "root" the community in the rich heritage of American and Spanish development patterns. Guided by town patterns contained in the Historical Precedents Toolbox, developers shall design new communities and neighborhoods that incorporate traditional settlement patterns by promoting centrality, neighborhood character and connectivity, streetscape hierarchy, open space diversity, and architectural traditions that collectively reinforce Soledad community identity.

In addition, development patterns should preserve significant natural features including significant riparian elements, woodlands, and topography while sensitively accommodating future development. No development shall occur upon ridgelines and slopes over Soledad's easterly 400 foot contour line, per the City General Plan. Lastly, development patterns shall incorporate a vehicular and pedestrian circulation network, designed in a hierarchical fashion, whereby block density and formality increase in relation to land use intensity, in order to promote Soledad community and neighborhood centrality. ◈

COMMUNITY DESIGN PRIMER
CITY OF SOLEDAD
Inc. 1921
HIST. PRECEDENTS



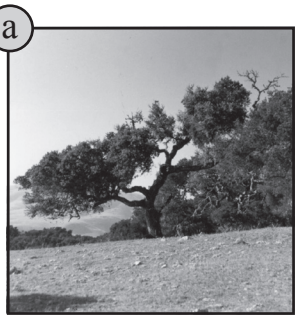
The first planning legislation in the America's, the Spanish Law of the Indies, was enacted in 1573 by Philip II in an effort to establish uniform standards and procedures for planning Spanish towns and colonial settlements in the New World. This codification influenced settlement patterns in early California and included environmental provisions for the siting of towns including water availability, wind direction, and agricultural potential, to name a few. The Laws also prescribed the siting and orientation of other physical man-made attributes that included the church, arcades, town hall, hospital, arsenal, and customs house, all positioned around the quintessential rectilinear town plaza and gridded street system, becoming a precursor to the all American Township grid. ◈

Did you know?

URBAN/RURAL TRANSECT

NATURAL / RURAL / SUBURBAN / URBAN

a



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g

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A Transect* (i) is a geographical cross-section of the region designed to identify and highlight various man-made and natural environments in a continuum that ranges from urban to rural. Based upon land use intensity, the Transect offers an easily understood and recognizable image of Soledad's desired community form and function. In relation to the man-made environment, the Transect can be used as a tool for the identification and design of the built environment, ranging from the development of the urban center to the rural outskirts.

Of particular interest in Transect planning is the identification of the differing residential neighborhoods and the various form-giving elements that provide richness, meaning, and depth to each particular environment. Called Transect Zones, each environment is designed to complement a particular location within the community in terms of historical precedents, land use intensity, circulation pattern, open space hierarchy, architectural form, and landscape arrangement. For example, a ranch compound would not contribute to the urban quality of a downtown mixed use commercial district, whereas a stacked flat midrise would. Wide curvilinear, meandering, and undulating country lanes bordered by informal drifts of tree clusters may be appropriate in a rural environments, but are out of context when applied to an urban setting, typically characterized by formal circulation patterns, narrow streets, curbs, sidewalks, and regimented rows of street trees.

Within Soledad, the Urban/Rural Transect, consisting of six Transect Zones, guides future development of the built environment, the reservation of significant agricultural parcels, and incorporation of sensitive natural amenities. Guided by the six Transect Zones contained in the Transect Zone Toolbox, developers shall design new communities and neighborhoods using these form-giving areas of the community.

Development should be guided by the following Principles:

► Development should be mindful of it's location within the Transect spectrum, and include characteristics that define that particular Transect Zone.

►Development patterns within the Transect should be based upon the neighborhood unit, reflecting the basic activities of daily life within walking distance.

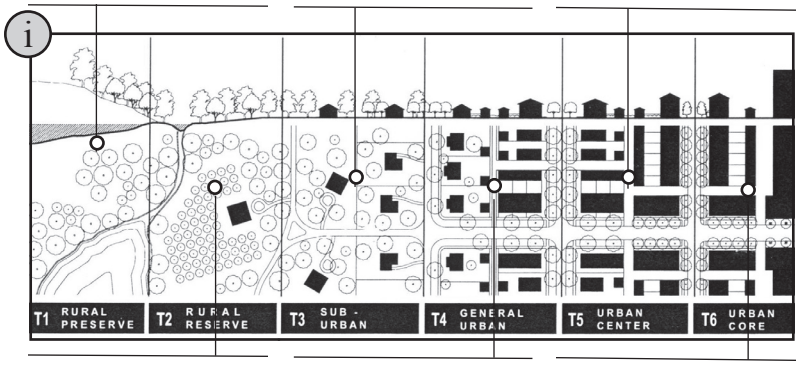
►Circulation features, such as boulevards, avenues, streets, roads, lanes, and alleys, should be based upon their formal or informal characteristics and location within the Transect. Circulation patterns within the Transect should promote connectivity, appropriately scaled to the Transect Zone.

TRANSECT ZONE TOOLBOX

►The Natural Zone (T1*) consists of lands dedicated to the preservation of significant natural amenities, including lands unsuitable for settlement due to topography, hydrology, or vegetation. This zone accommodates modest development, primarily in the form of utility infrastructure and camp buildings.

► The Sub-Urban Zone (T3*) consists of lands which accommodate low density residential land uses, such as estate villas and ranchettes, on large rural lots. These uses are commonly accessed by curvilinear roads and meandering country lanes defined by informal drifts of native tree clusters, accented by the hamlet common area.

►The Urban Center Zone (T5*) consists of medium-high density residential land uses, such as rowhouses, stacked flats, and live/work units. This zone is classic Main Street America, accommodating town squares, commercial storefronts, offices, hotels, restaurants, and civic uses, designed to frame the streetscape.



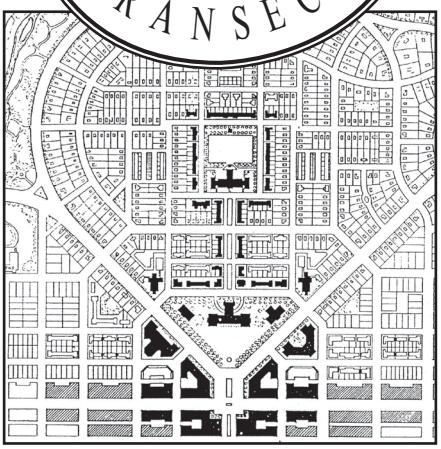
► The Rural Zone (T2*) consists of lands in a reserved state used primarily for agrarian purposes, including lands for truck farming, cattle grazing, dry farming, orchards, vineyards, and woodlots. This zone accommodates minor development in the form of agricultural outbuildings, ranch compounds, and campgrounds.

►The General Urban Zone (T4*) consists of lands that accommodate medium density residential such as detached dwellings, duplex/triplex, rowhouses, courtyard housing and limited neighborhood oriented "mom & pop" commercial uses; typically accessed by narrow streets and alleys defined by formal parkstrip rows of street trees complemented by village greens.

►The Urban Core Zone (T6*) is defined as the classic downtown, containing high density residential land uses including rowhouses, live/work units, and stacked flats. The transect zone is highly urbanized, characterized by a mixed use environment containing commercial storefronts, hotels, offices, civic institutions, plazas, courtyards, and forecourts.

* Credit: Duany/Plater-Zyberk & Co.

COMMUNITY DESIGN PRIMER
CITY OF SOLEDAD
Inc. 1921
TRANSECT



Traditionally, prior to WW II, towns were mapped out to contain all the essential elements of daily living ~ commercial plots, residential lots, parks, office parcels, and civic amenities ~ in a comprehensive fashion designed to complement its physical setting. Since that time, conventional development patterns have been implemented which segregates land uses into individual single use zones, creating disjointed neighborhoods and a lack of holistic community. Today, the Urban/Rural Transect is used to recapture the diversity and authenticity of the traditional town, graced by walkable neighborhoods, intimate "Main Street" commercial nodes, narrower tree-lined streets, residential variety, and prominent civic buildings and spaces. ◈

Did you know?

NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT

NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT-1927 NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT-1997

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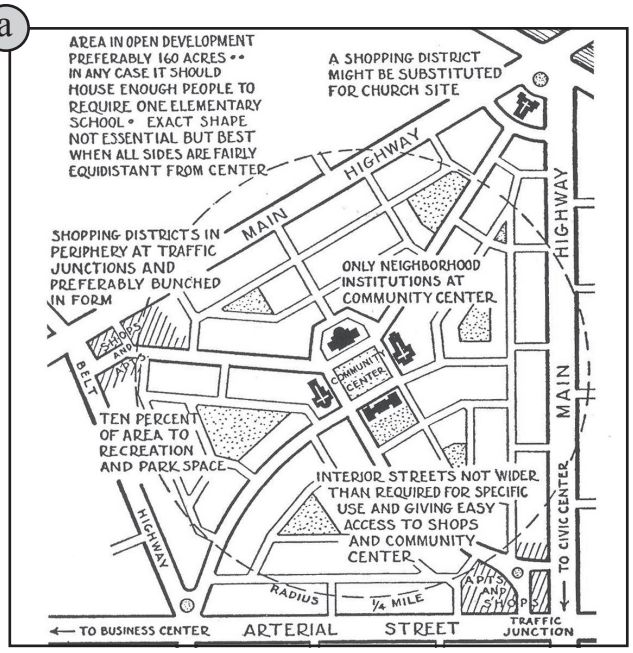

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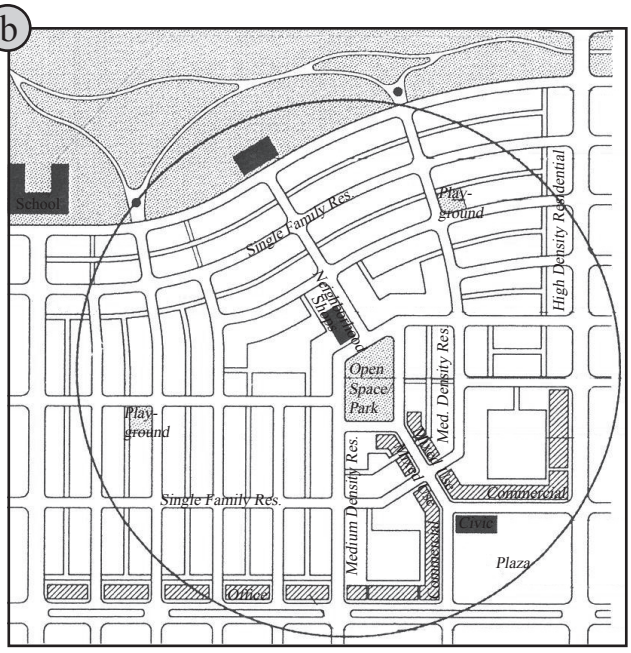


The Neighborhood Unit, first developed by Clarenece Perry in 1927 for the City of New York, envisions a neighborhood based upon a quarter-mile pedestrian walk that contains a variety of local and regionally related uses. The Neighborhood Unit, designed to accommodate the commercial, residential, employment, recreational, and educational needs of neighborhood residents, is designed as an identifiable, compact, and self-contained neighborhood that becomes the over-arching framework for the community.

Characterized by a rich pedestrian and vehicular network composed of grids, radials, and diagonals, the circulation system includes regional-oriented arterials and highways that contain inward-oriented local neighborhood streets and avenues. The circulation network is intentionally open-ended, designed to promote inward connectivity to neighborhood amenities while outwardly connecting to adjacent neighborhoods, shopping districts, and regional institutions.

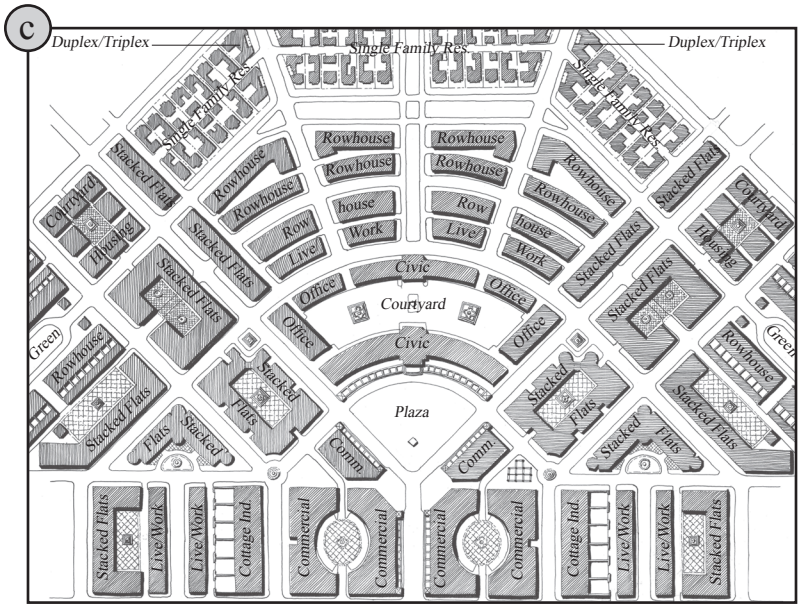
As is evident, the Neighborhood Unit places neighborhood institutions, such as churches, schools, and "mom & pop" shops, towards the center of the neighborhood, while locating higher intensity commercial and residential uses towards the periphery, providing a successful prototype for a self-contained living environment. ◈

The Neighborhood Unit of 1997, developed by Duany/Plater-Zyberk & Company, updates Perry's classic neighborhood by integrating TND (Traditional Neighborhood Development). In addition, TOD (Transit Oriented Development) orginally identified by Peter Calthorpe, places higher density at a level and location in support of mass transit use. Based upon the City's General Plan, such a TOD site might occur in the Soledad downtown/planned multi-modal transportation station area. While the new Neighborhood Unit is based upon the traditional quarter-mile pedestrian walking distance, it departs from the original Neighborhood Unit by locating school facilities on the periphery in order to serve multiple neighborhoods as student demographics change over time.

Encompassed by a circulation network composed of boulevards, avenues, and highways, the TND neighborhood is enhanced by a fine-grained network of local avenues, streets, and lanes designed to access neighborhood shops and institutions. The circulation network logically positions formal rectilinear blocks adjacent to the urban core, while transitioning to informal curvilinear roads at the rural periphery.

Higher-intensity regional-oriented uses, such as shopping centers and institutions are placed at major intersections, while boulevards are lined with offices and avenues are often graced by higher density residential dwellings. ◈

THE NEIGHBORHOOD TOOLBOX



Within Soledad, TND shall guide existing and future development within the community, as follows:

- The Neighborhood Unit is intended to accommodate the resident population within a five-minute walking distance to the center (1/4 mile). The immediate neighborhood needs, such as dwellings, employment, commercial, civic, and recreation, may be contained within this unit (c).
- Streets are laid out in a continuous network to provide alternative routes to most destinations (c). This connectivity permits most streets to be smaller with slower and safer vehicular speeds, optimizing coexistence with pedestrian activities. Streets commonly incorporate sidewalks, street trees, and on-street parking.
- Buildings frame and enclose the streetscape creating a disciplined streetwall uninterrupted by parking lots (c).
- The buildings are diverse in function, yet compatible in size, orientation, and location on their lots. The neighborhood may contain a variety of houses, duplex/triplex, and courtyard housing. Some neighborhoods may also include rowhouses, live/work units, stacked flats; shops, restaurants, offices, and civic amenities (c).
- Civic buildings (schools, community buildings, churches, libraries) shall be placed on plazas, squares, and village greens, at significant ceremonial locations, such as the termination of street vistas, designed to function as neighborhood landmarks, as feasible (c).
- Within urban and suburban environments, open space in the form of plazas, squares, ovals, crescents, and greens shall be well defined, oriented towards the public street (c).

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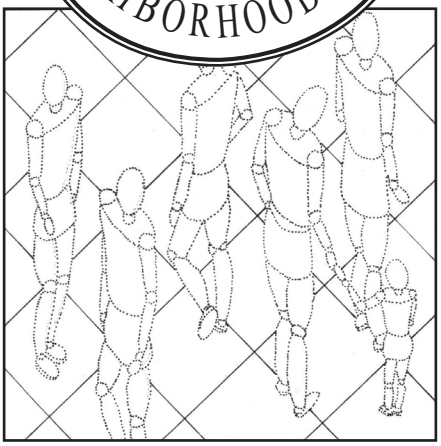
NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT



The Neighborhood Unit is based upon the five-minute-walk, that time-honored measurement that drives the size and design of the neighborhood, the basic building block of the community, at large. Associated with the five minute walk is the quarter-mile radius pedestrian shed, based upon the distance a pedestrian can comfortably walk. It is this basic planning principle that emphasizes the logical orchestration of neighborhood and regional related uses and their associated circulation types (boulevard, avenue, street, lane, alley) that provide easy pedestrian access to all the usual needs of everyday life. ◈

Did you know?

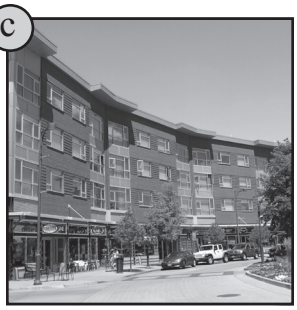
CIRCULATION PATTERN

GRIDS, DIAGIONALS, RADIALS, & CURVES

a

b

c



d

Grids have become synonymous with the image of the great American town. The advantage of the grid (e) is its streetscape hierarchy, directional orientation, vista-generating potential, and ability to disperse traffic in an efficient manner, providing maximum pedestrian/motorist route choice. However, continued outward growth can make the traditional grid monotonious. In this case, a more desirable alternative is the Modified Grid. Modified Grids (g, o) are designed to include periodic circulation deflections designed to optimize opportunities for terminating street vistas at important buildings and monuments within the local neighborhood. These "bent grid" circulation features, often associated with suburban communities represent a slightly more informal circulation network designed to link urban and rural environments while providing ample neighborhood connectivity and topographic response.

Based upon classic Baroque planning patterns, the diagonal circulation pattern (h, i, j, m) came into full bloom during the early 1900s. These community plans highlight major civic institutions and monuments by terminating diagonal street vistas at important locations, creating a circulation hierarchy and pattern which celebrates important buildings, monuments, and public space.

Radials are large-scaled circulation networks commonly designed to highlight, frame, and enclose commercial cores or civic centers, as evidenced in figure (i). Oftentimes used in conjunction with diagonals, these circulation elements feature concentric circles that radiate outwardly from higher-intensity land uses. Circuses (l) are round circulation features that typically encircle civic monuments and spaces. These elements promote continuous vehicular circulation movements while highlighting important civic features.

The American Curvilinear circulation pattern owes much of its planning legacy to Riverside, Illinois, the Frederick Law Olmstead designed community which celebrates the pleasures of rural living with all the urban conveniences. This informal circulation network (p), composed of meandering lanes that follow the natural contours of the site without the urban formality of right angled intersections, is designed to harmonize with the natural environment.

Guided by circulation patterns contained in the Circulation Toolbox, developers shall be required to design new communities and neighborhoods using the following time-honored vehicular and pedestrian circulation improvements:

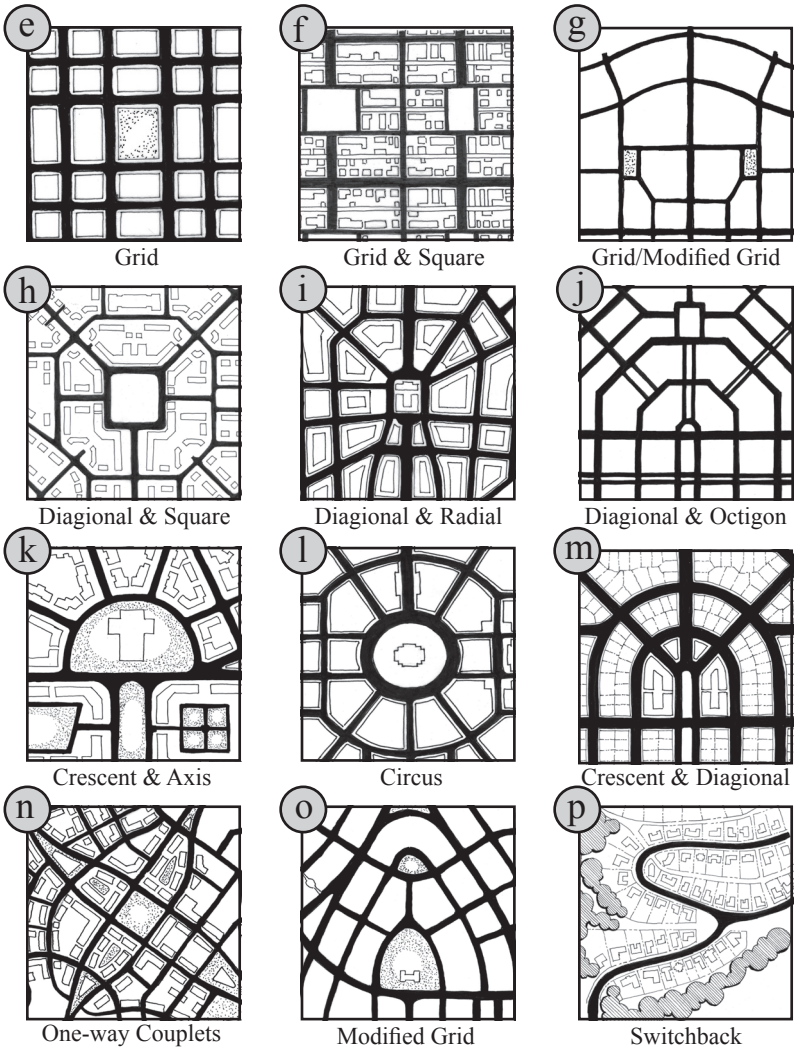
►An interconnected network of boulevards, avenues, streets, roads, and lanes shall be provided, designed to disperse and reduce the length of automobile trips.

►Vehicular and pedestrian connectivity shall be provided within and between neighborhoods.

►Circulation features shall be designed to respond directly to their immediate local and future land use intensity. Grids, diagonals, and radials should be used to encompass and define higher-intensity urban-oriented downtown and village center environments. Modified grids, couplets, and crescents should be used as transitional features between urban and rural areas. Curvilinear roads and lanes should be used in rural settings, responding to natural contours and amenities while projecting a rural image.

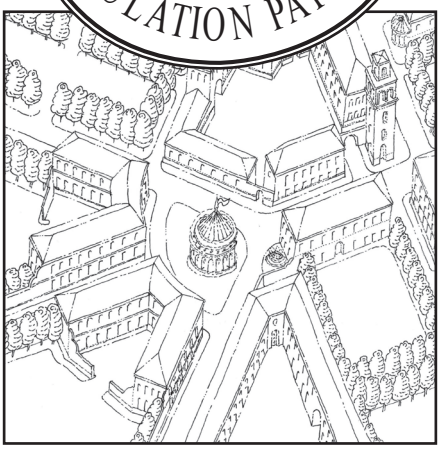
These circulation toolbox features range from higher intensity grids, squares, and diagonals to lower intensity crescents, modified grids, and switchbacks.

THE CIRCULATION TOOLBOX



The intent is to provide a wide range of circulation types designed to complement there associated land use intensity or Transect Zone. All new development shall be required to use these and other circulation toolbox features in an attempt to delineate and define urban, suburban, and rural land uses.

As is evident, formal geometric circulation features are commonly associated with more urban-oriented environments, while informal curvilinear features are often associated with rural settings. Within a suburban setting circulation features oftentimes project a town and country image, characterized by formal and informal streetscapes.



Circulation patterns are a leading indicator in the way humans interpret and perceive the built and natural environment. Grids and diagonals convey a sense of formality that is often associated with dense downtown environments whereby the short rectilinear urban blocks optimize expensive urban real estate while conveying a sense of compact centrality. Modified grids, often associated with suburban environments, function as transitional circulation forms characterized by "bendable grids" that bridge urban and rural environments while optimizing focused vistas of significant civic amenities. Curvilinear roads and lanes convey a sense of informal bucolic tranquility, oftentimes associated with outlying rural environments and topographic features. ◈

Did you know?

OPEN SPACE TYPE

URBAN / SUBURBAN / AGRARIAN / NATURAL

a

b

c

d

Traditionally, community open space features are designed to perform a variety of functions ranging from formal urban-oriented, plazas, courtyards, and forecourts to suburban-oriented town squares, crescents, and closes, to rural-oriented village commons and greens, all intended to express their immediate context and position within the urban-rural transect.

Within a downtown or village core environment, open space features, such as plazas, courtyards, and forecourts should be designed to reflect their urban context through the utilization of hardscape features, such as brick, stone, and concrete unit pavers and the introduction of civic features, such as monuments and fountains that promote a more urban oriented image. Within an urban context, these open space features are predominately flanked by buildings designed to frame and enclose urban space, creating well-defined "outdoor rooms".

Within a suburban context, open space features are defined by a blending of urban and rural elements designed to convey a "town and country" image. Open space amenities, including squares, ovals, crescents, and closes while commonly formal in shape, are often constructed of softscape materials, including landscaped areas and tree bosques that blend both urban and rural attributes.

When compared to their urban counterparts, these surburban-oriented features are defined by buildings to a lesser degree, typically in the form of detached or semi-detached residential dwellings, as opposed to the higher-intensity urban forms.

Within a rural context, open space features include village greens and commons. These open space amenities range from semi-formal "great lawns", to larger landscaped common areas historically used for the grazing of domesticated animals.

Within an agrarian context, open space is often associated with formal row crops, orchard plantings, and tall windrows designed for wind protection while framing and enclosing agricultural plots. Associated with these introduced agricultural features, informal clusters of agrarian outbuildings are often found forming enclosed farm/ranch compounds, designed to shelter man and livestock from the elements.

Natural open space includes the incorporation of significant environmental features such as: water bodies; wetlands; tree stands; rock outcroppings; and other natural features.

Within Soledad, a wide range of open spaces shall be distributed within neighborhoods, ranging from formal urban plazas to informal village commons. Guided by the open space features contained in the Open Space Toolbox, developers shall be required to design new communities and neighborhoods using the following time-honored open space principles:

►Important physical settings, such as high points and terminated street axis, shall be reserved for future civic open space features and other important buildings.

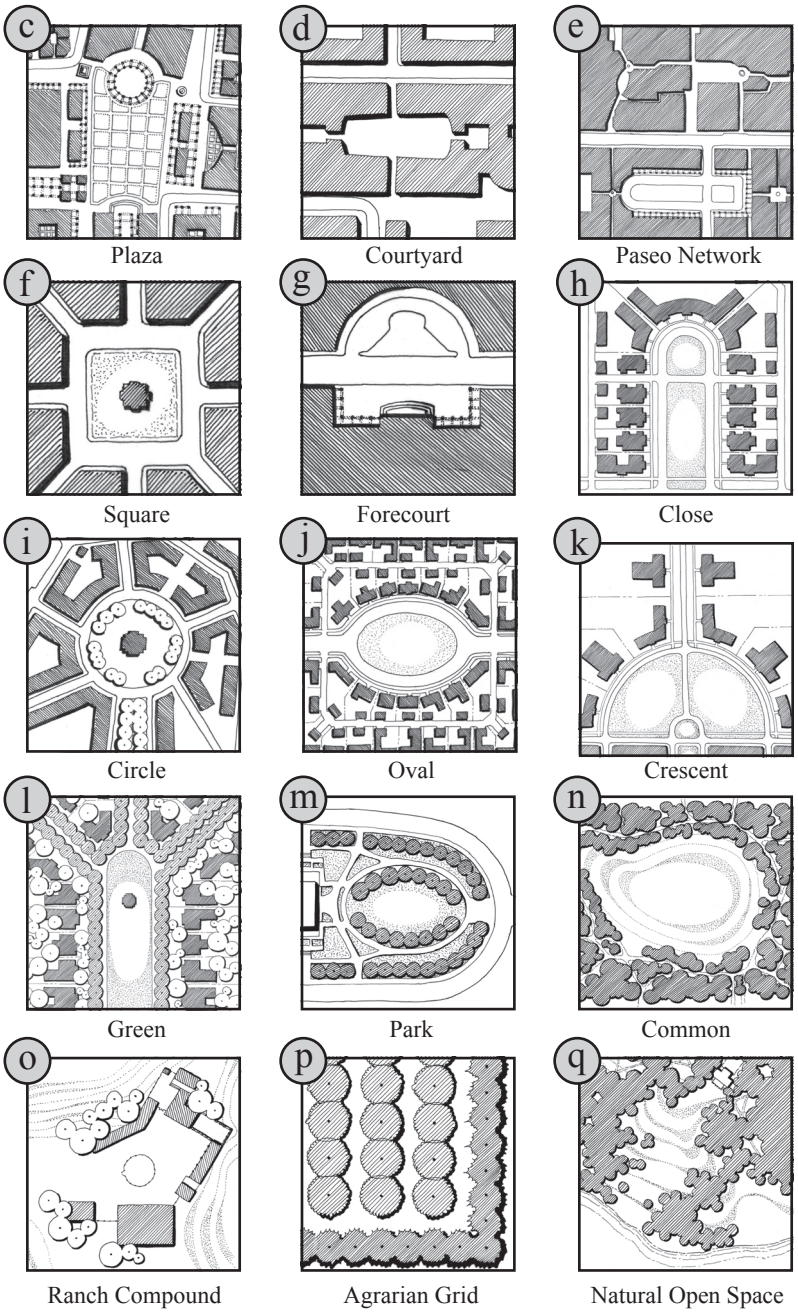
►Plazas, courtyards, paseos, squares, forecourts, and closes, shall be spatially defined by building frontages.

►Circles, ovals, crescents, and greens may be spatially defined by building frontages or trees.

►Plazas, squares, and circles, especially those containing civic buildings, shall be located at significant intersections, designed to terminate street vistas.

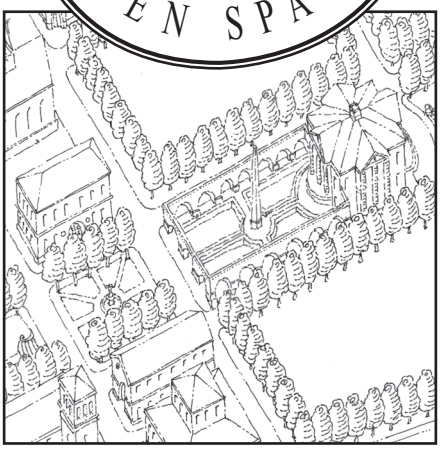
►A plaza, square, circle, oval, crescent, green, or common shall be placed generally within the center of a neighborhood unit, designed as a focal point, promoting neighborhood identity and centrality.

THE OPEN SPACE TOOLBOX



These toolbox features are intended to provide developers with a wide array of open space features intended to highlight and define communities, districts, and neighborhoods within the City of Soledad.

COMMUNITY DESIGN PRIMER
CITY OF SOLEDAD Inc. 1921
OPEN SPACE



Traditionally, public space is void with specific sizes, forms, and characteristics, depending on their location and context within the community. Within urban environments, public space is highly defined, oftentimes framed by dense continuous building enclosures that exhibit a high degree of architectural order. Within a suburban context, public space is less defined, typically delineated by detached buildings and regimented tree bosques that form inviting "outdoor rooms". In rural areas, public space is more varied, ranging from formal agrarian grids to informal ranch compound assemblages. Ultimately, the most successful cities provide a hierarchy of public space designed to highlight the spirit and context of the place. ◈

Did you know?