18.40.510  Building placement and site layout guidelines

18.40.511  Guidelines

(1) Site Layout

(a) Where properties abut natural features, such as drainageways, wetlands, and hillside slopes, the landscape design should incorporate the natural features into the overall design for the property. Solid fences, walls, and other devices that separate the natural feature from the site should not be used.

(b) Where a fill slope is to be located near the site boundary and the adjacent off-site property is either developed or public park or open space land, precautions should be incorporated in the plan to protect adjoining property from damage as a result of such grading. These precautions may include but are not limited to:

1. Additional Setbacks
2. Provisions for retaining or slough walls
3. Mechanical or chemical treatment of the fill slope surface to minimize erosion
4. Provisions for the control of surface waters

(2) Building Siting:

(a) The siting of a building should fit the existing topography, relate to climatic conditions, and consider on-and-off-site structures, streets and pedestrian ways.

(b) Structures should be placed lower than the top of slope so that the building will blend into the landscape, rather than being a focal point.

(c) Building orientation and placement should not be disruptive to existing topographic forms, and should minimize overall cut and fill depths.

(d) The pattern of spaces between buildings of new construction should be consistent with existing construction.

(e) Attention should be given to preserving unique and/or special topographical features such as streams, outcroppings, wetlands, and unusual or scenic geological features.

(3) Orientation:

(a) In general, buildings should be located in a manner that relates to the street and provides a strong street frontage rather than creating street frontages that are dominated by parking.

(b) Building orientation should face the street frontage, and preserve view corridors. View Corridor means the line of sight, identified as to height, width, and distance, of an observer looking toward an object of significance to the community (e.g., ridgeline, river, historic building) from a public right-of-way or public property; the route that directs the viewer's attention. Buildings should be carefully sited for climate control and to minimize casting shadows onto adjacent properties.

(c) When integrating with existing neighborhoods, buildings and other site plan elements should be oriented on the lot in a manner which is consistent with adjacent property lines.
with the established neighborhoods. Where there is a predominant pattern of siting characteristics established on surrounding lots, this pattern should be continued on the subject lot.

(d) Where the main entrance of a building does not face a street, other street side entrances, windows, and doors shall be highlighted, to provide interest and appear accessible to pedestrians.

(e) Loading and service entrances shall not intrude upon the public view, nor interfere with pedestrian and vehicular flows within the project.

(4) Massing, Scale and Proportion:
The intent is to ensure that buildings, particularly large structures, are designed with elements that relate to a human scale and are appropriately proportioned. Large building volume should be broken into a number of smaller components to decrease its apparent mass and volume, thus reducing its visual impact. Reducing the visual impact of mass can be accomplished by creating building insets or projections, stepping back upper floors, and varying the height of the roofline. Changes in vertical mass should be used in an architecturally appropriate way to add interest and reduce the appearance of building height and bulk.

(a) The design of the building or buildings should consider the building proportions, building mass and height and the potential for grouping buildings together so as to be compatible with adjacent existing and proposed uses.

(b) If the proposed building or buildings is to be larger than adjacent structures, architectural elements should be incorporated into the design of the larger building such that the scale of the larger building’s facade is compatible with the adjacent smaller buildings. Scale of the elements of the existing and proposed buildings, and existing rhythm of buildings along the street should be considered. Landscaping should also be designed to integrate the structures into the surroundings.

(c) A transition in scale, and appropriate quantities of open space and landscaping should be utilized to create an attractive, compatible edge in areas where larger scale buildings are sited next to smaller ones, such as office complexes next to single-family residences.

(d) Building proportions should be visually pleasing to the eye. Where suitable, the Golden Section or an appropriate visual scale should be used. The Golden Section (a ratio of 0.618 to 1.000) is encouraged as a standard proportion for width in relation to height as used in facades of buildings, in window sizing, and in first-story to second-story proportion. The Golden Rectangle, a rectangle whose sides are proportional according to the Golden Section, can be seen at the Colorado School of Mines and in the capital building downtown Denver.