



Community Character Element

NOTE: This element incorporates changes recommended by the Planning Commission during a series of public meetings on the Workshop Draft Policy Document held between August and November, 2007. Additional City staff and consultant recommended changes have been made since those public meetings and are shown in underline/strikeout text.

Introduction

The purpose of the community character element is to establish qualitative urban design goals and policies. The policies are intended to reinforce communitywide concepts depicting a framework of neighborhoods, corridors, and landmarks. Community design integrates diverse development concepts at an array of levels. From the overall city to neighborhoods and districts to streetscape and structure design, the goals and policies presented in this element provide for the visual pattern of land uses and circulation.

This element contains goals, policies, and implementation measures related to the following topics:

- Overall Community Design
- Gateways and Community Corridors
- Downtown
- Trees

Overall Community Design

The goal and policies in this section cover a wide variety of topics related to general city design. These policies provide for the overall theme of Galt as an urban city in the midst of a rural and open space landscape, with emphasis on contrast between the city and outlying areas.

Goal CC-1

To improve the overall visual quality of Galt's urban environment. (M&A)

Policy CC-1.1: City Image

The City should promote high quality design and building materials for all new development. (City: G-10)

Policy CC-1.2: Neighborhood Integrity

The City should protect and enhance the character and integrity of existing residential neighborhoods and protect these neighborhoods from incompatible uses. (City: G-14a)

Policy CC-1.3: Existing Neighborhood Design

The City should encourage the conservation, maintenance, and improvement of existing neighborhoods through enforcement of building codes, programs for the rehabilitation of housing, and replacement of substandard and deteriorated infrastructure (PC).

Policy CC-1.4: New Neighborhood Design

The City should require new neighborhoods to have a unique sense of place (i.e., entry designs, architecture, design features) that sets them apart from existing neighborhoods. (City staff)

Policy CC-1.5: Rail Corridors

The City should work with Union Pacific Railroad and private property owners to improve maintenance, code enforcement, screening, and landscaping of view sheds along rail corridors in Galt. (M&A)

Policy CC-1.6: Open Space Features

The City should promote community design that incorporates the open space features of Galt’s rivers, creek, wetlands, trail corridors, and parks into the travel experience. This includes visual access to open space features and private and public investment that visually frames and complements natural landscapes and parks. (M&A)

Policy CC-1.7: Viewsheds

The City should work to protect views from frequently used gathering places, major streets, and pedestrian paths to provide a sense of place and orientation. (M&A)

Policy CC-1.8: Building Elevations

The City should require that all exterior elevations have structural architectural treatments to alleviate long void surfaces. This can be accomplished through varying setbacks, breaking buildings into segments, pitched roof elements, columns, fenestration (doors and windows), substantial building relief/reveals to provide shadow and interest, patios, and similar treatments. (M&A and City Staff)

Policy CC-1.9: Signage

The City should require that all signs on existing buildings be made of high-quality materials such as stone, tile, cast concrete, or similar materials. No bare metals, wood, or any other non-durable material shall be allowed. (M&A and PC)

Policy CC-1.10: Art in Public Places

The City shall encourage new development projects to install public art and other design features such as fountains and monuments that beautify the community. (PC)

Gateways and Community Corridors

The goal and policies in this section seek to establish well-designated and inviting gateways and corridors in the city. Galt’s gateways and community corridors are critical to the identity of the city. The city’s major corridors – Twin Cities Road/State Route 104, State Route 99, Lincoln Way, Carillion Boulevard, C Street, A Street – carry heavy traffic volumes and are major elements in the city’s development pattern. All corridors shown in the Circulation Diagram (Figure C-1) are addressed in the policies in this section.

**Goal
CC-2**

To maintain and enhance the visual quality of Galt's major corridors, city entrances through landscape and streetscape improvements. (M&A)

Policy CC-2.1: Gateway Entrances

The City should promote efforts to improve the visual quality of gateway entrances to Galt, including State Route 99, Twin Cities Road, and Lincoln Way. The Circulation Diagram (Figure C-1) shows properties that are primary entranceways to the city. Development in these areas should include a combination of streetscape, building orientation and placement, signage, enhanced landscaping, and site amenities to create memorable community entries. Items that detract from the gateway image, such as attention-getting devices, outside storage, and off-premise signs should not be allowed. (M&A)

Policy CC-2.2: New Development in Corridors

The City should require that new development within major corridors comply with the following minimum building requirements:

- a. All outdoor storage of goods, materials, equipment, and loading docks areas shall be screened from major roadways, to the extent possible.
- b. Developments with multiple buildings should have a unifying design theme and sign program.
- c. Earth tones shall be used as the dominant color; vivid contrasting colors such as white, black, blue, and red should only be used as accents.
- d. Metal buildings will be allowed only with significantly enhanced architectural treatment (such as use of trim bands, wing walls, parapets, and reveals). (M&A)
- e. Increased frontage and parking lot landscaping in corridor developments shall be required.

Policy CC-2.3: Building Setbacks and Landscape Areas

The City should encourage increased building setbacks and substantially wider landscape areas along major corridors. (M&A)

Policy CC-2.4: Architectural Enhancements in Major Corridors

The City should encourage increased architectural enhancements for all buildings and uses within major corridors, including the following:

- a. Building elevations should be well-articulated and stress an original design.
- b. Buildings should be composed of stucco, brick, or masonry elevations. Tilt-up concrete panels will only be permitted if they have a bold relief with textured surfaces and fenestration to break up monotony. Integral color of panels is strongly encouraged. (M&A)

Policy CC-2.5: Landscape Maintenance

The City should actively monitor and enforce the maintenance of landscaping on private property within major corridors. (M&A)

Policy CC-2.6: Positive Travel Experience

The City should ensure, to the extent possible, that all public and private investments in Galt’s gateways and major corridors contribute positively to the overall travel experience by automobile, rail, pedestrian, and bicycle. (M&A)

Policy CC-2.7: State Route 99 and State Route 104 Beautification

The City shall work with Caltrans and private property owners to improve the visual quality of State Routes 99 and 104 through right-of-way maintenance, adjacent property maintenance, code enforcement, reducing the number of billboards, encouraging new investment on visible sites, requiring landscaping, and requiring screening of industrial uses. (M&A)

Downtown

The goal and policies in this section provide the framework for the protection of Galt’s Downtown and its historical assets. Policies in this section stress the importance of Galt’s Downtown to sustaining the identity and sense of place within existing community. New development should be compatible with the existing scale and design of downtown, and preserve historical features.

Goal CC-3	To protect historic and authentic qualities of Galt’s Downtown. (M&A)
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Policy CC-3.1: Restore Downtown

The City should continue to require that new infrastructure investment respect the image and character of the Downtown. Landscapes, roadways, sidewalks, and other public features in downtown should be repaired where necessary as funding allows. (M&A)

Policy CC-3.2: Historical and Cultural Resources

The City should ensure, to the extent possible, that new public and private investment protects and enhances Galt’s historical and cultural resources. (M&A)

Policy CC-3.3: Incorporating Historical Features in New Development

The City shall continue to enforce the design guidelines of the Downtown Revitalization and Historic Preservation Specific Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, requiring new development in Downtown to incorporate historic and natural features in site and development planning, and respecting existing historic structures, block and lot patterns, and landscapes. Infill development should be of compatible scale and character. (M&A)

Trees

The goal and policies in this section seek to preserve and enhance Galt’s trees. These trees not only provide shade, they also help define the character of neighborhoods.

Goal CC-4	To maintain and enhance the quality of Galt’s trees. (M&A)
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Policy CC-4.1: Tree Canopy

The City should endeavor to protect the tree canopy created by mature trees and heritage trees in existing developed areas and undeveloped areas. At a minimum, the City should require trees to be planted five to seven feet from street right-of-ways to provide streetscape enchantments. *(M&A and City Staff)*

Policy CC-4.2: Trees in New Development

The City should require that all new development [protect existing trees, to the extent feasible, and](#) incorporate the planting of [additional](#) trees and other vegetation, to provide shade, buffering, and visual character. [Oak trees are specifically protected by the Galt Municipal Code, but other trees on land that is subject to a development application should also be protected through the development phase.](#) [New T](#)rees should be carefully selected based on appropriate site conditions (Galt's microclimate, soil type, water usage, surrounding infrastructure and improvements, and distance from buildings). In order to help the Sacramento region attain air quality conformance, the largest tree species possible for the given application, with the lowest biogenic emission rates, should be selected. High biogenic emitting tree species should be avoided or planted only as a second choice when low emitters will be unsatisfactory. Developers can obtain information on biogenic emissions of tree species from the City of Galt Planning Department, the SMAQMD, and the Sacramento Tree Foundation. *(PC)*

Policy CC-4.3: Tree and Landscape Maintenance Requirements for Large Development Projects

The City should require, as a condition of approval for large development projects, the establishment of funding mechanisms for the ongoing maintenance of trees and landscape strips by neighborhood associations. The City should explore the potential for putting all new development in a master landscape and lighting district for maintenance of trees and landscape strips. *(M&A)*