

Therefore, it is important to consider all of these factors when designing a project and seeking to achieve a set or “ideal” number of dwelling units. A good design can balance many of these factors while still achieving density goals. However, the final decision on the appropriate density will rest with the hearing body after a careful consideration of staff’s recommendation, public testimony, the applicant’s request, and the particular aspects of each project.

## DESIGN BEST PRACTICES

### 1. Site Planning

**Objective: Conserve land, link open spaces, and promote a more unique neighborhood character that is compatible with hillside terrain.**

- 1.1. Locate development within 500 feet of existing infrastructure such as sewer and water lines, and existing roadways.
- 1.2. Locate at least 50% of the development footprint on the flattest portions of the project site (i.e., those areas having slopes of less than 25%).
- 1.3. Utilize previously graded or disturbed areas on the site for new development such that further development within undisturbed areas is reduced.
- 1.4. Create smaller groups and blocks of lots that have less than 800 feet between roadway intersections unless roadway geometrics or traffic volumes warrant a longer intervening distance.
- 1.5. Reduce single-family lot sizes to 15,000 square feet (sf.) or less (unless larger lots sizes are required by a Community Standards District).
- 1.6. Vary lot sizes by a degree of at least 1.5:1 (i.e. 5,000 sf., 8,000 sf., 12,000, sf., 18,000 sf., etc.).
- 1.7. Differentiate pad elevations over the site “by street”, “by block”, and “by lot” to provide variety, distinctiveness and views, and to better conform to the natural topography.
- 1.8. Place the narrow side of the lot (or building pad) such that it faces the roadway and is in the direction of the slope.
- 1.9. Utilize terraced building pads in select areas to preserve slopes that exceed 50%.
- 1.10. Preserve the steepest site slopes, main hilltops and ridgelines for recreational uses within the project’s dedicated open space areas.
- 1.11. Exceed the minimum Ordinance open space acreage requirements by 10% or more.
- 1.12. Preserve undisturbed open space contiguously over the site, utilizing segments of land that are at least 150 feet (ft.) wide or as otherwise wide enough to allow sufficient animal migration as determined by the Los Angeles County Biologist.
- 1.13. Utilize at least 25% of disturbed (improved) open space for recreational purposes.

- 1.14. Locate and design improved open space as a buffer (at least 50 ft. wide) between undisturbed open space and development.
- 1.15. Create scenic vista points at prominent site locations (such as hilltops and ridgelines) and dedicate them for public use.
- 1.16. Provide private (connector) trails that link to the project's open space areas and any onsite or offsite public trails.
- 1.17. For blocks of development that exceed 800 feet between intersections, design mid-block thru-paths that connect to intervening streets or open space areas, and dedicate the paths for public use.
- 1.18. Use other innovative site planning techniques not mentioned in this section that promote the overall design Objective.

## 2. Grading and Facilities

**Objective: Avoid mass landform alteration, preserve the physical shape of the hillside, and maintain pleasant views.**

- 2.1. Avoid mass cut and fill grading that results in more than a 50 ft. elevation change from the existing natural grade to the finished manufactured grade anywhere over the site.
- 2.2. Use contoured grading lines that match or closely match the existing topography, generally avoiding lines that trace 45-90 degrees against the natural contour.
- 2.3. Utilize undulating banks for graded slopes in order to maintain the natural flow of the topography to the greatest extent feasible.
- 2.4. Design the project's longer graded horizontal slope surfaces and slope increments (typically 300 or more feet in length) to be variable in terms of height and spacing, in order to mimic natural topographical patterns.
- 2.5. Locate water tanks and other public facilities that are 20 or more feet tall so that their highest point is at least 50 ft. below the crest of the most prominent unmapped<sup>1</sup> hilltop or ridgeline on the site (or the tallest unmapped hilltop/ridgeline within 1,000 feet linear distance, whichever is closer).
- 2.6. Locate water tanks and other unattractive public facilities so that they are mostly or completely hidden from public views; or otherwise, screen them with berms or landscaping, or a combination of techniques.
- 2.7. Avoid hiding buildings with berms and block walls. Instead, locate and design the buildings in accordance with the other design measures contained in these Guidelines so that they are both more attractive and compatible with hillside views.

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<sup>1</sup> Not mapped according to any County Plan or Ordinance that officially identifies significant ridgelines or other hillside features.