

Community Character

The Community Character Element reflects the following framework goals highlighted in black:

FRAMEWORK GOALS

- FG1: Promote a sense of place by requiring quality building and development that is not just compatible with the surrounding environment, but enhances the community spirit.**
- FG2: Promote quality building and development that is compatible with the surrounding environment.**
- FG3: Support a variety of housing opportunities for Edgewood's diversifying population that are affordable, enhance a safe and livable community, and prepare and protect our families for life in the 21st Century.
- FG4: Pursue a strong and diverse economy and assure economic development that creates a "Heart" for Edgewood and balances regional objectives, while complementing the unique neighborhood character.**
- FG5: Protect the natural environment and preserve environmentally sensitive areas.**
- FG6: Promote improvements to human services as the community changes and diversifies.**
- FG7: Assure effective and efficient public investment for quality public services, facilities, and utilities.**
- FG8: Balance the transportation needs of the community with regional objectives through improvement of both street and multimodal transportation systems for Edgewood's present and future population.**
- FG9: Provide for inclusive and meaningful citizen involvement in community planning decisions.**

Intent

The Community Character Element is intended to ensure that new public and private construction and improvements enhance and maintain the visual character of the community. Community design can provide more privacy in residential areas and encourage community activity in the public realm. Ultimately, implementing these policies will create and retain a cohesive community image and make the City a friendly place for residents, business people, and property owners.

The Community Character Element guides public and private development, while protecting the community's positive characteristics. These policies are intended to create a City that is people-oriented, diverse, and aesthetically appealing. These goals and policies will apply to the built and natural environments in commercial and residential areas of Edgewood. They also integrate community character with consideration for the natural environment.

Background and Context

Community design combines aspects of architecture, landscape, public works facilities, public art, and transportation systems. Improved design does not have to be extravagant; it can simply be a more thoughtful approach to the look of new development.

The goals and policies in this element address Design Quality, Public Places and Connections, Neighborhoods, and Historic Preservation. Design Quality policies support the development standards that apply to the design of development in commercial and multi-family use areas. Public Places and Connections policies apply to the design of streets, parks, public facilities, and other amenities that are used by the general public. Neighborhood policies apply to residential use areas, especially where they interface with commercial uses. Historic Preservation policies apply to those buildings, places, and landmarks that give Edgewood's identity more depth and relevance to its location and local history.

Design Quality

Design quality refers to development's overall contribution to the appearance of the community. For example, within new developments, retention of existing vegetation and new landscaping contribute to Edgewood's image as a community that values and protects its trees.

Design quality is essential in Edgewood to ensure that the changes and new development that is anticipated in the next 20 years will fit into and enhance community character. In Edgewood development is more acceptable if it is well designed.

Design describes more than appearance. It also means the way development is related to surrounding properties. Examples are shared driveways, similar landscaping, pedestrian connections, consistent building form, collective open and public space, and continuous pedestrian protection from precipitation. Assets and attributes of adjacent sites, when connected or combined, improve the overall function and appeal of the area.

Design refers to:

- The design and site planning of commercial, industrial, and multi-family structures, including layout, landscaping, lighting, and signage.
- The unique characteristics and small town look of Edgewood.

Public Places and Connections

People are drawn to public places that are comfortable and attractive. Attracting people to public places means providing safer sidewalks and walkways as important connections between different places in the City. Street corridors tie different parts of Edgewood together and should instill community pride through design. Meridian (State Route 161) is a major corridor that is planned for major design enhancements to promote multimodal use and design elements that are attractive and soften the visual impact on Edgewood's image.

Neighborhoods

For residential neighborhoods to be compatible with commercial development, it is important to design effective transitions between different types of land use. It is also important to encourage neighborhood services in adjacent commercial areas. The community becomes more cohesive as neighborhood development is refined to be more attractive, interactive, and functional.

Goals and Policies

Goal CC I: Promote commercial and residential development that is carefully considered, aesthetically pleasing, and functional.

Policies

Site and Building Design

CC1: Encourage designs of major private and public buildings to create distinctive reference points in the community.

CC2: Adopt design standards for new development that assures that new projects contribute to the community and complement adjacent use.

Discussion: Design standards should address public benefits, consistency with adjacent use, development quality, preservation of trees, views, and natural areas. The City should encourage designs

that convey quality architecture and workmanship.

CC3: Ensure that development relates, connects, and continues the design quality and site functions from site to site in multi-family, public facility, and commercial areas.

CC3b: Encourage small blocks between 660 feet and 330 feet parallel to the Meridian corridor to promote a variety of development types and encourage pedestrian connectivity.

Discussion: Small blocks facilitate pedestrian activity, encourage small complexes, and enhance access to businesses. The City will implement this policy through special area plans and development standards.

CC4: Encourage developments surrounding public places to use enhanced architectural elements and building materials.

Discussion: Development should provide site amenities, such as public access, pedestrian-oriented building design, mid-block connections, public spaces and encourage opportunities to provide community or city sponsored activities, open space and use, and view preservation. The City should consider incentives to encourage developers to incorporate these site planning concepts into the design of their projects.

CC5: Use building and site design, landscaping, and shielded lighting to buffer the visual impact of development on areas adjacent uses.

CC6: Incorporate pedestrian amenities into the design of public and commercial areas.

Discussion: Walkways should connect parking areas to building entrances and connect within and between developments. The City should also encourage structures that provide a weather refuge for pedestrians.

Signs

CC7: Encourage sign design and placement that complements building architecture.

Discussion: The City will implement this policy through design standards review and development standards for signs.

CC8: Discourage the use of large signs and off-site signs.

Discussion: Large signs and off-site signs detract from Edgewood's community character by cluttering, dominating, and distracting from the natural and visual character of the Meridian corridor. The City will implement and maintain this policy through Edgewood's sign code.

CC9: Encourage consolidation of signs on a single structure where a commercial development contains multiple businesses.

Vegetation and Landscaping

CC10: Encourage retention of existing and use of native vegetation with new development.

Discussion: See the Natural Environment Element, vegetation preservation and enhancement.

CC11: Encourage coordination of site planning and consolidation of landscaped areas in commercial development.

Discussion: Landscape consolidation enhances site planning options for small business and reduces the costs of landscaping. This would promote the economical viability of small businesses.

CC12: Encourage concentrated seasonal-color planting in highly visible areas.

Open Space

CC13: Preserve and encourage open space as a dominant element of the community's character through parks, trails, water features, cemeteries, and other significant properties that provide public benefit.

Discussion: See the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element.

Goal CC II: Promote the creation of highly usable public spaces that maintain community character and increase public safety.

Public Places

CC14: Ensure that public places are designed to include pedestrian amenities such as seating, landscaping, kiosks, walkways, pavilions, canopies, and awnings.

CC15: Consider the edges of public places that abut adjacent property for special design treatment to create a buffer effect.

CC16: Design buildings and open areas that minimize the effects of building shadows.

Public Art/Historic Preservation

CC17: Explore creation of a community Arts Commission and Historic Preservation Commission.

Discussion: Community arts commissions are usually non-profit organizations established to fund and promote art within their cities. They can promote activities and artwork in places that are accessible to the public. Arts commissions can fund activities and programs through 1% funds for public art and through private donations.

Pedestrian Linkages

CC18: Provide clear and identifiable systems of accessible sidewalks, walkways, and trails.

Discussion: A system of linear facilities connects parks, open space, recreation areas, trails, schools, and shopping for pedestrians and bicyclists. Amenities for non-motorized transportation include pedestrian-scale lighting and signage, landscaping, public art, bike racks, railings, newspaper boxes, trash receptacles, and other amenities. Please see the Transportation Element and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element for more detail.

CC19: Encourage building entrances to be sited at or near public walkways without diminishing safe access or space for improvements, such as benches or lighting.

Street Corridors

CC20: Provide “complete streets” that include amenities to enhance community character.

Discussion: Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street. Complete streets contain.

CC21: Encourage street designs that provide safe pedestrian design elements, especially at the corners of intersections.

CC22: Work cooperatively with businesses and property owners along the Meridian Avenue corridor to encourage and preserve the economic viability and visual quality of the City’s “Main Street” corridor.

CC23: Encourage the designation and development of a City “gateway”.

Discussion: A city gateway marks an entrance to a city. Gateways promote community character through special signage, community themes, or landscaping designed to catch the eye. A gateway should be dramatic and obvious and include a combination of buildings, structures, landscaping, signs, lighting, and public art.

CC24: Enhance the Meridian Corridor to include pedestrian amenities, landscaping, cohesive frontage improvements, and other design considerations.

Transit Facility

CC25: Encourage site planning and building designs that support and connect with existing and planned transit facilities in the City.

CC26: *Design and locate bike racks, benches, shelters, and pedestrian amenities, so that they accessible and coordinated with transit facilities.*

Goal CC III: Enhance the identity and appearance of residential and commercial neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Commercial

CC27: *Require commercial development to achieve a level of architectural quality and site planning that enhances the visual image and identity of Edgewood.*

Discussion: The City will implement this policy through the City's development standards, including design standards, and project level planning that considers these plan policies.

CC28: *Incorporate architectural character, landscaping, lighting and signs into commercial areas to create a balance between appearance and functions.*

CC29: *Ensure that perimeters of commercial areas use appropriate planting, lighting, and signs consistent with surrounding commercial developments and to buffer adjacent residential neighborhoods.*

CC30: *Encourage buildings on adjacent properties to have common walls and to utilize "zero lot line" provisions.*

Discussion: Common walls and zero lot line setback incentives increase land use efficiency and enhance pedestrian access.

CC31: *Encourage small-scale commercial and mixed-use development with unobtrusive parking areas, pedestrian connectivity, and ample landscaping.*

Discussion: In order to be unobtrusive, parking can be either buffered or designed. The City can implement this policy through design standards.

Residential

CC32: *Encourage improvements that enhance neighborhood appearance and pedestrian and vehicular safety.*

Discussion: Examples of improvements include signs, sidewalks/paths, crosswalks, traffic calming, fencing, special lighting, landscaping. The City can implement this policy through it's development standards and tools such as local improvement districts.

CC33: *Allow farm animals on large parcels, compatible with Edgewood's desire to maintain open space in the community.*

Discussion: See the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element for more detail. The City will address implementation of this policy the development standards.

Goal CC IV: Protect and enhance Edgewood's cultural, scenic, historical, and natural attributes.

CC34: *Recognize the heritage of the community by naming parks, streets, and other public places after major figures and events.*

Discussion: The City will implement this policy through citizen involvement.

CC35: *Designate and inventory historic landmark sites and structures.*

CC36: *Review proposed changes and develop incentives such as fee waivers and code flexibility to encourage*

preservation of City landmarks or important features.

Discussion: Landmarks in the City include both historical and natural features. The City may establish criteria for landmark designations through citizen involvement. Potential landmarks and important natural features could include old barns, large rocks, wetlands, or old-growth trees.

CC37: Work jointly with other jurisdictions, agencies, organizations, and property owners to preserve historic resources.

Discussion: The City may wish to adopt the State Historic Building Code, as an additional guideline or alternative to the Uniform Building Code.