

Summary of Measures for Addressing Esthetic Concerns of Ridge-top and Hillside Development

Sevier County Preferred
Directions Report



Goals/Vision

- Preserve significant vistas;
- Prevent severe environmental and aesthetic degradation;
- Maintain appealing community image for visitors and residents; and
- Accommodate continued economic and residential growth.



Five Guiding Principles

1. No Project shall result in an undue adverse impact on the region's significant and unique natural and scenic resources.

The goal is not to prevent all impacts from development - impacts are unavoidable. The key word is 'undue,' meaning unwarranted, unjustified, inappropriate, or excessive by reason of the conditions inherent to steep slopes.



Five Guiding Principles

2. Any approved project shall mitigate adverse impacts to the maximum extent practicable.

The standard, rather than prescribe specific practices, prescribes a way to assess the applicant's response to the project's impacts. The key word is 'practicable' (*not practical*), meaning what is able to be practiced.



Five Guiding Principles

3. *“Visually subordinate” shall be the standard for assessing visual impacts of proposed development within scenic regions.*

(Central to design standards discussed later.)



Five Guiding Principles

4. Density shall decrease as slopes increase.

Excessive density on steep hillsides not only exacerbates the hillside's negative qualities, it even detracts from its desirable qualities.



Five Guiding Principles

5. Project approval shall take into consideration both positive and negative impacts.

Positive impacts shall be considered to the degree that adverse impacts can be avoided.



Recommendations (1)

Identify scenic and landscape resources of significance (SLRS) for protection and adopt them as part of an ordinance to protect the scenic and aesthetic resources of the region.



Recommendations (1)

Identify areas that are available for development and likely visible from the SLRS. A common approach includes identifying a specific elevation above which development should be regulated. This establishes a know boundary for heightened review that is easily understood by landowners and reviewing agencies.



Recommendations (1)

Development review measures should be instituted for proposed development that is located above the identified elevation and potentially visible from a SLRS. Together, these recommendations could be organized into a *Hillside Overlay District* (HOD).



Recommendations (1)

Establish standards of design and construction for mitigating adverse impacts to Scenic and Landscape Resources of Significance (SLRS) - achieving Visually Subordinate Development



Visually Subordinate Development

- Visually subordinate means that new buildings and roads shall not be the defining feature of a hillside.
- Development should not be the most memorable feature of hillsides and mountains.
- Visually subordinate means that if someone tried, they could pick out individual buildings on a hillside. However, the buildings would not be the first things a person would see.



Visually Subordinate Development

- Limitation on vegetation removal for site planning and surveying
- Limitation on site clearing for construction
 - Roadways and utilities
 - Perimeter buffer area (no continuous clearing)
 - Building envelope (40 feet principal structure)
 - Additional clearing necessary for construction by specific plan only
- Limitation on clearing for views by specific plan only



Visually Subordinate Development

Clearing Standards

- Retain a minimum of 75% forest screening as viewed from a SLRS.
- Trimming (a) sufficient only to allow a filtered view from the property towards any SLRS, (b) that will not result in a view of more than 25% of structures as viewed from a SLRS, and (c) that assures continued health of each tree left standing.
- cleared area of no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ acre on any one lot/site as viewed from a SLRS.



Visually Subordinate Development

Design Standards

- Set down (setback) from ridgelines
- Structures stepped (set into) hillsides
- Retaining walls on contour and segmented down slope – earth tone materials
- Contour cut and fill
- Building setbacks at least 1.5 times height of structures



Visually Subordinate Development

Design Standards (continued)

- No signage visible above tree canopy
- Roads and driveways follow natural contour with minimal footprint
- 45 degree shielded lighting concentrated at intersections – motion activated floodlights – max 75 watts other continuous lighting – no lighting above eaves or parapets



Visually Subordinate Development

Design Standards (continued)

- Color muted dark earth tones on building surfaces
- Avoid uniform and massed building surfaces
- Low reflectivity of materials – windows etc. – avoid long expanses of windows - shade potentially reflective surfaces



Visually Subordinate Development

Design Standards (continued)

- Limit continuous rooflines – 40 feet max – parallel contour of land
- Building height 25 to 30 feet max
- No structure should exceed ridgeline
- Height of structure measured from lowest natural or manmade grade (greater of two)



Visually Subordinate Development

Mitigation Measures

- Professional design siting
- Screening - natural look - vegetation, fence or walls of stone, earth, brick or wood
- Relocation (of a structure) on site
- Camouflage or Disguise
- Low profile - reducing height of structure
- Downsizing - reducing density of structures
- Non-Spectacular materials
- Controlled lighting
- Maintenance - forestall eyesore
- Decommissioning – removing structures or objects



Recommendations

Tying it all together for the site

Two component process with Site Plan/Plat

Preparation of Findings Statement –
Documenting Probable Impacts –
permitting agency w/ applicant

Demonstration of No Undue Adverse Impact –
Maximum Extent Practicable –
applicant



Maximum Extent Practicable

The goal of the MEP standard is not to eliminate all adverse impacts, which is ideal. Rather, it requires the applicant to examine the full range of proven and advanced techniques available to them, and then identify from those choices, which works best within their project.



Maximum Extent Practicable

Maximum extent practicable means, specifically, that the applicant has proposed mitigation practices and avoidance techniques that minimize adverse impact by reason of

- 1) the project's scale,
- 2) the severity of the adverse impacts,
- 3) the commitment of resources commensurate with the project's scale,
- 4) the level of mitigation to be achieved,
- 5) and the use of innovative or state-of-the-art development practices and community planning techniques.



Maximum Extent Practicable

An impact that has not been mitigated to the maximum extent practicable is to be considered an 'undue adverse impact.'

In the event of an undue adverse impact, the applicant may elect to amend the project appropriately, or the Planning Commission shall reject the application until the applicant has demonstrated no undue adverse impact.

