

Multifamily Design Guidelines

City of Buckley

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

These City of Buckley Multifamily Design Guidelines specify minimum standards for multifamily open space, recreation areas and parking and describe desirable attributes for other characteristics of multifamily developments in Buckley.

The following outcomes are desired for multifamily developments in Buckley:

- Common open spaces and gathering places that are desirable, accessible, and tastefully integrated with recreation amenities;
- Recreation areas that provide sufficient amenities for families, children of all ages, pets, and other residents of multifamily communities;
- Vehicle, bike and pedestrian circulation that provides sufficient access throughout multifamily developments;
- Multifamily design elements that create architectural interest representative of Buckley’s small-town character;
- Parking that is adequate yet de-emphasized aesthetically to the extent possible; and
- Building layouts that provide sufficient *eyes on the street* to foster public safety, blend well into neighborhoods, and are designed to reduce the apparent size of multifamily buildings.

These guidelines are not intended to restrict the variety or creativity of architectural design of multifamily buildings, but rather to ensure minimum standards that reflect the desired form and function of multifamily housing in Buckley.

Applicability

These guidelines apply to all new multifamily developments in the City. For the purpose of these guidelines, the term “multifamily” includes all duplexes, townhomes, or any other structures containing three or more dwelling units amounting to at least eight (8) residential units on the same parcel or on consecutive parcels under common ownership, regardless of whether individual dwelling units are leased or individually-owned. Definitions for each of these housing types are found in BMC 19.12 and also the “Definitions” section of these guidelines.

When a multifamily development is proposed for a location within a City of Buckley Design Review District, as referenced in BMC 19.50, the multifamily development shall additionally comply with Buckley’s Design Guidelines. In cases of conflict, the more restrictive standard shall apply.

Enforceability

Guidelines preceded by the word “shall” are enforceable in the same way as all land use requirements in Buckley Municipal Code. Guidelines preceded by the words “encouraged” or “should” are strongly preferred by the City, yet it is left to the discretion of the applicant on how to meet the intent of such guidelines.

The Planning Director, or their designated official, has the ability to approve a waiver from these multifamily guidelines, without the need for a variance, when all of the following criteria are met:

1. Compliance with specific guidelines is impractical due to utility or infrastructure conflicts, topographic conditions, or other site limitations;
2. The applicant can clearly demonstrate that their design, with the waiver, will still conform to the purpose and intent of these guidelines;
3. The waiver of guidelines in one area of a multifamily development would not result in a material departure from the look and design of other parts of the development;
4. The waiver does not grant a special privilege to the property owner;
5. The waiver is the minimum necessary to grant relief to the applicant.

In order for a waiver from these guidelines to be considered, the applicant must submit a formal waiver request, in a format prescribed by the Planning Department, which shows how criteria 1-5 would be met and, if applicable, provides details of any proposed alternative to the waived guidelines. The waiver shall be considered a Type A-1 decision subject to the review and appeal procedures of Title 20 BMC.

Relationship to Buckley Municipal Code

These guidelines shall serve as a supplement to the standards of Buckley Municipal Code (BMC). Where there is a conflict between these guidelines and standards in BMC, the more stringent requirements shall apply.

Definitions

The following definitions are relevant and used frequently throughout these Multifamily Design Guidelines. Definitions for other frequently and commonly used terms in these Design Guidelines follow definitions in BMC 19.12. The definitions of these guidelines shall supersede any conflicting definitions of BMC 19.12.

Common Open Space: Open space intended and available for use by all residents within a multifamily development. Areas such as private balconies, porches, yards, or entryways for individual dwelling units as well as yards/setbacks required by zoning code are not considered common open space.

Multifamily: All duplexes, townhomes, or any structures containing three or more dwelling units amounting to at least eight (8) residential units on the same parcel or on consecutive parcels under common ownership, regardless of whether individual dwelling units are leased or individually-owned.

Open Space: That part of a lot, or any number of lots or portions thereof, brought together under one development plan for the entire parcel, other than required yards, which:

- 1) Is free and clear of buildings, structures and paved areas used for automobile parking or vehicular access and is to remain open and unobstructed from the ground to the sky;
- 2) Is accessible (and made available at all times) to all persons occupying a dwelling unit of the structures located on the lot;
- 3) Has a minimal uninterrupted horizontal dimension in all directions greater than 20 feet;
- 4) Limits paved areas in any required open space to five percent or less of the total square footage of the open space, and shall be located in only one section of the same.

Recreation Areas: Common areas set aside for recreational use and recreational amenities, such as sports courts, playground equipment, swimming pools, trails, gardens, picnic areas, ponds, and other outdoor amenities designed to be actively used and enjoyed by residents, tenants and guests of multifamily developments.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION AREAS

Applicability and Intent

Multifamily open space and recreation guidelines shall apply to all common open space in multifamily developments in Buckley. Consistent with goals and policies of the City of Buckley Comprehensive Plan, open space and recreation guidelines are intended to:

- Provide open spaces that are attractive, safe, and available to all segments of the population;
- Complement and enhance the city's natural environment and small-town appearance;
- Connect recreation areas and open spaces through trails and sidewalks;
- Provide recreational infrastructure that shows off the City's natural features;
- Provide screening from neighboring single family development to attenuate noise, traffic headlights, and to increase privacy.

Guidelines for all Common Open Space and Recreation Areas

All common open space and recreation areas shall adhere to the following guidelines:

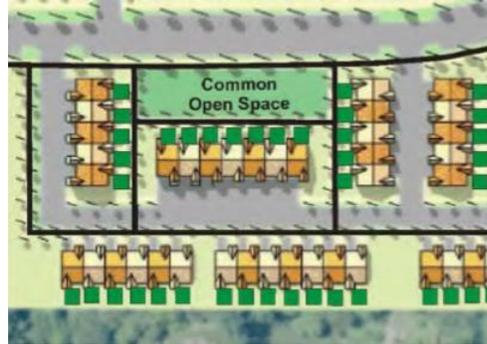
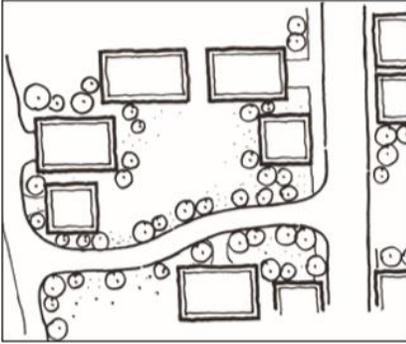
1. A minimum of 120 square feet of common open space per dwelling unit shall be provided for all new multifamily developments applicable under these guidelines. This open space shall include some type of landscape treatment such as grass or another permeable surface, trees, ponds/water features, and/or other maintained landscaped areas.
2. Common open space areas shall be usable and shall not include lands that are designated as sensitive areas, critical areas or have slopes steeper than a 20 percent grade.
3. Recreation areas amounting to a minimum of 60 square feet per dwelling unit shall be set aside for active recreation such as sports courts, playground equipment, swimming pools, trails, gardens, picnic areas, ponds, and other outdoor amenities designed to be actively used and enjoyed by multifamily residents and guests.
4. Multifamily developments subject to these guidelines shall implement a mechanism, acceptable to the planning director, to ensure the continued care and maintenance of privately-owned common open space. A typical example would be creation of a homeowners' association with authority and funding necessary to maintain the common areas.

Guidelines for Common Open Space

Common open space should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. All multifamily buildings should be located within 600 feet of common open space.
2. Common open space should be located adjacent to public rights-of-way and/or along the required setback/yard areas for public rights-of-way.
3. Common open space should be designed so private multifamily open space appears visually integrated with public streetscape landscaping.
4. Common open space should include a variety of dimensions, including long corridors along rights-of-way, larger open areas with similar length and depth, and uniquely shaped areas to fill-out otherwise unbuildable portions of multifamily developments.

Examples of Desirable Common Open Space and Configurations



Desirable Open Space Connections



Desirable Open Space Example 1: Lakeland Hills, Auburn, WA; showing a wide variety of common open space dimensions, shapes and locations, with areas for recreation open space set away from rights-of-way

Desirable Open Space Configuration



Desirable Open Space Example 2: Silver Creek Apartments, South Hill, WA

Guidelines for Recreation Areas

Recreation areas shall adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Every multifamily building shall be located within 600 feet of recreation areas.
2. Recreation areas shall be adjacent to the front or rear yard of at least one multifamily building in the multifamily development.
3. Recreation areas shall be physically connected to other common open space areas in the development through adjacency to other common open space or a pedestrian walkway.
4. Recreation areas shall include, at a minimum, the following amenities:
 - a. Garbage and recycling receptacles
 - b. Park benches and tables
 - c. Bicycle racks

Land included in the calculation for recreation areas should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Be located toward the center of multifamily developments and not immediately adjacent to public rights-of-way;
2. Include a variety of recreation amenities for all ages, such as pedestrian paths, gardens, water features, swing/play sets, and sports courts;
3. Include some covered areas so recreation areas can be enjoyed year-round.

PARKING

Applicability and Intent

Multifamily parking guidelines shall apply to all off-street parking within multifamily developments in Buckley. Consistent with goals and policies of the City of Buckley Comprehensive Plan and other parking outcomes desired by the City, multifamily parking guidelines are intended to:

- Ensure an appropriate amount of parking for all applicable multifamily developments in Buckley;
- Encourage connectivity within multifamily developments and between multifamily developments and the surrounding neighborhood;
- Create a vibrant, welcoming urban environment; and
- Encourage non-motorized access and enhance the potential for non-motorized transportation options.

Guidelines for all Multifamily Parking

All multifamily developments shall adhere to the following parking guidelines:

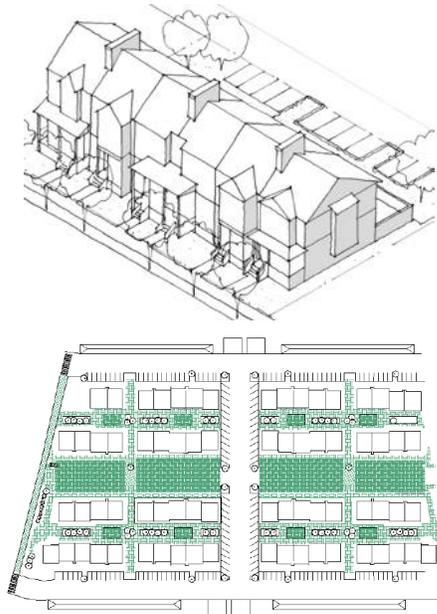
1. A minimum of two (2) parking spaces per dwelling unit shall be provided.
2. A minimum of one guest parking space per every five (5) dwelling units shall be provided.
3. A comprehensive system of pedestrian walkways shall link all site entrances, building entries, parking areas and common outdoor spaces with the public sidewalk.
4. Clearly defined pedestrian connections shall be provided:
 - a) Between public sidewalks and building entrances when buildings are not located directly adjacent to the sidewalk.
 - b) Between parking lots and building entrances.

All multifamily developments are encouraged to adhere to the following parking guidelines:

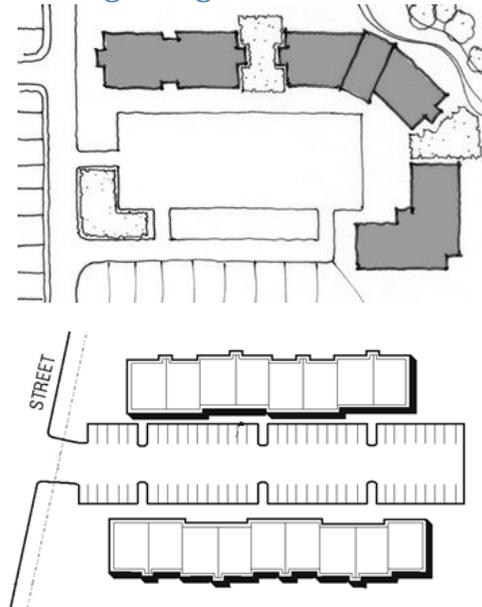
1. Parking areas and garages should be located behind or to the sides of multifamily buildings, located off of alleys, and/or located in the interior portions of multifamily buildings.
2. Parking should be designed to complement pedestrian entries. This applies to public garages and individual private garages, whether they front on a street or private interior access road.
3. Guest parking should be spread throughout multifamily developments rather than concentrated in one or a few central areas.
4. Parking lot lighting shall be placed to create adequate visibility at night and evenly distributed to increase security and pedestrian safety;
5. Developments should provide a safe and convenient network of vehicular circulation that connects to the surrounding road/access network and provides the opportunities for future connections to adjacent parcels, where applicable. For example, large sites (at least 2 acres) should utilize a network of vehicular connections at intervals of no more than every 400 feet.
6. For any configuration where the primary access is off of the same facade as vehicular access, carports may be allowed adjacent to an apartment building if integrally designed to the main structure. Lighted carports are encouraged.
7. Garages and carports should include façade buffer landscaping elements to minimize the appearance of garages.
8. Parking garage entries (both individual private and shared parking garages) should not dominate the streetscape. They should be designed and sited to complement, not subordinate, the pedestrian entry. This applies to both public garages and any individual private garages, whether they front on a street or private interior access road.

9. Townhouse developments featuring 2-car garages are encouraged to employ tandem garages to minimize the garage's negative visual impact on the street and visual environment.
10. Townhomes and all other multi-family dwelling units with private exterior ground floor entries should provide at least 20 square feet of landscaping adjacent to the entry. This is particularly important for units where the primary entrance is next to private garages off of an interior access road. Such landscaping areas soften the appearance of the building and highlight individual entries.

Examples of Desirable Parking Configurations



Examples of Undesirable Parking Configurations



Example of Desirable Parking Entrance Designs



Example of Undesirable Parking Entrance Designs



ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are strongly encouraged for multifamily developments in Buckley:

Façade Articulation and Modulation

Articulation is the visual enhancement of a building façade by including features such as broken rooflines, chimneys, entrances, distinctive window patterns, and other elements that add depth and texture to the building surface. Modulation is the stepping back or projecting forward of portions of a building face, within specified intervals of building width and depth, as a means of breaking up the apparent bulk of a structure’s continuous exterior walls. All residential buildings and residential portions of mixed-use buildings should include the following articulation and/or modulation features at intervals of no more than 30 feet (as applicable) along all facades facing a street, common open space, and common parking areas:

1. Vertical building modulation with distinct changes in the building façade that are tied to a change in color or building material and/or roofline modulation. Balconies should not be used to meet this modulation guideline unless they are recessed or projected from the facade and integrated with the building’s architecture. For example, “cave” balconies or balconies that appear to be “tacked on” to the facade should not be considered sufficient vertical building modulation.
2. Horizontal building modulation through the stepping back or extending forward of building stories or horizontal building elements. The depth (extension out or set back from the building facade) of the modulation should be at least two feet when tied to a change in the roofline and at least five feet in other situations.
3. The use of a distinctive ground floor or lower floor design, consistent articulation of middle floors, and a distinctive roofline.
4. The use of bays, dormers, balconies and other projected or recessed design elements to reduce the building’s mass and add visual interest.
5. Repeating distinctive window patterns.

Examples of Good Façade Articulation and Modulation



Windows

1. Windows on multifamily buildings should be simple in form, use transparent (not reflective) glass, and recessed and treated.
2. To the extent possible, multiple windows on a single wall plane should be regularly spaced and aligned with other windows and doors on the same wall plane. Single or grouped windows on a wall plane should relate to other architectural features such as roof forms, doors, or façade projections.
3. Landscaping adjacent to windows should not impede views from dwelling units.

Desirable Window Treatment and Layout



Undesirable Window Treatment and Layout



Roofs

1. Pitched roofs, with a minimum slope of 5:12, are recommended over flat roofs.
2. Roof lines should be varied within the overall horizontal plane through combinations of roof heights that create variation and visual interest.
3. Modulation of roofline height is preferred at least every 30 feet.

Desirable Roof Modulation and Roof Forms

