

Article 4: Community Design

Draft, September 1, 2011

NOTE: This is the first full draft of the code – intended for review by city council, planning commission, city staff, the non-motorized transportation committee, and interested citizens. The provisions herein are intended to replace applicable land use regulations now found in ECC Titles 12 and 13. Also note that the provisions herein supplement suggested changes to Section 3 (Street Standards) of the city’s public works development standards.

For clarification, we have indicated in (parentheses) whether each chapter is new or updates or replaces a current ECC chapter or section. Also, text in CAPS are special notes to reviewers.

Highlighted text warrants special review.

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15.40 Streetscape Design *(NEW)*

15.40.010 Purpose. *(NEW)*

Streetscapes are typically defined as the areas between buildings that are occupied by the public street right-of-way and related street, sidewalk, and landscaping improvements, and any setback and yard areas on private property. Ellensburg's streetscapes are among the most important urban design features of the community, because their appearance, character and the impressions they evoke, create the public image of the city. Streetscape design also impacts the ability of residents and visitors to move from place to place. A high priority for the city is to create a multi-modal network of streets, where roads are shared by a combination of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users. To accomplish this goal, streets need to be both safe and attractive to these users.

This chapter provides a summary of street design standards for the full range of street classifications. For the detailed design standards, see Section 3 (Street Standards) of the city's public works development standards ([ADD DIRECT LINK](#)). Standards and guidelines for the privately-owned portions of the streetscape (setbacks/yards, landscaping and buildings) are addressed via Site Orientation Standards in Chapter 15.51 of this Title.

15.40.020 Arterial street design. *(NEW)*

A. Purpose. Provide safe and attractive arterial streets to facilitate movement of multi-modal traffic through the city and to regional and community destinations. As mobility is the primary function of the arterial streets, access to property may be limited to accommodate traffic flow.

B. Principal arterial streets. [see Figure 15.40.020(B)]

1. **Definition.** Streets and highways that contain the greatest portion of through or long-distance travel. Such facilities serve high-volume travel corridors that connect major generators of traffic. The selected routes provide an integrated system for complete circulation of traffic, including ties to major rural highways entering the urban area. Generally, principal arterials include high traffic volume streets.
2. **Design.** Principle arterials include 2 lanes of travel in each direction, a center/left turn lane, bicycle lanes, planting strips, and sidewalks. On-street parking may be included in single family zones and in special circumstances in commercial zones. See Section 3 (Street Standards) of the city's public works development standards ([ADD DIRECT LINK](#)) for detailed standards.

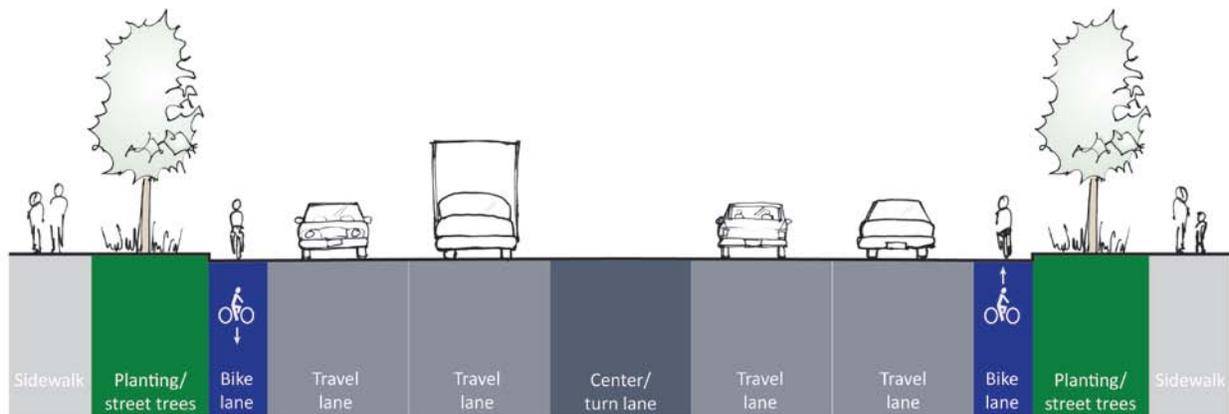


Figure 15.40.020(B). Cross-section of standards for typical new principal arterial streets. Variations could include on-street parking lanes in single family zones and commercial zones in special circumstances, and wider sidewalks with trees in grates in commercial zones.

C. Minor arterial streets. [see Figure 15.40.020(C)]

1. Definition. Streets and highways that connect with remaining arterial and collector roads extending into the urban area. Minor arterial streets and highways serve less concentrated traffic-generating areas such as neighborhood shopping centers and schools. Minor arterial streets serve as boundaries to neighborhoods and collect traffic from collector streets. Although the predominant function of minor arterial streets is the movement of through traffic, they also provide for considerable local traffic that originates or is destined to points along the corridor.
2. Design. Minor arterials include one lane of travel in each direction, a center/left turn lane, bicycle lanes, planting strips, and sidewalks. On-street parking may be included in single family zones and in special circumstances in commercial zones. See Section 3 (Street Standards) of the city's public works development standards (ADD DIRECT LINK) for detailed standards.

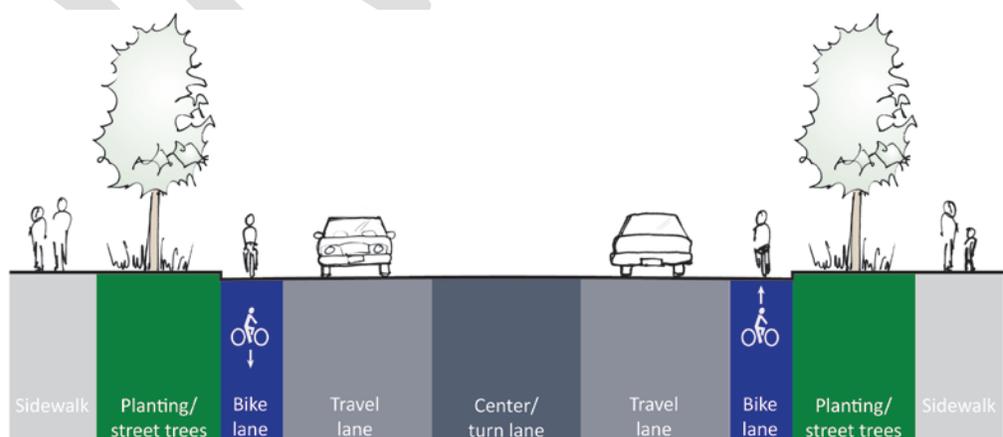


Figure 15.40.020(C). Cross-section of standards for new minor arterial streets located in commercial, industrial, and multifamily zones. Variations could include on-street parking lanes in single family zones and commercial zones in special circumstances, and wider sidewalks with trees in grates in commercial zones.

15.40.030 Collector street design. (NEW) (see Figure 15.40.030)

- A. Purpose. Provide safe and attractive collector streets that balance mobility and access to encourage flow of traffic from neighborhoods and provide access to property.
- B. Definition. An intermediate street connecting local streets to the arterial street system and to activity centers.
- C. Design. Collector streets include one lane of travel in each direction with shared auto and bicycle lanes, on-street parking, planting strips, and sidewalks. See Section 3 (Street Standards) of the city's public works development standards (ADD DIRECT LINK) for detailed standards.

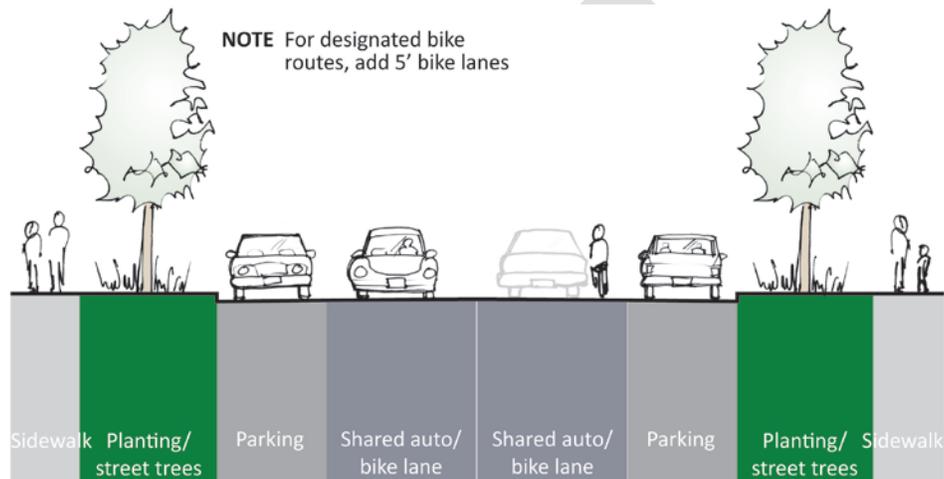


Figure 15.40.030. Cross-section of standards for collector streets. Variations could include removal of on-street parking lanes in single family zones (where alleys and other provisions for off-street parking are provided to adjacent lots) and commercial zones in special circumstances, and wider sidewalks with trees in grates in commercial zones.

15.40.040 Local access street design. (NEW) (see Figure 15.40.040)

- A. Purpose. Provide safe and attractive local access streets that provide access to property.
- B. Definition. A street used primarily for providing access to abutting property.
- C. Design. There are 3 optional designs for local access streets, including 20-foot, 24-foot, and 30-foot wide streets, to allow flexibility for subdivision design while accommodating functional access needs and community design goals. Travel lanes are shared auto and bicycle lanes. Planting strips and sidewalks are included on both sides of the street. See Section 3 (Street Standards) of the city's public works development standards (ADD DIRECT LINK) for detailed standards.

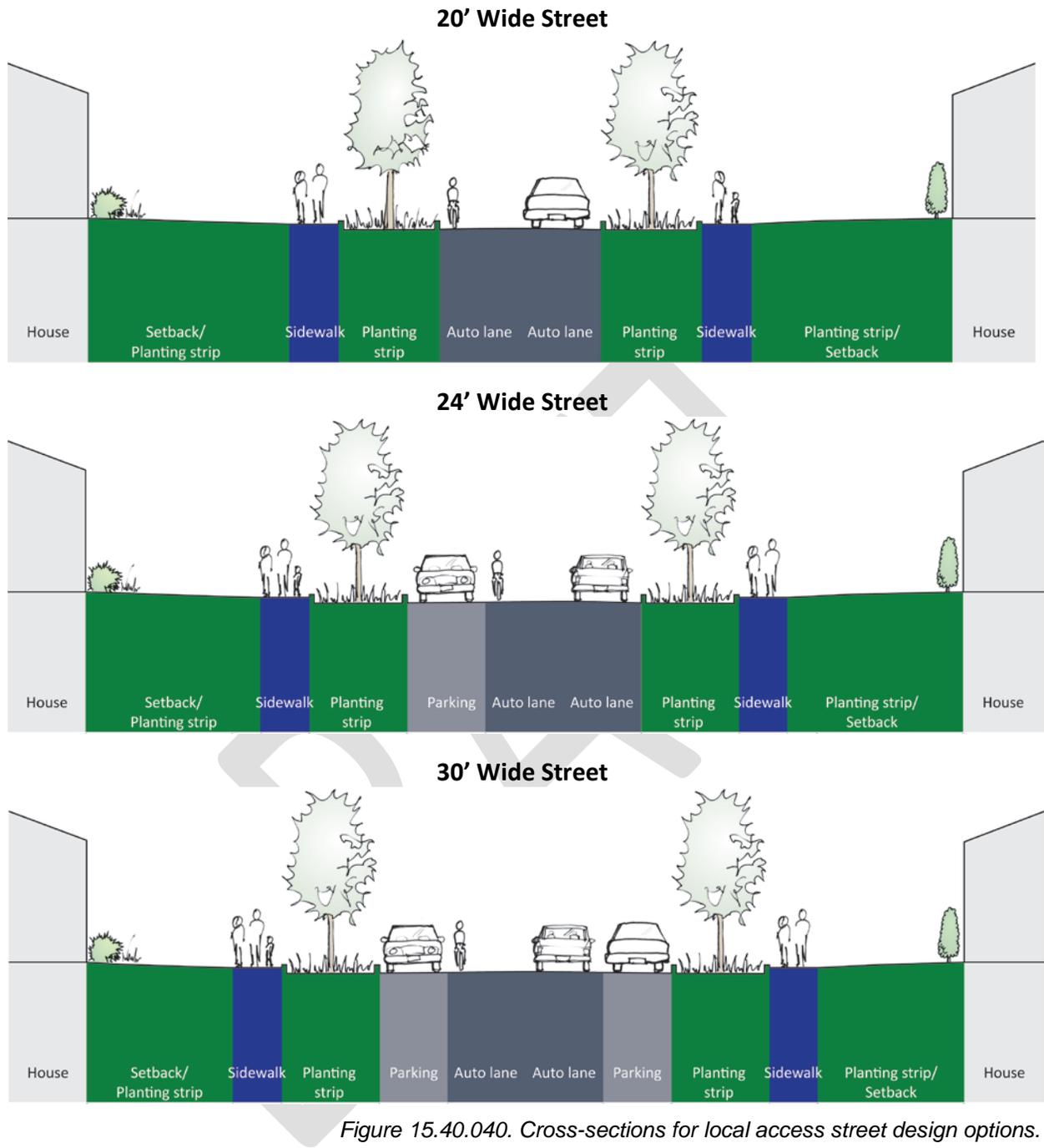


Figure 15.40.040. Cross-sections for local access street design options.

15.41 Subdivision Design & Block Structure *(NEW)*

15.41.010 Purpose. *(NEW)*

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- A. Enhance the character and livability of Ellensburg’s neighborhoods;
- B. Encourage compact and walkable neighborhoods;
- C. Promote “eyes on the street” for safety;
- D. Promote subdivision design that reduces energy consumption; and
- E. Integrate open spaces, natural elements, and recreational features into the design of developments.

15.41.020 Block design & connectivity standards. *(NEW)*

Ellensburg’s comprehensive plan places a high priority on being a “walkable” community. In order to be walkable, there needs to be frequent accessible and attractive connections between destinations. Consequently, this requires a well connected system of streets and pathways that encourages people to walk. Thus block size and design has a direct impact on the walkability of a community.

A. All zones.

1. Connectivity to abutting lands. The street system of proposed subdivisions shall be designed to connect with existing, proposed, and planned streets outside of the subdivision. Wherever a proposed development abuts unplatted land or a future development phase of the same development, street stubs shall be provided to allow access to future abutting subdivisions and to logically extend the street system into the surrounding area. All street stubs shall be provided with a temporary turn-around unless specifically exempted by the fire marshal, and the restoration and extension of the street shall be the responsibility of any future developer of the abutting land.
2. Continuation of streets. Planned streets shall connect with surrounding streets to permit the convenient movement of traffic between residential neighborhoods and to facilitate emergency access and evacuation. Connections shall be designed to meet or exceed the block standards in subsections (B) and (C) below, and to avoid or minimize through traffic on local streets.
3. Pedestrian accessway standards. Where a street connection in conformance with the maximum block length standards in subsection (B) and (C) below is impracticable, a pedestrian accessway may be required in lieu of the street connection. Such an accessway may be mid-block or at the end of a cul-de-sac, depending on where it’s needed the most to meet the standards and provide the desired pedestrian connection. Such access ways shall conform to all of the following standards:
 - a. Pedestrian accessways shall be located within dedicated public rights-of-way or private easements allowing public access with a minimum dimension of 10 feet in width;

- b. Pedestrian accessways shall be constructed to sidewalk standards for Local Access Roads. This includes width, materials, lighting, etc. See Section 3 (Street Design) of the public works development standards. Alternative designs may be considered where significant environmental constraints are present;
- c. Pedestrian accessways shall conform to applicable ADA requirements, except where the public works director determines this is not practical due to steep slopes or other significant environmental constraints;
- d. The city may require landscaping as part of the required pedestrian accessway improvement to buffer pedestrians from adjacent vehicles and land uses. Plantings shall emphasize drought tolerant and low maintenance materials and shall maintain adequate visibility for safety; and
- e. Where pedestrian accessways are privately owned, they shall be operated and maintained by the developer until: (1) the declaration and covenants for plat are recorded, and (2) a homeowners organization has been established which shall be legally responsible for the operation and maintenance of the pedestrian accessway. If the developer or the homeowners organization fail to fulfill, in whole or in part, their responsibilities to operate and maintain the pedestrian accessway, then responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the pedestrian accessway shall become the joint and several legal obligation of the owners of lots adjacent to the pedestrian accessway, their heirs, successors and assigns.

B. Residential zones. [see Figure 15.41.020(B)(1) and (2)] New residential developments shall provide an integrated and connected network of streets in a “modified grid” format to help provide a sense of place and orientation and provide multiple travel route options for all users. A street network dominated by long, irregular loop roads and cul-de-sacs is not appropriate. The modified grid relies on the “T” and crossroads intersection. It responds well to incorporating topographic features and creating road form where the property is surrounded by open space. Sidewalks in a modified grid allow for a continuously linked network. The following standards apply to new development in the residential zones.

1. Blocks shall be designed to provide pedestrian and vehicular connections at intervals no greater than 660 feet. DEPARTURES to this standard will be considered by the reviewing authority provided the alternative design meets the purposes of the standards and meets the following criteria:
 - a. A departure provides the opportunity for a public open space or other public amenity that goes well beyond minimum standards herein. For example, a larger block could allow for the development of a compact village of homes around a centralized open space; and
 - b. Vehicular connections shall be provided at intervals no greater than 1,000 feet, except where otherwise provided in this section.

The reviewing authority shall document the reason for approving a departure (to be maintained with project application records) for the purpose of providing consistency in decision-making by the city.

2. Exceptions to the standards: Where topography, right-of-way, existing construction or physical conditions, or other geographic conditions prevent compliance or impose an

unusual hardship on the applicant, the reviewing authority shall relax the standards provided the proposed design maximizes pedestrian and vehicular connectivity on the site given the constraints.

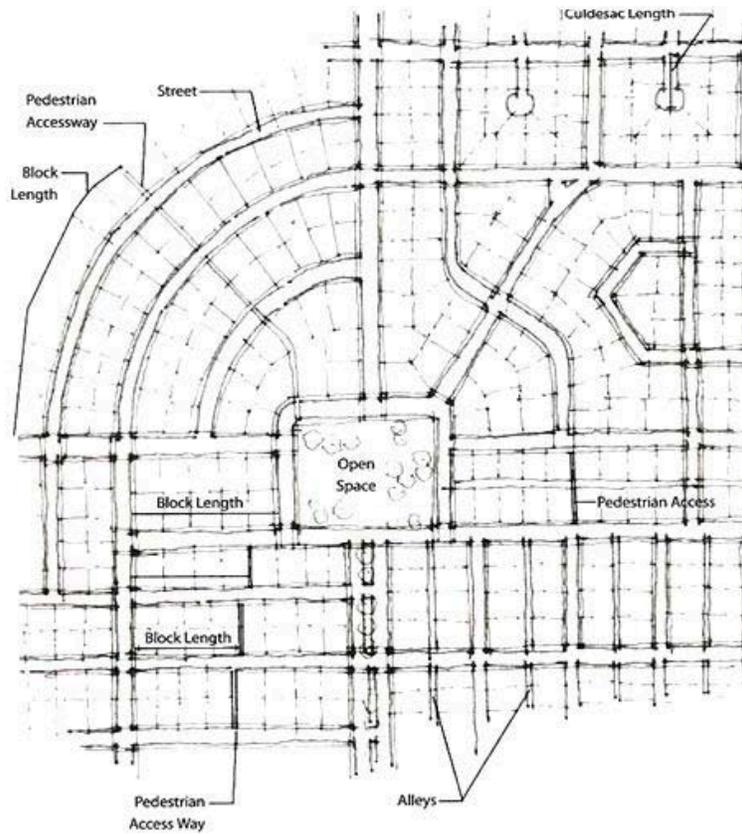


Figure 15.41.020(B)(1). A good example of a “modified grid.” Also note how block lengths are measured.

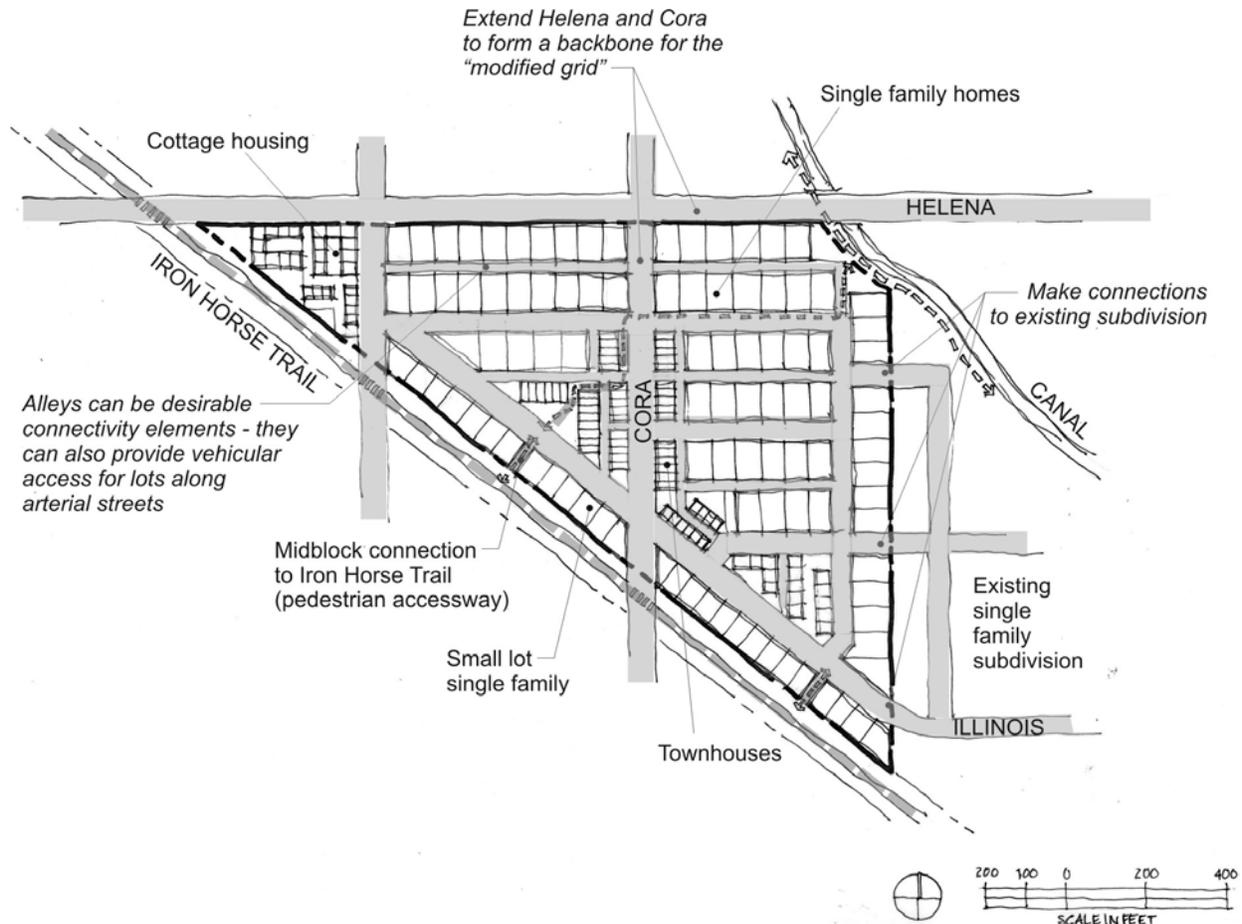


Figure 15.41.020(B)(2). Illustrating an example subdivision design and street grid on a site in Ellensburg. All blocks shown meet requirements (maximum length 660-feet). Note that mid-block pedestrian connections are used to access the Iron Horse Trail, rather than a full street connection, which would not be desirable in this case.

C. Commercial zones. Similar to residential areas, an integrated and connected network of streets is important in commercial zones to help provide a sense of place and orientation and provide multiple travel route options for all users. Connectivity is particularly critical in areas that allow for a mix of uses (including both residential and commercial uses). More flexibility is warranted in industrial zones, interchange commercial areas (such as the C-T zone), and within service oriented commercial areas (such as the C-H zone).

1. C-C, CC-II, and C-N zones. Blocks shall be designed to provide pedestrian and vehicular connections at intervals no greater than 400 feet.
2. C-H, C-T, and I-L zones. [see Figure 15.41.020(C)]
 - a. Blocks shall be designed to provide pedestrian connections at intervals no greater than 660 feet; and
 - b. Blocks shall be designed to provide vehicular connections at intervals no greater than 1,320 feet. Private streets and other internal circulation routes may be used to meet

block/circulation requirements where such connections meet the purposes of the standards.

3. I-H zones. Blocks shall be designed to provide vehicular connections at intervals no greater than 1,320 feet.

Exceptions to the standards: Where topography, right-of-way, existing construction or physical conditions, or other geographic conditions prevent compliance or impose an unusual hardship on the applicant, the reviewing authority shall relax the standards provided the proposed design maximizes pedestrian and vehicular connectivity on the site given the constraints.



Figure 15.41.020(C). Examples of private streets and internal circulation elements that could be used to meet the connection standards for the C-T, C-H, or I-L zones.

15.41.030 Community design provisions. (NEW)

- A. Development of neighborhoods.** New residential subdivisions are encouraged to be designed to be integrated with the surrounding neighborhood to ensure that it maintains the established character, where consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan. Subdivisions in city expansion areas should be designed so that individual, separately developed projects work together to create distinct neighborhoods, instead of disjointed or isolated enclaves. The case study in Figure 15.41.020(B)(2) above is a good example of how to accomplish this.
- B. Integration with existing/planned open space.** New residential subdivisions adjacent to planned or existing parks or other public open spaces (e.g., creeks, riparian areas), or the landscaped grounds of schools or other public facilities shall be designed to maximize visibility and pedestrian access to these areas through street configuration, pathways, and development orientation.
- C. Integration with natural amenities.** [see Figure 15.41.030(C)] New residential subdivisions are encouraged to preserve and integrate natural amenities (views, mature trees, creeks, rock outcrops, and other similar features) with the development as an amenity. Clustering of lots/units and adjusting roadway configuration to integrate these features is encouraged as a means of achieving these goals. Public access and visibility to these natural amenities is encouraged. For example, trails along the perimeter of wetland buffers are an attractive option.



Figure 15.41.030(C). Examples of a subdivision configured to save large existing trees as an amenity to new housing development.

D. Edges and fences.

"Gated communities," and other residential developments designed to appear as continuous walled-off areas, disconnected and isolated from the rest of the community, are discouraged. While privacy fences separating rear yards between homes are desirable for privacy, tall fences that back up to streets tend to reduce the number of "eyes on the street" and make such streets feel less safe and welcoming. New subdivisions in Ellensburg should consider ways to integrate the new developments into the community rather than walling them off.

Specifically:

1. Subdivision design that incorporates reverse frontage lots is discouraged. This refers to double frontage lots that front on one street, but back up to the other and typically include fences that run along the street edge for back yard privacy.
 - a. For arterial streets, no more than 50 percent of the subdivision's frontage shall be occupied by reverse frontage lots and no more than 400 feet of continuous arterial street frontage shall be occupied by such lots. Applicable subdivisions shall also comply with fences standards set forth in ECC 15.32.130.
 - b. Subdivision design that includes lots that back up to collector or local access streets is prohibited.
2. As an alternative to lots backing up to arterials, developments can provide lots that face arterials and incorporate alleys to the rear for public access. Consider wider front yards and/or planting strips to buffer negative impacts from the street. [see Figure 15.41.030(D)]



Figure 15.41.030(D). Examples of lots that front an arterial street and contain alleys in the back for garage access.

- E. Design diversity.** Residential subdivisions are encouraged to incorporate measures that promote design diversity. This can be accomplished by: [see Figures 15.41.030E(1) and (2)]
1. Providing a mixture of lot sizes and/or front setbacks (which could be specified on the final plat); and/or
 2. Providing a diversity of floor plans and façade treatments that avoid monotonous streetscapes. This could be accomplished with provisions on the final plat and/or **special covenants required for lots.**



Figure 15.41.030(E)(1). The above homes feature a good diversity of façade designs, colors and rooflines.



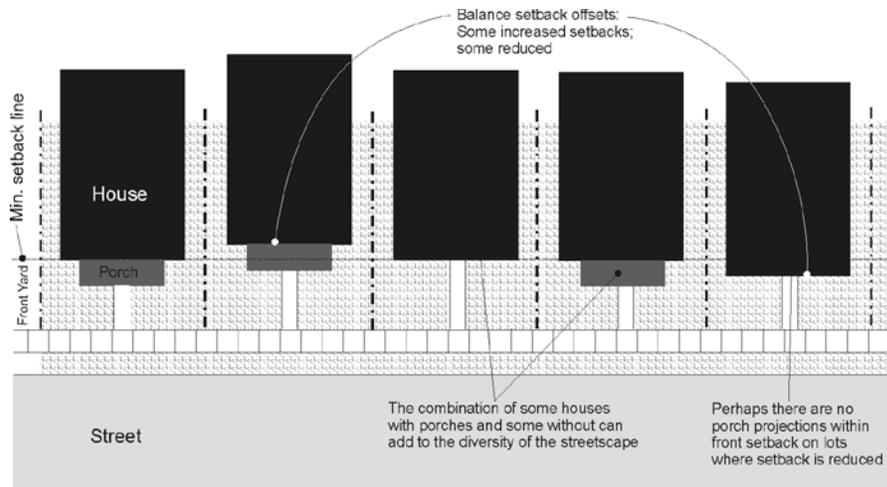


Figure 15.41.030(E)(2). Avoid monotonous rows of duplicative homes. One solution is to use a diversity of floor plans and façade/roofline designs per Figure 15.41.030(E)(1) above. Another solution is to proscribe variable setbacks such as in the example above.

15.41.040 Open space/parks. (NEW)

Parks and open space integrated into subdivisions shall meet the following design criteria:

- A. Must be convenient, usable and accessible.** [see Figure 15.41.040(A)] All open spaces shall be physically and visually accessible from the adjacent street or major internal pedestrian route. Open spaces shall be in locations that the intended user(s) can easily access and use, rather than simply left-over or undevelopable space in locations where very little pedestrian traffic is anticipated. Locations integrated with transit stops, for instance, would be encouraged, as there is likely to be pedestrian traffic in the area.



Figure 15.41.040(A). These parks are located in accessible and centralized locations within the neighborhood. Both parks have accessibility from streets on multiple sides combined with good visibility from adjacent homes.

- B. Must be inviting.** [see Figure 15.41.040(B)] Inviting open spaces feature amenities and activities that encourage pedestrians to use and explore the space. On a large scale, it could be a combination of active and passive recreational uses. It could include a children's play

area, special landscaping element, or even a comfortable place to sit and watch the world go by. In order for people to linger in an open space, it must be comfortable. For instance, a plaza space should receive ample sunlight, particularly at noon, and have design elements that lend the space a “human scale,” including landscaping elements, benches and other seating areas, and pedestrian-scaled lighting. No use shall be allowed within the open space that adversely affects the aesthetic appeal or usability of the open space.



Figure 15.41.040(B). Examples of inviting park design, with design features and amenities that attract usage from the surrounding community.

- C. Must be safe.** Safe open spaces incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles:
1. Natural surveillance – which occurs when parks or plazas are open to view by the public and neighbors. For example, a plaza that features residential units with windows looking down on space means that the space has good “eyes” on the park or plaza;
 2. Lighting that reflects the intended hours of operation and is appropriate for the proposed activities;
 3. Landscaping and fencing. Avoid configurations that create dangerous hiding spaces or minimize views;
 4. Entrances should be prominent, well lit, and highly visible from inside and outside of the space; and
 5. Maintenance. Open spaces shall utilize commercial grade materials that will last and require minimal maintenance costs. Walls, where necessary, shall be designed and treated to deter graffiti. Use and maintain landscape materials that reduce maintenance cost and maintain visibility, where desired.
- D. Provides for uses/activities that appropriately serve the anticipated residents and users of the development.** For example, common open space that serves a variety of functions will attract greater usage. When designing open spaces, project applicants should consider a broad range of age groups, from small children, to teens, parents, and seniors.

15.41.050 Lot design. (NEW)

Lots within subdivisions shall be designed to allow placement of homes to address functional design issues. Lots shall be designed to contain a usable building area. If the building area would be difficult to develop, the lot shall be redesigned or eliminated, unless special conditions can be imposed that will ensure the lot is developed consistent with the standards of this code and does not create nonconforming structures, uses or lots.

The placement and orientation of lots and homes should consider privacy, solar orientation, access, location and access to open space and other factors that can contribute to the overall livability of the home and its relationship to the surrounding environment. Flexibility shall be encouraged in spatial orientation of homes on lots to address these issues and create interesting and attractive streetscapes with homes having a high functional value that might not otherwise occur with a less flexible approach.

To maximize site efficiency and usable open space, small lot developments are encouraged to utilize zero-lot line and courtyard access configurations as described below:

- A. Zero lot line.** [see Figure 15.40.050(A)] This is a configuration where the house and/or garage is built up to one of the side property lines, providing the opportunity for more usable side yard space. Standards:
1. Dwelling units and accessory structures may be placed on one interior side property line. The opposite side yard shall be at least 10 feet.
 2. Privacy wall. In order to maintain privacy, no windows, doors, air conditioning units, or any other types of openings in the walls along a zero lot line structure are allowed except for windows that do not allow for visibility into the side yard of the adjacent lot. Examples include clerestory or obscured windows. See Figure 15.40.050(A) below for an example of a privacy wall for a zero lot line house.
 3. Eaves along a zero lot line may project a maximum of 18 inches over the property line.

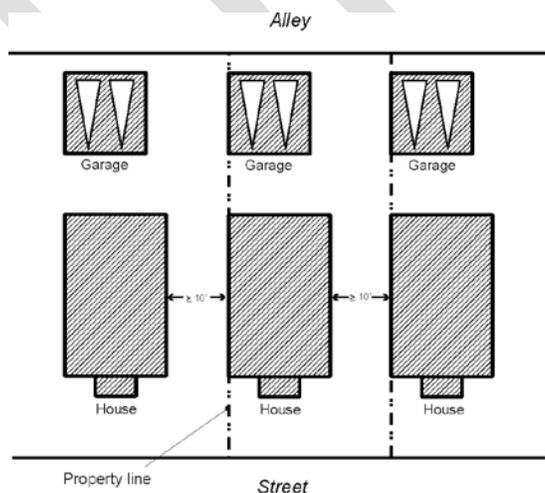


Figure 15.40.050(A). Zero lot line layout example (left). The right image shows the side yard and privacy wall for a zero lot line house.

B. Reciprocal use easement lots. This works similar to the zero lot line configuration, except that the homes and accessory structures meet the standard setbacks and easements are granted on one side yard to allow consolidated use of the side yards by the adjacent property [see Figure 15.40.050(B) for example]. Also, configurations providing for reciprocal use easements in the rear yard are allowed to maximize usable open space [see Figure 15.40.050(C) for example]. Standards/provisions:

1. Reciprocal easements shall be noted on the plat.
2. Privacy wall. In order to maintain privacy, no windows, doors, air conditioning units, or any other types of openings in the walls of a structure along a reciprocal use easement are allowed except for windows that do not allow for visibility into the side yard of the adjacent lot. Examples include clerestory or obscured windows. See Figure 15.40.050(A) above for an example of a privacy wall.
3. Areas within reciprocal use easements may count towards usable open space requirements for applicable lots.

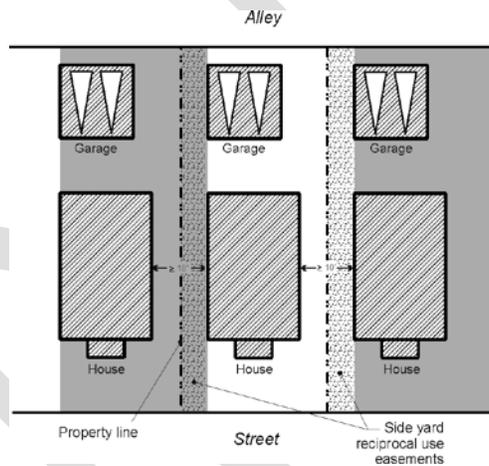


Figure 15.40.050(B). Example of a reciprocal side yard easement configuration.

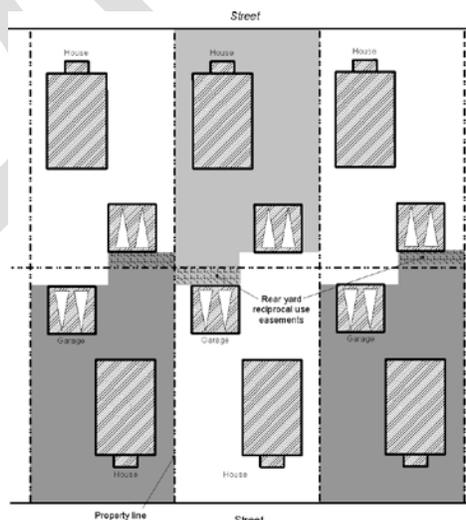


Figure 15.40.050(C). Example of a reciprocal rear yard easement configuration.

C. Courtyard access lots. [see Figure 15.40.050(E)] This includes a series of lots clustered around a private internal roadway. Standards:

1. Maximum number of lots served by a courtyard access: 5 (this includes lots fronting the street on either side of the courtyard access).
2. Maximum length of a courtyard access: 100 feet (or deeper if approved by the Fire Department).
3. Surface width of courtyard access: 12 feet. Due to the limited length, wider drives are unnecessary (safety and function) and undesirable (aesthetics).
4. An easement of 20 feet in width shall be secured over the applicable parcels to allow lots legal access to the public street. A maintenance agreement shall be required for all applicable lots and must be recorded on the final plat.

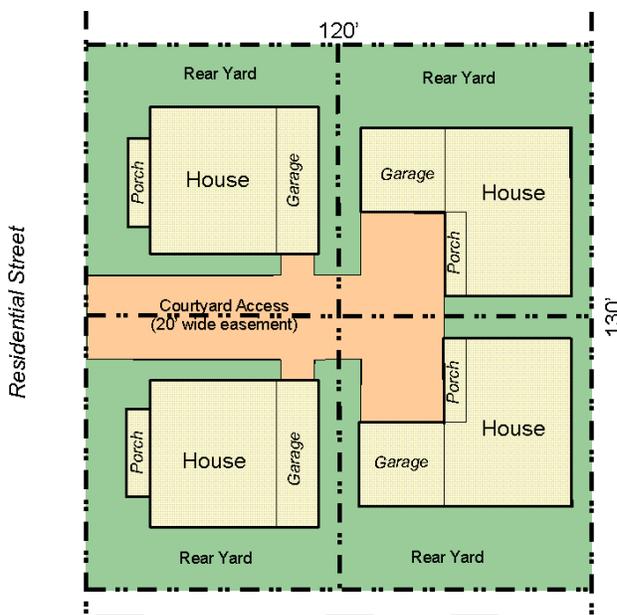


Figure 15.40.050D. Examples of courtyard access lots.

D. Pedestrian-only entry lots. [see Figure 15.40.050(E)] This includes configurations where one or more lots are clustered around a pedestrian easement and/or common open space and do not front on a street [see Figure 15.41.050(E) for an example]. Standards:

1. A pedestrian entry easement shall be provided to all homes that do not front on a street, alley, or common open space.
2. Pedestrian entry easements shall be a minimum of 10 feet wide with a 5-foot minimum sidewalk constructed per Local Access Street standards in Section 3 of the public works development standards (ADD LINK). The sidewalk and easement will need to meet Fire Code fire apparatus access road standards where homes or accessory buildings exceed 150 feet from a street or other road qualifying as a fire apparatus road.
3. These lots must contain private detached or shared garages off an alley or other access if approved by the Public Works director.



Figure 15.40.050(E). Pedestrian-only entry lot configuration examples.

- E. Protective covenants.** The styles of developments discussed above require special consideration to ensure conflicts between neighbors are minimized and that opportunities are provided for a home owners association to deal with unique issues created by these development forms. Covenants for these development styles shall be written to address issues unique to small lot developments that use reciprocal use and easement agreements. Great latitude shall be allowed to the city in reviewing and requiring covenant elements that deal with identified issues.

15.41.060 Access, services and utilities. (12.08.160)

- A. Each lot in a residential subdivision shall have direct access to a public right-of-way, except for alternative lot designs as described in EEC 15.41.050 in this chapter. Driveways shall be constructed per public works development standards (ADD LINK) and ECC Title 4, Public Works Construction;
- B. Each lot in a residential subdivision shall be provided with adequate provisions for water supplies and sanitary wastewater facilities consistent with the requirements of the public works development standards (ADD LINK) and ECC Title 9, Utilities; and
- C. Approval of subdivisions may be conditioned upon dedications to the city of drainage ways, other public ways, water supplies, sanitary waste facilities, parks, playgrounds, sites for schools, and other needs of the public.