

DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN GUIDELINES
For the
NICASIO VALLEY PLANNING AREA

**PREPARED FOR THE MARIN COUNTY COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

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DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

NICASIO PLANNING AREA

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

These Development and Design Guidelines were prepared by the Marin County Community Development Agency with the Nicasio Design Review Board to assist property owners, architects, engineers and planners to design development which is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Nicasio Valley Community Plan. The intent of this document is to give guidance to all concerned as to the scope and nature of the review of projects in the Nicasio Valley Planning Area, and provide a common basis for discussion on the merits of proposed projects. These are guidelines, not inflexible rules; they should be applied with consideration of the site context and project circumstance.

Properties in the Nicasio Valley Planning Area are zoned for agricultural use, single-family residential use and limited village commercial use around the town square. Current zoning of the various parcels in the planning area requires Marin County Community Development Agency discretionary review prior to the division and/or development of land.

The purpose of the project specific plan review is to achieve the goals and objectives of the Nicasio Valley Community Plan. The Community Plan goals encourage the preservation of agricultural land and protection of the natural beauty of the area while permitting development consistent with the plan policies and zoning regulations.

These guidelines are intended to promote harmony between the natural and built environment. They are designed to minimize any adverse physical or visual effects of a specific development project or land use proposal, including those resulting from: (1) agricultural, residential or village commercial land use; (2) subdivision or land division; (3) building location, height, bulk, mass, scale and exterior materials and colors; (3) grading, cut and fill or reforming of the natural land forms; (4) removal and replacement of natural indigenous vegetation; and (5) view obstruction or view impairment. The purpose of these design guidelines is to protect the natural features of the land and benefit the Public welfare.

A. DESIGN REVIEW:

All projects on parcels zoned ARP (Agricultural Residential Planned), and RMPC (Residential Multiple Planned Commercial), require Design Review by the Marin County Community Development Agency. Design Review encompasses a broad review of activities (use), site planning, and improvements including: principal buildings, accessory structures, water tanks, fences, grading and tree removal, roads, retaining walls, antennas, paint colors, and other changes which affect the exterior appearance.

The purpose of Design Review in Nicasio is to implement the goals and policies of the Marin Countywide Plan and the Nicasio Valley Community Plan. The Community Plan encourages the

preservation of agricultural land and protection of the rural quality and natural beauty of the area, while permitting development with design controls consistent with the plan policies and zoning regulations. These design guidelines are designed to minimize any adverse physical or visual effects of a project and promote harmony between the natural and built environment. However these guidelines provide only an overview of concerns and are not a substitute for the detailed Marin County Code regulations or professional expertise.

The Nicasio Design Review Board is a volunteer committee of local residents appointed by the Directors of the Nicasio Land Owners Association Inc., and is an advisory Board to the Marin County Community Development Agency. This Board operates as a courtesy to the community and as a local community review board to the Community Development Agency.

When an application for development in Nicasio is submitted to the Marin County Community Development Agency, the development plans are forwarded to the Nicasio Design Review Board (NDRB) for its review and comment. When application documents are received from the County the NDRB contacts the project applicant (usually the property owner and/or architect) to meet and visit the site to discuss the project.

The NDRB meets to review project plans and story poles to formulate comments and recommendations, which are forwarded to the Community Development Agency for consideration. The Board's area of project review includes all the land in the Nicasio Valley Planning area, which includes the watershed of Nicasio Reservoir.

One of the NDRB's functions is to observe and comment on the physical characteristics of a site and how they relate to a proposed project. Consequently, an owner and/or project sponsor should set up a preliminary site meeting with the Nicasio Design Review Board at the beginning stages of project planning before starting the design work. Names of current NDRB members can be obtained from the Nicasio Land Owners Association.

The NDRB mailing address is:
Nicasio Design Review Board Nicasio California 94946

II. LAND USE CATEGORIES:

The Nicasio Valley Planning Area includes three general land use categories: agricultural and open space land use, single-family residential housing, and very limited multiple-residential and village commercial land use.

A. Agricultural/ Open Space: "Agricultural Land Use," means the production of food or fiber through tilling of the soil, the raising of crops, horticulture, viticulture, small livestock farming, dairying and/or animal husbandry and generally all other uses customarily incidental thereto, and is the principle land use in the Nicasio Valley Planning Area. "Open Space Land Use" means agricultural land not presently in use but preserved as undeveloped private open space which may be made available in the future for compatible agricultural use. The primary intent for open space land is that it shall be preserved for agricultural use, not to provide open space/recreational land uses that would interfere, or be in conflict, with agricultural operations.

B. Single-Family Residential: "Single-Family Residential Land Use," means development and use of detached buildings designed for single family use. The majority of the land in the planning

area is zoned to allow development and use of low density single-family housing in agricultural areas. The current regulations are designed to allow varied housing types without the confines of specific yard or lot area requirements.

C. Multiple Residential/Village Commercial: "Multiple Residential Land Use" means the development and use of buildings, or portions thereof, as a residence for two or more families living independently of each other, including apartment houses, hotels and flats. "Village Commercial Land Use," means the development and use of buildings for the establishment of commercial businesses that provide local community retail and service needs. These designations apply only to certain parcels around the Town Square. The purpose of the multiple residential/village commercial land use in the Nicasio Valley Planning Area is to maintain the established historical character of the Town Square. This includes a balance between residential use and commercial business that provide local community retail and service needs. This mix of uses is limited to the area around the Town Square. The specific zoning for this area encourages mixing these uses in existing buildings or new buildings of the same or similar architectural character as historically established. (See Appendix A)

III. LAND USE GUIDELINES:

A. Agricultural Land Use Guidelines: Agricultural land not presently in use should be preserved as undeveloped public or private open space to be made available on a lease or ownership basis in the future for compatible agricultural use. The primary intent of development on undeveloped agricultural parcels shall be to preserve open lands for agricultural uses, not to provide open space / recreational land uses which would later interfere or be in conflict with future agricultural operations. Agricultural land management plans are required for a Master Plan. The criteria listed below have been established to guide proposed development so that the proposed use is consistent with Nicasio Valley Community Plan goals. Proposed development on agricultural lands should be planned to accomplish the following:

1. Protect threatened or rare species of plants and animals and their habitats.
2. Preserve archaeological sites in an undisturbed condition.
3. Identify and protect significant natural resources in the pastoral zones with special attention paid to streams, stream banks, wetlands, and riparian habitat.
4. Manage for the health and perpetuation of existing native plants and animals.
5. Protect surface waters from fecal and/or chemical contamination.
6. Minimize soil erosion to prevent soil loss and to protect surface water from increased sediment loads.
7. Maintain landscapes and improvements to preserve the natural rural landscape and visual environment.
8. Stop the spread of noxious non-native plant species.
9. Provide for the recovery of rangeland resources that are in deteriorated condition.
10. Implement an integrated approach to pest management and minimize pesticide use.

11. Discourage plowing of land located on:

- a) Slopes exceeding 20 percent.
- b) On land within 200 feet of any natural bodies of water, marshes, or sand dunes;
- c) In significant wildlife and plant communities as delineated on maps maintained in the Marin County Community Development Agency including, but not limited to California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Data Base maps;
- d) In areas inhabited by endangered plants as delineated on maps maintained in the Marin County Community Development Agency including, but not limited to California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Data Base maps;
- e) In areas that would disturb archeological resources;
- f) On lands designated by the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service as "highly erodible lands", unless a site-specific SCS approved conservation plan is developed and followed.

12. Include agricultural water use needs in calculations when determining the adequacy of water sources for development approval.

In some cases reasonable public access across those lands remaining in private or public ownership may be requested. Such access should be for pedestrian, equestrian and / or multi-use purposes and should only be provided where it will not interfere with agricultural operations, or conflict with existing vehicular access. (Marin County Code § 22.47.105)

B. Equestrian Land Use Guidelines:

Though not defined as an agricultural use in Marin County Code, recreational equestrian activities are permitted on properties which are zoned for agricultural/open space uses. The following criteria have been developed to guide the establishment of equestrian uses and facilities so that they are consistent with the Nicasio Valley Community Plan goals.

1. Horse Uses and facilities:

- a) A Horse Management Plan should be prepared in conjunction with any Design Review or Use Permit application involving equestrian uses with greater than one horse per five (5) acres, or more than five (5) horses on a parcel. The Horse Management Plan should plan for open space uses, erosion control, dust suppression, odor and insect control, and show all existing and proposed structures, including fencing, on the parcel. The term "horse" applies to all foals, ponies, llamas, mules or donkeys.
- b) The Horse Management Plan should address all proposed and existing land uses and all facilities, and structures, water and drainage systems, and should include permanent and temporary uses, as well as short term "events".

c) The spectator's interaction with horses, as well as traffic, parking facilities, visual impact, fire prevention and life safety should also be considered a part of the Horse Management Plan.

d) Areas exceeding a slope of fifty (50%) percent slope should be excluded from calculations when determining the number of horses permitted on a property.

e) The number of horses permitted on a property should depend on the specific site characteristics and conditions. The characteristics to be considered should include, but are not limited to, access to roads and equestrian trails, streams and bodies of water , watersheds, vegetation, use of surrounding properties, slope, and visual impact.

f) There should be a full time residence owner or manager on-site, for facilities where horses are boarded.

2. Shelters: The following guidelines should be considered when designing and evaluating shelters for equestrian uses. However, shelters are not required in open pastures.

a) All animals should be provided with adequate shelter, feed and water supply.

b) Shelters should be at least 10 feet by 10 feet, with at least one solid wall and a roof, and provide a dry footing.

c) Stalls within a barn should be at least 12 feet by 12 feet.

d) Stables, barns, and shelters should be at least 30 feet from any property line.

3. Corral and Pasture Areas: The following criteria should be considered when designing and evaluating corral and pasture areas for equestrian uses.

a) "Corral" means a fenced area of less than one acre of net open land for the confinement of horses.

b) "Pasture" means a fenced area of one acre or more used for the grazing or feedings of horses.

c) Corrals should be located at least thirty feet from any existing property line.

d) A minimum of 600 square feet of corral or pasture area should be provided for each horse kept in a barn, with adequate shelter, with feed and water supply.

e) Pasture grazing areas should consist of existing grasslands with no more than ten percent (10%) of the pasture in wooded areas.

f) No trees may be removed to create pasture areas.

g) No horse pastures or corrals should be located on slopes greater than fifty percent (50%).

h) Corrals and pastures should be designed to control erosion, pollution, dust, odors, and insects, and have a drained base material to prevent the creation of mud.

i) Fencing should conform to the fencing standards set forth in these Guidelines.

j) New fencing along roads should be located to provide visual continuity with adjacent fencing on adjacent parcels.

c. Single-Family Residential Guidelines: Plans for residential development require either Master Plan or Design Review approval. The following criteria have been established to meet Nicasio Valley Community Plan goals:

1. Maintain adequate separation between residential development and agricultural activities to avoid conflicts. It should be noted that the County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance limits the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be considered a nuisance to nearby residential properties.

2. On agricultural properties, site improvements should be located to avoid operational conflicts between residential and agricultural land use on adjoining properties by providing clustering of the different uses and using buffers between them. Within parcels, traditional ranch clusters of residential, and limited agricultural buildings are encouraged.

3. Building sites should be located to avoid natural environmental and visual resources, including open grass lands, ridges, saddles between peaks, hill tops, rock out-croppings, significant trees, streams, valleys, unique plant habitats and wildlife areas.

4. Locate development behind natural land forms (depressions, knolls, valleys & outcroppings), so that buildings will be screened from view along roads, surrounding development and/or open space. Do not locate building sites on ridges or hilltops unless they are effectively screened from surrounding view corridors and access can be provided with minimal road cuts. In the event that topography will not allow for such siting, development should be screened by existing tree cover. Screening by way of new landscaping may be required. Landscape screening should comply with fire safe guidelines.

5. Minimize grading, road construction, utility extensions, building pad excavation, and removal of vegetation.

6. Utilize geologically stable building sites.

7. Limit road ingress and egress to only one entrance from the main access road, except where the number of units warrants the provision of a second access point for emergency vehicles.

D. Multiple Residential/Village Commercial Guidelines: Plans for development of Village Commercial and Multiple Residential use require either Master Plan and Development Plan or Design Review approval. The following criteria have been established to meet the Nicasio Valley Community Plan goals and guide plan development:

1. The Town Square is the focal point of the Valley and of the village area. The central 1.9-acre parcel is public open space currently zoned O-A (Open Area) and used as a little league baseball park. The square should be kept open and accessible.
2. Maintain historical uses and rural character of the parcels adjacent to the Town Square by protecting existing buildings of architectural significance and by ensuring that new buildings are of compatible architectural character, form, bulk, mass, color and materials. (See Appendix A)
3. Residential and commercial development plans should preserve historical buildings and surrounding open space.
4. Existing buildings or new development on parcels adjacent to the Town Square should provide a mix of residential and village commercial uses. Architectural character, form, bulk, mass, color and materials must be consistent and compatible with the surrounding historical buildings and open space in this area.
5. New commercial uses should serve the local community, such as grocery stores, cafes, deli, post office, local retail stores, low-intensity offices, and family style sit-down restaurants. Night clubs, franchises, and drive-thru or fast food establishments are discouraged.
6. See Appendix A for specific historic resource preservation design criteria.

IV. SUBDIVISION AND LAND DIVISION GUIDELINES:

A. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): Transfer of development rights in the planning area can be used to relocate development. TDR encourages clustering development as an alternative. Transfer of development rights allows development rights from one property to be determined and transferred to a second property. The TDR is permitted to avoid residential subdivision of large open tracts of land necessary for agricultural activities. Transfer of development rights in the Nicasio Valley Planning Area can be used to relocate development from areas where environmental and land use impacts could be severe to other areas where those impacts can be minimized, while still permitting development rights to both a donor and receiver site. Specific guidelines and procedures for implementing this planning and subdivision alternative is provided in the Nicasio Community Plan Policy and Marin County Zoning Code, (ARP § 22.47.106).

The following criteria have been developed to meet the Nicasio Valley Community Plan objectives:

1. A substantial buffer should be provided between residential and agricultural land use. Clustering uses and buildings on lots where residential use is the primary use is encouraged.
2. Significant natural environmental features and large tracts of agricultural land should be protected.

3. Conservation easements or restrictions must be a condition of the TDR subdivision. The easements and restrictions shall be recorded against the donor property prior to the recording of a Parcel or Final Subdivision Map for the receiver site.
4. Density bonuses attributable to TDR will only be considered if an essential agricultural asset, such as a working dairy, is being preserved, and provided the proposed TDR meets the criteria set forth in the Nicasio Valley Community Plan.
5. Residential and agricultural buildings must be clustered in the least visually prominent, and most geologically stable portion or portions of the site.
6. Where wooded hillside property is being subdivided, greater setbacks for buildings is preferable to vegetation removal.
7. Transfer of Development Rights should not be used to transfer development to visually prominent areas.

B. Subdivision Design Guidelines: The following criteria have been established as guidelines to achieve Nicasio Valley Community Plan goals:

1. Agricultural lands, natural environmental resources and rural vistas should be identified and preserved.
2. Property boundaries for proposed parcels should be designed with particular consideration given to natural topography, natural drainage courses, vegetation, ridgelines, valleys and meadows. This standard is intended to promote land divisions, which reflect the natural terrain and vegetation, and to prevent property line fencing from arbitrarily bisecting open meadows or grassy areas.
3. Location of lot lines must consider the integrity of existing land uses, buildings, roads, septic leach fields, drainage and utility connections.
4. Building envelopes should be sited away from unstable or hazardous portions of the property.
5. Dedication of land for agricultural/open space, parks, schools and pedestrian / equestrian access use may be required. (See Marin County Code § 20.16.118)
6. The design of subdivisions should provide for passive or natural heating and cooling opportunities for future residences.
7. All major site improvements including, but not limited to roads, utilities, drainage and grading, must be designed and constructed in accordance with the rural residential standards required by Marin County Code Titles 20, 22, 24 and all improvements as required by the approval of a Tentative Map.
8. Site grading must be held to a minimum by designing lots and development to fit on the natural landforms.

C. Design Guidelines for Roads: The following references and criteria have been established to provide direction on road design that meets Nicasio Valley Community Plan goals:

1. General classifications, centerline, intersections, width, parking, grades, curbs, surfacing, etc. see Marin County Code § 24.04.020 through 24.04.230
2. Driveways: length, width, grade, surfacing, etc. See Marin County Code § 24.04.240 through 24.04.320
3. Parking: see Marin County Code § 24.04.330 through 24.04.420. Parking areas should not have adverse impacts on adjacent tree root systems.
4. Pedestrian/Equestrian and Multi-Purpose Paths: see Marin County Code § 24.04.430 through 24.04.510 Except paving of paths should not be required where surrounding area remains unpaved.
5. Road surface material should be darker than 50% gray to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflective surfaces and potential visual impact.
6. Roadways and driveways should be located to minimize their length and visibility.

D. Alternative Design Guidelines for Roads, Driveways, and Parking:

1. Narrower street widths should be considered when less grading is required than that required for full-width streets, provided adequate Fire Department access is maintained. Any retaining walls should be terraced and landscaped. Split roadways are discouraged. Street layouts must conform to the natural grades and long stretches of straight road should be avoided.
2. Driveway and street grades of up to 16% or less are encouraged. Exceptions may be granted to allow grades up to 25 % when it will help protect views and minimize grading and tree removal, provided that: 1) the Fire Marshall verifies that adequate fire safety improvements have been incorporated into the proposed project; and 2) the specific design includes adequate traffic safety improvements. Common drives are encouraged when they would result in less grading than individual driveways.
3. On-street parking should be provided in parking bays. If parallel parking is permitted on narrow streets, it should be located on one side only. On streets, which do not meet minimum width standards, two to four guest parking spaces per dwelling unit, located off the driveway apron, are required.
4. Paved surfaces should be kept to a minimum to preserve the natural landscape and should be located where least visible from off-site locations.

E. Building Envelope Location and Use Guidelines:

1. Visually prominent development on hillsides or in open grassy areas should be avoided by taking advantage of existing site features for screening such as tree clusters, depressions in

topography, and setback hillside plateau. Building envelopes should be located behind land forms (depressions, valleys, & rock outcroppings) so that buildings will be screened from view along roads or from surrounding development or open space, and should not be located near visually prominent ridge lines (See Marin County Code § 22.47.1 05(1)(b). In the event that topography will not allow, building envelopes should be sited to take advantage of existing vegetation screening.

2. Building envelopes that offer a variety of building sites that are compatible with topography and other natural features of the site are encouraged.

3. Construction of all buildings and minor structures must be located within the boundaries of the building envelope:

4. Subdivisions that propose land to be preserved for agricultural use must include building envelopes for both residential and agricultural buildings.

5. Building envelopes should be located to minimize the length and visibility of roads and driveways.

6. Building envelopes may have to be surveyed and described with a legal description, and identified with survey markers to verify the appropriateness of their location. In addition, story poles may be required to indicate the size, height, and location of proposed building envelopes.

7. Building envelopes should be sited with consideration for fire safe requirements and defensible safe zones.

F. Utilities:

1. All utilities shall be located underground (Section 24.04.840).

2. Electric transformers and junction boxes shall be in underground vaults.

3. Above ground water tanks, which are visible off-site, may be considered provided that berms and appropriate landscape screening are provided, in accord with IV.G.4 below.

4. Wind energy conversion systems, including windmills and electric generator, are discouraged in visually prominent locations.

G. Water:

1. Water supply for domestic, agricultural, and recreational uses and for fire protection of each lot must be provided. Adequate ground water must be available for new development and no new building permits will be issued or final maps recorded until sufficient proof is provided that adequate ground water for domestic, agricultural, and recreational uses and fire protection is available. All road and other fire protection appliances (e.g. sprinkler systems and fire hydrants) must be consistent with the fire safety regulations of the State of California.

2. All water source development shall comply with standards contained in the State of California Title 22 Regulations and the County of Marin Environmental Health.

3. Testing shall be required before approval of tentative maps.
4. Water tanks should be hidden from view off-site by use of berms and/or landscaping to blend into the natural landscape. In addition, tanks should be painted dark green or a subdued earth-tone color to blend with the surrounding background.

H. Septic Systems:

1. Septic system drain fields should not be located within 100 feet of any watercourse in accordance with County requirements. (Check current code for other setbacks and definitions; See Marin County Code § 18.06)
2. Sewage disposal facilities must be provided for each lot. (See Marin County Code § 20.080)
3. Septic systems should be located away from forested areas, where feasible. All trenching within the drip line of trees should be done under the direct supervision of a Certified Arborist.
4. Trenching for leach field pipes which would endanger the structural integrity or long term health of existing trees should not be permitted.
5. In forested areas trenching should be hand dug to preserve significant tree roots. Design of leach lines can curve to avoid roots.

I. Fire Protection:

1. Water storage, pumps and other facilities needed for adequate fire protection, including automatic sprinkler systems, shall be provided for each new building development. The specific design and capacity of water storage facilities shall be subject to approval by the Fire Marshal. Consideration shall be given to additional water storage requirements for potential wild land fires based upon slope, vegetation and access.
2. Fire hydrant locations shall be determined by the Marin County Fire Department. Fire hydrants should be located to allow vehicles to pass a fire engine parked at the hydrant. Fire hydrants should be marked with reflectors, paint or other suitable means, and maintained to be clearly visible.
3. Water systems using common storage tanks and a distribution system should be encouraged for clustered development.
4. Fire breaks around each building, and/or exterior fire extinguishing systems shall be provided as required by the County of Marin Fire Department.
5. All water supply facilities and appliances must comply with the fire safety regulations of the State of California and the Marin County Fire Department.
6. All propane tanks shall be securely anchored for earthquake safety.

7. Street address numbers should be clearly posted at driveway entrance. Numbers should be sized so that they are clearly visible from the roadway. Numbers should be visible at night, on a contrasting background.

V. BUILDING DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES:

A. Building Location Guidelines: The following building location guidelines have been established to meet Nicasio Valley Community Plan goals:

1. Preservation of the rural character, open vistas and uninterrupted views of fields and hillsides shall be an important consideration when siting structures.

2. Buildings should not be located on or near visually prominent areas, exposed grassy hillsides, or ridgelines. Where lot size or other constraints exist, buildings should be located below the ridgeline so that views to the hillside, from off-site areas, retain the natural ridgeline.

3. Buildings should be sited to preserve the natural vegetation and landforms of the site, and to utilize screening provided by existing vegetation, rock outcroppings, ridges, depressions in topography or other natural features and landscape elements. Where structures are sited in proximity to existing vegetation, consideration should be given to fire safe requirements

4. The site plan should delineate the "Limits of Construction," encompassing all grading, trenching, truck access, turn-around, parking and materials storage and staging areas. Prior to commencing construction, a fence surrounding this construction area should be erected to prevent damage to the undisturbed natural landscape.

5. Buildings should be placed outside areas where geologic hazards exists (See Marin County Code § 20.20.097), and where archeological resources exist.

6. Buildings should be located outside of areas where extreme fire hazards exist.

7. Buildings should be located to minimize driveway visibility. Within the constraints of county policies, avoid building locations close to, or visible from, public roads or common private roads. Buildings should be located on sites that are easily accessible without steep lengthy access roads requiring excessive grading or removal of vegetation or other natural site features.

8. Within the constraints established by the Streamside Conservation Policy, and where no other building sites exist, building locations in narrow canyons along the creek on Lucas Valley Road and Nicasio Valley Road may be appropriate. For locations close to or visible from these roads, the buildings should be screened by the existing trees along the creek.

9. Level building pads on slopes are discouraged. Buildings should be designed to fit with natural features of the site.

B. Streams:

1. Countywide Plan policy establishes a stream and creek side conservation zone along all natural watercourses shown as a blue line on the most recent appropriate USGS quad sheet, or

along watercourses which support riparian vegetation for a length of 100 feet or more. Only limited developments under strict controls are allowed in this zone. (See Marin Countywide Plan requirements for specifics)

2. In addition to the above restrictions, placement of the following uses within the stream conservation zones should be avoided: residential septic tanks and systems, use of garden chemicals, cutting and grading for roads, grazing where protective soil covers may be damaged and runoff from livestock feed lots, stalls, horse exercise fields, training areas and all paved areas.

C. Building and Site Grading Guidelines: (See Marin County Code § 22.47.105 [2.a], 24.04.620 through 24.04.740)

1. Grading should be kept to a minimum and should be performed in a way that respects significant natural features and visually blends with existing land forms. Grading should be done in such a manner as to eliminate flat planes and sharp angles of intersection with the natural terrain. Slopes should be rounded and contoured to blend with existing topography, especially at tops of cuts and base of fills. Use transition slopes of 3:1 or shallower to blend cuts and fills with natural contours to create rounded transitions.

2. Avoid creating large graded terraces at mid-slope areas for building pads. Terracing, if any, should be designed with small incremental steps, avoiding wide step terracing and large areas of flat pads.

3. New building sites should be graded such that they appear to emerge from the slope. Building sites should be graded to form a compatible attachment of the structure with the existing landscape.

4. Hazardous or geologically unstable portions of the site should be avoided.

5. Excessive grading for pads for tennis courts, swimming pools and extensive grading for landscaped areas are discouraged.

6. Sloping lot designs, such as split-level building terraces are encouraged to reduce building pad size.

7. Retaining walls and pony walls visible from off site should either be avoided or of minimum height. Retaining walls faced with native stone, or earth-colored materials, or heavy timber are encouraged. Landscaping of retaining walls is also encouraged.

8. Avoid use of pre-cast concrete crib walls.

D. Drainage Design Guidelines: (See Marin County Code § 22.47.105 [2.c])

1. To decrease erosion, storm water should be collected and conveyed in a manner that will avoid erosion damage on-site, and off-site on adjacent properties.

2. Impervious surfaces should be minimized to reduce water run-off.

3. Drainage improvements should be placed in locations of least visibility. The sides of a drain may be bermed to conceal it. Natural drainage swales leading downhill are a good location drain outlets. Visible concrete drains should be color tinted dark gray and screened with plants to be less visible.
4. Natural stream gradients should not be flattened.
5. Grading and drainage plans should include, erosion control and revegetation programs. Where erosion potential exists, hydroseeding, silt traps or other engineering solutions may be required.
6. The timing of grading and the construction of drainage improvements should be controlled to avoid failure during construction.
7. Where drainage and erosion control facilities are required, the negative visual impact to natural features of the site should be mitigated.
8. The timing of grading and construction shall be controlled by the Department of Public Works to prevent erosion and sedimentation and to avoid failure during construction. Such grading activities should be planned to avoid the rainy season (October 15 through April 15).

E. Building Bulk and Mass Guidelines: (See Marin County Code § 22.47.105 [1.g(2)])

1. In general, no part of a residence shall exceed 30 feet in height above natural grade, and residential accessory building shall exceed 15 feet in height above natural grade. The lowest floor level shall not exceed 10 feet above natural grade at any point.
2. In certain sensitive areas, any lot that cannot accommodate a two story residence without being visually obtrusive may be limited to a one story residence.
3. Proposed building size, height, and location for new development must be clearly and accurately shown on site by placing story poles and orange construction netting where development is proposed as part of Design Review. The construction netting should be at least 3 feet wide and must be installed to accurately maintain the outline of the building perimeter and height. Elevation of building pad and story poles should be measured from a permanent surveyed benchmark.
4. Satellite dishes, TV antennas, solar panels, windmills, flag poles, clothes lines, well heads, water tanks, entry structures, propane tanks, electric meters and other appurtenances should be integrated into the project design to minimize visual impact.
5. Avoid obstructing important views.
6. Avoid impairing views or decreasing the scenic quality of the project site or objects that have aesthetic significance.
7. Building form should be designed to conform to the site topography. The effective visual bulk of building development should be reduced so that they do not "stand out" prominently seen from a distance.

8. Avoid multi-story buildings on open hillsides, visually prominent locations, and ridge top lots.
9. Split pads, stepped footings, pier and grade beam foundations should be used to permit structures to step up the slope. Avoid large, single form structures.
10. Set buildings into the slope on hillside lots to reduce effective visual bulk. Excavation or below grade rooms may be used to reduce effective bulk, where grading is minimized.
11. Roof forms should be designed to be compatible with the irregular forms of the surrounding natural features of the site. Long, linear, unbroken roof lines are discouraged.
12. Avoid the use of large gable roof ends on downslope elevations. The slope of the roof should be oriented in the same direction as the natural slope and should not exceed the natural slope contour by more than 20%.
13. Avoid excessive cantilevers or overhangs on downslope elevations,
14. Modulate or detach parts of a building, such as the garage, to develop horizontal and vertical articulation.
15. Consider the use of flat roofs on lower levels for outdoor decks for upper levels, which do not increase building bulk.
16. Avoid using down slope decks or decks elevated on poles that make buildings seem more massive when viewed from downhill lots. Where decks are proposed, the underpinning should be screened, concealed with landscaping or cantilevered from the building. Screening below decks should be fire resistant.
17. Avoid large expanses of a wall in a single plane. Use horizontal and vertical building components and/or landscaping to effectively reduce the bulk of hillside residential development.
18. Building materials and color schemes should blend with the natural landscape with an emphasis on darker tones.
19. Avoid large retaining walls. Break retaining walls into smaller components and terraces and reduce visual impact with landscaping.

F. Architectural Character:

1. Architectural character, or style, should be compatible with the surrounding context of built and natural elements of the specific site. Characteristics of visibility, bulk, mass, materials, textures and color are subject to Design Review.
2. Residences designed as, or appearing as, a cluster of buildings forming a ranch or farm group or compound are encouraged.
3. Traditional styles and forms that are familiar and sensitive to the particular climate, rural character and landscape of Nicasio are encouraged. Two story single plane wall elements should be avoided. Single story porches, verandahs, outdoor rooms, terraces, arcades, covered

walkways, trellises, pergolas, and garden walls can be used to reinforce the notion of the compound and provide elements that develop a strong connection between buildings and the landscape. (See Appendix A, see also Marin County Historic Study Local Coastal Program, 1981)

4. Predominately single story forms with the floor level at or close to grade, gently pitched low roofs with broad and low overhangs and eaves are encouraged as devices that promote a sense of connection to the landscape.

5. Building forms should not be monolithic or consist of a single uniform shape and should avoid a "box" like appearance.

6. Window and door proportions should be consistent with the particular style of each house. Traditional proportions, arrangement, and breakup of windows are encouraged. Vertical proportions are favored. Proportions of window to wall area should be carefully considered. Excessive glass areas are discouraged as being visually disruptive as well as energy inefficient. The projection of interior lights to the exterior should be minimized. Solar design and energy efficiency are strongly encouraged in the placement of windows.

7. All buildings should have shadow relief created by modest overhangs, minor projections, recess and plan offsets. Gable, hip and shed roof forms at low to moderate pitches are encouraged. Moderate overhangs on downhill elevations to create strong shadow lines are desirable. Changes in roof pitch orientation should be accomplished by plan offsets on primary elevations.

8. Careful consideration should be given to views of roof tops from other hillside locations, adjacent roads and other properties.

9. Flat roofs that require membrane or built up roofing materials are discouraged except on small portions of the building and non-visible areas.

10. New development and/or remodels in the Nicasio Village Planning Area must be consistent with the design standards specified in Appendix A.

G. Garages: Garages make up a significant portion of many residences. It is important that the design of the garage be integrated with the overall house or building group design. It is the intention of these: guidelines to minimize the impact of garages as a dominant feature of any residence.

1. Detached, side or rear entry garages are encouraged.

2. Where appropriate, treatment of the garage as a separate structure, outbuilding or pavilion within the building group with trellises or covered connecting walkways to the house is encouraged.

H. Building Material, Texture and Color Guidelines: A primary goal of Community Plan is "to preserve the Valley beauty by protecting its natural resources and minimizing man's impact

upon them." The selection of materials and choice of colors has a significant effect on the impact of structures. Without precluding or imposing specific materials or colors it is desirable to provide design objectives.

Building material, texture and color selection should coordinate with the predominant values of the darker surrounding landscape. Structures which recede into the background are encouraged, as opposed to standing out in contrast to the landscape. Generally darker colors serve to make structures less visible in the landscape because dark colors reflect less light. The use of materials, textures and colors which visually blend with the natural landscape is encouraged. Colors which contrast with the prevailing natural landscape should be avoided.

1. Large flat expanses of bright colors should be discouraged because they stand out in contrast to the textured landscape with its shadows. Designs which use textures and create shadows which mute the colors of structures should be encouraged.
2. Roof color and materials should tend toward darker values, and be non-reflective, such as black, dark browns and dark greens. Metal roofing, if proposed, should be treated to reduce reflectivity.
3. Building colors matching the dried grasses, such as creams, light tans or yellows are often perceived as too bright because they are monotone which doesn't match the texture and variations of shadows and the seasons.
4. Light color trim which outlines building shapes serves to differentiate a structure from its background and should be avoided.
5. Concrete walls and pavement can be tinted to darker shades to avoid its light gray color which often appears white when contrasted to the natural landscape.
6. Highly reflective surfaces should be avoided. Large panels of glass or plastic should be designed to minimize reflected sunlight. Where a design includes large panels of glass, a non reflective glazing should be used to minimize off site glare impacts. Mirrored, highly reflective glass or curved "bubbles" are discouraged. Large glass areas should be shaded with wide overhangs or porches to eliminate solar glare and maintain dark surfaces.

I. Fences, Landscaping and Lighting:

Fences:

1. Fences, walls and accessory structures should be compatible with adjacent landscape and buildings.
2. View obscuring fences should not be permitted. Traditional rural design of "stock" (wood and wire) fences are encouraged.

3. Fencing along property lines, roadways, horse corrals and any other fencing outside building envelopes shall not obstruct open grassland views through and behind the fences, and should not arbitrarily bisect open meadows or grassy areas.
4. Traditional Agricultural fence materials and color should be used, see Marin County Code § 22.47.105 [1.g(4)] , and be shown on the site plan.
5. Cyclone, chain link, razor wire, re-bar, plywood or similar fences should not be permitted, where visible off-site.
6. No fence outside a building envelope should exceed 5 feet in height. Exceptions for agricultural purposes shall be considered.
7. Fences and fence posts should be a color to blend into the natural landscape.
8. Preservation of vertically split redwood fences is encouraged as a historical resource.

Landscaping:

9. Every effort should be made to avoid removal, change or landscaping which would cause death of existing trees or rare plant communities and wildlife habitats. Preservation of the indigenous landscape and rural character of Nicasio is a primary design goal of the Nicasio Valley Community Plan.
10. Landscaping, visible from off the parcel, should be planted in a natural arrangement typical to the area.
11. Trees and natural vegetation to remain should be protected from damage during construction with a temporary fence placed at the drip line of the trees and plants. (See also the section on grading)
12. Landscape plans should recognize the importance of water conservation, fire resistance and erosion control. Emphasize drought-tolerant local native plant species. Landscape water use needs to be calculated in determining adequacy of water source.
13. Landscape plans should reinforce the dominant natural planting patterns that define the California native vegetation indigenous to the specific site area.
14. Drip irrigation should be used to provide water to areas proposed to be landscaped.
15. Decorative or formal landscaping on exposed natural sites is discouraged, except close around the building and designed in such a way as to not change the character of the surrounding natural landscape.
16. Should development potentially impact existing tree cover, a certified arborist should be retained by the project sponsor to develop a specific plan for recommended tree work and protection during construction. The elements of this plan should be shown on the project site plan and include the following:

- a. A diagram outlining proposed protection fencing for all trees and other vegetation to remain within the construction area.
- b. Trimming and/or root pruning recommendations for specific trees impacted by adjacent grading, excavation, paving, or soil compaction.
- c. Materials storage and parking should be designated in areas that will not impact adjacent native trees and their root systems.
- d. A "Tree Protection Plan" which address steps to be taken prior to and during construction to ensure that trees to be saved receive proper attention. The "Tree Protection Plan" should be reviewed and approved by the County and the NDRB prior to the removal of any trees or commencement of excavation.
- e. A guarantee and financial bond may be required to ensure compliance with the Arborist Report, Tree Protection Plan, and/or Landscape Plan

17. Fire safe landscaping is encouraged.

Site Lighting:

18. Site lighting should only be used to aid safety.

19. Lighting should minimize intrusion into adjacent properties, roadways, site silhouette and the night sky.

20. Site lighting should be indirect low intensity and incorporate full shield cut-offs. Light sources should not be visible from adjacent properties or public right-of-ways.

21. Low level path lighting, if needed for safety, in the form of bollards or fixtures mounted on short posts is encouraged.

22. Exterior building lighting for safety should be shielded so as not to shine on adjacent properties. "Flood lighting" is discouraged.

23. Decorative lighting to highlight a structure, sign, or landscape should not be permitted.

24. Low wattage address numeral lighting is encouraged.

APPENDIX A

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR NEW AND REMODELED CONSTRUCTION IN THE NICASIO VILLAGE

I. NICASIO VILLAGE PLANNING AREA

The Nicasio Village Planning Area is defined as the properties within the Town Square Study Area; from the intersection of Lucas Valley Road and Nicasio Valley Road, including development located along Old Rancheria Road; and development extending along Nicasio Valley Road northerly from the Square up to and including the Nicasio School. The Nicasio Village Planning Area is more specifically designated as Assessor Parcel numbers: 121-050-11, 13,14,30,31,41,42,43,44,45,46; 121- 121-080-3,4,5,6,7,8; 121-090-1,3,4,5,6,7, 10,11,13; 121-120-26,27,28,29,30,31,32, 3 310-01.

It is recognized that the Nicasio Village Planning Area possesses unique features and qualities requiring special attention and additional Design Guidelines that augment those outlined for development in other sections of these standards.

The Nicasio Village Planning Area has historically been surrounded and defined by large ranch parcels and open pastures. Due to its location away from the urban eastern corridor of Marin, as well as water and sewer limitations, this area has remained relatively intact as an example of a 19th century California coastal village settlement. A variety of old architectural styles is found throughout this community which gives it a traditional character.

The existing village fabric of Nicasio, as exemplified by its buildings and the spaces they form, is aesthetically unique, historically important, and worthy of preservation.

II. ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The most predominant early architectural styles of the Nicasio Village area include Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Mission Revival, California Bungalow and Western Rancho. In the small villages of West Marin including Nicasio, these styles are often more simplistic than their equivalent expressions in larger urban environments. (For a more detailed discussion of local styles and preservation see: Marin County, Historic Study, Local Coastal Program, Nov. 1981, Marin Planning Dept.).

A. Historic Resource Preservation:

When considering any permit which pertains to any structure or use permit in the Nicasio Village Planning Area, the following criteria should apply;

1. New Construction: New Construction should be consistent in scale, design, materials and texture with the surrounding community character.

2. Alterations and Additions: Alterations and additions to any structure should retain the scale and original architectural features of this structure, especially for the prominent facades.

3. Demolition: Issuance of a permit for demolition of any structure is required. A six month delay in the Issuance of a demolition permit may be a further condition. During this period, the property owner together with the Nicasio Design Review Board will work to find an alternate solution including, but not limited to, purchase of the building or moving the building to an alternate location and/or photograph documentation.

B. Design Guidelines:

The exterior spaces, landscape and buildings of the Nicasio Village Planning Area exhibit a continuity of the community's past and present. The aim of these Guidelines is to provide guidance of future construction in this historic setting. Design Review is intended to ensure that new construction conforms in site planning, scale, proportion and texture to the existing village form.

The design guidelines and principles that follow are intended to provide for maximum compatibility of remodeling and new construction with older buildings in the village.

1. Renovation: In renovations, permanent changes to the building should be carefully conceived and reviewed. The aim is to achieve restoration and compatible additions rather than remodeling a building to give it a modern or "new" appearance.

2. Additions: Additions on the prominent facade of an existing building may be damaging to a historic building and are discouraged. Unobtrusive additions to the rear are less likely to create undesirable change.

3. Materials: Replacement or removing of details with modern trim or siding can significantly alter a building integrity and should be avoided.

4. Reuse: Where an existing building can be revitalized and used, a new structure should be avoided.

5. Repetition of roof shape: Similarity of roof shapes is often the most important means for achieving continuity in design between new and old buildings. Roofs are an important factor in the overall design of a building to help relate items such as height and scale to adjacent structures.

6. Consistent building height: New or remodeled buildings should be constructed to a height within a reasonable average of existing adjacent buildings.

7. Directional expression of elevations: In traditional buildings structural shape, placement of openings, and architectural details give a predominantly vertical character to a building's facade. Therefore, compatible new buildings should be vertical expressions also. (Horizontal siding may be an appropriate building material even given this desire for vertical expression.)

8. Additions to Historic Buildings: The most important facade of any building is generally the frontal facade: this is particularly true when viewing a streetscape. The front elevation, and side

elevation of a corner building, should not have additions added that detract from a building's historic character.

9. Building Setback: Setback is an important consideration in harmonizing new with old in rural historic areas.

10. Architectural Details: Historic architectural details are essential in defining a building's character. These details include siding, trim, ornamentation, window & door types, porches, railings, roof shape and pitch, gutters & down spouts, chimneys, fences, lighting, signs, etc. These features are used according, to design principals inherent in the architecture. The preservation and handling of these details is critical to the preservation of historic architecture.

11. Relationship of textures: The texture of a building is an important factor in the overall appearance of a village. The predominant texture is horizontal wood siding. Whatever texture is used, its appearance must be considered in relation to the village to insure a compatible blending with other styles. For example, adding wood shingles to replace horizontal wood siding on a Greek Revival building is inappropriate.

12. Repetition of Detail: Repetition of details, such as choice of exterior building materials, proportions of windows and doors, porch posts and trim, window and door moldings, cornices, lintels, and arches, is extremely important in insuring compatible appearance in new construction in the Nicasio Village Planning Area.

There has been a general misunderstanding about 19th century styles because of the weather-beaten appearance of many vintage buildings. Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Italianate, and Stick architectural styles are precise in their detailing and consistency of proportions. There is a great difference between these precise, albeit weathered, architectural statements, and contemporary efforts to create vintage style buildings by constructing badly proportioned, indistinctive, rough-shod buildings of rough-sawn plywood or board and batten.

13. Relationship of Colors: The proper application of a color scheme to a building or a series of buildings can highlight important features and increase their overall appearance. Accent or blending colors on building details is also desirable in creation compatibility of neighboring buildings.

Use of exterior color is of particular importance in the case of a wood frame house where the combination of wall and trim colors usually decides its basic character. A good color scheme should be neighborly and well as effective in itself, so that both the building and the environment benefit.

14. Relationship of landscaping and physical features: Landscaping should be placed as part of the site design and should enhance a building rather than detracting from it. Traditional village features such as picket fences, building facades, benches, lamp posts, and signs or combinations of these features provide continuity and cohesiveness to a building's adjacent outdoor space:

Efforts to achieve continuity should not force mere imitation. The design of new buildings and new additions to old building, must be carefully executed to achieve harmony between new and old.

15. Signs: Commercial and private signs are an effective tool for enhancing the historic quality and can be designed to harmonize with the buildings. All too often, oversized or modernistic signs are used and detract from the overall charm. For this reason, strict Design Review for all signs is required. (See Marin County Code § 22.69, Signs)

16. Street Furniture: The physical elements which make up the visual streetscape can be as important a design feature as the buildings. Numerous elements such as benches, bike racks, drinking fountains, light standards, trash containers, fences, drainage structures, paving materials, curbs, electric lines, transformers, etc. "Street furniture" should be designed to embellish the historic grace and conform to existing architectural styles. Ingenuity may be required, but these details can provide cohesion and grace.

END