

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-R____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION DESIGN STANDARDS AND INCORPORATING THE STANDARDS INTO THE CITYWIDE RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED USE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

(Small Lot Subdivision Design Standards)

WHEREAS, the State of California has adopted numerous bills, including, but not limited to, Senate Bill 167 ("SB 167"), Senate Bill 35 ("SB 35"), Senate Bill 330 ("SB 330") and Assembly Bill 2162 ("AB 2162"), which limit or restrict discretionary review of certain qualifying residential projects; and

WHEREAS, State Housing Law continues to evolve, and multi-family affordable housing projects meeting certain criteria are required to be ministerially approved; and

WHEREAS, cities are permitted to apply only "objective design standards," which are intended to provide clear, quantifiable, objective standards for those qualifying projects; and

WHEREAS, the City's adopted 2021-2029 Housing Element contains housing programs aimed at facilitating additional housing, including developing objective design standards to comply with SB 330 (Policy 6.J, and Measure 4.H); and

WHEREAS, in December 2022, the City of Culver City engaged Rincon Consultants Inc. to review the City's existing design guidelines and Zoning Code to create a separate Citywide Residential and Mixed Use Objective Design Standards (Objective Design Standards) document that would be referenced in the Zoning Code; and

WHEREAS, on October 9, 2024, the City's General Plan Update and Zoning Code Update became effective, including Implementation Action LU-6, and Policy Goals LU-13.2 and LU-15.6, within the Land Use and Community Design Element, which also call for adopting and updating objective design standards; and

1 WHEREAS, the proposed Objective Design Standards supersede and replace the Gateway
2 Neighborhood and Gateway Adjacent Neighborhood Design Guidelines, which were adopted on March
3 24, 2010 and July 13, 2011, respectively, as these contain subjective standards; and

4 WHEREAS, an associated Zoning Code Amendment (P2024-0310-ZCA) was necessary to
5 incorporate the proposed Objective Design Standards by reference, eliminate overlapping standards
6 and subjective standards applicable to residential and mixed use development, and include standards
7 for consistency with the proposed Objective Design Standards; and

8 WHEREAS, the Objective Design Standards are contained within a standalone document that
9 shall be amended in the future, as needed from time to time, through the adoption of a Planning
10 Commission resolution; and

11 WHEREAS, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Guidelines, the
12 adoption of the Objective Design Standards, which will supplement Zoning Code standards as it relates
13 to design, and do not affect permitted uses or density/intensity, are exempt per Section 15061(b)(3),
14 because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a
15 significant effect on the environment. In addition, the proposed Objective Design Standards do not
16 require additional review under CEQA pursuant to Section 15168(c)(2) as they are consistent with the
17 Final Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the General Plan and Zoning Code Update
18 certified on August 26, 2024 (SCH# 2022030144) and would not result in new impacts. The adoption of
19 the Objective Design Standards implements the adopted General Plan (Implementation Action LU-6,
20 and Policies LU-13.2, LU-15.6); as the creation of Objective Design Standards was considered in the
21 General Plan and Zoning Code EIR, pursuant to the provisions of CEQA no further environmental
22 analysis is required; and

23 WHEREAS, on February 12, 2025, after a duly noticed public hearing on a City-initiated Zoning
24 Code Amendment (P2024-0310-ZCA) amending the Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC), Title 17 –
25 Zoning Code, Sections 17.210.020 – Residential Zoning Districts Development Standards, 17.220.030
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27
28

1 – Supplemental Standards for Mixed Use Development, and 17.300.010 – Applicability, to incorporate
2 the Objective Design Standards by reference and ensure consistency between the Zoning Code and
3 proposed standards, including full consideration of the staff report and attachments, environmental
4 information, and all testimony presented, the Planning Commission by a vote of 3 to 0, adopted
5 Resolution No. 2025-P003, recommending to the City Council approval of the Objective Design
6 Standards, associated Zoning Code Amendment P2024-0310-ZCA, and exemption from CEQA; and

7 WHEREAS, on March 17, 2025, after conducting a duly noticed public hearing on the
8 aforementioned Zoning Code Amendment and Objective Design Standards, fully considering the staff
9 reports and attachments, environmental information, Planning Commission recommendation, and all
10 testimony presented; the City Council by a vote of 5 to 0, approved the Objective Design Standards as
11 set forth in Attachment 5 of the March 17, 2025, Objective Design Standards Agenda Item and adopted
12 an exemption from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) and 15168(c)(2); and

14 WHEREAS, on May 12, 2025, after conducting a duly noticed public hearing, including full
15 consideration of the application, plans, staff report, environmental information, Planning Commission
16 recommendations, and all testimony presented, the City Council, by a vote of __ to __, introduced an
17 ordinance approving Zoning Code Amendment, P2024-0237-ZCA, that amended the Culver City
18 Municipal Code, specifically, Chapter 15.10, Subdivisions, Section 17.400.040, Condominium
19 Conversions, and Section 17.700.010, Definitions, to facilitate streamlined review of qualifying parcel
20 or tentative maps for housing and mixed-use developments (the “Subdivision Ordinance”); and

22 WHEREAS, as part of the May 12, 2025 Subdivision Ordinance, language was incorporated
23 that allows processing and creation of small fee simple lots in-lieu of airspace condominiums; and

24 WHEREAS, it is necessary to create design standards for small lots because prior to the
25 Subdivision Ordinance, small lot subdivisions were not allowed and thus the Objective Design
26 Standards did not have language to address this type of subdivision; and
27
28

1 WHEREAS, on May 12, 2025, and in conjunction with introduction of the Subdivision Ordinance,
2 and after conducting a duly noticed public hearing, including full consideration of the application, plans,
3 staff report, environmental information, Planning Commission recommendations, and all testimony
4 presented, the City Council, by a vote of ___ to ___, approved a Small Lot Subdivision Design Standards
5 resolution as set forth herein below.

6 NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Culver City, California, DOES HEREBY
7 RESOLVE as follows:

8 SECTION 1. The City Council finds the adoption of the Small Lot Subdivision Design Standards
9 is consistent with General Plan policies and goals that call for objective design standards and is thus
10 within the scope of the Citywide Residential and Mixed Use Objective Design Standards and no further
11 environmental review is required.
12

13 SECTION 2. Pursuant to the foregoing recitations and provisions of the CCMC, the City Council
14 hereby approves the Small Lot Subdivision Design Standards as set forth in Exhibit A, attached hereto
15 and incorporated herein by this reference, and makes these standards part of the Citywide Residential
16 and Mixed Use Objective Design Standards, to become effective May 14, 2025. The City Council
17 authorizes the Planning Commission to make future updates to the Small Lot Subdivision Design
18 Standards by Planning Commission Resolution.
19

20 APPROVED and ADOPTED this ___ day of May 2025.
21

22
23 _____
24 DAN O'BRIEN, Mayor
25 City of Culver City, California

26 ATTEST:

27 APPROVED AS TO FORM:

28 

JEREMY BOCCHINO, City Clerk

HEATHER BAKER, City Attorney

EXHIBIT A

SMALL LOT SUBDIVISIONS STANDARDS

Introduction

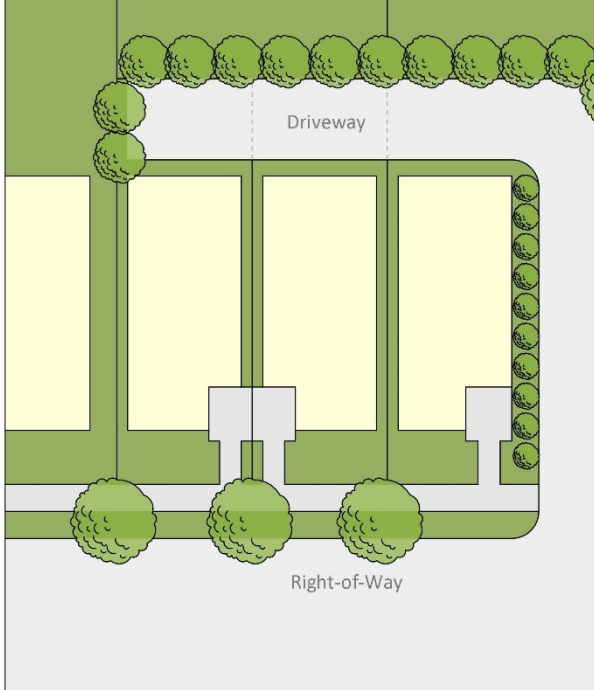
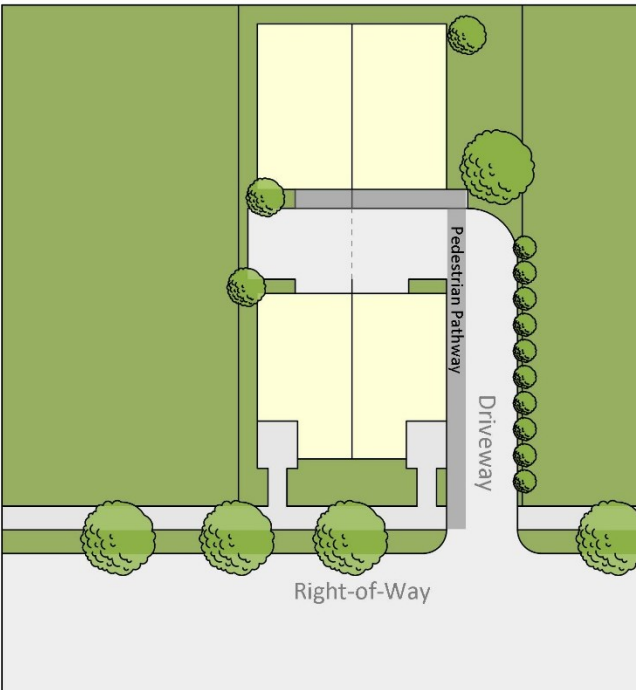
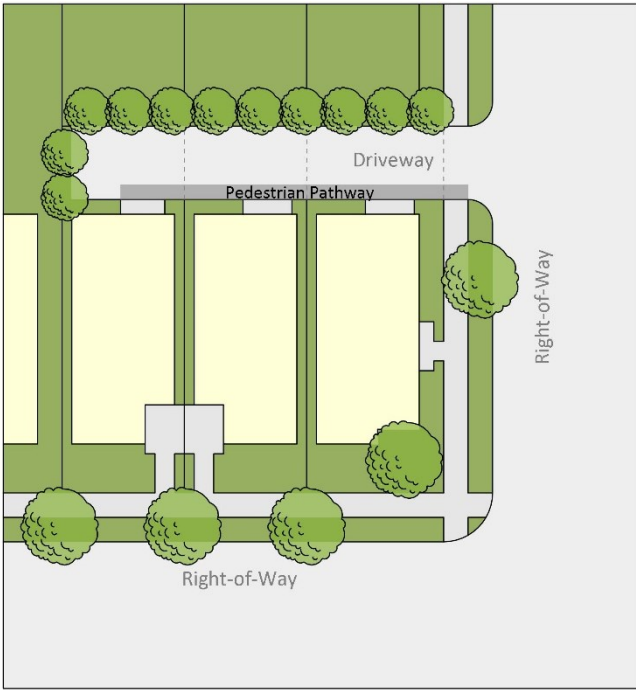
Small lot design standards have been created to assist in shaping small lot developments with their unique complexities. All small lot subdivision projects are required to comply with the Small Lot Design Standards listed below. A building permit is required to comply with the objective design standards listed in this document. All new small lot dwellings must comply with these design standards. The design standards should be used in conjunction with relevant policies from the General Plan and Community Plans.

1. Small Lot Subdivision Design Standards

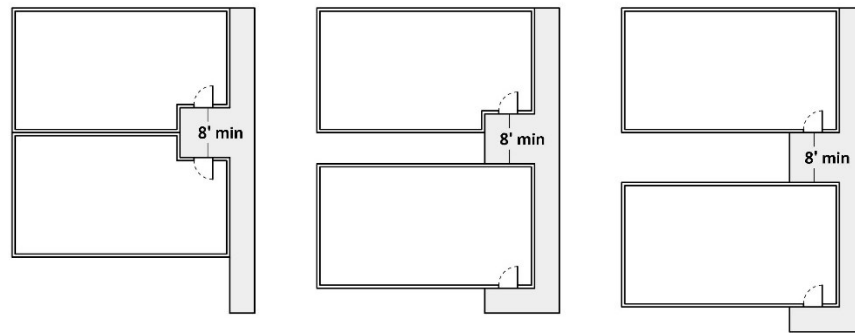
1.1 Building Location and Orientation

1. Exterior setbacks for the Small Lot Subdivision project shall be provided in accordance with the underlying zoning district and the regulations provided in CCMC Section 17.300.020 Setback Regulations and Exceptions. Setbacks shall be measured from the parcel lot lines prior to the subdivision.
2. The front door of the unit(s) closest to the public right of way of the Small Lot Home unit development shall be oriented towards the front property line as defined in the zoning code.
3. Primary pedestrian entrances for each Small Lot Home shall face the public street, a shared pedestrian paseo, or a common courtyard. On a corner lot, the front door of all units, except the front unit, shall be oriented towards the side street. Primary pedestrian entries for individual units fronting interior side property lines shall be provided a 5-foot by 5-foot alcove or oriented to not face doors and windows of uses on adjacent properties.
4. Small Lot Homes shall provide at least an 8-foot separation between the face of a primary entryway of a Small Lot Home and the adjacent building wall of a neighboring Small Lot Home on the same development.

Building Orientation



Primary Entry Separation



5. All primary entryways shall provide the address or unit identification, ornamental low-level lighting to illuminate the entry area, and a landing area.
6. All primary entryways shall incorporate **at least four** of the following elements:
 - a. The entryway shall be recessed at least 2 feet from the building façade to create a covered porch or landing area.
 - b. The doorway shall be recessed at least 3 inches from the building façade.
 - c. The entryway shall be designed with an overhead projection of at least 6 inches such as an awning or other architectural design features so as to distinguish the front door from the rest of the building façade.
 - d. The entryway shall be clearly marked with a side lite window panel, adjacent window, or a door with a window.
 - e. The entryway shall be raised or sunken at least one stair step from the pedestrian pathway.
 - f. The entryway landing area shall be enhanced with unique paving material, texture, pattern, or color that is differentiated from the pedestrian pathway.

1.1 Neighborhood Compatibility and Privacy

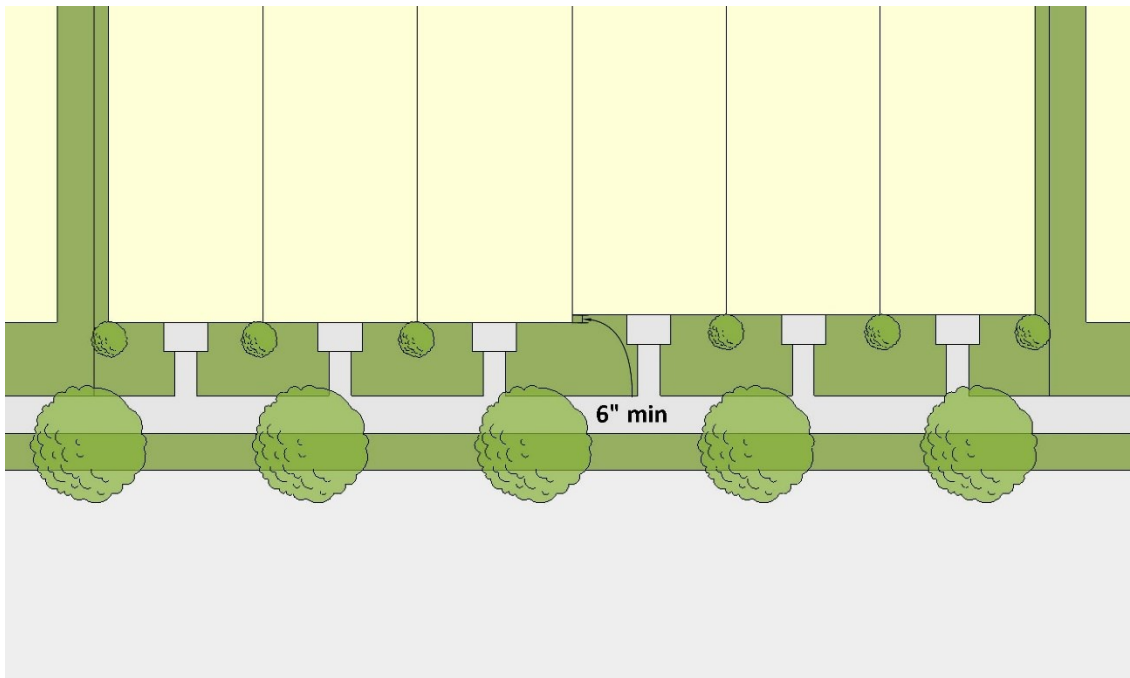
1. Upper floor step backs shall conform to CCMC Section 17.210.020.
2. Rooftop decks shall conform to CCMC Section 17.210.020.
3. **Window Alignment.** When building separation is less than 20 feet at the time of application submittal, no more than 20 percent of window or balcony area of the new development may align directly with existing neighboring windows or balconies without screening obstructing views into at least 80 percent of the area of the window. Visual screening may be accomplished through the use of landscaping that can be shown to grow to the height of

the top of the windows, walls, accessory buildings, or other solid structures. Translucent windows and clerestory windows are exempt from this requirement.

1.2 Building Mass and Scale

1. Small Lot Homes shall be grouped into clusters to avoid long spans of building wall. Clusters of Small Lot Homes shall be no more than six Small Lot Homes in a single continuous row or 180 linear feet, whichever is smaller. Clusters of Small Lot Homes shall be separated with a building gap of a minimum of 6 feet in width, which shall be treated with a combination of landscaping, open space, and common walkways or driveways.
2. Small Lot Homes in a single row shall provide a lateral shift or break in the façade of a minimum of 6 inches for every three Small Lot Homes or 90 linear feet, whichever is smaller.

Lateral Shift in Façade



3. **Roofline Variation.** Rooflines along elevations facing a public street shall be articulated using at least one of the following techniques.
 - a. Color, texture, or material changes.
 - b. Variations, projections, or reveals in the wall plane.
 - c. Variations in fenestration size or pattern.
4. **Façade Articulation.** All façades facing a right-of-way and the project perimeter, as well as all portions of exterior building elevations located greater than 7 feet from an adjacent Small Lot Home, shall be treated with an equal level of detail and articulation, and shall incorporate all of the following façade articulation techniques:
 - a. Change in exterior building materials to include at least two high quality building façade materials that accentuate or correspond to variations in building massing.

Building materials may include, but are not limited to: wood, glass, brick, metal spandrel, cement board siding, or tile.

- b. Porticos, awnings, terraces, balconies, eyebrows, or trellises of at least 6 inches in depth that provide variations in the building plane.
- c. Window treatments that are extruded or recessed from the building façade a minimum of 2 inches. Windows or doors that are flush with the plane of the building (rather than extruded or recessed at least 3 inches) will not qualify as facade articulation.
- d. A break in the façade plane of a minimum of 6 inches in depth that is applied to at least 10 vertical feet of the facade.
- e. Other additional architectural enhancements to the floor of the primary entrance and below, so as to create a human scale to the building. Examples include handrails, fixed planters, and ornamental details, such as lighting, molding, or tiles.

1.3 Building Materials and Colors

- 1. **Number of Materials or Colors.** Buildings shall incorporate a maximum of two (2) main body colors, three (3) accent colors, and three (3) different materials, excluding windows, doors, or trim. Street-facing exterior elevations shall include at least two (2) colors and at least (2) different materials, (in addition to glazing, window trim, doors, or railings) that can accentuate building masses. The main body color is the predominant color used on the face(s) of the building.
- 2. **Glare.** Reflective surfaces and materials such as mirrored glass and polished aluminum are prohibited.
- 3. **Color and Material Changes.** Material and color changes shall occur at an inside corner, underside of a massing element, or wrapped to an appropriate termination point such as a roof break, half-column, bay window, or enhanced trim element.
- 4. Street level architectural elements and ornamental features shall not impede pedestrian routes.

1.4 Open Space, Pedestrian Pathways, Landscaping, and Lighting

- 1. Pedestrian pathways of a minimum width of 3 feet shall be provided from the public right-of-way to all primary entryways and common areas, such as common open space areas, guest parking, mailboxes, and centralized trash enclosures. All street-facing setback areas shall comply with the landscape and hardscape requirements of CCMC section 17.310.020.
- 2. A pedestrian pathway located within or parallel to a Common Access Driveway shall be constructed and/or treated with a change of materials, finishes, pattern, or paving that distinguishes the pathway from vehicular traffic.
- 3. All setback and open areas not used for buildings shall comply with CCMC Section 17.310.020 A.
- 4. All yards of a subdivision abutting the public right-of-way shall be improved with landscaping (combination of groundcover, shrubs, and trees) and amenities. Amenities may include:

decorative fencing, uncovered patios, enhanced pedestrian pathways, garden walls, seating areas, and/or decorative bike racks.

5. **Landscaping Standards.** All project sites shall be landscaped in accordance with Municipal Code Chapter 17.310 Landscaping.
6. **Fences, Hedges, and Walls.** Fences, hedges, and walls shall be designed in accordance with Municipal Code Section 17.300.030.
7. **Variety of Plant Materials.** Landscaping shall contain a combination of low (3 – 24 inches), medium (2 – 5 feet) and tall (5 + feet) plant materials. For example, low planting may be used in the foreground, proceeding back to the tallest in the background.
8. **Fence and Wall Materials.** Fence and wall materials, colors and detailing shall match the architectural style of buildings on the site. Permanent chain link fencing is not permitted.
9. **Front Yard Walls.** Freestanding solid front yard walls of at least thirty (30) inches in height, if included, shall be setback at least two (2) feet from the sidewalk and incorporate low plantings or vines placed between the sidewalk and the fence or wall to soften the appearance of the wall and preserve the public parkway environment.
10. Lighting shall be directed onto the driveways and walkways within the development and away from adjacent properties.
11. Lighting of at least one (1) foot-candle (fc) shall be installed and maintained within all covered and enclosed parking areas and shall be screened to reduce glare onto public sidewalks and adjacent properties. Lighting levels shall not be increased by more than one (1) fc onto the public right-of-way and not more than 0.5 fc onto adjacent properties.
12. Landscape and pedestrian walkway lighting mounted to building walls or freestanding poles shall not be placed higher than ten feet above grade or the walkway surface. These lights shall be shielded and set back from the property line a minimum distance equal to the height of the light fixture to confine lighted area to within the property line.
13. Lighting fixtures shall be of the same architectural style, materials, and color of the structure.

1.5 Utility and Service Areas

1. Screening. Mechanical and utility equipment shall be screened in accordance with Municipal Code Section 17.300.035.
2. Refuse and recycling material containers shared by multiple dwelling units shall be enclosed and screened in accordance with Municipal Code Section 17.300.035. Sizing of the enclosures shall conform to the requirements of the Environmental Programs and Operations (EPO) Division of the Culver City Public Works Department.
3. Refuse enclosures shall incorporate roof structures to help improve stormwater quality and to screen the enclosure from views from above.
4. Refuse enclosures shall be finished using materials and colors that are consistent with the chosen architectural style. Enclosure gates shall be opaque.
5. Refuse and recycling material containers stored within individual yards shall be screened from street view.

2. Small Lot Subdivision Map Standards

These Map Standards are to be applied in addition to the provisions of the Small Lot Ordinance (CCMC Section 15.10.950) and general requirements that fall under the Map Act and the authority of the Advisory Agency. Amendments to the small lot subdivision map standards may be approved by the Planning Commission.

Applicability:

1. *New Construction:*
 - a. Applications for small lot subdivisions that only involve new construction will be subject to all Small Lot Subdivision Map Standards, where applicable.
2. *Combined New Construction and Existing Dwelling Units:*
 - a. Applications for small lot subdivisions that involve the retention of an existing legal dwelling or dwellings and the new construction of a small lot home(s) will be subject to the Map Standards where they are deemed feasible by the City and do not result in the removal, including partial removal, of an existing legal dwelling unit or structure.

Small Lot Map Standards:

1. A **Common Access Driveway** (easement) shall be provided for all small lot subdivisions with a minimum width of 10 feet that is open to the sky, unless the driveway leads to subterranean parking. The Common Access Driveway shall also provide a minimum ground floor width as follows:
 - a. 10 feet minimum for driveways serving up to 2-4 small lot homes.
 - b. 16 feet minimum for driveways serving 5 or more small lot homes.
2. A **Maintenance Agreement** shall be created, composed of all property owners to maintain all common area and shared facilities such as trees, landscaping, trash, parking, community driveways, walkways, etc.
3. **Automobile Guest Parking** Guest parking, if provided, shall be readily available to all guests and be accessible from a common access driveway or common access walkway.
4. **Bicycle Parking** shall be provided in accordance with Section 17.320.045 of the Municipal Code.
5. All **Refuse Pick-Up** shall be in compliance with CCMC Section 1.300.035.C.4.

Small lot subdivision maps that are determined by Community Development Director, or their designee, to be inconsistent with these standards, where applicable, may be denied or conditioned to comply.