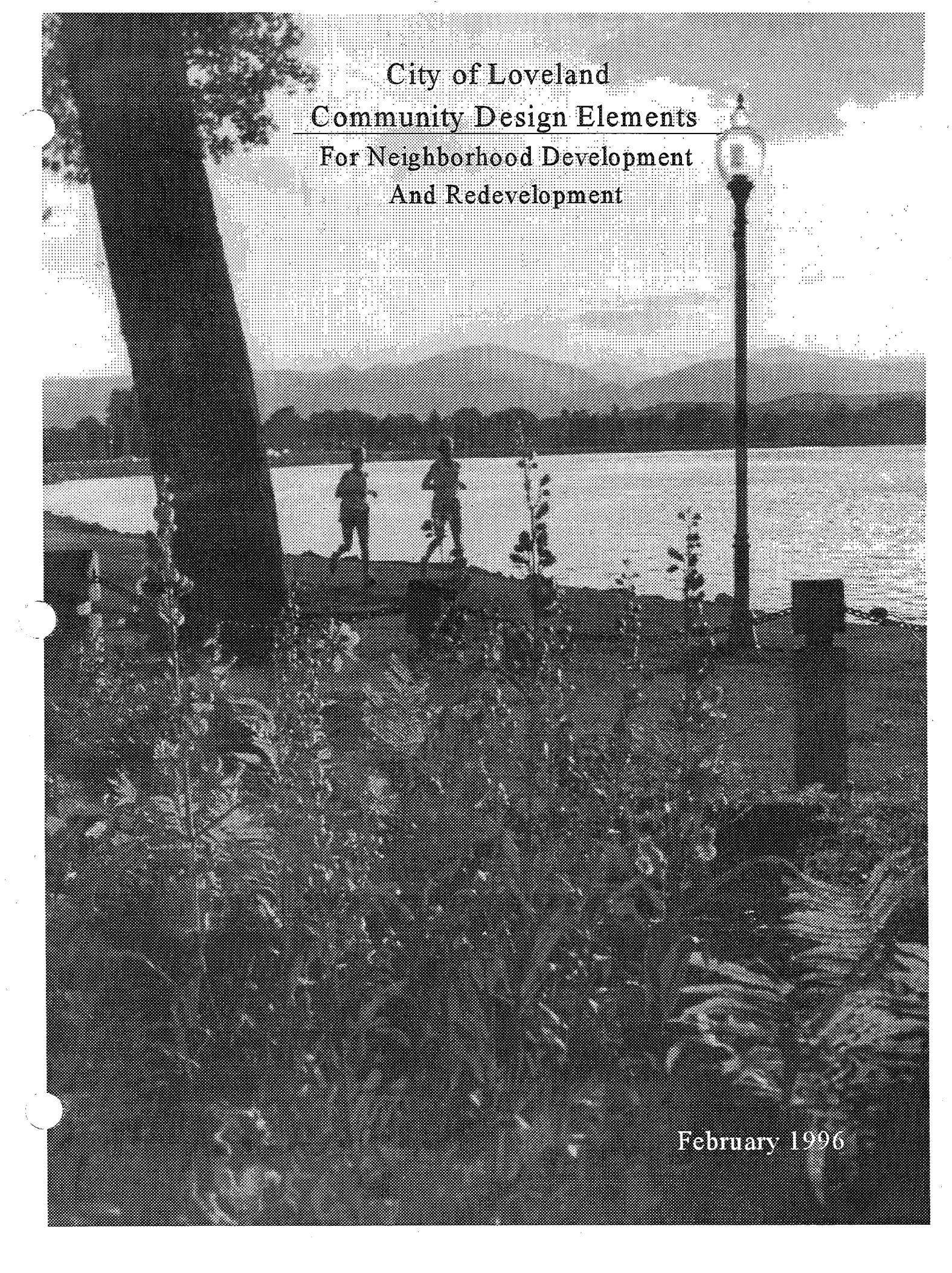


The Purpose

The primary purpose of this document is to outline elements which will provide guidance for anyone wanting to enhance the "sense of community" in Loveland. "Sense of community" is defined here as a positive attitude toward a clearly defined area and how citizens feel about where they live. While only people can create a sense of community, design elements can certainly encourage it.

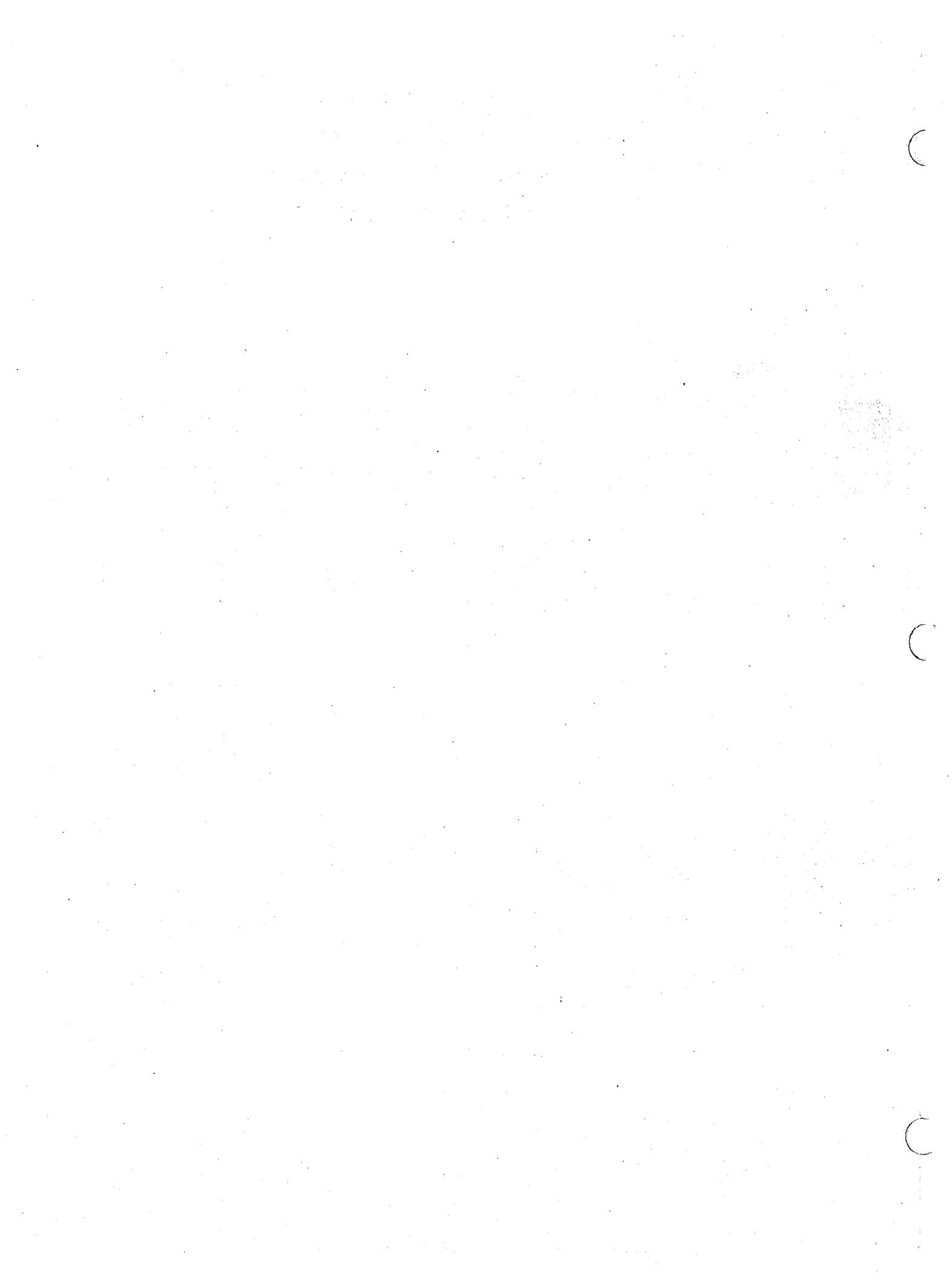
Free-lined streets and a traditional downtown are characteristics of Loveland, where people can gather and meet friends or feel personally welcomed in many of the shops. The challenge is to maintain these characteristics as the community moves into the future.

This document provides a set of guidelines which should help to preserve these characteristics and provide a way for Loveland to continue to be a quality and desirable home town.



City of Loveland
Community Design Elements
For Neighborhood Development
And Redevelopment

February 1996



INTRODUCTION

Well designed neighborhoods:

- 1) Are charming and provide interesting and varied architecture and street views,
- 2) Increase the likelihood that citizens will get to know and enjoy their neighbors,
- 3) Enhance the security of the residents, and
- 4) Provide a strong sense of security by defining neighborhood boundaries.

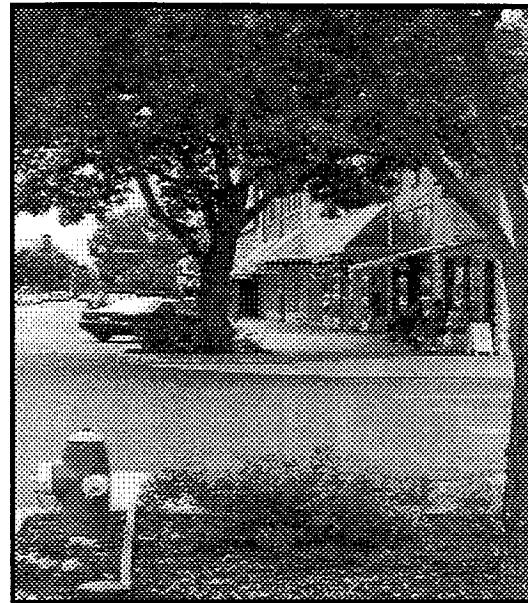
These factors combine to create the small home town character and charm that Lovelanders desire.

This document defines **eight** design elements that provide a logical path to attain these attributes for both existing and new areas. The eight design elements are:

ELEMENTS:

1. Creating Neighborhoods
2. Ecological Responsibility
3. Streetscape
4. Neighborhood Aesthetics
5. Pedestrian/Bike Ways
6. Open Spaces
7. Historical Preservation
8. Maintenance

These design elements must be integrated to be truly effective. For example, sidewalks are useless if there is no destination; or parks can be an eyesore without maintenance. This document provides a guide for combining the design elements and is flexible enough for neighborhoods with different land uses.



The charming downtown area helps define the small town feel.



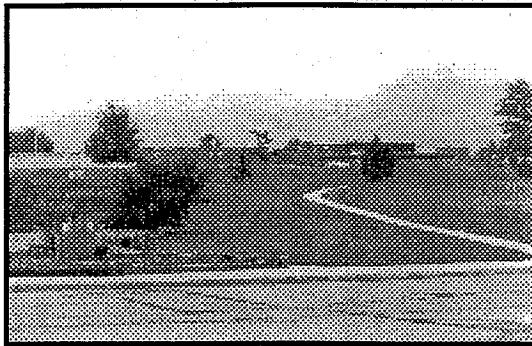
Parks are inviting for citizens



Neighborhoods give people of all ages the opportunity to meet and get together.



Mixing some low intensity commercial uses with residential areas will add convenience and reduce traffic.



Interconnecting parks and schools with bike/walk paths increases open space, reduces traffic risks to pedestrians and makes an attractive gathering place for neighbors.

Element 1: CREATING NEIGHBORHOODS

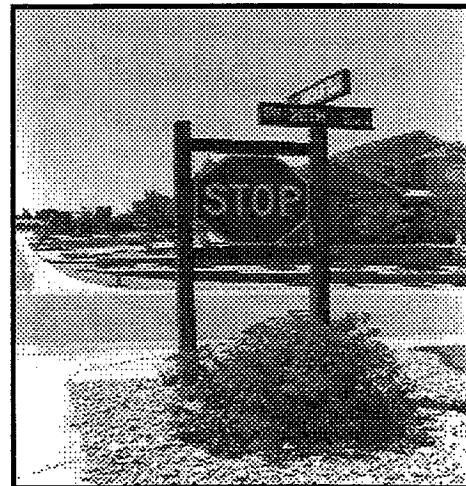
GOAL: Maintain and create residential neighborhoods that are attractive, distinct and safe.

People want and seek a sense of common friendships, a neighborhood can provide that opportunity. People want to be able to walk or bike to a nearby park, a school, grocery store, etc.; people want to feel safe; people want to have open spaces in which to play that are close to their homes. People want to continue to improve their quality of life and the place where they live.

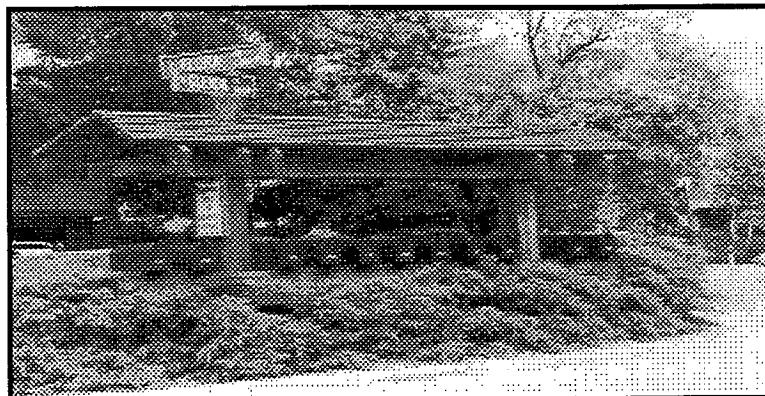
RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION

- 1.1 Often neighborhood areas are defined by boundaries such as water bodies, ditches, open spaces, streets, railroad tracks, architectural differences, industrial areas, and commercial areas. During the design process, incorporate and enhance these features to define specific neighborhoods.
- 1.2 Encourage walking and biking by providing visual interest, assuring safety from traffic, increasing security through knowing your neighbors, and providing access to facilities such as parks, the City trail system and nearby commercial centers.
- 1.3 At the block level, provide small focal points or common areas such as an attractive multifamily mailbox center, a playground or a picnic area.
- 1.4 Design with unifying features such as intersection design, signage, landscaping, street lighting and fencing to strengthen neighborhood identity.

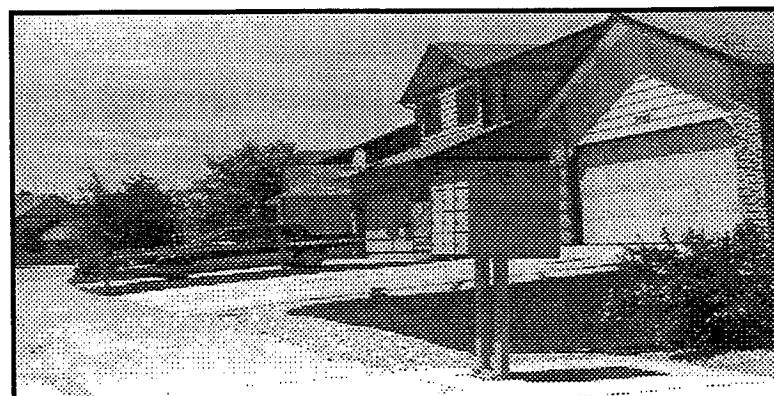
- 1.5 Discourage "hard boundaries" such as solid fencing immediately next to sidewalks.
- 1.6 Provide a mix of land uses to reduce commuting and short errand traffic and provide diverse housing opportunities to create more balanced neighborhoods.
- 1.7 Within groups of neighborhoods, include such things as open space, small business, a park, a school, a limited parking area or other amenities that create a center which draws people together. Also plan for future transit stops in the center of a neighborhood where a shelter, telephone, bicycle rack, transit map, etc. are located.



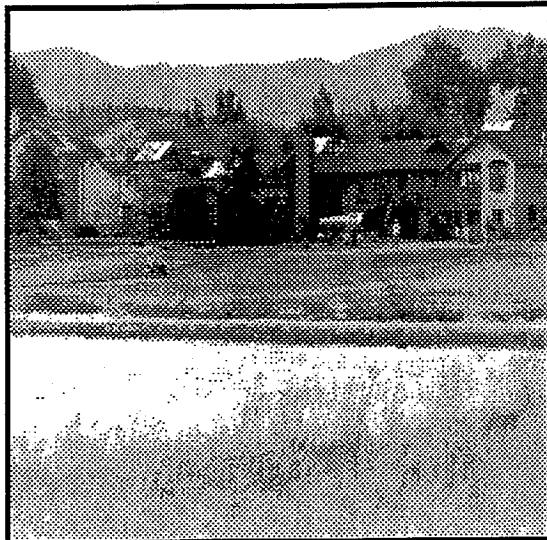
Unifying features such as this stop/street sign give character to neighborhoods.



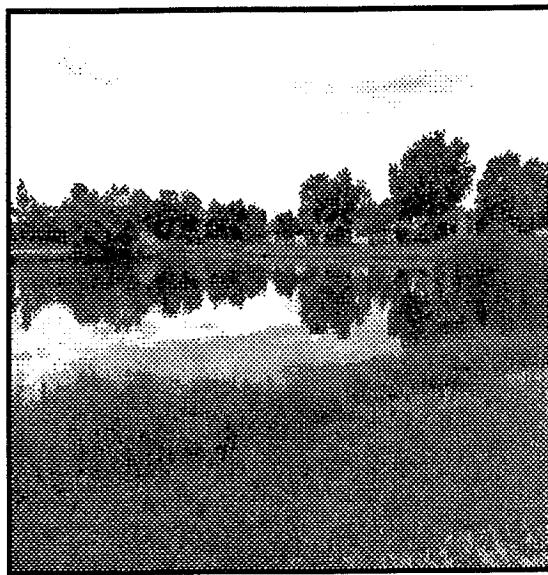
An attractive mailbox area adds to neighborhood charm and helps neighbors get to know each other.



A poorly designed central mailbox area can detract from the overall aesthetics of the neighborhood.



Protecting natural areas is good for the ecosystem and adds value to the development.



There are many benefits to wide buffers along lake edges, including quality wildlife habitat and protected viewsheds.

Element 2: ECOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY

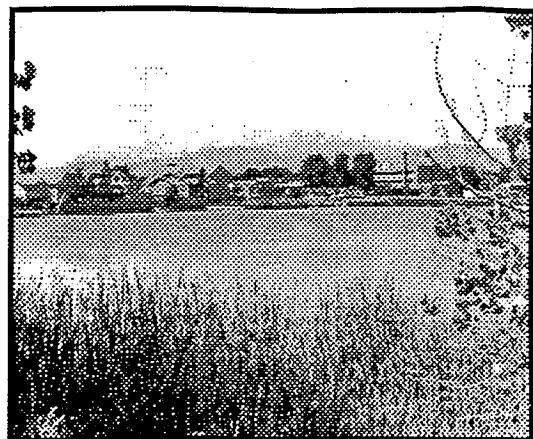
GOAL: Make development compatible with natural features and the environment.

Design of projects should enhance and compliment existing natural features on-site and within the surrounding area. Any new development should strive to eliminate negative impacts on the environment.

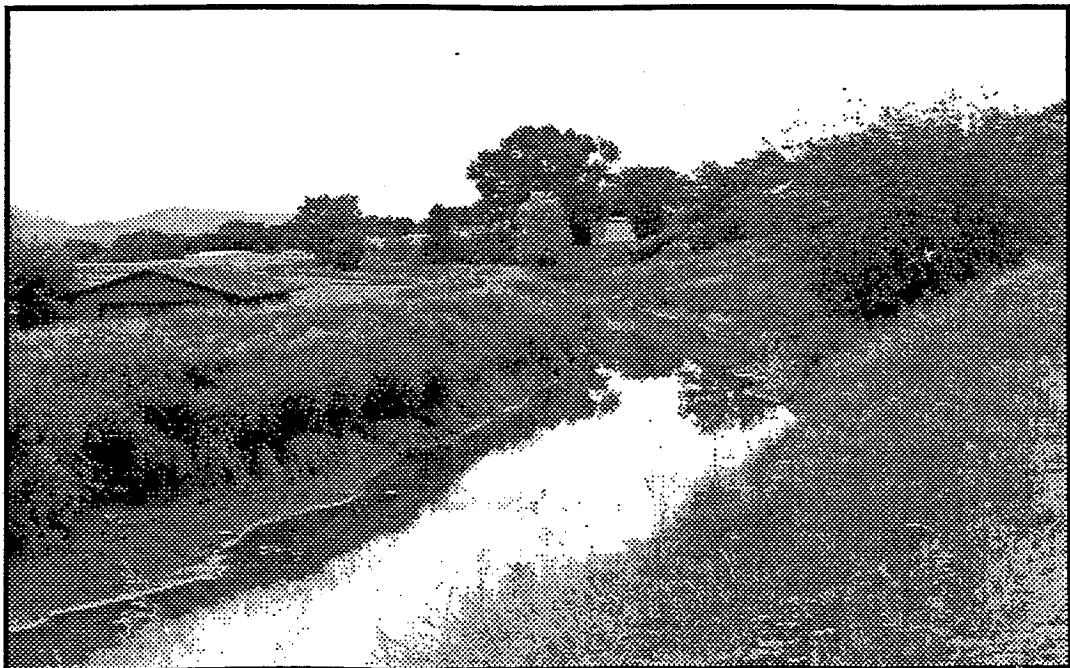
RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION

- 2.1 Analyze and lay-out each development site based on the following site characteristics: wetlands, open water, drainage patterns, water table, floodplains, slopes, mature vegetation, bedrock formations, historic sites, easements and rights-of-way, utility infrastructure, geology, wildlife, climate, sun angle, soil conditions, previous land use, views, etc.
- 2.2 Design neighborhoods that accommodate people while protecting, enhancing and preserving the existing character of the environment.
- 2.3 Limit development on sensitive land, such as wetlands, steep slopes, critical wildlife habitat, etc., to minimize any possible negative impacts by the development.
- 2.4 Use energy conscious land use and site planning practices such as: incorporating natural ventilation, daylight, and passive solar heating designs; using non-treated water for irrigation; etc.

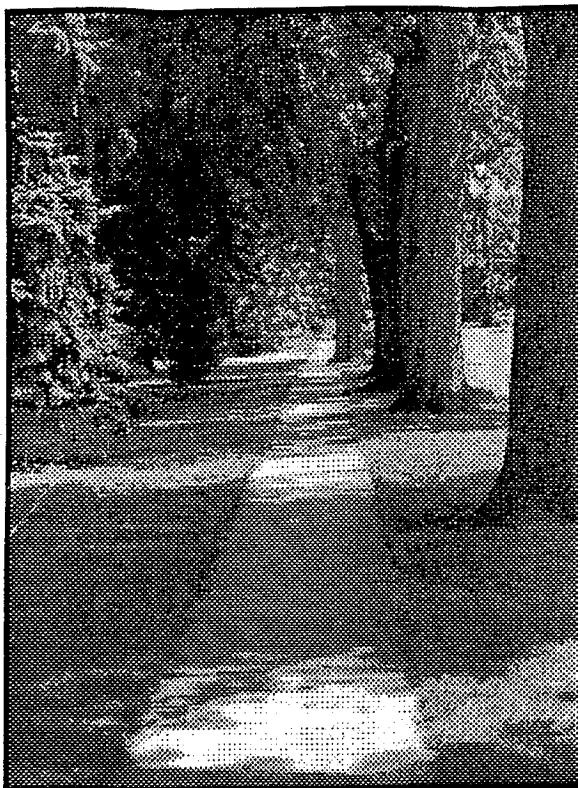
- 2.5 Employ landscape materials that will minimize long term requirements for maintenance, irrigation water, pesticides and herbicides.
- 2.6 Incorporate landscape design that shields buildings, parked cars and pedestrian areas from summer sun and winter wind.
- 2.7 Encourage construction site recycling programs and protect the existing vegetation during construction by use of temporary fencing outside the drip-line of the trees.



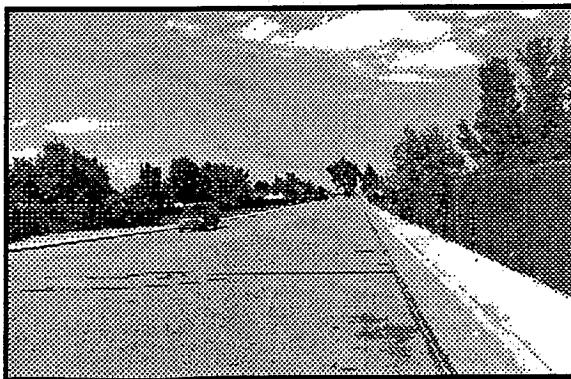
Natural features add to the overall appeal of a neighborhood.



Integrating the existing environment into the design of the development, protects and enhances the natural quality of the site.



Large trees shading the street are often associated with the small town character.



Avoid creating "hard edges or boundaries" along streets with fencing next to sidewalk next to the curb.

Element 3: STREETSCAPE

GOAL: Create a sensitive and aesthetically pleasing interface between the developed lots and the street.

The street layout, sidewalk design, setbacks, and landscape make up the Streetscape that is a visitor's first impression of that community. Even residents see their hometown from the street. Therefore Streetscape design plays an important role in community image.

RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION

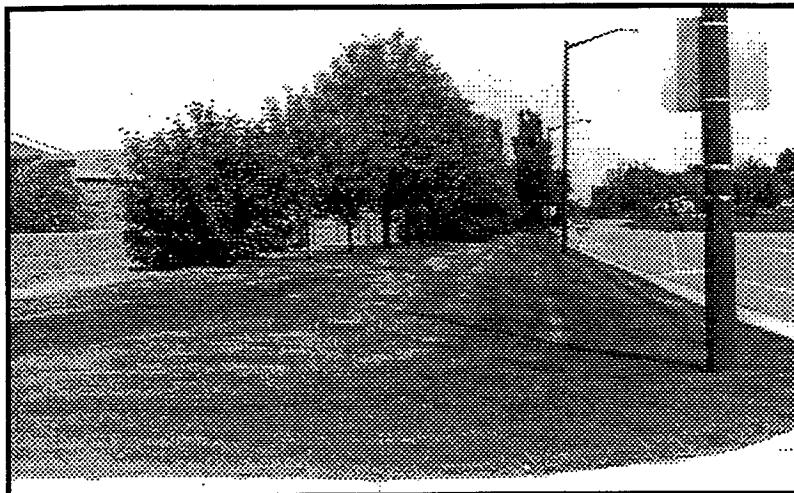
- 3.1 Street layout should be designed to encourage slower speeds, efficient use of land and avoid concentrating traffic.
- 3.2 All streets and intersections within the residential area should be designed to assure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic calming devices like "T" intersections and "traffic circles" along minor arterials should be used where necessary.
- 3.3 Place trees in colonade fashion on either side of the street to approximate a canopy.
- 3.4 Parking lots should be screened around the perimeter and large interior sections should be divided by landscaping.
- 3.5 Consider designing a neighborhood with alleys to provide offstreet parking, utility easements and emergency access. Conceal or minimize the visual impact of garages on the streetscape.

3.6 Parking lots, building ventilation equipment, trash receptacles, etc. should be screened through the use of natural coniferous landscape, fencing, etc.

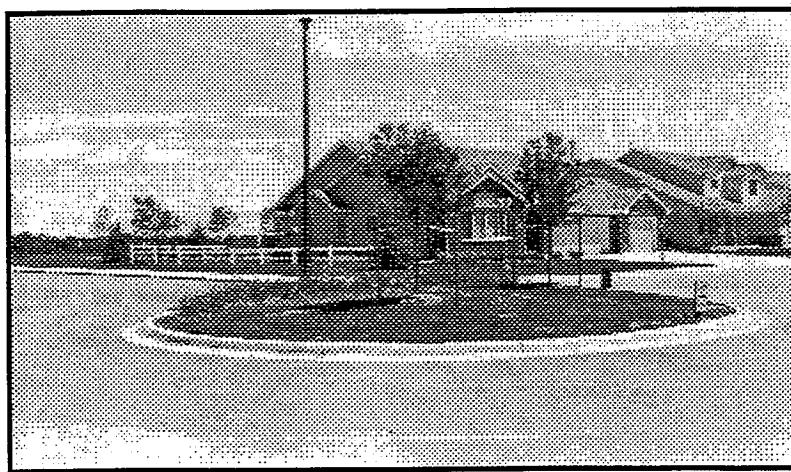
3.7 Intersection design must provide high visibility for both motorists and pedestrians. Avoid landscaping which will grow to obstruct views.



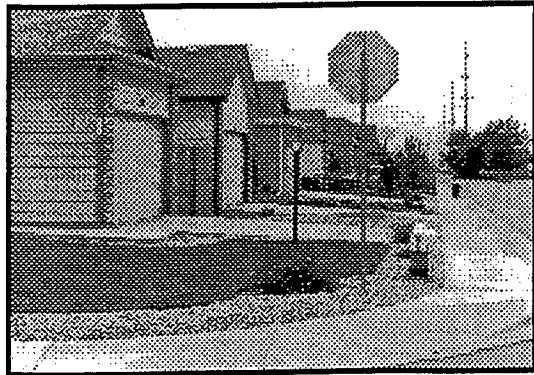
This is a poorly designed intersection which does not give adequate visibility of on coming traffic.



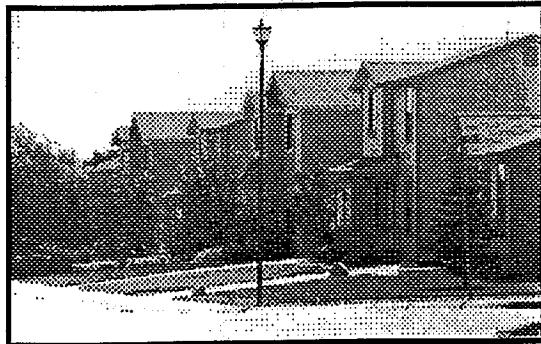
The setback with landscaping along streets creates a aesthetically pleasing edge to the neighborhood.



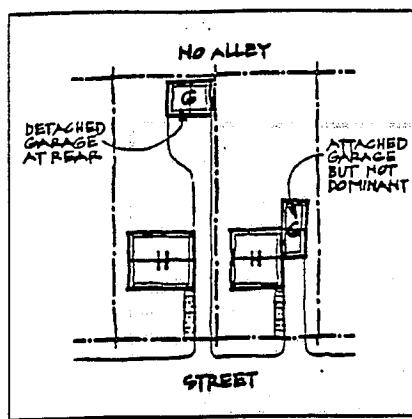
This traffic circle adds to the appearance of the entrance into the development and slows down traffic entering the neighborhood.



The house front of these homes are dominated by the garages, which creates an unattractive view from the street.



These houses have identical architectural designs which doesn't allow for any visual variety.



The variation in the building orientation and the placement of garages creates unique homes and improves the overall aesthetics of a neighborhood.

Element 4: NEIGHBORHOOD AESTHETICS

GOAL: Enrich the overall visual experience of a neighborhood.

Variation in the basic design pattern of new development is encouraged in order to prevent a "dull sameness" in a neighborhood.

RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION

- 4.1 Variation of lot widths and depths, and block shapes and sizes.
- 4.2 Variation in the positioning of a house on a lot and the setbacks of the house from the street, while maintaining a standard average for the development.
- 4.3 In order to enhance the aesthetics of the view along the street, setback the garages from the front of the house or access them by alleys or side driveways.
- 4.4 Provide a mix of housing types and design, with a variety in height and sizes of homes.



These have different building size and design although they are similar in proportion and compatible with each other.

Element 5: PEDESTRIAN/ BIKE PATHS

GOAL: Create safe and interconnected pedestrian/bike paths.

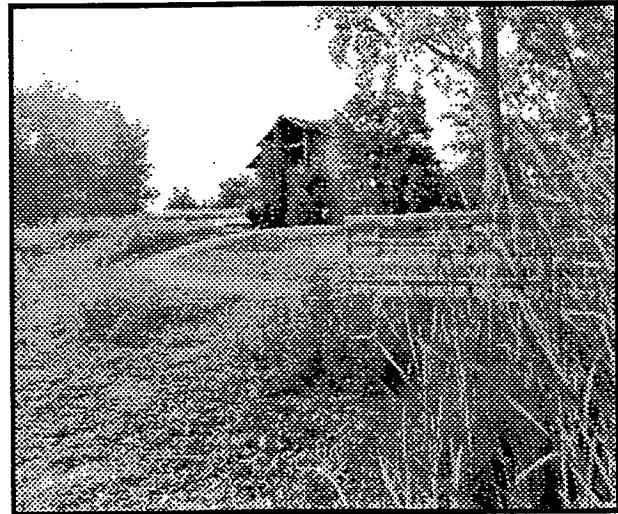
Encourage pedestrian and bike travel by creating safe and interconnected paths to points of attraction within and adjoining the development.

RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION

- 5.1 Bike and pedestrian routes between and within developments should be interconnected and establish a linkage to school facilities, retail shops, parks, recreation centers, regional trail systems, and open spaces.
- 5.2 Provide a connection to the City's trail system for each neighborhood.
- 5.3 Encourage informal walking by setting sidewalks back from curbs 4 to 12 feet and by providing visual interest, and safety from traffic.
- 5.4 Provide a means of separation between the street and accompanying pedestrian/bike ways.



Providing connections to the City's trail system encourages residents to utilize these bike/hike paths and reduces traffic.



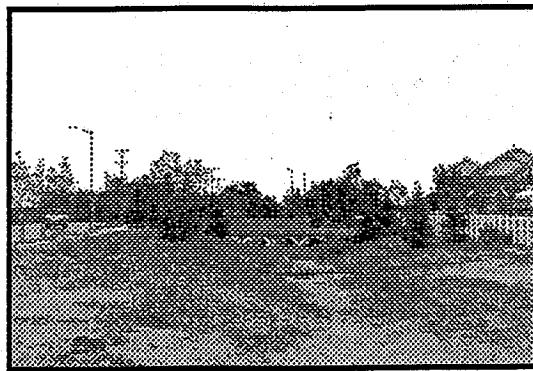
Bike/hike trails between development and open space gives the feeling of escaping to the country" while you are still in town.



Provide a walk/bike path through a neighborhood to link points of interest such as open space or a park.



Incorporating natural features increases the enjoyment of this park/open space by the residents of the surrounding neighborhood.



This development combines infrastructure, drainage areas, setback from an arterial and open space together within its design.

Element 6: OPEN SPACES

GOAL: Provide open space around and within neighborhoods.

Design for public/private open spaces, surrounding and/or within a neighborhood which will complement Loveland's existing and future parks and Open Lands system.

RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION

- 6.1 Design open spaces within the neighborhood for recreational opportunities, picnicking, outdoor concerts and shows, etc. These areas can be incorporated into required development site standards such as detention areas, or buffering between different uses or intensities.
- 6.2 Incorporate existing natural features that may be valuable as park or open space elements into development master plans, with appropriate setbacks and/or buffering.
- 6.3 Provide more public open space as lot sizes become smaller.
- 6.4 Where possible and appropriate, cluster development to maximize open space.
- 6.5 Lots should have a private rear yard; these are especially good for small children and seniors.
- 6.6 For smaller lots, provide a modest amount of fencing, screening, etc. to help maintain privacy.
- 6.7 Front yards should be a semi-private area, defined by a low fence or landscaping.

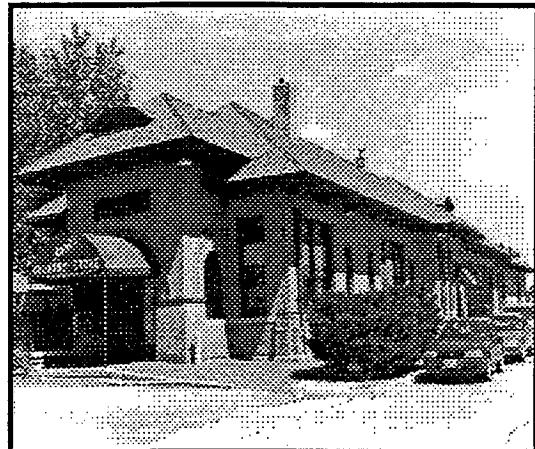
Element 7: HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

GOAL: Preserve the historical character of an area

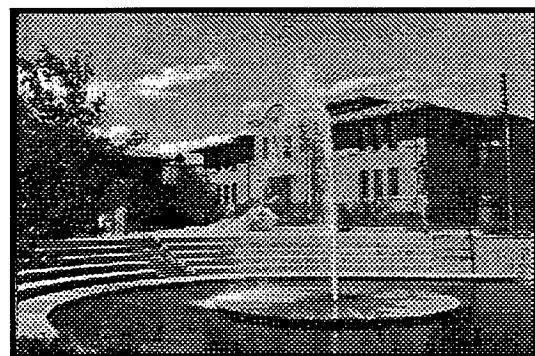
Many people relate their "small town feeling" to driving down a tree-lined street and looking at the variety of well-kept older homes and buildings in town. Preserving our historical heritage in a responsible, yet useable, way can be a great asset to the community.

RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION

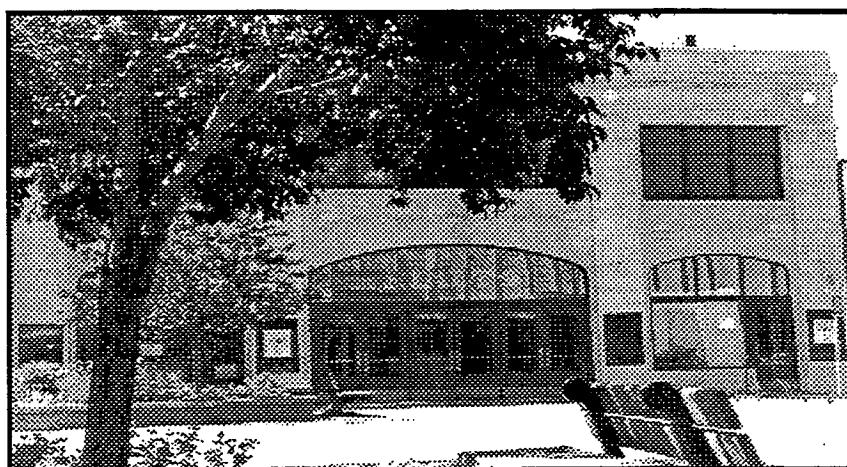
- 7.1 Preserve historical buildings that contain good design or other desirable features, and either restore to original condition or the building(s) can be integrated into current design schemes while preserving their unique architectural style or design, thus making them functional in today's economy.
- 7.2 Encourage new development to respect and enhance the visual character of nearby historical buildings.
- 7.3 Minimize and discourage alterations and new construction that weaken the historic integrity of individual buildings and/or a neighborhood.



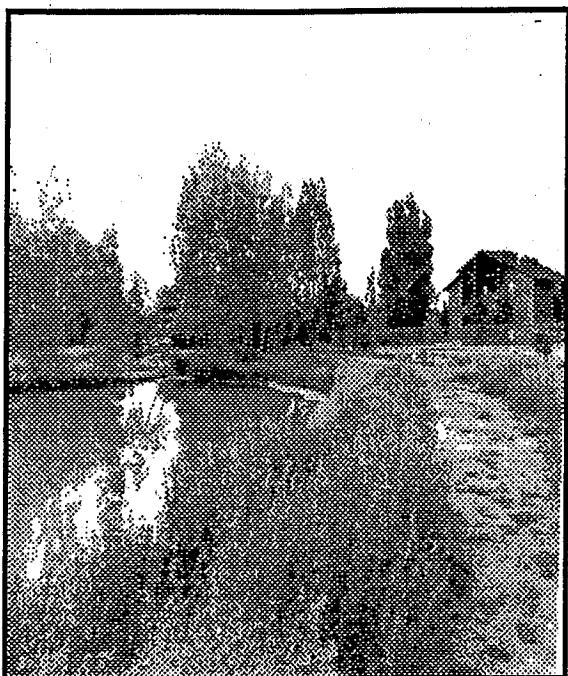
Using historical buildings for current uses presents the character yet allows for economic uses.



Integrate historic buildings into new development to enhance its character.



Retaining the historical aspects of a community preserves the unique character of the city.



Leaving areas in a neighborhood natural reduces the need for maintenance.

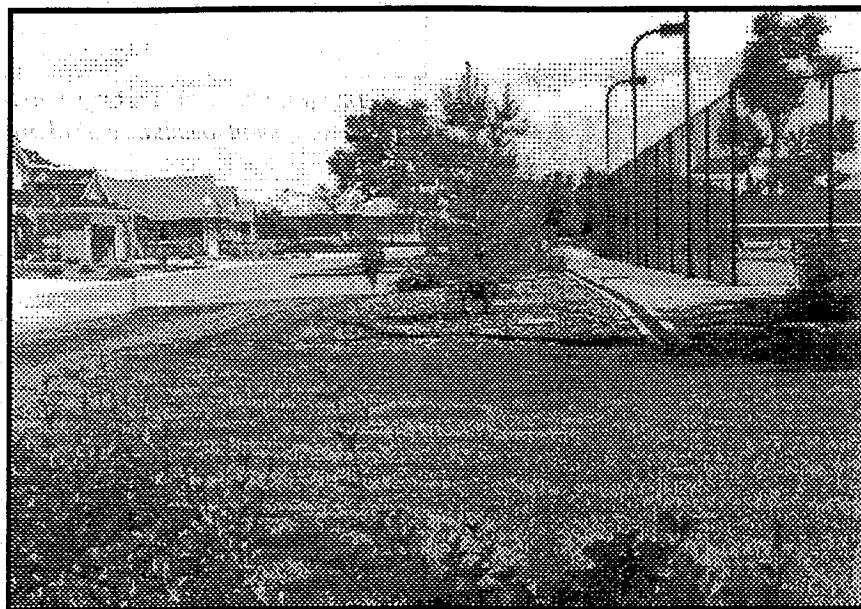
Element 8: MAINTENANCE

GOAL: Maintain the structural integrity and appearance of new and existing development including landscaping.

To continue the quality of life Lovelanders expect, there must be a commitment to maintaining the character and value of developments.

RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION

- 8.1 Use landscaping and building designs that are low maintenance and easy to care for.
- 8.2 Design sites to facilitate maintenance such as the collection of trash, litter, leaves, sticks, and recyclable products.
- 8.3 Create organizations, such as a Home Owners Association, or volunteer neighborhood clean up crew, to provide maintenance for public areas and features.



Neighborhood park which is maintained by a Home Owners Association.

Why Loveland Needs Community Design Elements

The City of Loveland, Colorado enjoys a unique geographical location nestled to the West of Interstate 25 between Fort Collins and Denver, and within 60 miles of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Due in part to this location, and to the highly appealing charm of its neighborhoods, Loveland is experiencing higher than average growth. Out of concern for how this growth might adversely affect the appeal of Loveland, the City is mobilizing its resources to provide strategies which address development pressures and help to preserve the original character of the neighborhood that make it a desirable place to live.

What is it that makes Loveland so desirable? Is it the abundance of natural features? Is it the tree-lined streets? Is it the historic small town flavor of the downtown? Most likely, it is all of these things and more. In fact, there is an abundance of factors which contribute to the overall community image and character and provide residents with the high quality of life that they enjoy.

Citizen groups such as "Agenda for the 90's and Beyond" were created to help define the vision for the future of Loveland. The city has completed Phase I of the Comprehensive Master Plan and is working on Phase II which will include this document. There has been significant involvement in the process by citizens of Loveland at large, motivated by their desire to preserve a high quality of life. This commitment in itself speaks to the importance of the concept of "community" in Loveland. There is civic pride, which drives residents to participate in the maintenance and bettering of their neighborhood and community.

The importance of guiding Loveland's growth is critical, if our "sense of community" is to be maintained. One tool is presented here in the form of Community Design Elements. These elements are intended to assist the planning effort to produce quality outcomes within the physical, built environment. Understanding and implementing the Community Design Objectives will provide direction and control over the way Loveland grows while maintaining choices and flexibility regarding the specific design solutions that are generated. Diversity of choices is needed in the regulatory process in order to secure quality outcomes. The form and appearance of the City does have a significant impact on an

individual residents' sense of community and well being; and design and environment do affect our behavior.

It is our intent that the Community Design Elements will become part of a larger whole. This document must be used in conjunction with other tools such as the Master Plan, Open Lands Plan, Bike/Hike Trail System Plan, Municipal Code and Site Development Performance Standards and Guidelines, as well as, transportation plans, technical guidelines for street design and landscaping. The next step will be to incorporate the intent of these Community Design Elements into the site development performance standards and guidelines.

A team was established to develop design objectives to help set the direction for residential development. Workshop sessions were held to define positive neighborhood character and discuss issues that would result in quality outcomes. There was a significant discussion about the master planning effort and it was determined that the Community Design Elements would serve as a bridge to assist with implementation of the Master Plan and therefore, be included in the Master Plan. We realized during our meetings that the diversity of the neighborhoods was a part of the character and desirable image that should be maintained. Consequently, one paramount goal is that this document should promote choices and flexibility so that diversity is preserved and enhanced. It is important that both the developer and the citizen participate in the design process so that a more cohesive neighborhood environment can be achieved. Objectives should be well defined to guide quality outcomes while maintaining diversity. Implementation strategies will be developed as a part of Phase II of the master planning process. These solutions must result in a balanced existence between humans and environment.

Concluding Statement

The process for generating Community Design Elements has been and continues to be interactive, participatory and collaborative. Only through its successful implementation and use of this document can Loveland preserve its character and quality of life. This is a living document; it is part of a dynamic process and will be updated as Loveland continues to grow and change.

Acknowledgments

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