

3.5 Village Grid System & Main Street Design

In very old communities built before the advent of automobile travel, most of the land area was composed of buildings housing people and businesses. When the community is built at a human scale (i.e., pedestrians) most goods and services are close by and within walking distance. Interaction among the people is both frequent and intimate. Interestingly, these communities have low crime (many eyes on the street), low pollution, low road maintenance expenses, and residents express very high satisfaction with their community.

Healthy neighborhoods require a variety of different street types, generally in a rectilinear or grid pattern. An interconnected street pattern with short block lengths (grid system) provides multiple routes to multiple destinations, diffuses automobile traffic and shortens walking distance. A balance of different streets types make neighborhoods accessible to residents, moves cars efficiently at low speeds and volumes, and keeps the neighborhood quiet, safe, and pleasant (*Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods*, Dan Burden, Local Government Commission, January 2002).

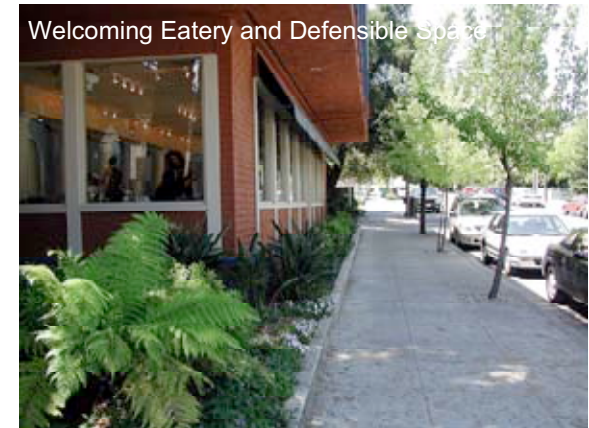
The street is shaped by the location and design of adjacent buildings. Buildings that have blank walls on the street are unpleasant to walk by while those that are built near the sidewalk and have windows and entrances are inviting to pedestrians. Buildings that have signs readable at driving speeds or buildings that are separated from the sidewalk by driveways or parking lots are designed for drive-by traffic and create an automobile-oriented environment. (*Streets and Sidewalks, People and Cars: A Citizens' Guide to Traffic Calming*, Dan Burden, Local Government Commission Center for Livable Communities, April 2000).

A Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a human scale, walkable community with moderate to high residential densities and a mixed-use core. Compared with conventional suburban developments, TNDs encourage and accommodate alternative transportation modes including walking and bicycling as well as automobiles.

TNDs have a high proportion of interconnected streets, sidewalks and paths. Streets and rights-of-way are shared between vehicles (moving and parked),



Stores fronting on roadways provide “eyes on the street.”



Storefronts along streets is more appealing than large asphalt parking lots.



Many store fronts are located far away from the highway.



Some store fronts turn their back to the street and pedestrians.

bicycles and pedestrians. The dense network of TND streets functions in an interdependent manner, providing continuous routes that enhance non-vehicular travel. Most TND streets are designed to minimize through traffic by the design of the street and the location of land uses. Streets are designed to only be as wide as needed to accommodate the usual vehicular mix for that street while providing adequate access for moving vans, garbage trucks, fire engines and school buses.



Existing Conditions: Traffic congestion and "walkability" are a result of existing land uses as well as street pattern in downtown Hoopa. Much of the automobile traffic on Highway 96 through the downtown area is local as opposed to through traffic. Most of the accidents are a result of vehicles turning on and off of Highway 96 to drive from one place downtown (e.g., Laura's Kitchen) to another (e.g., the Post Office). The absence of pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and bicycle lanes discourage non-motorized travel.

There are no secondary roads paralleling the highway that allow internal vehicle travel when necessary to move from one part of downtown to another without having to use Highway 96.

Most of the buildings in the downtown area are located some distance from the highway and much of the non-built area is composed of paved driveways and parking lots. According to focus group discussions and comments during the community meeting, many of these areas have become havens for loitering during the day and partying at night. Absence of lighting results in too many dark spots that support unacceptable behavior such as littering and graffiti, and occasional vandalism. Many parents do not allow their children to go downtown or cross the bridge because of perceived safety issues.

Discussion: Transportation and land use are closely linked. Higher density land uses make transportation more efficient, while encouraging people to walk and ride bikes. Mixed land uses provide opportunities for living, shopping, and working in the same area, reducing the need for vehicular travel. In low-density areas, the automobile is the most practical and often only means of transportation but in higher density areas, like downtown Hoopa, there are opportunities for walking.

Many of the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design could be applied to the "main street design" for downtown Hoopa.

An interconnected grid street pattern with short block lengths could provide multiple routes to multiple destinations within downtown Hoopa, reducing automobile traffic on Highway 96 and reducing walking distance. Likewise, orienting new buildings within the village grid system close to the street could enhance pedestrian activity (many eyes on the street), and create a safer and more pleasant setting.

Recommendation: The Conceptual Plan recommends consideration of a new off-highway street grid system that will allow some access by automobiles to local services without having to use State Highway 96 for local travel from one place to another. This grid system could connect to the realigned Tish Tang Road on the east side of Highway 96 and extend to Hostler Field Road. The grid system could extend from the existing shopping center (New Village Center) north including adjacent trust lands (assignment) along the west side of Highway 96. (Figure 6. New Village Grid System).

Within this grid system, a "village" intimacy could be created by orienting new buildings to the Highway or frontage street. Open areas (mini-plazas) with water and/or plants for small gatherings of people and resting areas could be provided. Relocation of essential services such as the post office, bank, and police station to the new buildings could encourage development of additional businesses within the Main Street area buildings (for example, clothing store, arcade, movie theater and restaurant). Both on-street and off-street parking could be provided.



Traditional "Main Street Design" supports multiple use and public open spaces.



Before – A roadway cuts a swath through a commercial neighborhood



After - Traffic calming, sidewalks, and stores fronting on the roadway reclaim the area for pedestrian use.

As illustrated in the Conceptual Plan, the area designated for Main Street development is adjacent to the New Village Center offering an extension of safe and secure activity during both the day and night time. This area is Tribal Trust land (held in assignment by individuals) and could be developed under the direction of the Tribal Council.

The Village Grid System and Main Street Building Designs, combined with improvements to the pedestrian environment and traffic calming, could create a viable hub for commercial activity as well as encourage positive social interaction among Tribal members and visitors.

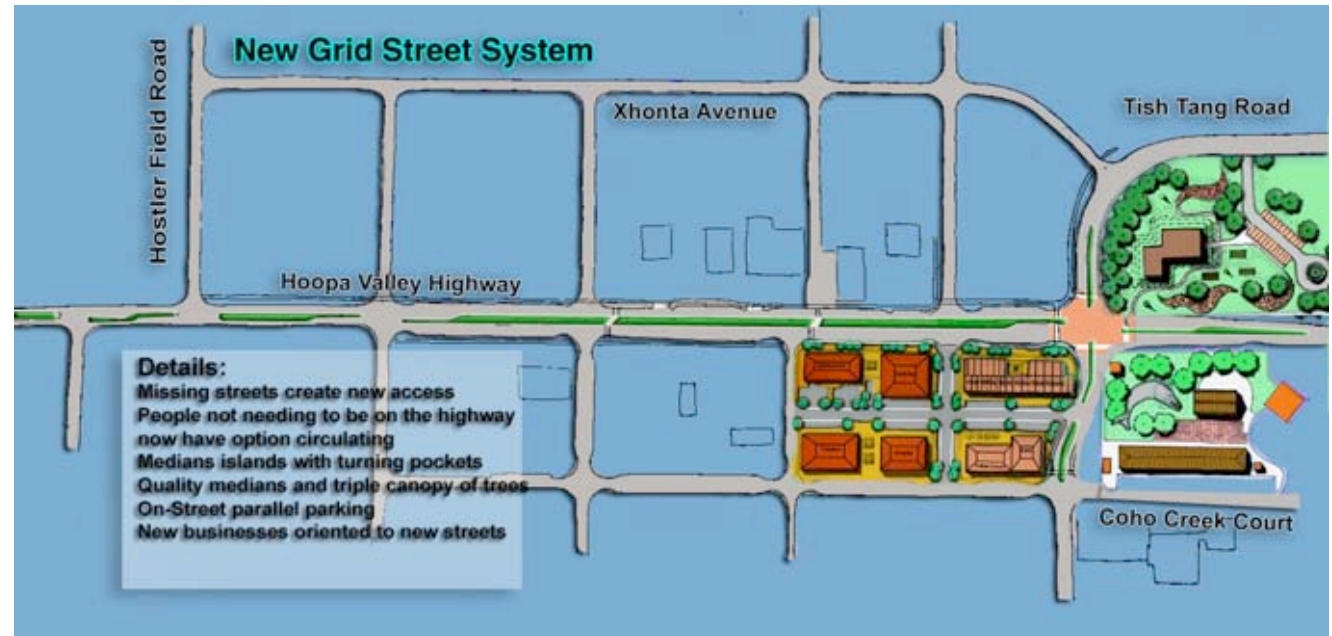


Figure 8. New Village Grid System

