

2.4.9 Neighborhood Activity Center



DESCRIPTION: A neighborhood focal point with a concentration of activities such as general retail, service commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open spaces uses easily accessible by pedestrians and bicycles.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: Each neighborhood center should include a mix of retail, services, and offices to serve neighborhood residents' day-to-day needs. Residential development should reinforce the center by locating higher density housing options adjacent to the center,

targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family town homes, apartments, and condominiums. Design for each Center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses. Road edges should be clearly defined by locating builds at roadside with parking in the rear. Direct connections to greenspace and trail networks should be provided. The pedestrian-friendly environment should be enhanced by adding sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly trails/bike routes linked to other neighborhood amenities such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, parks, and schools.

PERMITTED ZONINGS:	Community-Commercial (C-C) /	General Commercial (C-G)
	When property located along a Collector or Arterial roadway	
	Multi-Family Residential (R-6M) & (R-M)	
	Neighborhood-Commercial (C-N)	Office-Professional (O-P)
	Office Institutional (O-I)	Planned Development (P-D)
	Residential-Professional (R-P)	Single-Family Residential (R-6)

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Growth Preparedness Objective:** Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (e.g. roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.
- 2) Appropriate Businesses Objective:** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.
- 3) Educational Opportunities Objective:** Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.
- 4) Employment Options Objective:** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.
- 5) Transportation Alternatives Objective:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including accessible mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.
- 6) Housing Opportunities Objective:** Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.

- 7) **Traditional Neighborhood Objective:** Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.
- 8) **Infill Development Objective:** Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.
- 9) **Sense of Place Objective:** Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 1) **Appropriate Zoning Districts:**
 - a. **Single-Family (R-6) Residential Zoning Districts:** See description above in 2.4.6
 - b. **Multi-Family (R-6M) & (R-M) Residential Zoning Districts:** See description above in 2.4.7
 - c. **Residential-Professional (R-P) Zoning District:** See description above in 2.4.7
 - d. **Office-Professional (O-P) and Office Institutional (O-I) Zoning Districts:** See description above in 2.4.7
 - e. **Neighborhood-Commercial (C-N) Zoning District:** See description above in 2.4.7
 - f. **Community-Commercial (C-C) and General Commercial (C-G) Zoning Districts:** See description above in Section 2.4.5.
 - g. **Planned Developments (P-D):** See description above in 2.4.6
- 2) **Access Control Measures:** To ensure neighborhoods and commercial properties are interconnected to allow for greater traffic circulation and increased public safety.
- 3) **Alternatives to or Reuse of Big Boxes:** As Big Boxes become vacant, developers are encouraged to investigate innovative methods of reuse and possible redesign. Developers are also encouraged to design big box retail stores so as to minimize impact on surrounding properties and provide greater aesthetic appeal. This can include the use of alternative construction materials, creative building design, and innovative site layout.
- 4) **Appropriate School Siting:** To ensure schools are located within existing or planned activity centers to promote pedestrian and bicycle accessibility.
- 5) **Density Bonuses:** Certain income groups are in need of additional housing options but may find it very hard to obtain. Increased density in appropriate areas may help decrease the cost of development thus making housing more affordable.
- 6) **Design for Walkable Communities:** In an effort to promote active living, developers and planners should work together to ensure new development is designed in such a way as to encourage walking and biking. This includes such methods as interconnecting neighborhoods and commercial developments, providing universally designed sidewalks and bike lines, and situating buildings to promote pedestrian friendliness.
- 7) **Flexible Parking Standards:** Revising land development regulations to remove rigid parking requirements that typically result in an oversupply of unnecessary parking spaces. Revisions may include reducing the number of required parking spaces, allowing shared parking between adjacent facilities, or promoting the use of alternative materials.

8) **Flexible Subdivision Regulations:** Revising subdivision regulations to enable development of more innovative types of subdivisions that better match the character of the community and physical constraints of the development site. Revisions may include adjusting specific physical development standards to allow for condominium-style development or encouraging greater use of discretionary site plan review for new subdivisions.

9) **Infill Development Program:** A comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development in particular areas of the community, while also regulating this development to ensure protection of quality of life in affected neighborhoods. An effective program will include both: a) development incentives, improvements to public facilities and services, and streamlined regulations to encourage infill development; b) guidelines for appropriate design, density and location of new infill projects.

10) **Mixed Use Zoning:** In contrast to traditional zoning techniques, mixed-use zoning, which is often accomplished through zoning overlays, allows different types of uses such as: residential, commercial and office/professional to locate within the same area provided the uses are reasonably compatible. This type of development, in appropriate areas, creates a more diverse and dynamic urban setting and often makes it easier for people to carry out daily activities by alternative modes of transportation.

11) **Right of Way Improvements:** Any type of public improvement made in a roadway's "right-of-way," which is the strip of land that includes the road itself and the narrow band of publicly owned property on either side of the road where sidewalks, curbing, and utility lines are typically located. Such improvements may address issues such as: not enough or non-accessible sidewalks and bike trails, traffic problems, unattractive commercial or shopping areas, or unattractive sprawl development/visual clutter along roadways

12) **Reuse of Greyfields:** Redevelopment of Greyfields can occur through programs such as the State's Redevelopment Fund. This fund gives local governments access to flexible financial assistance to help them implement projects that cannot be undertaken with the usual public sector grant and loan programs. The Redevelopment Fund finances locally initiated public/private partnerships to leverage investments in commercial, downtown and industrial redevelopment and revitalization projects that would not proceed otherwise.

13) **Traffic Calming:** Physical improvements designed to decrease traffic speed and increase the pedestrian-friendliness of roadways. Typical traffic-calming improvements include raised crosswalks, narrower traffic lanes, fewer lanes, on-street parking, bump-outs, pedestrian refuges, and landscaped medians.