Chapter 7: Land Use & Community Design

Goal 7.A.: Promote sustainable land use to meet the needs of the future.

Objective 7.A.1: Plan for purposeful growth, revitalization and redevelopment.

Critical Questions

- How do we develop and plan for purposeful growth?
- How do we plan for redevelopment and revitalization of our existing community to meet the needs of the future?
- How do we enhance our community's design and appearance?
- Are there issues with annexing? If yes, what are they?
- Does the wastewater system, floodplain or water supply (pressure or fire flows) limit annexation in any way? If not, where do you think the best directions for annexation are?
- Is there a process in place to determine the cost-benefit of future development and redevelopment? What is the process or tool? If not, should you?
- Are there properties that experience chronic surface water flooding or sanitary sewer backups into the property?
- Any properties on septic within City limits? Would these have limited redevelopment potential?
- Are there specific parts of town you think are ripe for redevelopment and why?

Goal 7.A.: Promote sustainable land use to meet the needs of the future.

Objective 7.A.2: Protect the environment and meet the needs of the future.

Critical Questions

- How do we protect the environment and meet the needs of the future?

Assessment

New development in Lee's Summit over the next decade—and future decades— will be focused on greenfield development and infill within areas considered already developed. While infill sites represent a relatively small percentage of the overall land in the City, they represent a range of opportunities to redevelop under-utilized sites to better maximize existing infrastructure, services and amenities. Where possible, this Plan will guide redevelopment to ensure that it takes the form of walkable, mixed-use and mixed-income centers and neighborhoods that support the community's vision and goals.

The land use goal for Lee's Summit is to promote sustainable land use that meets the needs of the future, with an objective to plan for purposeful growth, revitalization, and redevelopment. A land use framework to assist with defining future opportunities was developed as a guide for directing land use recommendations throughout the community. The framework seeks to maintain and preserve existing land uses, such as open space and neighborhoods, while proposing infill development or redevelopment for portions of the community with existing infrastructure and likelihood for growth.

LAND USE FRAMEWORK

The following pages translate the concept of strategic growth and change into a foundation for future policies and actions:

1. **Preservation and Managing Growth and Change** identifies specific areas across Lee's Summit where shaping the future is about green space preservation (i.e. parks/open space) or a three-pronged approach to change: places to strengthen (i.e. Downtown), places to enhance (i.e. traditional suburban neighborhoods), and places to transform (i.e. declining strip retail centers and areas).
2. **Definition of Character Areas, Land Uses & Activity Centers** builds on the construct of preservation and managing change for community benefit, as the foundation for creating the Land Use Plan as an essential requirement. At a high level, the Plan organizes the City based on a range of traditional land use categories. Honing in on these categories with guiding input from the fiscal impact analysis, varying land use clusters throughout the community are then identified as larger character areas that form activity centers for future growth-- or the areas where most of the future growth in Lee's Summit can be anticipated.
3. **Establishing A Planning Framework** that builds on this character-based foundation by providing specific detailed goals and strategies for implementing the Guiding Principles, identified in Chapter X, to shape the City's future in ways that are targeted to enable preservation, strengthening, enhancement and transformation. Prioritizing neighborhood character, as the basis for determining land use, guides more specific aspects of community development such as site design, public realm, building form & massing, and quality architecture. It establishes the notions of land use and density as tools for achieving the right range and variety of character areas necessary to support community growth.

FRAMEWORK STRATEGY

The framework strategy outlines the purpose and intent for four high-level, guiding categories, including areas to preserve, enhance, transform and strengthen. The framework also provides focus for the land uses categories, character areas, activity centers and place types in the Plan.

Within the following section, each category is described with accompanying summaries of objective, important considerations, and targeted outcomes for advancing the recommendations of the Plan. Icons are used throughout the land use recommendations to reinforce how specific actions support one or more of the high-level categories—reminding the community they are on-track for meeting its stated needs and expectations.

Preserve

Areas to preserve include: public open space; private open spaces that represent important natural areas, includes valued natural resources or offers important open space connections; and places that represent valued historic and cultural landmarks and resources. Together, these preservation areas represent a green and historic framework element that is important in defining the City's character and quality. Change should be carefully managed to enhance the setting and protect the environmental quality of these areas and should largely be confined to park-related activities. Such an example could include trails and greenways that provide attractive, viable travel corridors for walking and biking. Where feasible, the City should acquire environmentally sensitive lands as an opportunity to enhance historic and cultural sites, parks, athletic fields, and nature.

Areas to Preserve:

- Parks/Recreation
- Open space
- Agriculture
- Water

Map 7.X shows areas to preserve (city framework map)

Enhance

Areas to Enhance include most of the City's existing residential neighborhoods. Enhancements may introduce traffic calming measures on roadways; new connections to nearby walkable, mixed-use activity centers; improved bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure; or opportunities for new parks, open space, and tree canopy. In limited cases, some neighborhoods may benefit from small-scale, context-sensitive infill development that complements neighborhood character. Residential infill development, and redevelopment initiatives, in these neighborhoods should be focused on increasing the range of housing types and affordability for the City's residents.

Areas to Enhance:

- Single-family detached
- Single-family attached
- Multifamily

- Light industrial
- Civic facilities
- Emergency services
- Primary/Secondary education
- Hospitals
- Transportation
- Utilities/Communications

Map 7.X shows areas to enhance (city framework map)

Strengthen

Downtown Lee's Summit would be an area to preserve if it were not also the bustling heart of one of the fastest growing suburbs in the region, and a celebrated Main Street. "Strengthen" is not about compromising the Downtown's historic character in any way, but about building on that character through carefully designed infill development. Examples of this could include retrofitting of existing buildings to grow its residential population, help new retail and restaurants—along with the farmer's market, conservatory and other new businesses that celebrate Downtown's unique character. There are also other ways to strengthen Downtown, such as alleviating parking challenges; public realm improvements to sidewalks, parks, and tree canopy; and exploring creation of additional places for community gatherings.

Areas to Strengthen:

- Downtown related land uses
- Expansion of the Downtown core

Map 7.X shows areas to strengthen (city framework map)

Transform

Places to Transform represent areas to reimagine the City's future. In most instances, these areas are shaped around retrofitting strip commercial development, older industrial areas, and other parts of the City that are or will become increasingly outmoded in the face of accelerating demographic, economic, and technological change. These areas represent a prime opportunity to harness growing market demand to create a new generation of walkable, mixed-use, mixed-income centers that offer opportunities to achieve greater walkability; a wider variety of diverse housing options; more and better local jobs; enhanced access to public spaces; and similar community benefits.

Areas to Transform:

- Commercial Centers and hotels
- Office parks
- Commercial recreation areas

Map 7.X shows areas to transform (city framework map)

PRESERVATION AND CHANGE

The Preservation & Change Map for Lee's Summit depicts preferred development types, locations, patterns, and intensities for areas of change while also assuming full build-out of the community. Some recommendations for the map are bold, and set a long-term vision for a more diverse development portfolio that is forward-thinking, focused on economic development, mindful of supporting infrastructure, aware of residents' quality-of-life, and aimed to be financially-rewarding for the City.

Map 7.X shows areas to preserve (city framework map)

ACTIVITY CENTERS

The Areas to Transform represent significant opportunity for development of Lee's Summit's undeveloped pockets together with redevelopment of outmoded strip retail, older industrial facilities, outmoded office buildings, and other candidate sites ripe for redevelopment—and whose current development in most cases does not represent the City's goals for its character and quality. The Areas to Transform break down into five distinct activity centers.

Map 7.X shows proposed activity centers

1. Downtown
    - Traditional Downtown character with small local businesses
    - Mobility hub where all modes should be accommodated

2. South PRI
    - Innovation and tech focus
    - Transit Oriented Development (TOD) potential fits into Mid-America Regional Council's long-term plans for the corridor
    - Emphasis on connectivity
    - Commuter hub – 291 connection

3. Summit
    - Regional retail and residential – two shopping centers will evolve over time and new residential developments are already being constructed
    - Mobility hub potential – focus on 470 and highway 50 and interstate access
    - Additional residential density is needed to fulfill mobility hub designation

4. North PRI
    - Environmental focus – trees, green space, county park amenity, etc.
    - More about trails/greenway connections and 470, and airport

5. New Longview
    - Historic Preservation component with the Historic Longview Farm and historic gateways
    - Mobility hub potential – western hub and has the presence of institutions like MCC

Taken together, these activity centers will host most of the new development across Lee's Summit over the next two decades. They will absorb most of the projected market demand discussed in Chapter 2 They will also provide the sites with a new generation of walkable, mixed-use, activity centers discussed throughout the plan that will accommodate most of the anticipated new housing, jobs, and retail.

Beyond the timespan of this plan, additional activity center locations may continue to emerge as the community grows. Sites for emerging activity centers should be monitored and included within future updates to the land use map, including the allocation of place types, supporting land uses, and infrastructure improvements.

PLACE TYPES

To further guide future development within the activity centers, as well as along corridors, *place types* provide more specific recommendations and design guidance for the land use mix, building heights and massing, density, building/parking disposition, and general development character for new development. A majority of future development or redevelopment should be directed to the activity centers and along existing corridors, using the place types for high-level design guidance.

The following place types are based on input from the market analysis and guide the type and amount of growth anticipated in Lee's Summit for the next 20 years.

- *Urban Mixed-use*
- *Neighborhood Mixed-use*
- *Neighborhood Commercial*
- *Neighborhood Residential*

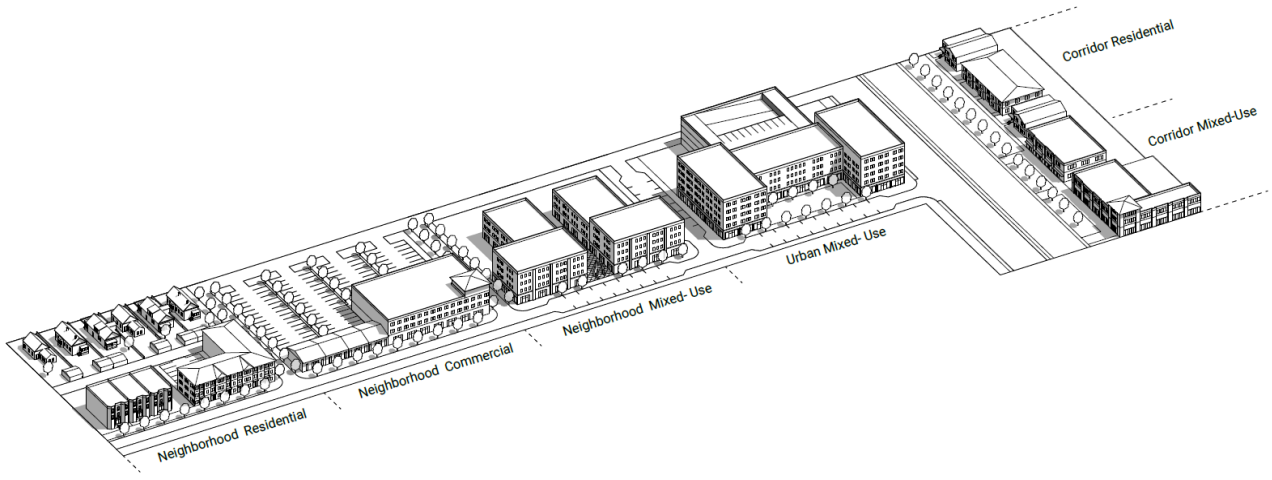


Figure X: This illustration demonstrates the relative massing & density, open space, building location, and relationship to the street for each of the place types in Lee's Summit.

In addition to the activity centers, the corridors in Lee's Summit are anticipated to undergo change with some associated redevelopment in the next two decades. Highways 50 and 291 provide opportunities to integrate a wider range of uses in proximity to existing retail and medium- to high-density residential development.

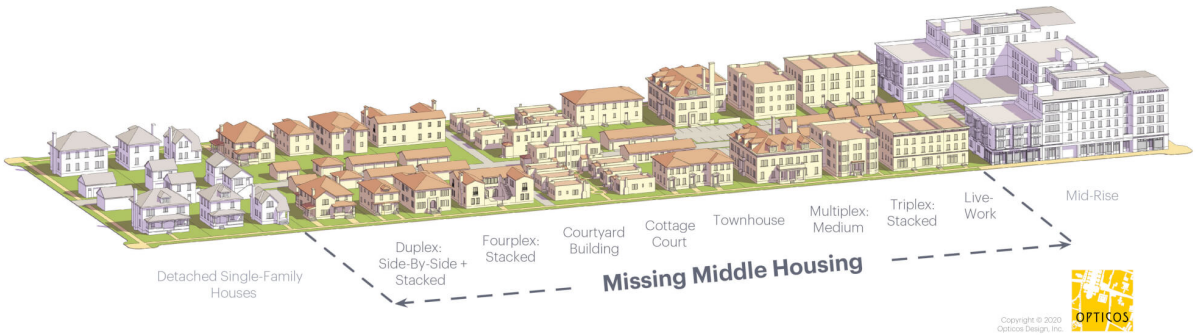
Additional corridor place types are proposed to guide development and establish the basis for design principles along these corridors. Design principles establish guidance and help ensure future developments convey a positive and welcoming image of the community. Corridor place types include:

- *Corridor Mixed-Use*
- *Corridor Residential*

Missing Middle Housing

"Missing Middle" housing types are those that fill the gap between traditional detached housing units and large multi-unit apartment or condominium buildings – generally including duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and small apartment structures. Th market analysis for Lee's Summit illustrates that there will be a need for missing middle housing types over the next two decades, which can be accommodated primarily in the new *activity centers* (with guidance from the *place types*), but also as infill development in existing mature neighborhoods and along the community's corridors. As discussed in the Housing chapter (Chapter 2), the incorporation of missing middle housing throughout the community – particularly in proximity to existing infrastructure and transit – provides a larger range of housing choice and offers increased affordability for a larger portion of the community.

Scale and form parameters are key to ensuring that missing middle housing supports the context of an area; it is not necessary to introduce large buildings in sensitive areas to create more housing options. Most of these missing middle types fit into structures that are a similar scale to existing housing: not more than 2.5 stories, no more than 55-75 ft. wide, and approximately 45-60 feet deep. While a majority of missing middle housing types are appropriate within the urban or neighborhood *place types*, some of the denser housing types



in Figure X ("Upper Missing Middle") could reach up to 3-4 stories and are only appropriate in the context of higher density, mixed-use development.

The following characteristics provide guidance and considerations for incorporating missing middle housing in the community. Shared characteristics common to missing middle housing types include:

1. Walkability: Missing middle housing is most easily located in newly built development, but integration into existing neighborhoods with proximity to jobs, schools, shopping, and entertainment are important considerations.

2. Density/Critical Mass: Missing middles housing allows enough density to support services and amenities (including public transit), while not contributing to an increase in the perceived density of an area when the scale of new development is context sensitive. These structures can generate average densities at or above 12 units/acre while ensuring predictable results for the surrounding neighborhoods in terms of form, scale and building types.

3. Small Building Footprints: These housing types have similar heights, depths, and widths as single-family homes and present a compatible scale with existing housing in the community.

4. Livability: Missing middle housing provides a similar living experience to single-family homes even though the unit size is smaller. For example, being able to enter from a private door on a front porch or stoop as opposed to an apartment hallway. The smaller spaces and lower costs allow developers to integrate well-designed open space solutions in conjunction with new projects.

5. Ownership: Missing middle homes can be either owner-occupied or rental, or a mix of both. As a more affordable option than traditional single family homes, these housing types provide a more attainable option for owning a home in Lee's Summit (see Objective 2.A.2 related to cost burdened households in Lee's Summit).

6. Parking: Requiring too much parking can be a deterrent to the creation of missing middle housing, because not enough units can be constructed to make a project economically viable. A thoughtful approach to the quantity of parking and how that parking is integrated into the design of the site should be considered. Generally, missing middle housing requires less off-street parking because it is constructed in walkable areas, households are smaller, and on-street parking available.

7. Construction: Missing middle housing is generally built using simple and cost-effective techniques. Wood construction and two-story buildings are common for these housing types, which provide greater cost efficiencies for builders.

8. Sense of Community: Allowing for and encouraging additional housing types helps create a stronger sense of community by being located in vibrant neighborhoods with access to shared spaces. This is especially important to single-person households and empty-nesters who are often looking to belong to a community when considering housing options.

Figure X.X Missing Middle Housing types are most easily integrated at the edge of neighborhoods (left) or as a transition between commercial and existing residential development (right),

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LOCAL LAND USE ACTIONS

The following actions will assist Lee's Summit with prioritizing decisions and investments to achieve the stated land use goal, objective and framework strategy.

Education and Outreach:

- The development community and city staff should be apprised of the new land use framework approach to ensure a multidisciplinary understanding of the activity centers, place types, and design principles.

Plan Development: The implementation of the framework is largely tied to the future development or redevelopment of the activity centers.

- To further assess the potential of the activity centers, a master planning approach is recommended to identify infrastructural needs and more specifically associate the market analysis with proposed densities in each of the activity centers. Illustrative master plan alternatives and test case scenarios will provide prototypical development alternatives based on the place types and allow the city to determine future needs for realizing full build out of the activity centers.
- A strategy for corridor redevelopment along Highways 50 and 291 is recommended to determine the location, amount, and type of new development that is appropriate for the next 20 years. The strategy should focus on physical improvements and community development activities that create an urban design framework that is more pedestrian-friendly with connections to neighborhoods and adjacent community services.

Inventory, Assessment, or Survey:

- The recommendation for a housing survey in Chapter 2 should integrate future development opportunities in the activity centers and provide for a wider range of housing options that fit with the market analysis projections.

Practice Improvements:

- The fiscal model should be used to analyze the impact of future land use decisions to support overall financial sustainability.

Policy and Code Adjustment: Regulatory changes that reflect the land use recommendations of the plan should be implemented in the zoning ordinance and other regulatory devices.

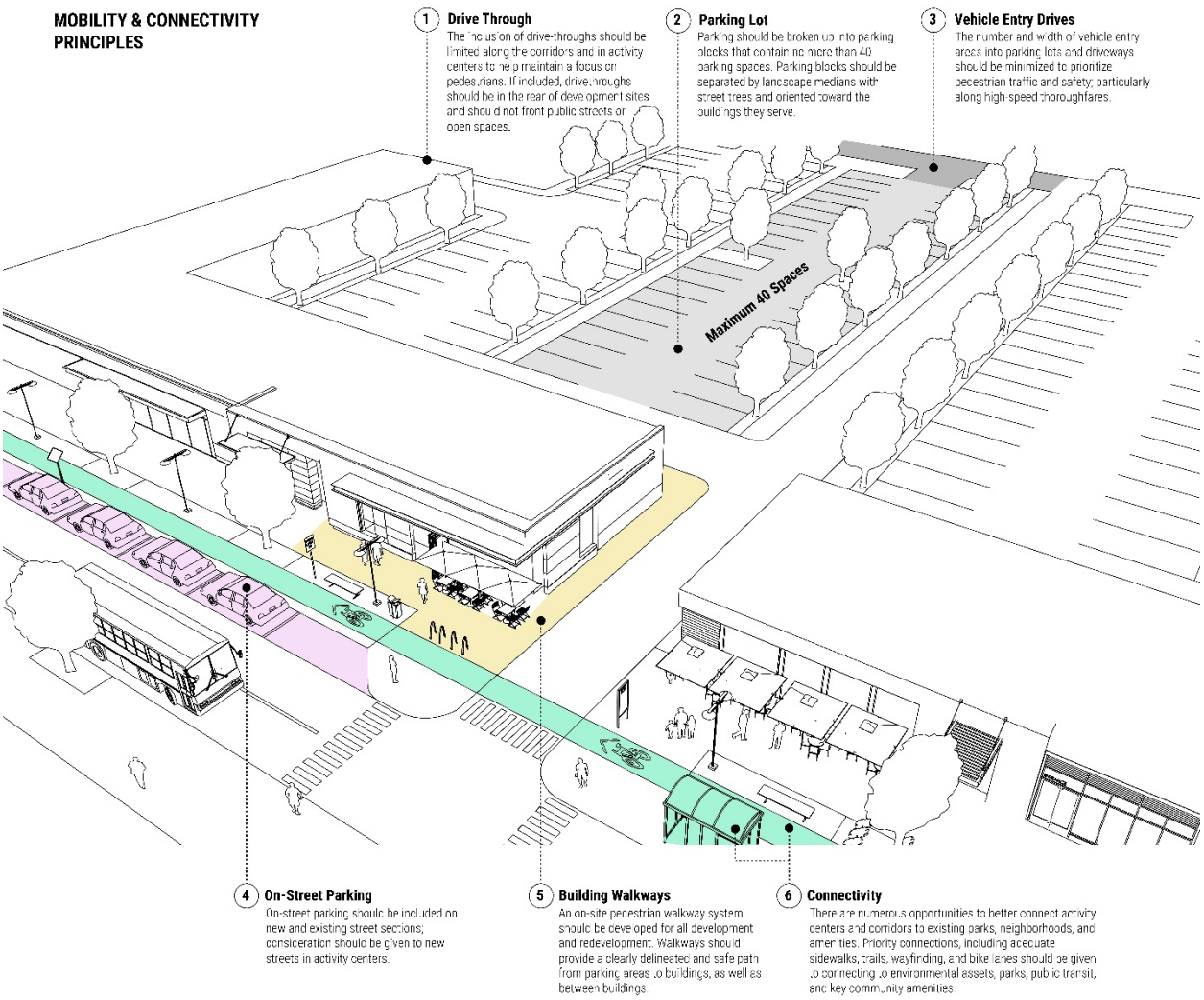
- An overlay district approach that addresses the unique challenges of redevelopment should be considered for the corridors. Corridor place types and design principles (see Appendix) should be used as the basis of design guidance. The overlay district should address building density/height/massing, parking, specific land uses mix, environmental aspects, and connectivity.
- As Downtown Lee's Summit continues to grow with anticipated redevelopment activities, the design guidelines should be evaluated and updated based on the land use framework and place types. Future guidelines should reflect, maintain, and enhance downtown Lee's Summit as the community's business center and main activity hub of the community.
- Policy and code adjustments should be based on design principles for the activity centers and corridors that address mobility, open space, and building & site development principles. From this basis, more specific and place-based guidelines can be developed in future regulatory changes.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Community design principles provide guidance for the future development and redevelopment of Lee's Summit's activity centers and corridors. While the principles are not prescriptive, they do provide overarching guidance for the new streets, open spaces, and buildings in the activity centers and adjacent to the corridors. They should serve as the basis for the review of development applications, revisions to or the development of future regulatory guidance, and as a signal to the community regarding the character and quality of development.

Mobility & Connectivity Principles

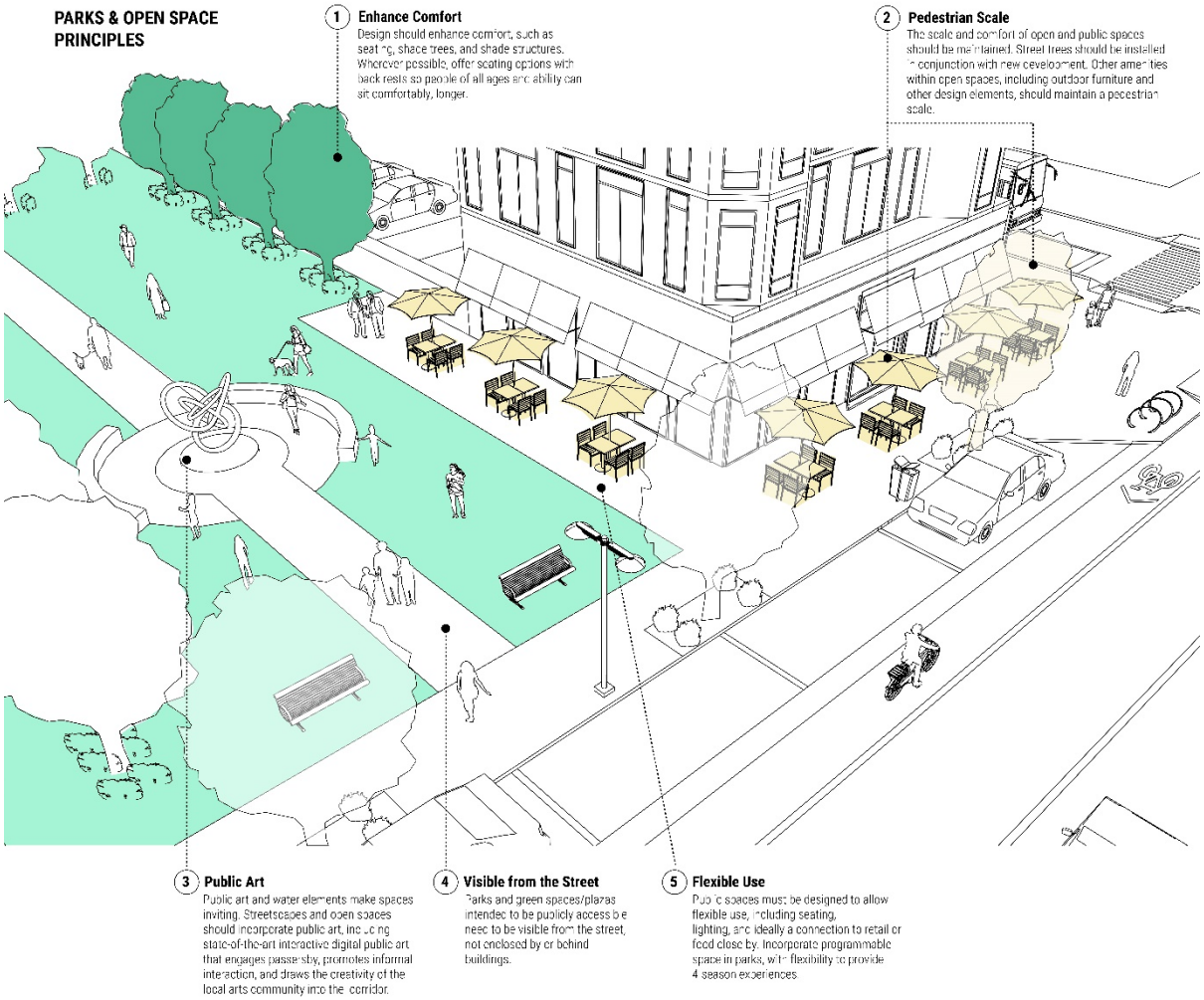
- Connectivity: There are numerous opportunities to better connect activity centers and corridors to existing parks, neighborhoods, and amenities. Priority connections, including adequate sidewalks, trails, wayfinding, and bike lanes should be given to connecting to environmental assets, parks, public transit, and key community amenities.
- Building walkways: An on-site pedestrian walkway system should be developed for all development and redevelopment. Walkways should provide a clearly delineated and safe path from parking areas to buildings, as well as between buildings.
- Scale and safety: New streets should accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists wherever possible and create/enhance connections to neighborhoods and nearby amenities. If a new connection is shown but is not wide enough for all modes, pedestrian comfort and safety is the top priority.
- Wayfinding: Wayfinding should be used to enhance connections and neighborhood identity.
- Parking lots: Parking should be broken up into parking blocks that contain no more than 40 parking spaces. Parking blocks should be separated by landscape medians with street trees and oriented toward the buildings they serve.
- Intersection Parking: Surface parking areas should not be located directly at the intersection of two thoroughfares. Intersections should preferably be defined by buildings and/or pedestrian amenities.
- Vehicle Entry Drives: The number and width of vehicle entry areas into parking lots and driveways should be minimized to prioritize pedestrian traffic and safety; particularly along high-speed thoroughfares.
- On-street Parking: On-street parking should be included on new and existing street sections; consideration should be given to new streets in activity centers.
- Drive-throughs: The inclusion of drive-throughs should be limited along the corridors and in activity centers to help maintain a focus on pedestrians. If included, drive-throughs should be in the rear of development sites and should not front public streets or open spaces.



Parks & Open Space Principles

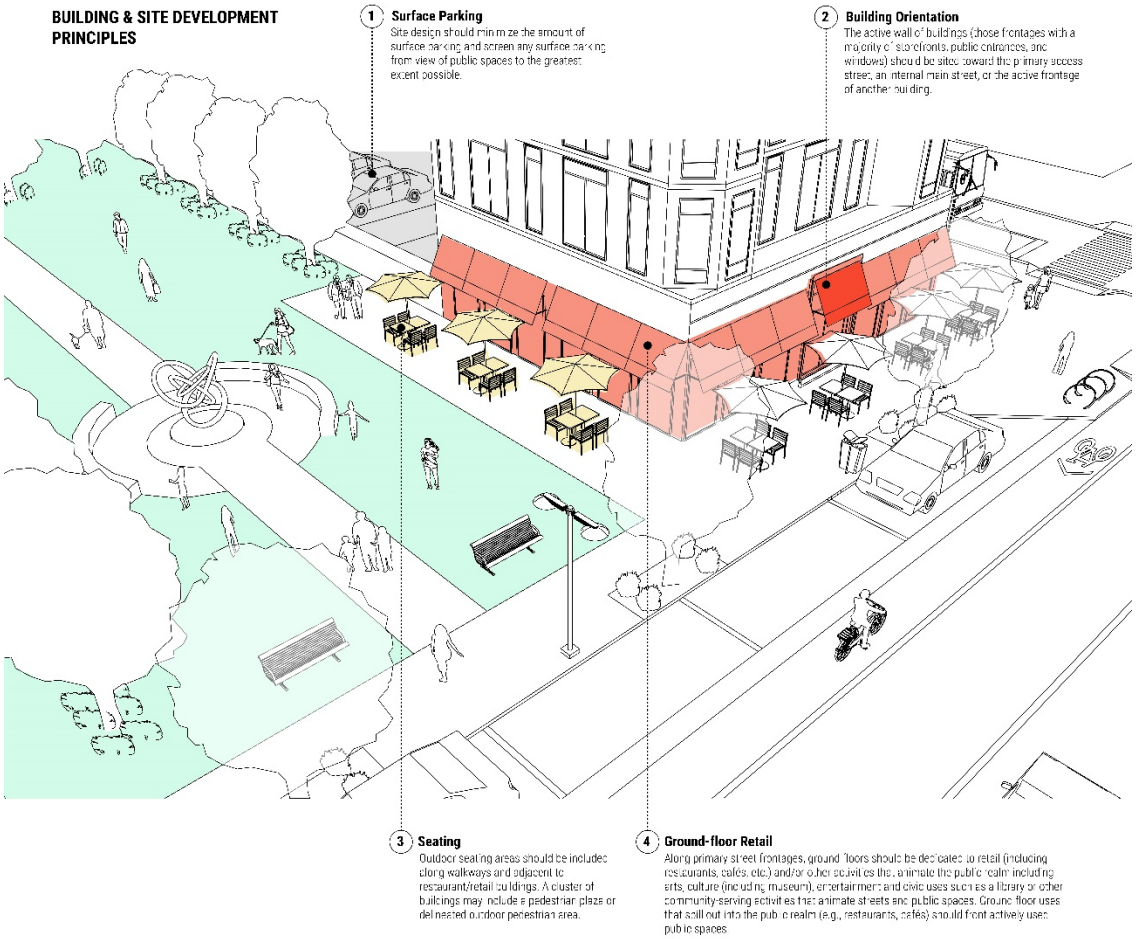
- Visible from the street: Parks and green spaces/plazas intended to be publicly accessible need to be visible from the street, not enclosed by or behind buildings.
- Flexible use: Public spaces must be designed to allow flexible use, including seating, lighting, and ideally a connection to retail or food close by. Incorporate programmable space in parks, with flexibility to provide 4-season experiences.
- Public art: Public art and water elements make spaces inviting. Streetscapes and open spaces should incorporate public art, including state-of-the-art interactive digital public art that engages passersby, promotes informal interaction, and draws the creativity of the local arts community into the corridor.
- Native Plantings: Promote the use of native plantings and include education around the ecological benefits. Low-impact design should be used to reduce impervious surfaces.

- Enhance comfort: Design should enhance comfort, such as seating, shade trees, and shade structures. Wherever possible, offer seating options with back rests so people of all ages and ability can sit comfortably, longer.
- Recreational and environmental purposes: Open space should serve a dual purpose (e.g. stormwater management and recreation), wherever possible. However, maintenance is critical for keeping them attractive and functional.
- Maintenance and safety: Maintenance and safety are important to maintaining the built environment and critical for keeping open spaces attractive and functional. Sidewalks and trails should be safe and inviting, and any missing segments should be completed as a priority. Interference with street trees, landscaping, and utilities should be minimized. Street trees should maintain clear-view triangles at intersections and driveway access points for pedestrian and vehicular safety.
- Scale and comfort: The scale and comfort of open and public spaces should be maintained. Street trees should be installed in conjunction with new development. Other amenities within open spaces, including outdoor furniture and other design elements, should maintain a pedestrian scale.



Building & Site Development Principles

- Historic resources: Property owners should be encouraged to pursue a National Register designation, followed by a local historic designation, for qualifying structures. Conservation Districts should be created to buffer historic districts and to maintain appropriate size, massing, and building setbacks within the area.
- Surface parking: Site design should minimize the amount of surface parking and screen any surface parking from view of public spaces to the greatest extent possible.
- Building orientation: The active wall of buildings (those frontages with a majority of storefronts, public entrances, and windows) should be sited toward the primary access street, an internal main street, or the active frontage of another building.
- Setbacks: Site design should prioritize buildings along the setback line of new streets, as opposed to parking. If additional space is needed for right-of-way expansion along these corridors, building setbacks should serve as an extension of the sidewalk and public realm.

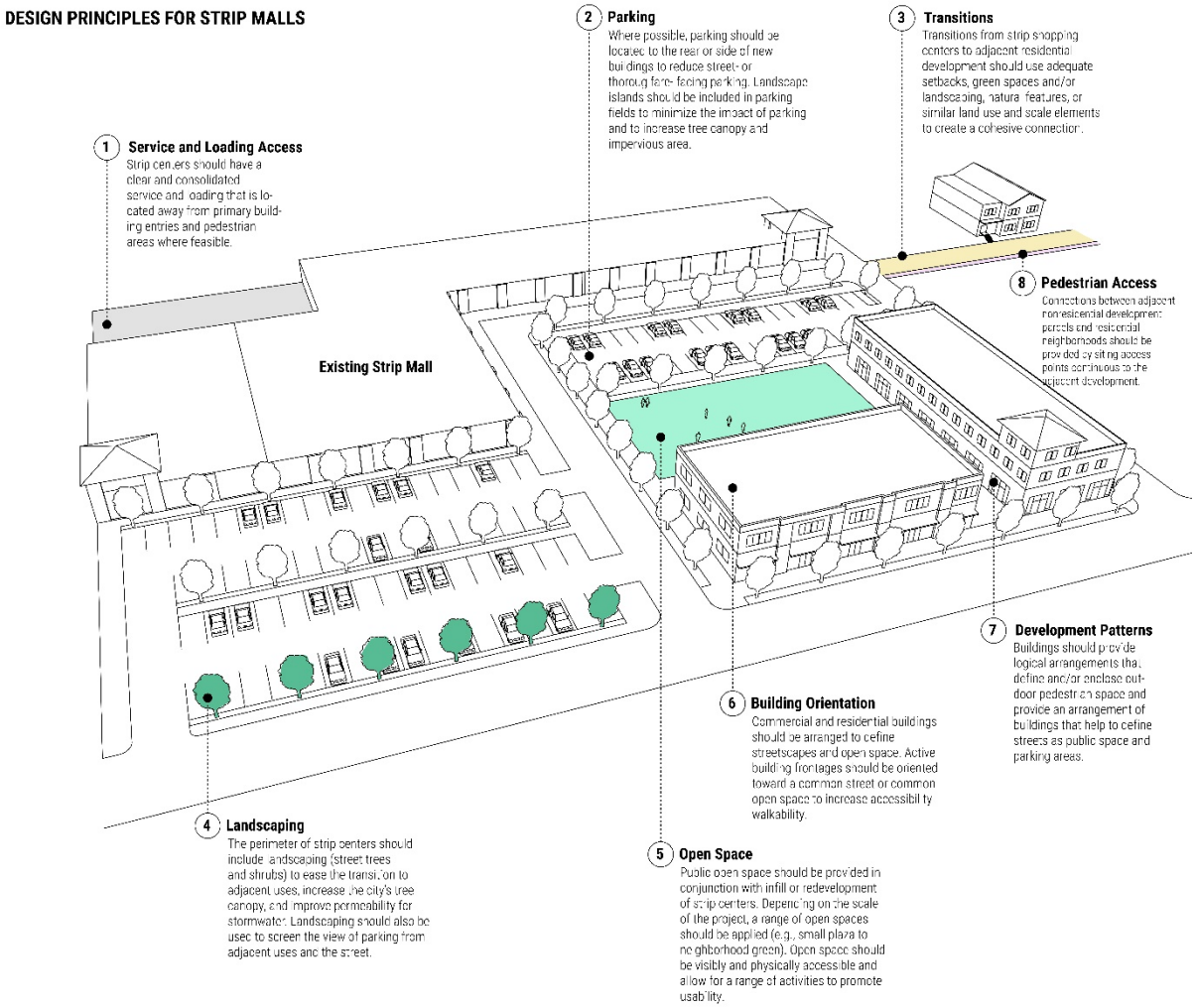


- Seating: Outdoor seating areas should be included along walkways and adjacent to restaurant/retail buildings. A cluster of buildings may include a pedestrian plaza or delineated outdoor pedestrian area.

- Ground-floor retail: Along primary street frontages, ground floors should be dedicated to retail (including restaurants, cafés, etc.) and/or other activities that animate the public realm including arts, culture (including museum), entertainment and civic uses such as a library or other community-serving activities that animate streets and public spaces. Ground floor uses that spill out into the public realm (e.g., restaurants, cafés) should front actively used public spaces.

Design Principles for Strip Malls

- Development Patterns: Buildings should provide logical arrangements that define and/or enclose outdoor pedestrian space and provide an arrangement of buildings that help to define streets as public space and parking areas.
- Land Use: Retrofitted or redeveloped strip centers should allow for a flexible range of uses. Uses should range from the addition of small retail kiosks and food trucks to higher density residential and mixed-use buildings. The scale of new development should be compatible with adjacent uses with effective transitions and/or screening.
- Open Space: Public open space should be provided in conjunction with infill or redevelopment of strip centers. Depending on the scale of the project, a range of open spaces should be applied (e.g., small plaza to neighborhood green). Open space should be visibly and physically accessible and allow for a range of activities to promote usability.
- Building Orientation: Commercial and residential buildings should be arranged to define streetscapes and open space. Active building frontages should be oriented toward a common street or common open space to increase accessibility walkability.
- Parking: Where possible, parking should be located to the rear or side of new buildings to reduce street- or thoroughfare-facing parking. Landscape islands should be included in parking fields to minimize the impact of parking and to increase tree canopy and impervious area.
- Pedestrian Access: Connections between adjacent nonresidential development parcels and residential neighborhoods should be provided by siting access points continuous to the adjacent development.
- Vehicle Access: Vehicle access and circulation in commercial developments should provide for an interconnected street network. Access points along thoroughfares should be reduced and consolidated concurrent with new development to provide safe vehicular and pedestrian environments.
- Connectivity: The street system internal to a strip development should connect to the perimeter public street system to provide for both intra- and inter-neighborhood connections. Clear and delineated pedestrian connections and sidewalks should be developed from parking locations.
- Transitions: Transitions from strip shopping centers to adjacent residential development should use adequate setbacks, green spaces and/or landscaping, natural features, or similar land use and scale elements to create a cohesive connection.
- Drive-throughs: Drive-throughs should be compatible with the development that they are located within and integrated into the overall building development scheme. Access should be from internal drives/streets that are internal to the development. Drive-

throughs should be sited away from primary building frontages and open space and screened from view when not feasible.

- Landscaping: The perimeter of strip centers should include landscaping (street trees and shrubs) to ease the transition to adjacent uses, increase the city's tree canopy, and improve permeability for stormwater. Landscaping should also be used to screen the view of parking from adjacent uses and the street.
- Service and Loading Access: Strip centers should have a clear and consolidated service and loading that is located away from primary building entries and pedestrian areas where feasible.