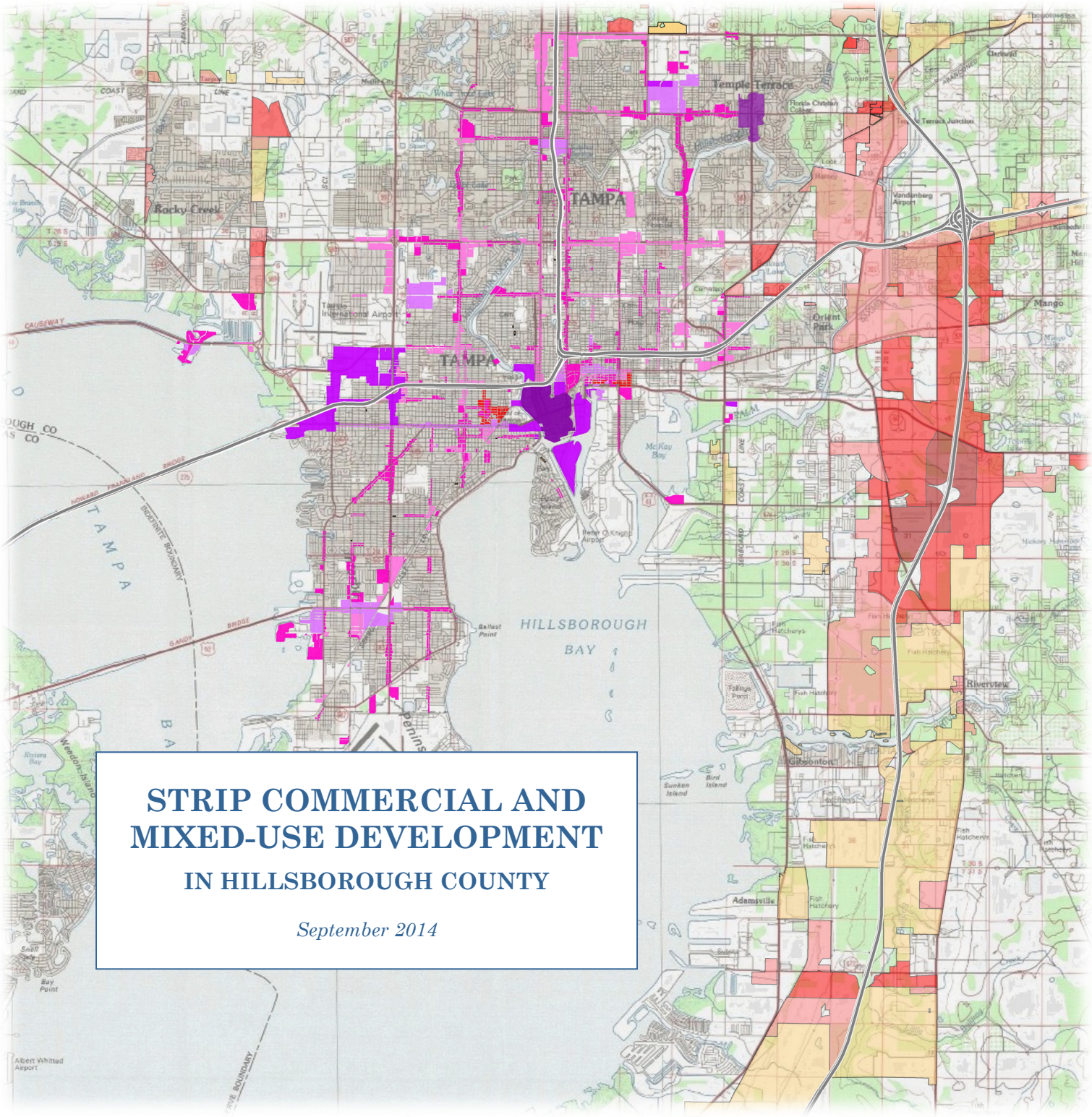

STRIP COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

September 2014

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STRIP COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Background

The Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission is preparing updates to the comprehensive plans for Tampa, Temple Terrace, Plant City, and unincorporated Hillsborough County.

The Planning Commission engaged Dover, Kohl & Partners and Spikowski Planning Associates to identify approaches for improving the way these plans discourage strip commercial development and encourage mixed-use development.

Strip commercial development in its post-World War II form has been one of the most common patterns for new stores, restaurants, and service businesses. This pattern is often unsightly, it adversely affects adjoining neighborhoods, and it causes congestion on adjoining highways. Better patterns are available for developing land along suburban arterials.

> Stretching for miles in what seems to be an undifferentiated landscape of signs, driveways, parking lots and cheap buildings, the American commercial strip is one of the most exasperating and yet ubiquitous urban forms ever created. Occurring in nearly every settlement of any size in the country, the strip is everywhere the same and everywhere an eyesore.
>
> *--- Brenda Case Scheer*

Until the 1950s, mixed-use development didn't have a name because most development didn't restrict large expanses of land to a single use. It wasn't unusual for entire blocks to be dedicated to one use, yet proximity and easy access to complementary uses was taken for granted. That time-honored development pattern has been replaced in most new communities by rigid separation of uses and severe limitations on access. Segregated-use communities have become so widespread that buyers of new homes have little choice if they prefer a different kind of neighborhood.

> Suburban planning is all about separation and segregation of uses: buffers, enormous setbacks, masking, and high speeds. Urban planning, by stark contrast, strives for mixed and shared use, permeability, modest speeds, and compact dimensions.
>
> *--- Dom Nozzi*

Case Studies & Best Practices

The initial task in this effort was to identify national best practices plus a spectrum of methods that other communities use in comprehensive plans to discourage or repair strip commercial development and to encourage mixed-use development.

These other communities included six Florida counties, one Florida city, and three counties and cities outside Florida.

Appendices A and B summarize that research.

Policy Framework & Recommended Policies

This document proposes an improved policy approach for the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission to consider in preparing updates to the four comprehensive plans.

This report begins with a policy framework, which is a narrative description of improved approaches to strip commercial and mixed-use development. Specific suggestions are presented as to how those approaches could be carried out. Examples are provided to illustrate the application of these approaches.

Specific draft policies are then presented for consideration by the Planning Commission and the four local governments that it serves.

1. GENERAL POLICY DIRECTION

The state of Florida now allows cities and counties greater latitude in deciding how to shape a healthy and prosperous future. Recent changes to state law and the comprehensive-plan review processes mean that many regulations that state action had forced into comprehensive plans can now be improved, relaxed, removed, or moved into codes.

The segregated-use concept for future land use maps is still enshrined in state law, but all indications are that local governments now have more flexibility to support the creation and revitalization of compact and diverse mixed-use communities.

The Tampa region is a sophisticated and thriving urban center which, through its unique public planning structure, can take immediate advantage of this opportunity to update all four comprehensive plans in a coordinated way.

Hillsborough County and its cities can leverage many assets during this process:

- Their renewed commitment to making the region more attractive to visitors and businesses.
- Their recent experience in planning for urban redevelopment and new suburban development while protecting existing neighborhoods and natural systems.
- Their closely linked MPO and city-county comprehensive planning organi-zation.

These comprehensive plan updates should also set the stage for subsequent land development code amendments.

Steps Toward a Better Future

The first wave of better planning that discourages strip commercial and promotes mixed-use development can be initiated in the upcoming revisions to all four comprehensive plans.

Essential aspects of this first wave should include:

(1) Move unnecessary regulations out of comprehensive plans. Regulations that are still useful can be moved into land development codes, where most regulations belong.

(2) Create consistent terminology to be used among all four comprehensive plans, beginning with clear definitions for basic terms like “suburban commercial strip” and “mixed use.”

(3) Improve the way that rezonings are evaluated for comprehensive plan consistency, supplementing numerical criteria with important factors about physical context.

(4) Include policies that identify additional ways that comprehensive plans can be refined to address these same issues, for instance identifying future government actions in addition to responding to the latest development proposals.

(5) Identify and implement systems that can identify how the future local and collector street network will be interconnected despite actual development taking place at different times and accommodating different uses.

2. COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Important streets are often lined on each side with a row of stores, offices, and restaurants. This pattern has always been successful in downtowns and along Main Streets, and later became standard and highly desirable along streetcar routes.

The strip pattern becomes problematic when replicated along high-speed roads, in large part because each business must have its own parking lot for customers who all arrive by car.

Today's common strip-commercial pattern is not the inevitable pattern for all suburban arterial roads. Wide suburban roads can become much more than commercially-lined conduits for through traffic.

Most corridors are composed of distinct centers of activity separated by segments of lower-intensity uses. These differences are healthy and should be encouraged in order to provide varying levels of activity and character along the corridor.

Planning for commercial corridors should encourage a series of robust centers with segments of different character between them. A wide range of nonretail uses can be accommodated even in the segments between centers, including housing, hotels, offices, banks, personal services, child care, churches, civic uses, and other cultural and recreational activities.

Five different patterns for land development along commercial corridors are presented and analyzed in Section 6 of this report.

The character of these corridors should become more intense and diverse as they mature. Mixed-use development should become an essential part of this change to add new life to the corridor, bring new services, create a more lively human dimension, and reinforce a sense of place.

> In the post-strip suburban city, it is easier for corridor frontages to attract value by integrating with the neighborhoods they border than by trying to compete with far-away crossroads properties for shoppers and retail investors.
>
> *--- Restructuring the Commercial Strip*

A secondary street pattern will nearly always be needed to make local circulation convenient and minimize interference with through traffic.

Transit works best where there are many destinations along a fairly straight line. Many suburban strips have this character, along with the potential for intensification that is needed to support convenient transit service.

For at least some existing suburban strips, transit thus can play an important role in healing their most troublesome features, re-creating them as humane and functional places where shopping, entertainment, walking, cycling, and transit all have adequate space alongside private cars. Major intersections of suburban roads can become transit transfer points that support higher-intensity mixed-use neighborhoods. These neighborhoods would provide excellent accessibility for suburban residents who don't wish to drive everywhere or don't own a car.

Variety Along Commercial Corridors

Some of the difficulty that communities confront regarding strip commercial development is understanding exactly which aspects of the familiar highway strip are the most troublesome.

For instance, the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan defines strip commercial development this way for the unincorporated county:

> *"Commercial development which is not located at an intersection of major streets (collectors or arterials), or within a mixed use development."*

Strip commercial development is defined here in a way that excludes even traditional downtowns. This definition, which was intended to be pejorative, inadvertently includes several desirable commercial patterns.

Improved comprehensive plan policies need to be based on a common set of terminology that distinguishes between excellent, acceptable, and undesirable patterns of commercial development.

A typology of commercial areas is presented on the following pages to distinguish the major types of retail configurations found in Hillsborough County.

Suburban Commercial Strip, Compared to Other Commercial Patterns

SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTERS

- Shopping center sites are much larger than city blocks
- Sites are usually located near major intersections
- Buildings are irregular in form and placement; their assembly is visually chaotic
- Businesses can complement each other, with shared parking and signs
- Large tracts under single ownership can accommodate wholesale changes
- Provide better opportunities for transit & intensification than commercial strips

SHOPPING MALLS

- Limited to major highway locations to attract large volume of customers
- Chaotic & amorphous from the outside; highly refined pedestrian experience inside
- Tenant mix is tightly controlled, although the same mix consistently reappears
- The shoppers' experience is park once, cross the parking lot, stroll past compact stores

SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL STRIP

- A row of individual lots, each with a single building surrounded by parking
- Nearly all customers enter & exit on a driveway from a high-speed road
- Lots are smaller than city blocks, but aren't arranged in city blocks
- Lots can be irregular in area and width, often subdivided for the initial user
- Each lot provides parking for all visitors; separate loading and refuse areas
- The strip is visually chaotic to drivers -- dominated by signs and parking lots
- Once lots are subdivided, the strip pattern is set almost irrevocably

NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING DISTRICTS

- Commercial lots are small and rectangular with uniform depths (often shallow)
- Building variety is constrained by the size of the lots and adjoining neighborhoods
- Local streets have frequent connections to the main road
- A strong relationship exists between buildings, lots, sidewalks, and streets
- More accessible to pedestrians and transit riders than suburban shopping centers

DOWNTOWNS & MAIN STREETS

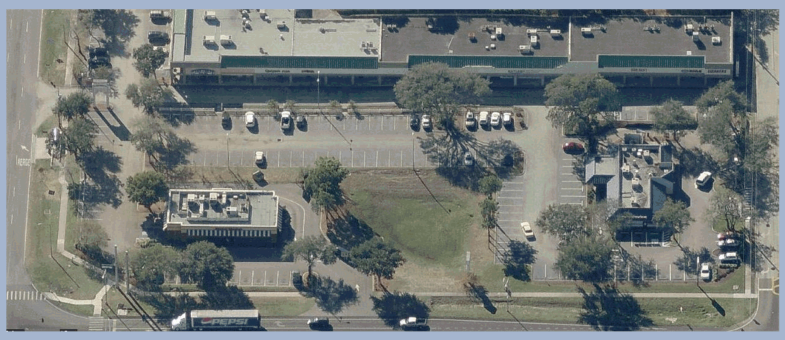
- Businesses rarely have any on-site parking
- Lots are narrow, providing greatest convenience for pedestrians

RURAL CROSSROADS

- At the most important intersection to attract vehicles passing by
- Physical form of lots and buildings varies widely

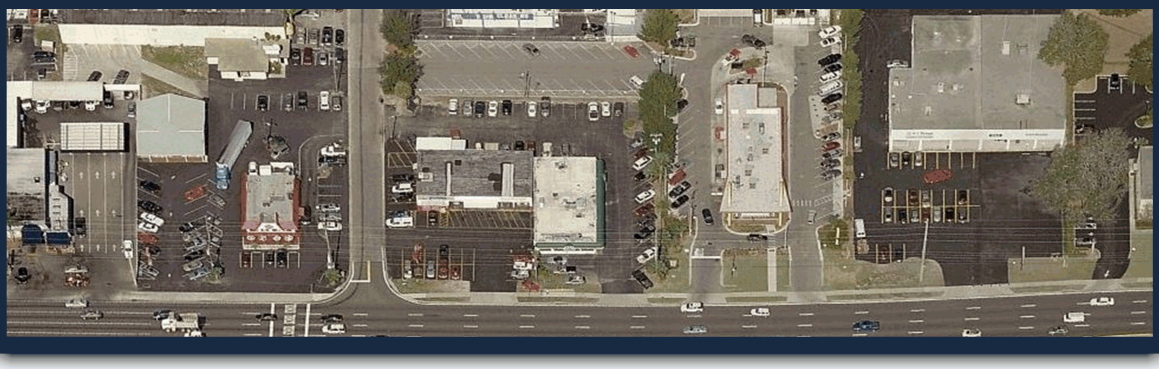
Suburban Commercial Strip, Compared to Other Suburban Patterns

SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTERS

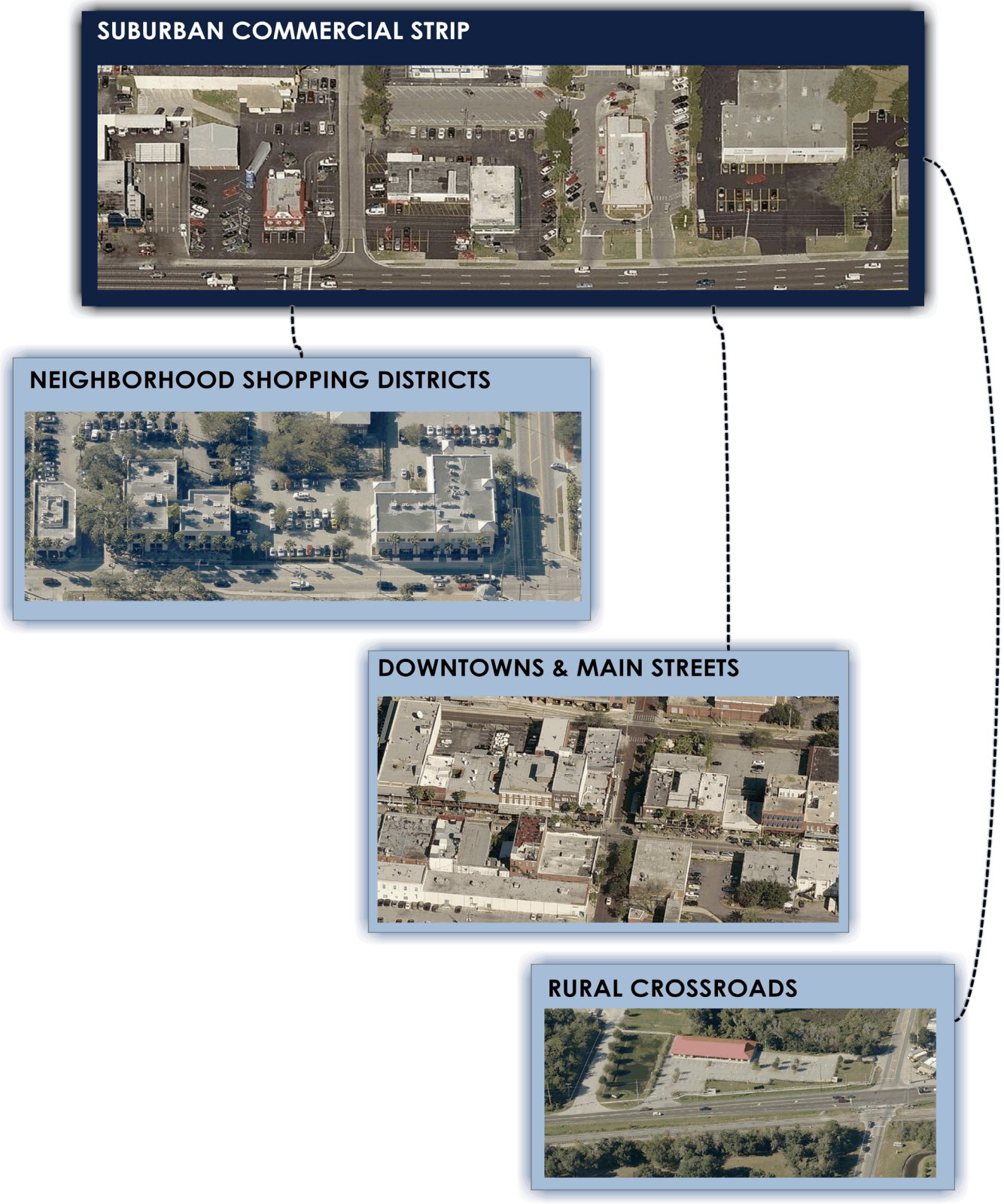


SHOPPING MALLS

SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL STRIP



Suburban Commercial Strip, Compared to Urban and Rural Patterns



Commercial Strips: Short-Term & Long-Term Effects

The problems caused by commercial strips have been widely documented. Appendix A provides a thorough summary of their problems, some of which are related to traffic congestion, accidents, and the constant turns in and out of parking lots.

Buildings on commercial strips are highly varied in size and irregular in shape. Zoning has very little physical effect on the shape or placement of these buildings because the buildings are small relative to their lots (because of the need to accommodate peak parking demand).

Most new buildings on commercial strips are built by national or regional chains using customized designs that serve almost as logos for their brands. Buildings on older commercial strips vary widely in age due to rapid turnover of businesses and obsolescence of corporate standards, even for businesses that remain at the same location.

Commercial strips are disliked by the public due to their visual chaos, frequent turning vehicles, and the constant view of parking lots and large signs. Despite these problems, strip commercial is often tolerated, for two major reasons:

- The traveling public enjoys the new shopping options this pattern provides and doesn't realize that other patterns can provide the same consumer choices; and
- Local plans and regulations rarely encourage better patterns for developing land along suburban arterials.

On collectors, and even on minor arterials with moderate speeds and traffic volumes, it is acceptable for house lots to face the street, even with private driveways. However, when too few collectors and minor arterials are provided in suburban areas, through traffic gets funneled to a sparse network of arterials, with the result that most end up being widened to 4 or even 6 lanes.

This pattern causes high traffic levels on arterials, which are extremely attractive to the kind of businesses that thrive on commercial strips. These levels are equally unattractive to potential residents of single-family homes, who typically seek quiet locations where they can enjoy private yards. As a result, when single-family homes are built along suburban arterials, the backs of houses usually face the arterial; the fronts face a local street that is completely isolated from the arterial network. This isolation is often solidified and symbolized with a solid wall along the arterial.

The most important problem caused by suburban commercial strips is the initial subdivision of lots. The strip pattern creates problems that long outlive the obvious immediate drawbacks and visual incoherence of the new freestanding businesses.

Once lots on a suburban commercial strip are subdivided and sold to initial users, the lots have little ability to evolve when travel patterns or consumer tastes make the initial businesses obsolete. These lots are difficult to reconfigure for other purposes due to their size, single access points, absence of a local street network for circulation, and fragmented ownership.

This situation is in sharp contrast to shopping centers, which sit on much larger tracts and typically remain in single ownership. When a shopping center becomes obsolete, it can be torn down and rebuilt in a new retail configuration, or be redeveloped for more intense purposes, including the creation of new local streets on traditional city blocks. Obsolete shopping centers are sometimes the only places in suburban areas where a significant change in urban pattern is possible. This change can be anticipated by placing parking lot drive aisles where they can be converted to local streets and by placing buried utilities under the drive aisles.

Many commercial areas being built today could in the future become denser, more valuable, and more attractive if a pattern of city streets was established (or at least planned) in advance. Additional local streets would improve access and distribute traffic while supporting the addition of housing plus a wider range of businesses and other uses.

Debates over commercial rezonings typically ignore important factors that are difficult or impossible to retrofit. Even sophisticated local governments rarely address some of the most influential and long-lasting impacts of development, tending instead to get sidetracked with traffic projections, the initial use of new buildings, or minor details of the building or site.

The comprehensive planning and rezoning stages should focus on long-term impacts on the urban pattern, with transitory details regulated more lightly (or later in the development review process).

Existing Planning For Commercial Corridors

All comprehensive plans in Hillsborough County contain commercial locational criteria that apply during the rezoning process. These criteria are used to control or forbid strip commercial development and to restrict the size and type of commercial buildings that can be constructed.

For the unincorporated county, commercial and office development are controlled through the policies under Objectives 22 through 25. These policies define precise locational criteria for new commercial development.

The county's stated purposes are to avoid strip commercial development and to allow neighborhood-serving commercial development without site-specific comprehensive plan amendments.

The county's locational criteria are based on the cost-affordable highway map from the MPO's long-rage transportation plan. Acceptable locations include land near the intersections of major roads shown on that map, or intersections of those roads with major local streets. The comprehensive plan defines "near the intersection" as specific distances from the intersection, ranging from 300 feet to 1000 feet. The plan provides various waivers and exceptions to these dimensions.

The county limits the square-footage of buildings in each quadrant of the intersection based on the type of intersection and the land-use category.

The county's locational criteria apply in more than 20 land-use categories, including two mixed-use categories for projects smaller than 40 acres.

Tampa's commercial locational criteria are applied to requests for general commercial, neighborhood commercial, and residential office rezoning in land-use categories that are nominally limited to residential and suburban mixed-uses. These criteria do not apply in Ybor City.

Temple Terrace's commercial locational criteria apply only to new neighborhood commercial uses, which can be located only at the intersections of collector and arterial roads "in areas accessible to residential neighborhoods."

Plant City has commercial locational criteria that apply to rezonings and development orders for neighborhood commercial development in land-use categories that are nominally limited to residential uses. Applications may be considered for land within 250 or 500 feet from the intersection of collector and arterial roads, depending on the land-use category. Plant City limits highway commercial development to I-4 intersections.

These plans do not provide specific locational criteria for commercial development in urban areas.

Potential Enhancements

The commercial locational criteria are due for a series of refinements to resolve problems that have become apparent during their application across the Hillsborough County region.

In addition to these refinements, the locational criteria should incorporate an additional factor. Perhaps the fundamental problem of strip commercial development is the transfer of a classic urban pattern (rows of pedestrian-scaled stores along important streets) to fast suburban roads, a context where this pattern functions poorly in the short run and interferes with healthy urban evolution in future years.

Suburban commercial strips and many other planning problems are exacerbated because the essential differences between areas with compact urban versus suburban or rural character have not been identified and mapped in advance. If this distinction had been made, it would be more obvious where the classic urban pattern should apply and where it should not.

The unincorporated county plan currently assigns its land-use categories into four groups: rural-agriculture, rural-residential, suburban, and urban. These groups are too broad to control commercial locational criteria; for instance, small compact urban areas can occur within any of these four groups.

The implications of a finer-grain distinction would extend far beyond commercial development; it would guide other development decisions and would allow government agencies to coordinate street and utility improvements with the intended character of different neighborhoods, as discussed in Section 4 of this report.

An intermediate solution would be make this distinction in advance for potential commercial locations only and then show the results for the entire jurisdiction on an adopted vision map or other overlay map.

Either of these solutions could be applied by next year to Temple Terrace and Plant City because of their limited area. Based on that experience, these solutions could be expanded to Tampa and then to the unincorporated county.

Proposed Interim Approach

Until then, an important interim step would be to make this distinction for each application based on the physical characteristics of the existing or planned urban pattern. For instance, the immediate area may now be, or be planned to become, a:

- **Compact urban area,** where commercial development uses the classic urban pattern of rows of pedestrian-scaled stores along important streets.
- **Connected suburban area,** where most commercial development is near corners, in shopping centers or individual buildings with shared access.
- **Modern suburban area,** where most commercial development is in freestanding shopping centers and office parks.
- **Rural area,** where the limited commercial buildings are near major intersections.

This case-by-case distinction would be made during the rezoning process; it is not the kind of administrative determination that is suitable for later stages in the development review process.

Besides adding this new distinction, the existing locational criteria need several significant refinements:

- The current plans establish a test of "meeting" or "not meeting" precise numerical standards. In practice, some of these criteria have proven difficult to apply, resulting in numerous exceptions and waivers. Actual situations are often far from black and white; mitigating circumstances need to be considered.
- Each plan would continue to have customized commercial locational criteria. Due to the size of the area to be mapped, the county may continue to base its criteria on the MPO's 2035 long-range transportation plan until a better system can be developed, but Temple Terrace and Plant City (and possibly Tampa) should identify qualifying intersections on a new map.
- A better map for the unincorporated county could be adapted from the local functional classification map (Map 2B) by deleting limited-access facilities, identifying most other arterials as commercial corridors, and including a subset of collectors (plus certain major local roadways) as important intersecting roads that may qualify as commercial corridor intersections
- Even though each plan would have its own locational criteria, they should share new terminology that defines the character of commercial corridor intersections (land that "meets the criteria") and the segments in between that may qualify for new options.
- The unincorporated county's "neighborhood-serving" terminology for commercial uses along suburban arterials should be updated. Nearby shopping centers, restaurants, and offices are prized by nearby residents but rarely succeed without a larger customer base. Businesses are placed along suburban arterials because they can attract customers who are merely driving past in addition to those who live or work nearby.
- The maximum square footages per quadrant in the unincorporated county plan were an attempt to match the amount of commercial development with its surroundings. This has proven ineffective because many factors beyond those listed in the comprehensive plan are relevant to the amount of commercial development that can be supported in any given quadrant.
- The maximum floor-area ratios in Plant City's plan should be removed. Floor-area ratios are occasionally warranted in land development codes, but generally they establish a highly artificial cap on the size of buildings, a cap that is counterproductive in places where development is desirable. In any case, regulations such as floor-area ratios rarely belong in policy documents like comprehensive plans (despite prior insistence by state planners that they were a critical part of Florida comprehensive plans). The floor-area ratio in the comprehensive plan for the Midtown redevelopment district is especially restrictive, given the desire to create a walkable environment which needs a consistent pattern of street-oriented building facades along sidewalks.

Proposed Definitions

The following definitions should be considered to support the proposed interim approach for locating new commercial development in Hillsborough County:

Commercial Corridors – Roads with potential for commercial development on certain adjoining properties. Commercial locational criteria in this plan will identify:

- Intersections that may qualify as "commercial corridor intersections."
- Land between those intersections may qualify as "commercial corridor segments," except in rural areas.

Commercial Corridor Intersections – Land near the intersection of two commercial corridors, or near the intersection of a commercial corridor and a major local roadway (as defined in this plan), may qualify for commercial rezonings based on the commercial locational criteria in this plan.

Commercial Corridor Segments – Land fronting commercial corridors between commercial corridor intersections.

Downtown – The major business and civic district in a community, typically served by major thoroughfares and public transportation radiating in all directions. Lots are arranged on a densely interconnected network of local streets and are not expected to accommodate off-street parking.

Main Street – A major business district in a compact urban pattern, typically in a linear arrangement along a major thoroughfare. Lots are not expected to accommodate off-street parking.

Neighborhood Shopping District – A compact urban pattern where businesses are placed in highly visible locations on an interconnected network of streets and blocks. Lots in neighborhood shopping districts can be small because each lot is not expected to accommodate all parking for individual businesses; some customers may park in shared lots or on-street parking spaces and other may walk or arrive by transit.

Pattern, Compact Urban – A physical pattern of towns and cities where public streets form an interconnected network that surrounds traditional city blocks. Blocks are subdivided into lots for individual buildings that can accommodate a variety of land uses and building types. Parking is placed to the side or rear of buildings and may be reached by mid-block alleys.

Pattern, Connected Suburban – A post-war physical pattern that replaces traditional gridded city blocks with irregular blocks while maintaining a connected network of public streets that are spaced at quarter-mile intervals.

Pattern, Modern Suburban – A late 20th century suburban pattern that groups large superblocks and single-purpose pods into master-planned communities that are physically separated from adjoining communities. Most jobs, shopping, and entertainment can be reached on wide arterial roads or expressways.

Pattern, Rural – A non-urban pattern where most land is used for farming or remains uncultivated. Occasional roads connect scattered or clustered homes and businesses with each other and with nearby urban and suburban areas.

Rural Crossroads – A cluster of businesses in a rural area typically located at an important intersection.

Suburban Commercial Strip – A suburban pattern where most businesses occupy their own building on a lot facing a commercial corridor. Lots on suburban commercial strips are typically large enough to accommodate their peak parking demand. Lots have individual driveways to a commercial corridor as their primary access instead of connecting to adjoining lots or secondary streets.

CHANGE TO DEFINITION IN COUNTY PLAN ONLY:

~~**Neighborhood Serving Commercial /**~~ **Neighborhood and General Commercial** – A variety of retail and service uses, ~~commercial and office development,~~ usually located on a collector or arterial street ~~at the edge of a neighborhood, serving~~, that serve the daily needs of contiguous neighborhoods and the surrounding community. ~~including convenience goods and personal services. Neighborhood serving commercial development shall be limited as to the intensity of the described use as provided in the locational criteria for neighborhood serving commercial uses~~. Intensive commercial uses (uses allowed within the Commercial Intensive zoning district) shall not be considered neighborhood and general commercial ~~serving~~.

Proposed Policies and Strategies

The following policies should be considered to enhance commercial locational criteria in Hillsborough County:

POLICIES FOR UNINCORPORATED COUNTY AND CITIES:

Objective 101. Discourage suburban commercial strips; encourage diverse commercial and mixed-use development in downtowns, main streets, neighborhood shopping districts, commercial corridor intersections, and rural crossroads.

Policy 101.1 Commercial Corridor Intersections. Properties along commercial corridors that meet this plan's commercial locational criteria are considered to be in a potential commercial corridor intersection.

- In **compact urban** commercial corridor intersections:
  - Commercial or mixed-use development should be built in a compact urban pattern as defined in this plan.
  - Shopping centers and other commercial development not built in a compact urban pattern should be avoided in compact urban commercial corridor intersections, downtowns, main streets, neighborhood shopping districts, and areas designated by this plan for compact urban development. If such proposals are approved due to overwhelming mitigating factors, they must be:
    (a) Carefully designed to protect the character of abutting neighborhoods.
    (b) Planned to allow future redevelopment and eventual full integration of the tract into the existing or potential city street network. Parking lot drive aisles can be located so they could be converted to streets that form traditional city blocks; major utilities can be placed there to serve future development as well.
- In **connected suburban** commercial corridor intersections:
  - Commercial or mixed-use development may be built in a compact urban pattern as defined in this plan.
  - Shopping centers must provide ample connections to arterial roads and adjoining properties.
  - Businesses in freestanding buildings should share driveways with adjoining properties and provide cross-access easements that can accommodate connections to new businesses and future local streets; most parking should be to the side and rear of stores instead of in front.

- Sites must be planned to provide or allow the future redevelopment and eventual integration of the tract into the existing or potential suburban street network which includes connections at least every ¼ mile.

- In **modern suburban** commercial corridor intersections:
  - Businesses in freestanding buildings should share driveways with adjoining properties and provide cross-access easements that can accommodate connections to new businesses and future local streets.
- In **rural** crossroads:
  - Parking lots should be to the side and rear of the stores instead of in front.
  - Businesses should share driveways with adjoining properties and provide cross-access easements that can accommodate connections to new businesses and future local streets.

Policy 101.2 **Commercial Corridor Segments**. Properties facing commercial corridors between commercial corridor intersections are considered to be in a potential commercial corridor segment. Segment designations do not apply in rural areas.

- In **compact urban** commercial corridor segments:
  - Suburban commercial strips may not be formed in these segments.
  - Commercial or mixed-use development must take the form of a neighborhood shopping district that is built in a compact urban pattern.
- In **connected suburban** and **modern suburban** commercial corridor segments:
  - Suburban commercial strips may not be formed in these segments unless the surrounding development pattern completely precludes the preferred development patterns or there are strong mitigating factors such as the extent to which a suburban commercial strip pattern has already been irreversibly established.
  - Preferred development patterns for suburban commercial corridor segments include:
    (a) Commercial or mixed-use development may be approved if it takes the form of a neighborhood shopping district that is built in a compact urban pattern; or
    (b) Higher density residential and other non-retail uses that are not on traditional city blocks but which have consolidated access points to the

corridor, internal circulation among adjoining parcels, and if in a **connected suburban** area, is connected to surrounding properties at a minimum of ¼-mile intervals. Acceptable non-retail uses may include housing, hotels, offices, banks, personal services, child care, churches, civic uses, and other cultural and recreational activities.

Policy 101.6 **Suburban Commercial Strip Performance.** The performance of existing suburban commercial strips can be improved through better regulations and future interventions. Public and private actions are encouraged to pursue techniques that improve circulation, such as:

- Cross-access easements or other agreements that allow customers to patronize multiple businesses without re-turning to an arterial road.
- Shared driveways to waste less land and reduce the num-ber of driveways and curb cuts.
- Shared parking for nearby businesses.
- The addition of a new street that improves local circula-tion, including walking and reduced interference with through traffic.

SUPPLEMENTAL POLICIES FOR UNINCORPORATED COUNTY ONLY:

Policy 101.3 **Commercial Development.** Commercial development is encouraged in various locations in unincorporated Hillsborough County:

- At appropriate locations in the Neighborhood Mixed Use, Suburban Mixed Use, Community Mixed Use, Urban Mixed Use, Community Mixed Use, and Regional Mixed Use land use categories;
- Properties with existing CN (Neighborhood Commercial), CG (General Commercial), and CI (Commercial Intensive) zoning;
- Along main streets and in neighborhood shopping districts; and
- In other locations that qualify as commercial corridor intersections and segments (see commercial locational criteria in Policy 101.4).

Policy 101.4 **Commercial Locational Criteria.** Commercial corridors are defined in this plan as roads with potential for neighborhood and general commercial development on certain adjoining properties. In the unincorporated county, commercial corridors are the "major roads" shown on the adopted highway cost affordable map from the MPO's 2035 long-range transportation plan. The commercial location criteria below identify property along commercial corridors that may qualify as "commercial corridor intersections" or "commercial corridor segments."

- **Commercial Corridor Intersections** – Land near the intersection of two commercial corridors, or near the intersection of a commercial corridor and a major local roadway (as defined in this plan), may qualify as a commercial corridor intersection (see Policy 101.1) and may qualify for commercial rezonings even in land use categories that are primarily residential. Some land near the intersection may not be suitable for non-residential uses due to land use compatibility, environmental features, or other factors. Land within the following distances from the intersection is considered to be "near the intersection":

	Major Local Roadway & Major Road	Major Road & Major Road
Compact Urban	300'	660'
Connected Suburban	300'	900'
Modern Suburban	660'	1000'
Rural	300'	660'

- **Commercial Corridor Segments** – Land fronting commercial corridors between commercial corridor intersections may qualify as a commercial corridor segment, except in rural areas (see Policy 101.2).
- Commercial corridor intersections will be classified at the rezoning stage as compact urban, connected suburban, modern suburban, or rural based on the existing or planned physical pattern in the surrounding area.

Policy 101.5 **Commercial Context and Pattern:** New commercial development shall match the planned physical pattern in the surrounding area. Development standards for the following patterns are provided in Policies 101.1 and 101.2: Compact Urban, Connected Suburban, Modern Suburban, and Rural patterns.

SUPPLEMENTAL POLICIES FOR TAMPA ONLY:

Policy 101.3 **Commercial Locational Criteria:** Commercial development is encouraged in various locations in Tampa:

- In the Central Business District and Community Commercial land use categories;
- At appropriate locations in the Suburban Mixed Use, General Mixed Use, Urban Mixed Use, Community Mixed Use, and Regional Mixed Use land use categories;
- Properties with existing General Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, and Residential Office zoning;
- Along main streets and in neighborhood shopping districts; and

- In other locations that qualify as commercial corridor intersections and segments (see Policies 101.1 and 101.2). Until potential commercial corridor intersections are mapped in this comprehensive plan, they shall be identified on a case-by-case basis during the rezoning process.

Policy 101.4 **Commercial Context and Pattern:** New commercial development shall match the existing or planned physical pattern in the surrounding area. Development standards for the following patterns are provided in Policies 101.1 and 101.2: Compact Urban, Connected Suburban, Modern Suburban, and Rural patterns.

SUPPLEMENTAL POLICIES FOR TEMPLE TERRACE ONLY:

Policy 101.3 **Commercial Locational Criteria:** Commercial development is encouraged in various locations in Temple Terrace:

- In the Commercial and Downtown Mixed Use land use categories;
- In appropriate locations in the Community Mixed Use, and Urban Mixed Use land use categories;
- Along main streets and in neighborhood shopping districts;
- At rural crossroads; and
- In other locations that qualify as commercial corridor intersections and segments (see Policies 101.1 and 101.2). Until potential commercial corridor intersections are mapped in this comprehensive plan, they shall be identified on a case-by-case basis during the rezoning process.

Policy 101.4 **Commercial Context and Pattern:** New commercial development shall match the existing or planned physical pattern in the surrounding area. Development standards for the following patterns are provided in Policies 101.1 and 101.2: Compact Urban, Connected Suburban, Modern Suburban, and Rural patterns.

SUPPLEMENTAL POLICIES FOR PLANT CITY ONLY:

Policy 101.3 **Commercial Locational Criteria:** Commercial development is encouraged in various locations in Plant City:

- In the Downtown Core, Commercial, and Light Commercial/Office land use categories;
- In the Midtown Redevelopment District;
- Along main streets and in neighborhood shopping districts;
- At rural crossroads; and

- In other locations that qualify as commercial corridor intersections and segments (see Policies 101.1 and 101.2). Until potential commercial corridor intersections are mapped in this comprehensive plan, they shall be identified on a case-by-case basis during the rezoning process.

Policy 101.4 **Commercial Context and Pattern:** New commercial development shall match the existing or planned physical pattern in the surrounding area. Development standards for the following patterns are provided in Policies 101.1 and 101.2: Compact Urban, Connected Suburban, Modern Suburban, and Rural patterns.

STRATEGIES FOR UNINCORPORATED COUNTY AND CITIES:

Strategy 101.A Add a planning and regulatory system that defines a future street network to coordinate development by adjoining landowners. This system could be used to:

- Identify a secondary street network that would support mixed-use development at commercial corridor intersections and segments; or
- Identify a interconnected web of collectors and arterials that would support larger scale mixed-use development on raw land.

Strategy 101.B Remove regulatory barriers that inhibit new and expanded neighborhood shopping districts because suburban standards are being applied to urban lots. These barriers often include open space and parking requirements that were designed for suburban areas, mandatory retention of stormwater on each lot, and unnecessary front setbacks and front or side buffer strips.

SUPPLEMENTAL STRATEGIES FOR UNINCORPORATED COUNTY:

Strategy 101.C Upgrade the infill residential density bonus program under Objective 23 to encourage preferred development patterns:

- The following requirements should be added:
  - The program should apply only in commercial corridor intersections and segments.
  - The development pattern must match the planned physical pattern in the surrounding area.
- The density incentive should be increased to up to twice the maximum density allowed in the land use category.
- The following locational requirements should be eliminated:
  - Restricted to transit emphasis corridors.
  - Must be within 660 feet of a collector/arterial intersection.

Strategy 101.D Modify comprehensive plan policies that conflict with the new policies proposed above, including replacing the term "Neighborhood Serving Commercial" with "Neighborhood and General Commercial."

SUPPLEMENTAL STRATEGIES FOR TAMPA ONLY:

Strategy 101.E Modify any remaining comprehensive plan policies that conflict with the new policies proposed above.

SUPPLEMENTAL STRATEGIES FOR TEMPLE TERRACE ONLY:

Strategy 101.F Modify any remaining comprehensive plan policies that conflict with the new policies proposed above.

Strategy 101.G Eliminate the comprehensive plan's maximum floor-area ratios for commercial development.

SUPPLEMENTAL STRATEGIES FOR PLANT CITY ONLY:

Strategy 101.H Update the comprehensive plan's infill development density credit program in the same manner as proposed for the unincorporated county.

Strategy 101.I Modify city regulations to allow the Historic Resources Board to approve a mix of compatible uses in existing buildings in the downtown historic district. Approvals must be contingent on a finding that the expanded uses maintain the historic character of the building, site, and district. Existing zoning standards such as required off-street parking may be modified so that excessive parking will not damage the historic character.

Strategy 101.J Modify any remaining comprehensive plan policies that conflict with the new policies proposed above.

Strategy 101.K Eliminate the comprehensive plan's maximum floor-area ratios for commercial development.

3. MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

In many ways, society provides previously unimaginable choices about how and where local residents can work, live, and play. Yet despite the widest variety of vehicles being available today, those who choose to walk, bike, or use public transit have very limited choices.

Despite fierce competition among national homebuilders to produce homes with wide public appeal, those who prefer traditional neighborhoods with sidewalks and places to walk find that today's choices are in fact quite narrow. Despite the strong competition among national retailers to cater to every taste, most stores being built are isolated from walkable neighborhoods, requiring car trips even for daily needs.

Many of these factors are beyond the influence of local government, but some factors are abetted by comprehensive plan policies or land development code regulations that can be modified to create a more flexible and resilient future for Hillsborough County. Perhaps most important is reversing the lost role of local government in requiring physical connections within and between adjoining development tracts.

Scale of Mixed-Use Development

Over time, the term "mixed use" has acquired many different meanings:

- ***New Community:*** In large new communities such as Developments of Regional Impact (100-2,500 acres), mixed use means the community will have integral centers for shopping, jobs, civic uses, plus at least several housing types. Each of these uses may be isolated, or even gated from the other uses, but the different uses will at least exist — in contrast with the relative homogeneity of 1950s communities such as North Port and Port Charlotte.
- ***Neighborhood:*** At the neighborhood scale (40–120 acres), mixed use means that a variety of uses are within walking distance. This requires not only physical proximity of the different uses, but a street and circulation network that makes them easily accessible.
- ***Rezoning:*** At a common rezoning scale (1–40+ acres), the unincorporated county plan uses the term "mixed or multiple use" to mean a single master-planned development (of whatever size) that will have two or more uses.
- ***Building:*** At the scale of an individual building (<1/4 acre), mixed use means the building includes more than one use, usually on separate floors of a multistory building.

Another categorization of mixed-use spans the walkable neighborhood scale down to an individual building:

- ***Mixed-Use Walkable Neighborhoods:*** These neighborhoods combine vertical and horizontal mixed uses in an area within a 5- to 10-minute walking distance (known as a pedestrian shed, about a quarter-mile radius of a neighborhood center). When newly constructed, these neighborhoods are often known as traditional neighborhood developments.
- ***Horizontal Mixed-Use Blocks:*** A single city block can combine single-use buildings on different lots. Horizontal mixed-use offers the advantage of sharing utilities and amenities, while individual buildings are easier to finance and build than mixed-use buildings.
- ***Vertical Mixed-Use Buildings:*** A single building can combine different uses. Lower floors typically have more public uses like stores or restaurants; upper floors have offices, apartments, or hotel rooms. In highly urban areas, an entire block can contain buildings with uses mixed vertically.

Flexible vs. Frozen Urban Patterns

Healthy and resilient mixed-use development requires a flexible urban pattern rather than a pattern that is frozen indefinitely by the choices made by today's homebuyers.

Compact urban patterns of streets and blocks have allowed communities to evolve over many centuries. Streets and blocks work as well for neighborhoods of detached homes as they do for urban conditions at every scale. They are as desirable today, when driving is commonplace, as they were when walking was the primary means of transportation.

As discussed earlier for strip commercial development, the initial subdivision of land has a

phenomenal and very long-lasting influence on how a community can or cannot evolve when consumer tastes and demographic conditions have changed.

New developments platted with an inward-focused street pattern and only one entrance will be as frozen in time as a suburban commercial strip. Their isolation makes them impenetrable to transit and difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to reach useful destinations. It also blocks those living or working nearby from having reasonable access throughout the community. The result is excessive travel, mostly by private cars, even when other means of travel are available.

Fully developed tracts that have never been subdivided can transform dramatically when there is a need to expand or contract, or when their uses have become obsolete or inappropriate for a valuable site. Like shopping centers, the slate can be wiped clean and the land converted into a different urban pattern. This is true for apartment complexes, corporate or government campuses, regional malls, theme parks, RV and mobile home parks, and industrial sites.

Without the flexibility provided by never-subdivided tracts or by a connected block structure, modernizing changes to planning and zoning will rarely be able to overcome the handicap caused by land having been subdivided without an interconnected street network.

Scale and Distance

Mixed-use development reduces vehicular travel simply by having complementary uses closer together. Benefits increase when any given trip can serve more than one purpose. Benefits are enhanced further when multiple uses can be reached on foot, thus avoiding oversized parking lots that themselves become impediments to walking.

The desirability of walking depends on many factors, including climate, shade, safety, visual interest, direct routes, and distance to destination. A rule-of-thumb on distance is that the typical American will walk five minutes, about a quarter mile, before considering driving. Urban planners consider a "pedestrian shed" to be the area that can be reached on foot in five minutes (or ten minutes from a transit station).

This rule-of thumb appears in other contexts as well. Scholars and urban designers observe that that a quarter mile reappears across cultures as the distance across neighborhoods. Quarter-mile spacing of connections between neighborhoods is dense enough to allow for free movement (and civic/shopping shared between neighborhoods) while being sparse enough to allow pedestrian-scaled neighborhoods in between.

Existing Planning For Mixed Uses

At present, the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan defines "mixed or multiple use" this way for the unincorporated county:

> *"The mixture of more than one land use within a single building, or within a single project in separate buildings, such uses planned in a coordinated manner under a single master development plan. Land uses, which when combined constitute mixed or multiple uses, exclude parks, golf courses, schools, and public facilities (fire stations, utility substations, etc.). Land uses, which when combined within a single project constitute mixed or multiple uses include residential, commercial, office and industrial uses."*

This definition assumes that mixed-use development requires a "single master development plan," even though two or more adjoining developments might provide an equivalent urban pattern. This is a serious shortcoming; the final outcome is the critical factor, not the ownership pattern of available tracts at the time of initial development.

Tampa defines "mixed use development" this way:

> "A *development that combines residential use with commercial and/or office uses within one building or multiple buildings within one lot. The development form is:*
>
> *A. Vertical Mixed Use . . .*
> *B. Horizontal Mixed Use . . .*
> *C. Horizontal Mixed Use – Detached . . ."*

Plant City defines "mixed use development this way:

> *"A relatively large scale project composed of one or a group of structures located in proximity to major roadways and intersections which is characterized by two or more significant revenue producing uses (e.g., retail, office, residential, hotel/motel, and recreation)."*

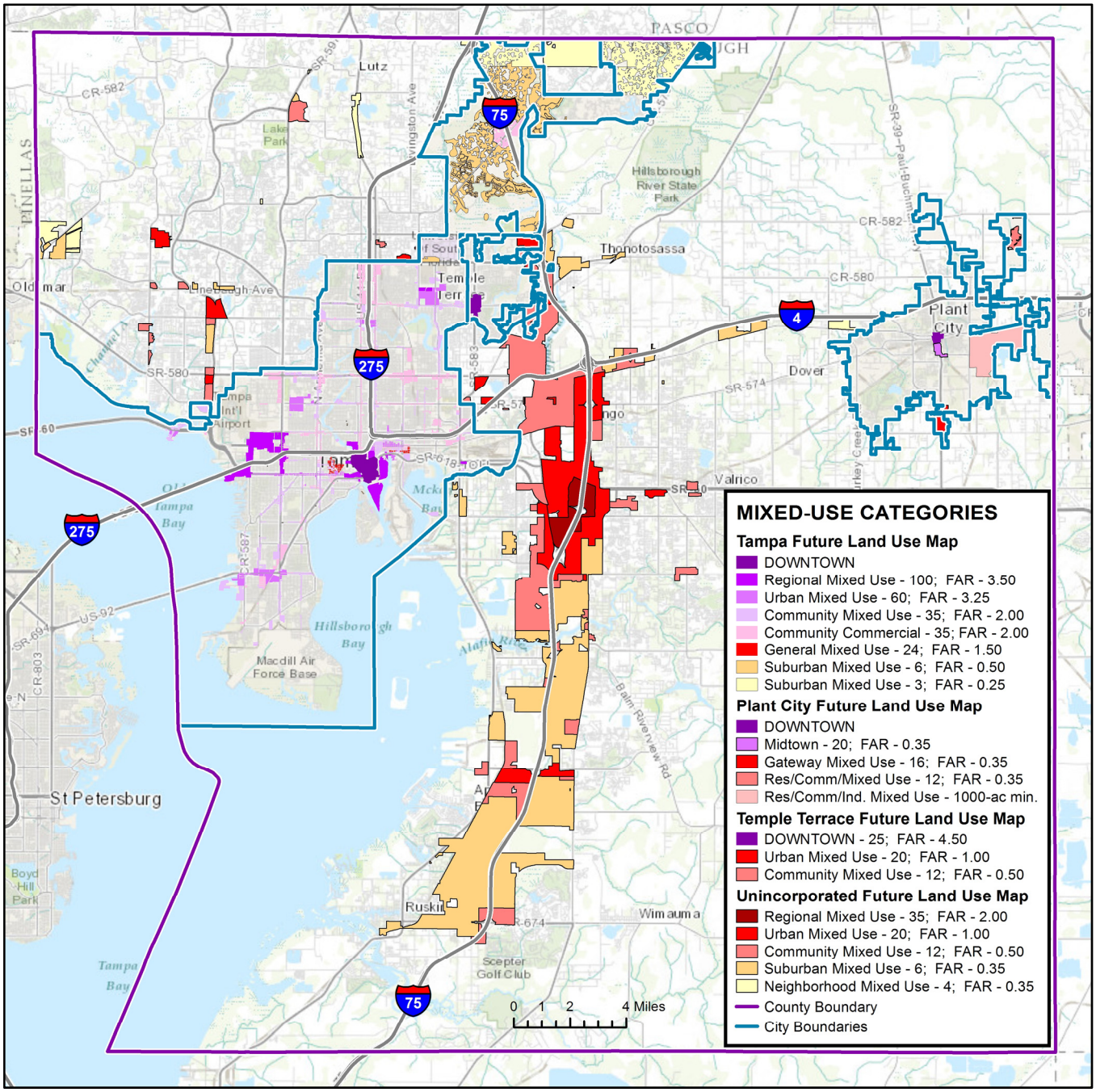
Temple Terrace expands on Plant City's definition:

> *"A relatively large scale project composed of one or a group of structures located in proximity to major roadways and intersections which is characterized by two or more significant revenue producing uses (e.g.,*

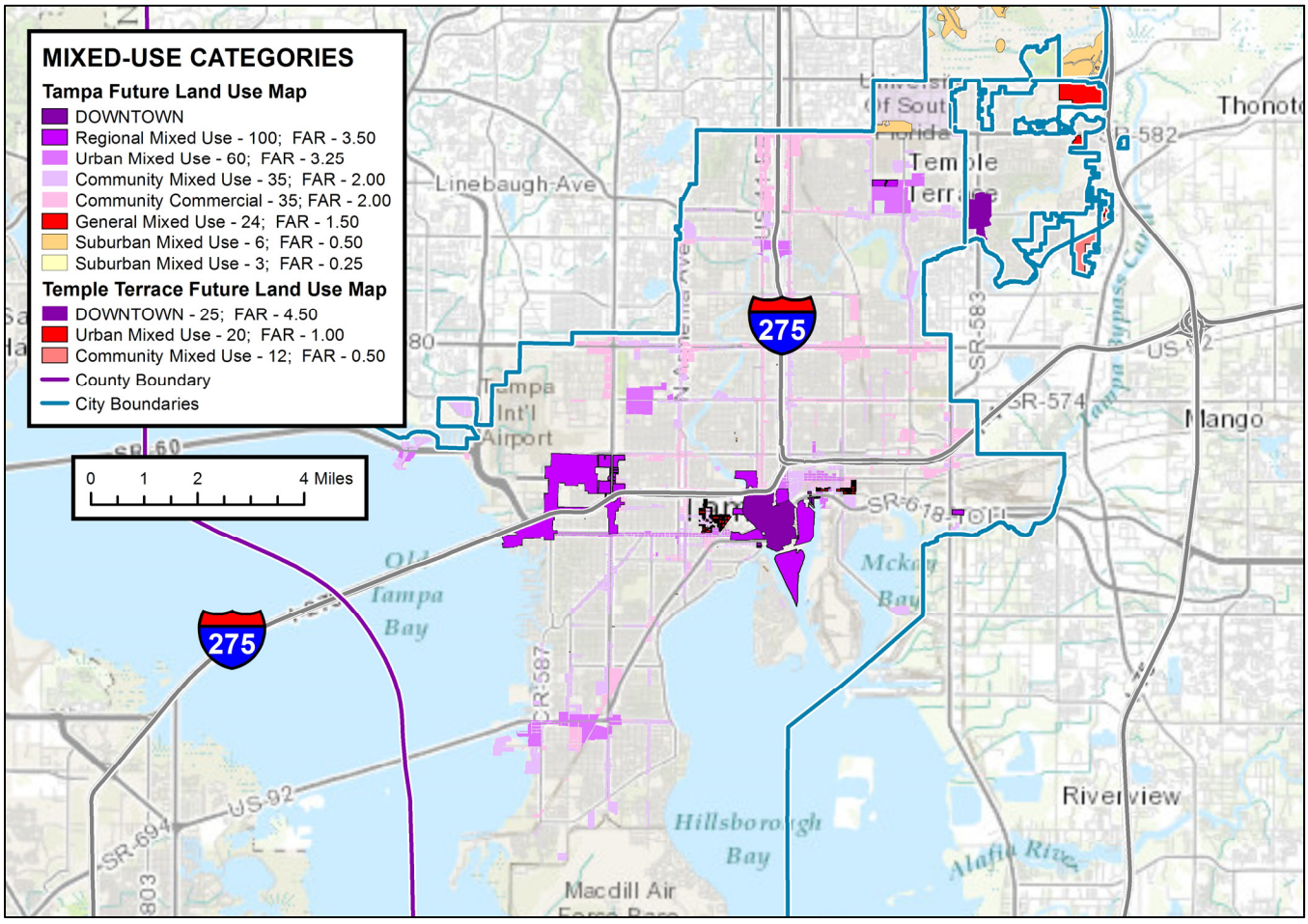
retail, office, residential, hotel/motel, and recreation); or a mixture of uses within one structure, usually including retail, services, office, parking, and residential uses."

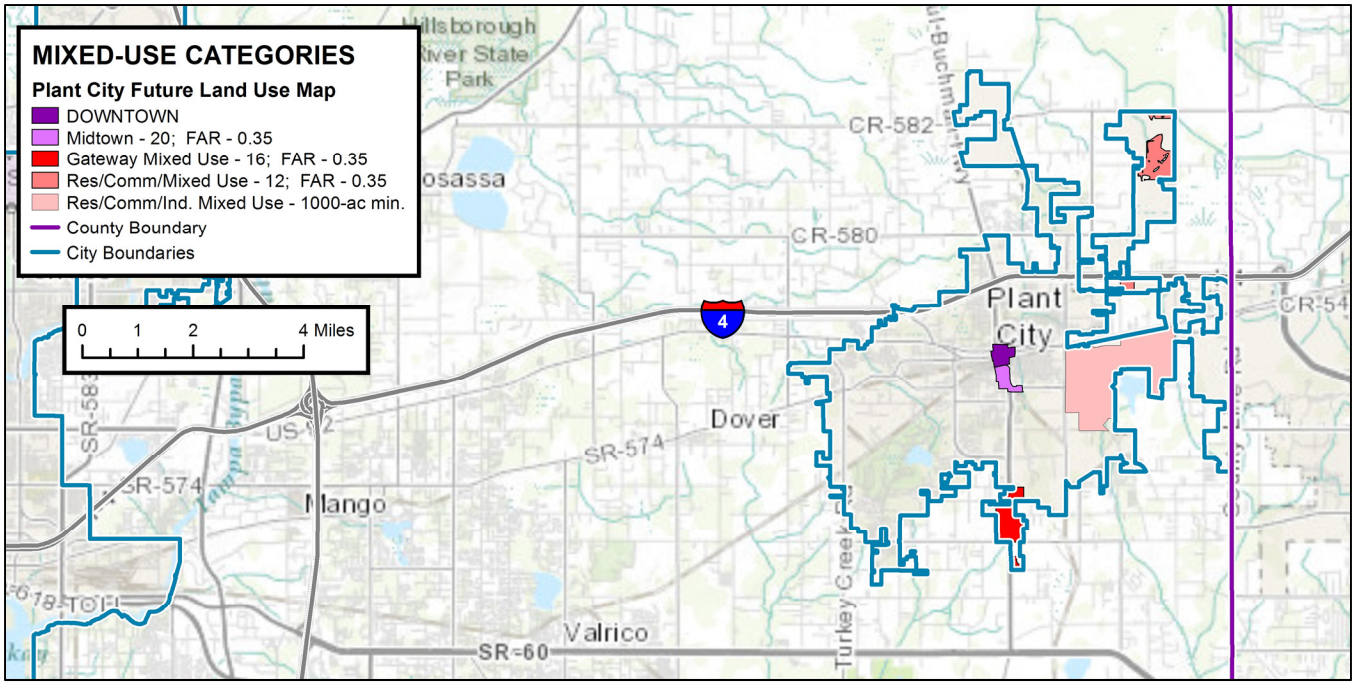
All four comprehensive plans in Hillsborough County define "mixed use" categories on their future land use maps, as summarized below. The following page provides more detail for the mixed-use categories in the three cities.

Mixed-Use Categories in all Comprehensive Plans (with densities and floor-area ratios)



Mixed-Use Categories in City Comprehensive Plans (with densities and floor-area ratios)





The extensive use of mixed-use categories in Hillsborough County is noteworthy because many Florida communities have future land use maps that resemble zoning maps, with separate residential and commercial categories.

The use of common terminology in all four comprehensive plans is also unprecedented around the state; each city and county plan generally creates its own terminology and standards, even when responding to nearly identical conditions.

By using mixed-use categories, communities avoid arbitrarily forcing the separation of uses that at a broad scale can clearly be complementary. The zoning process is fully capable of defining where used need to be separated because of inherent incompatibilities.

Yet the application of these mixed-use categories has proven troublesome. Several factors have contributed to these difficulties:

- Despite the similarity in terminology, these categories have been applied to land whose character varies tremendously. For instance:
  - In Tampa, these categories apply to downtown Tampa (the county's employment center) and along walkable urban corridors, while also applying to outlying areas where the development pattern has already been established as the antithesis of mixed-use development.
  - In the unincorporated area, these categories apply to extremely large tracts that include raw land in the path of growth as well as fully entitled large-scale suburban developments.
- Major regulating mechanisms for these categories are maximum density and maximum FAR, two gross measures of intensity that have very little relationship to the intended character of development or even to the varying levels of intensity that should occur within large tracts.

The two major issues for mixed-use development in Hillsborough County are how to encourage a compact and walkable mix of uses in urban areas and how to plan new development in a way that avoids large expanses of single uses that are separated from complementary uses and frozen into homogeneous patterns.

Potential Enhancements

These issues are related, but not identical. To achieve both ends, the application of mixed-use categories need to clearly differentiate between areas with at least three distinct types of character and intensity:

- **Compact urban areas,** with a compact urban pattern of interconnected public streets and traditional city blocks.
- **Connected suburban areas,** with lower-intensity mixed uses, larger blocks, and public streets that connect to surrounding areas at quarter-mile intervals.
- **Modern suburban areas**, with large master-planned developments separated by suburban arterials.

The first two types are the primary subject of the policies proposed below. The third type may include occasional examples of the first two, but isn't generally considered mixed-use development even though it may contain some commercial uses such as office parks and shopping malls.

The ideal planning approach for new mixed-use development would begin with refining the mixed-use categories on all four future land use maps:

- These categories should be differentiated by their existing and proposed physical pattern and character so the future land use map would clearly distinguish between compact urban areas and connected suburban areas. Modern suburban areas would be deleted from the mixed-use categories except where there are retrofit opportunities.
- Each category now contains a single density cap, even though each covers very large areas. Suburban mixed-use areas for instance should have some urban-level concentrations within them. The density caps in each mixed-use category should account for these variations.

This general approach is discussed in Section 4 of this report, along with an important supplement for mixed-use categories which could provide:

- A clear pattern of where the centers of intense activity would occur, including major employment centers, within each mixed-use category.
- A depiction of how that development pattern would be served by major roads and public transportation.

- A less precise depiction of how a collector and minor arterial system would be built at ¼-mile intervals to supplement the major road pattern. This is essential to avoid recreating today's suburban dilemma where every through road becomes a wide high-speed thoroughfare.

This ideal approach would be a major undertaking and would certainly occur in phases over a period of years. A similar approach is already contemplated for the unincorporated county plan in Objective 35 and related policies.

Several interim adjustments to the current approach toward mixed-use development can be made during 2015 that would take important strides toward encouraging mixed-use development in the Hillsborough County region.

Proposed Interim Approach

The remainder of this section describes interim modifications that would not require significant changes to the future land use maps. Instead, the rezoning process would be used to determine which set of standards should apply to applications in mixed-use categories:

- **Compact urban** standards,
- **Connected suburban** standards, or
- **Modern suburban** standards (as would apply to land outside the mixed-use categories).

To guide this process, several steps would be required.

The first step would be to clarify the terminology that the four comprehensive plans use to describe mixed-use development and the physical patterns that the various types need to succeed.

The second step would be to refine the descriptions of mixed-use categories so that connectivity to existing or future streets outside the rezoning applications becomes an important criterion. The level of connectivity can vary between mixed-use categories, with the compact urban areas requiring the greatest level of connectivity.

The third step would be to refine certain existing mixed-use standards in the comprehensive plans. For instance, each mixed-use category in the unincorporated county's plan contains criteria that development applications must meet and the potential approval processes, using language such as this:

> *"Rezonings shall be approved through a site planned controlled rezoning district in which the site plan demonstrates detailed internal relationships and pedestrian integration among uses…or through a mixed use standard zoning district."*

A key standard to be applied is that each application is "required to develop with a minimum of two land uses within a single building or within a single project in separate buildings," with at least 50% of the site being the "primary use" (see Policy 19.1).

This policy requires a second land use in each new development project without any criteria to assess if the second use is accessible from the primary use. The primary use must be at least 50% of the site, but the second use can be of negligible size. Applicants can assert compliance by promising just a single building with two uses, or promising a second use anywhere on the site, regardless of viability, separation, or likelihood of ever being constructed.

Even if the second use is viable and non-trivial, the resulting urban pattern can be isolated pods of non-complementary uses rather than the actual mixed-use pattern envisioned in the comprehensive plans.

The policy refinements proposed below for the unincorporated county would require that at least 10% of the site be used for the second (and/or third) uses.

The policy refinements would also adjust the size of parcels that are subject to the "minimum of two land uses" rule. A policy adopted in 2009 mandated that the rule would be applied to every parcel being moved into a mixed-use category, no matter how small. That policy is a disincentive for landowners to move small parcels into mixed-use categories; it should be repealed. Another existing rule allows parcels as large as 20 or 40 acres to avoid the rule completely. Even a 20-acre parcel is large enough to be subdivided into 5 to 10 blocks, which is far too large for a single use to even arguably be considered "mixed use." Both thresholds should be cut at least in half.

The policy refinements would also begin allowing consideration of second uses that are nearby (but not within the same development) when applying the "second use" rule, provided those uses are within walking distance. "Walking distance" can be difficult to quantify because there are many factors that affect walkability. The rule-of-thumb for a comfortable walking distance is a quarter-mile, but there are important variables:

- The character and condition of sidewalks, including width; protection from moving vehicles; shade; and the view from the sidewalk.
- Physical barriers such as private property, fences, walls, berms, busy driveways, or crossings of multi-lane roads.

The policy refinement proposed below would reference the quarter-mile standard but indicate that the typical walking distance would be longer under ideal conditions for walking and shorter when the character of sidewalks is poor or when the walk would be interrupted by multiple curb cuts or a busy multi-lane road.

All of the standards just discussed are applied at the unincorporated county's planned-development rezoning stage. Several drawbacks to reliance on that approach are discussed in Section 4 of this report.

The county plan also allows the use of a mixed-use standard zoning district and contains a specific policy calling for its standard zoning districts to begin permitting mixed-use development (Policy 19.4).

Mixed-use areas can be regulated by standard zoning districts after streets have been built; however, standard zoning districts do not provide any of the tools that would be needed to ensure that a mixed-use pattern will be created from raw land.

Standard zoning districts operate primarily by limiting allowable uses to a narrow range and establishing numerical standards for how a building can be placed on each lot. These standards are minimums for setbacks and parking and maximums for density, building height, and sometimes non-residential intensity. Standard zoning districts do not regulate key factors for creating mixed-use development such as varying levels of intensity, a connected street network, and multiple land uses that require different development standards.

Two techniques are used to successfully generate new mixed-use development:

- **Planned-development zoning**, where a site plan is presented for zoning approval and is measured against either general or specific mixed-use standards; or
- **Form-based codes**, where the code contains standards that govern intensity levels, limit the maximum size of blocks, and set standards for a selection of building types that support each level of intensity.

In some communities, these two techniques are combined. The appendices to this report describe several methods used in other communities. Comprehensive plans should be amended to allow form-based codes to be an alternative to planned-development zoning for creating new mixed-use development.

Proposed Definitions

The following definitions should be considered for promoting mixed-use development in Hillsborough County:

Pattern, Compact Urban – A physical pattern of towns and cities where public streets form an interconnected network that surrounds traditional city blocks. Blocks are subdivided into lots for individual buildings that can accommodate a variety of land uses and building types. Parking is placed to the side or rear of buildings and may be reached by mid-block alleys.

Pattern, Connected Suburban – A post-war physical pattern that replaces traditional gridded city blocks with irregular blocks while maintaining a connected network of public streets that are spaced at quarter-mile intervals.

Pattern, Modern Suburban – A late 20th century suburban pattern that groups large superblocks and single-purpose pods into master-planned communities that are physically separated from adjoining communities. Most jobs, shopping, and entertainment can be reached on wide arterial roads or expressways.

Block – A block is the smallest area that is surrounded by streets. Blocks are subdivided into lots that face a street.

- Traditional city blocks are typically two to four acres in size.
- Superblocks can be irregular and much larger than traditional city blocks. Superblocks may have streets within them, but many streets do not extend to the perimeter of the block. Superblocks can be agglomerations of former city blocks or they can be created when land is first developed.

Mixed-Use Category – A category on the future land use map that expressly encourages or requires development to combine complementary uses of land within walking distances.

Mixed-Use Development – A development pattern where complementary uses of land are located within walking distances.

Mixed-Use, Horizontal – A physical pattern that include at least two different uses near each other, but typically in buildings that contain only a single use.

CHANGE TO DEFINITION IN COUNTY PLAN ONLY:

Mixed ~~or Multiple~~ Use - The mixture of more than one land use within a single building, or within a single project in separate buildings, or within walking distance ~~such uses planned in a coordinated manner under a single master development plan~~. Land uses, which when combined constitute mixed ~~or multiple~~ uses, exclude parks, golf courses, clubhouses, ~~schools,~~ and public facilities (fire stations, utility substations, etc.). Land uses, which when combined within a single project constitute mixed ~~or multiple~~ uses include residential, commercial, office and industrial uses.

Proposed Policies and Strategies

The following policies should be considered for promoting mixed-use development in Hillsborough County:

POLICIES FOR UNINCORPORATED COUNTY AND CITIES:

Objective 201. Require new development proposals in mixed-use categories to accommodate street connections in context with surrounding properties and meet other standards conducive to creating mixed-use development.

Policy 201.1 **Compact urban** mixed-use development is built on a compact urban pattern which has the following characteristics:

- All streets are multi-modal, enhancing neighborhood character, safety, walkability, and transit potential.
- Local streets connect to the existing and future street network in all adjoining areas except where blocked by physical constraints such as canals, expressways, railroads, wetlands, etc.
- Lots are placed on traditional city blocks.
- Small parks are placed in neighborhoods.
- Each neighborhood has a greater variety of housing types to accommodate diverse ages and incomes, allowing residents to trade up, down-size, or create multi-generational households.
- The widest variety of transit, employment, shopping, and entertainment opportunities are available.

Policy 201.2 **Connected suburban** mixed-use development is built on a connected suburban pattern which has the following characteristics:

- This pattern relies on private cars for most travel.
- Street connections take place on a web of collectors and arterials spaced at quarter-mile intervals. Most are complete streets that also accommodate walking and bicycling.
- Local streets form a reasonably continuous block structure, although blocks may be irregular in shape and larger than traditional city blocks.
- Parks are larger and are spaced farther apart.
- Each neighborhood has several housing types.
- Employment, shopping, and entertainment is available along commercial corridors.
- At key locations, pockets of compact urban mixed-use development provide additional employment, shopping, and entertainment opportunities.

Policy 201.3 **Modern suburban** development is built on a modern suburban pattern which has the following characteristics:

- This pattern relies on private cars for nearly all travel.
- Street connections take place on arterials spaced at 1/2 mile to 1 mile apart. Walking and bicycling are accommodated on a network of paths that are separated from arterial traffic.
- Blocks may be much larger than in connected suburban areas, or blocks may have been replaced by pods.
- Different neighborhoods provide different housing types.
- Most employment is provided in office parks and most shopping and entertainment is provided in shopping centers and malls.
- Additional employment, shopping, and entertainment is provided along commercial corridors.
- At key locations, pockets of compact urban mixed-use development provide additional employment, shopping, and entertainment opportunities.

Policy 201.4 **Street Connectivity for Mixed Use Development.** Development proposals in all mixed-use categories must provide a level of connectivity to existing and potential future streets consistent with the planned urban pattern:

- In the **compact urban** pattern, streets are generally continuous throughout a neighborhood and between neighborhoods to supports a greater intensity and variety of activities.
- In the **connected suburban** pattern, streets can also be continuous, but through streets are placed no more than ¼-mile apart.
- In the **modern suburban** pattern, most street connections take place on arterial roads.

SUPPLEMENTAL POLICIES FOR PLANT CITY ONLY:

V. PLAN CATEGORIES.
O. MIXED USE – RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL (MU-RCI)
1.d Requirements for the MU-RCI Plan Category:

~~1. The minimum size for the MU-RCI category is 1000 acres.~~
1. ~~2.~~ The MU-RCI category must have direct access to an arterial roadway.
2. ~~3.~~ Public water and sewer service must be available or available concurrent with development.
3. ~~4.~~ The MU-RCI category must be located within fire, police, and EMS service areas.
4. ~~5.~~ The MU-RCI category must be located in an area where it can be demonstrated that environmental damage will not occur.

Policy 2.G.2 Consideration of plan amendments to the MU-RCI plan category ~~requires at least 1000 acres and~~ must be located on an arterial road.

FOR UNINCORPORATED COUNTY ONLY:

Mixed Use Land Use Categories

Objective 19: The County will establish techniques in the Comprehensive Plan, which will ensure mixed use development in the mixed use categories.

Policy 19.1 [xv] Larger new projects proposed in ~~the~~ all ~~of~~ mixed use plan categories shall be required to develop with a minimum of 2 land uses ~~within a single building or within a single project in separate buildings~~ in accordance with the following.

- Requirements for 2 land uses will apply to properties 10 ~~20~~ acres or greater in the RMU-35, UMU-20, and CMU-12 land use categories, and to properties 20 ~~40~~ acres or greater in the SMU-6 and NMU-4 land use categories.
- ~~These acreage thresholds will not apply to properties that have adopted plan amendments to a mixed use category after January 1, 2008.~~
- At least 10% ~~50%~~ of the site shall be used for the second or third ~~primary~~ uses. Use percentages will be determined based on ~~land area for primarily residential projects or~~ building square footage ~~for primarily non-residential projects~~.
- Uses may be horizontally mixed (in separate buildings within walking distance) or vertically integrated (two or more uses in one building). If a different use already exists outside the project but within walking distance, a second use is not required within the project. Walking distance is typically a quarter mile, about a five-minute walk. The distance may be greater if the walk is along a shaded sidewalk adjacent to building frontages or other visually interesting settings; the distance would be less if the character of sidewalks is poor or if the walk is interrupted by multiple curb cuts or if it crosses a busy multi-lane road.
- The possible land uses for a mixed use project include: retail commercial, office, light industrial (if permitted in the land use category), residential and civic uses including residential support uses.
- These requirements do not apply within identified "economic development areas" or within Community Activity Centers (if other mixed use standards have been adopted for that area).

Policy 19.2: In the mixed use land use categories, planned development districts, ~~or~~ mixed use standard zoning districts, or form-based zoning districts that specify intensity levels and the proposed street network are required for all new rezonings, except as provided for in applicable land development regulations.

Policy 19.3: Incentives for Mixed Use [xvi] The following incentives are available to encourage horizontal mixed use and vertically integrated mixed use projects within the Urban Service Area:

- ~~Parking structures shall not count towards the FAR for projects that include 3 or more land uses or vertically integrate two land uses.~~
- Projects that either include 3 or more land uses or vertically integrate two land uses may utilize a density bonus to the next higher land use category. ~~or the following FAR bonus:~~
  - ~~Property with a Future Land Use Category of 35 units per acre and/or 1.00 FAR and higher and within the USA – may increase up to 50 units and/or an additional .50 FAR~~
  - ~~Property within a Future Land Use Category of 9 units per acre and/or .5 FAR and higher and within the USA – Increase in FAR by .25~~
  - ~~Property within a Future Land Use Category of 4 units per acre and/or .25 FAR and higher and within the USA – Increase in FAR by .10~~
- When considering mixed use projects of 3 or more land uses, a different housing type (multi-family, attached single family or detached single family) may be considered as one of the uses.

Policy 19.4: [xvii] ~~By 2014,~~ The County will update the Land Development Code as follows:

- to permit mixed use development in one or more standard or "Euclidean" zoning districts; and
- to provide an additional method for rezoning land in mixed use categories, such as a form-based zoning district that governs intensity levels, establishes the future street network and connections to adjoining properties, and defines the maximum size of blocks; and
- to allow greater flexibility for site design regulations ~~(such as parking standards)~~ for mixed use development, such as:
  - Reduced parking requirements where on-street parking is provided and were complementary uses can share parking.
  - Reduced buffering and open space requirements.
- Additional incentives to promote mixed use development shall be considered for inclusion in the land development code.

Policy 19.5: The Planning Commission staff shall review the locations of the mixed use categories on the Future Land Use categories on the Future Land Use Map and their appropriateness given existing and approved development patterns. Land that has been developed in a modern suburban pattern may be considered for redesignation from its mixed use category unless there are retrofit opportunities. Any needed amendments to the location of the mixed use land use categories on the Future Land Use Map shall be initiated by the end of 2015 ~~2009~~.

Policy 35.9: Planned development districts, ~~or~~ mixed use standard zoning districts, or form-based zoning districts are required for all new rezonings in mixed use categories, except as provided for in applicable development regulations.

STRATEGIES FOR UNINCORPORATED COUNTY AND CITIES:

Strategy 201.A Refine the descriptions of all comprehensive plan mixed-use categories to remove floor-area ratio caps, to allow the use of form-based zoning districts in addition to planned development districts, and to require development proposals to provide a level of connectivity to existing and potential future streets consistent with the planned urban pattern (see Policy 201.4).

Strategy 201.B Add a planning and regulatory system that defines a future street network to coordinate development by adjoining landowners. This system could be used to:

- Identify a secondary street network that would support mixed-use development at commercial corridor intersections and segments; or
- Identify a interconnected web of collectors and arterials that would support larger scale mixed-use development on raw land.

Strategy 201.C Remove regulatory barriers that would inhibit development in the compact urban pattern by inappropriately applying suburban standards. These barriers often include open space and parking requirements that were designed for suburban areas and unnecessary front setbacks and front or side buffer strips.

Strategy 201.D Amend local subdivision regulations to include a street connectivity index and to establish minimum connectivity standards for new development, with one standard for compact urban areas and another for connected suburban areas.

SUPPLEMENTAL STRATEGY FOR PLANT CITY ONLY:

Strategy 201.E Review maximum floor-area ratios for commercial development in Midtown and Gateway mixed-use districts to be sure they are appropriate to allow walkable, compact urban forms. Higher ratios should be pursued, coupled with further specificity in land development regulations to directly shape urban form to meet community and city goals. Parameters to be included in land development regulations may include maximum building heights (in stories), build-to locations, minimum building frontage, and percentage of open space per lot.

4. MISSING SCALES OF PLANNING

The upcoming comprehensive plan updates provide a timely opportunity to reconsider the practice of planning newly developing areas mainly through isolated site-specific "planned development" rezonings.

That practice evolved because landowners have financial incentives to achieve zoning that is commensurate with the development potential specified in comprehensive plans, and planned-development rezoning is often a formal requirement or the approach preferred by local government.

Planned development zoning, with its site plans and special conditions, seems like a reasonable approach to this end, but its many pitfalls must also be acknowledged.

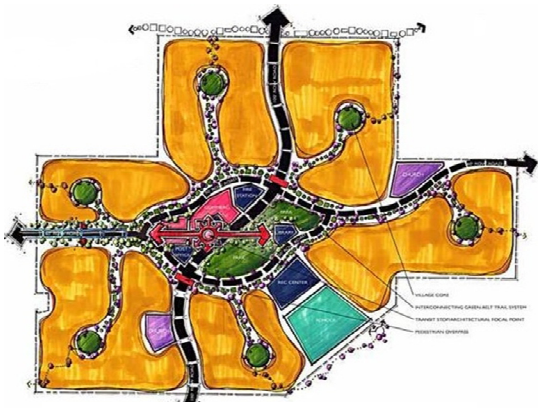
From the government side, this process isolates the discussion to individual sites, foregoing the opportunity to plan essential factors such as the street network that should extend beyond that site.

From the general public's perspective, planning becomes a never-ending series of lengthy public hearings managed by paid experts that frequently take place after site plans and other details have already been solidified by applicants and staff.

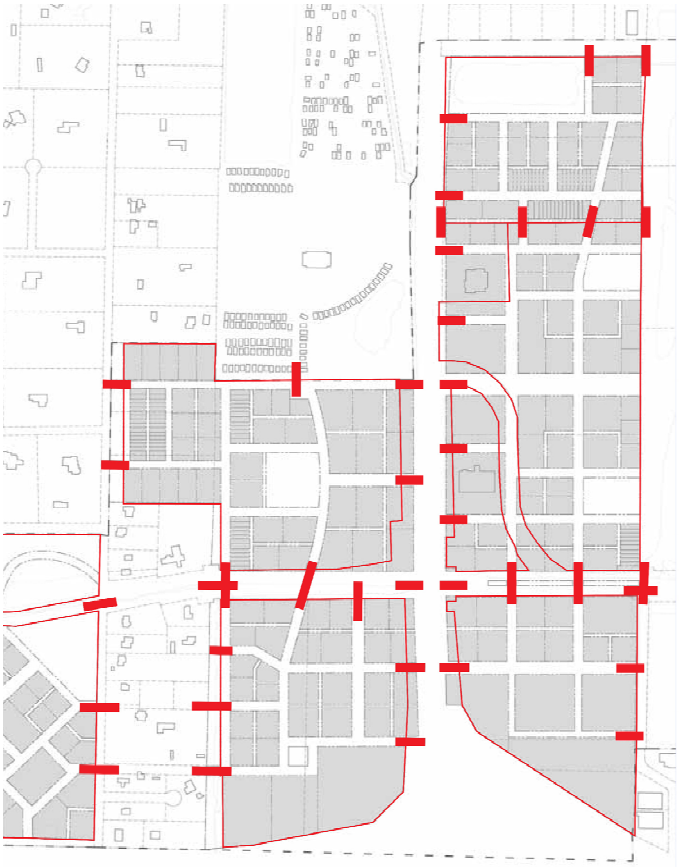
From the landowner's side, the process works when development is imminent and the required site plan and special conditions respond to a serious development proposal. When development isn't imminent, landowners are still required to propose site plans and development concepts even though they may not resemble how the property will ultimately be developed. The use of inward-focused "bubble plans," which are intended to preserve flexibility for developers to meet future market conditions and unknown design constraints, can end with very unpredictable results from the government and community perspective.

Even when a planned-development rezoning successfully mediates competing concerns, fundamental questions may not have been resolved about:

- How the development site is integrated into or separated from its surroundings.
- Where the local street network should connect to adjoining development tracts.
- How special zoning conditions might restrict the ability for neighborhoods and buildings to evolve over time – a particular risk when pre-development concepts are frozen into zoning approvals.



Bubble site plans emphasize isolation



Better site plans emphasize connections

Adding the Missing Scales

Today's planned-development zoning process can be suitable for large and isolated single-owner parcels. However, the more common situation is that one landowner wishes to obtain entitlements through a site-specific rezoning application; adjoining owners are often not ready for that action and expense, yet they are often directly affected by the rezoning decision.

Individual planned-development rezonings are also an awkward approach for discouraging strip commercial development or encouraging mixed-use development on small or medium-sized parcels.

The general approach suggested in this report for strip commercial and mixed-use development could be expanded through two related efforts that would improve local comprehensive plans. Each effort would add a new scale or dimension to public-sector planning in the Hillsborough County region.

Scale #1: Context Mapping for Urban Form

Although each comprehensive plan contains a future land use map with a wide variety of land-use categories, these categories often don't reflect the existing or anticipated development pattern.

For instance, the unincorporated county's future land use map clearly identifies rural areas, which is the land outside the urban service area. For land inside the urban service area, the map's categories are divided into "Urban Development Areas" and "Suburban Development Areas." However, this distinction is based mainly on maximum allowable densities across broad areas, rather than a finer-grained determination of where, for instance, compact urban or connected suburban development should be focused within these areas.

Future land use maps would be more valuable if they identified the existing and/or anticipated development pattern so that coordinated private and public improvements would produce highly successful urban, suburban, and rural places.

Earlier portions of this report described specific development patterns. Corresponding designations could be mapped across Hillsborough County, describing the existing or anticipated physical context as follows:

- Areas that are (or are planned to become) **compact urban areas** would have mixed uses of higher intensity, rows of stores along important streets, a tightly interconnected network of slower-speed streets, better transit service, and shared drainage and parking solutions.
- Areas that are (or are planned to be become) **connected suburban areas** would have mixed uses of lower intensity, with the largest commercial uses clustered near major intersections. Travel would be accommodated by a moderately interconnected network of streets designed so that through-traffic isn't always forced onto a sparse arterial network.
- Areas that are (or are planned to become) **modern suburban areas** would have segregated uses of varying intensity, including regional employers and shopping malls. Travel would be accommodated by a hierarchical network of wide arterial roads and expressways.
- Areas that are (and would remain) **rural** would have most land in farming or remaining uncultivated. Country homes would be scattered, and stores would be clustered at occasional crossroads. Major roads would be infrequent but would allow high speeds and would have trails instead of sidewalks.
- Areas that are (and would remain) **natural** such as parks, wetlands, and other preserves.
- Some areas would require special context designations. Examples include developed areas such as universities, theme parks, and industrial sites.

The unincorporated county has already taken important steps in this direction. The community design component of the county's comprehensive plan establishes conceptually similar aspirational policies for unincorporated urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Each city in Hillsborough County contains both compact urban places and less intense suburban places. The cities could add these same physical context designations to their future land use maps

Implementing this approach would require significant revisions to the future land use maps of each jurisdiction in Hillsborough County, or at a minimum include a larger scope for vision maps that might accomplish the same task or move in this direction.

To apply this approach effectively, the county and the cities would consider these context designations when evaluating development applications and would provide infrastructure improvements that match an area's context.

For instance, these context designations would become the basis for context-sensitive street design as promoted by the Federal Highway Administration. The compact urban designation would authorize the standards in *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares*, published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the Congress for the New Urbanism. These contexts would also become the basis for planning by the MPO for the future collector and arterial network.

An important enhancement to this approach would be to identify "areas of change" where the context may be evolving. For instance, a suburban commercial strip might be designated on the context map as "modern suburban," but could be classified as "connected suburban" or "compact urban" on the areas of change map to indicate the opportunity and direction for urban evolution.

Scale #2: Physical Planning for Urban Form

In larger undeveloped areas, the context mapping just described cannot be completed in isolation from other critical aspects of physical planning, such as identifying proposed centers of activity and creating a conceptual plan for a matching street network.

This more detailed planning effort would be especially important on vacant tracts that have been designated into mixed-use categories, particularly where land ownership is fragmented or entitlements have not yet been granted. These mixed-use categories have already been assigned a maximum residential density, but some of them, especially along the I-75 corridor, cover exceptionally large areas. Actual mixed-used development in those areas should contain many patches of higher and lower intensity.

An example of this more detailed level of physical planning is described on pages B-23 through B-26 of Appendix B. This example is in Sarasota County, in the northeast and southeast quadrants of the intersection of Fruitville Road and I-75. This example contains 322 acres of mostly vacant land with ownership shared among six entities. Planning for this area was coordinated by the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County, a public/private partnership.

- An initial step in adding this dimension to the planning process in Hillsborough County would be identifying what level of detail this planning process should provide.

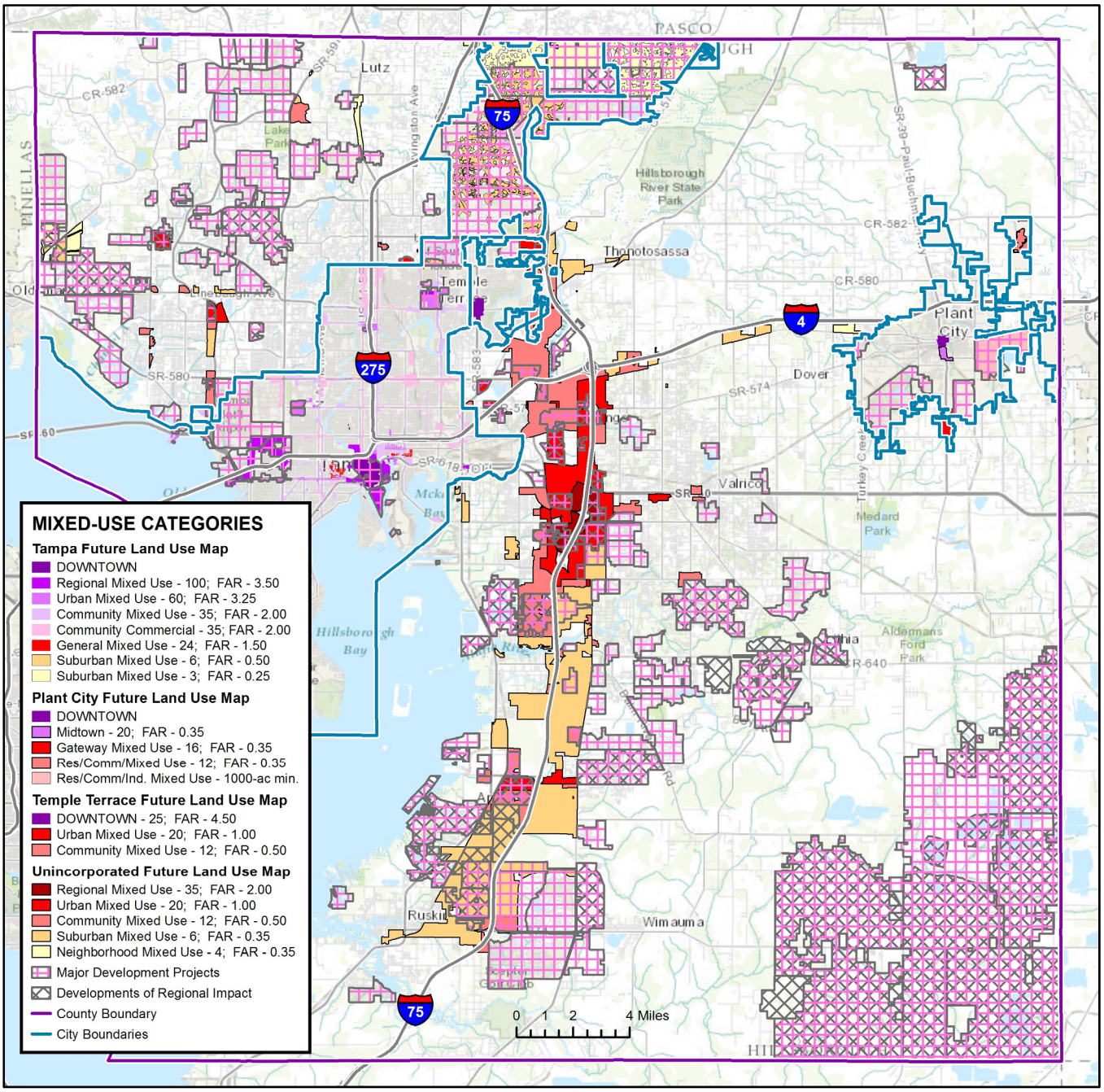
  The context designations described above are essential, but a greater level of detail should be provided (for instance, using transect zones in compact urban areas, and classifications of a comparable scale in suburban areas). An important result is a clear indication of where centers of intense activity would occur, including major employment centers.

  For large-scale mixed-use planning, it would be essential to identify a major road and public transportation network that serves the centers of activity, and a less precise depiction of how a collector and minor arterial system would be built at ¼-mile intervals. This network would identify potential connecting points between tracts to avoid today's suburban dilemma where every through road becomes a wide high-speed thoroughfare.

  For smaller-scale planning in compact urban areas or along suburban arterials, the local street network would also need to be identified.

- The second step would be identifying one or more places in the existing planning and regulatory process where the results of this detailed planning effort could be incorporated. For smaller areas, the results could be implemented through planned-development rezoning or adopted directly into the land development code, once suitable standards had been established. For larger areas, the results could be incorporated into comprehensive plans, similar to community plans. Another approach would be to create a special zoning category that could preclude the need for landowners to rezone individually. What these approaches would share in common would be terminology, standards, and a technique for memorializing the essential results through a special kind of site plan often referred to as a "regulating plan."

- A valuable third step would be to identify areas where public agencies could initiate this kind of detailed physical planning to meet clearly stated goals (such as corridor revitalization or creating employment-rich mixed-use areas). An ideal test corridor would cross jurisdictional boundaries and be suitable for expansion of public transit (and the intensification that transit can generate). An ideal mixed-use area would be raw land in a mixed-use category without existing entitlements but in a location well-suited for higher-intensity development. The map below shows the mixed-use categories throughout Hillsborough County along with the best available summary of approved major development projects and developments of regional impact.



(boundaries of approved developments are based on best available GIS data, which is known to be incomplete)

Proposed Definitions

The following additional definitions should be considered if jurisdictions in Hillsborough County begin to add the "missing scales of planning" as described on the previous pages:

Regulating Plan, Conceptual – A map or site plan that summarizes a general physical plan for development or redevelopment. A conceptual regulating plan covers more area and provides less detail than a detailed regulating plan contained in a form-based code. Primary focuses of conceptual regulating plans are the future street network, particularly as the network crosses property boundaries, and the identification of areas where intensity levels will be the highest.

Regulating Plan, Detailed – A map or site plan that serves as an integral part of a form-based code by identifying exactly where and how specific regulations will apply. Detailed regulating plans generally identify existing and future streets, zones of varying character and intensity, the configuration of private buildings in relation to streets, and civic spaces and preserves.

5. DESIGN POLICIES & STRATEGIES

Earlier sections of this report propose new policies to discourage strip commercial patterns and encourage mixed-use development. In addition to achieving a desired mixture of uses, a high quality urban realm depends on the design of streets, public spaces, and buildings on private lots working together to create the desired result.

Land development regulations can specify design parameters for streets (such as optimal dimensions for sidewalk and lane widths) and for buildings (such as build-to locations, height, massing, and transparency requirements). However, general guidance that addresses urban design basics can also be provided in comprehensive plans and can be calibrated for specific physical patterns, defined here as compact urban, connected suburban, modern suburban, and rural.

A connected network of streets allows for the dispersal of vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic along many routes, rather than funneling traffic onto a few main arteries. This reduces the need to widen roads (as often happens when too few options exist) and provides more opportunities for walkable and bikeable street design elements.

The design of a street should reflect its immediate context, changing as the context changes:

- In **compact urban** settings, the needs of all users – pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and transit users – are balanced. Vehicles move more slowly so that cyclists can safely share the road and pedestrians can feel comfortable crossing and walking near the street. Design techniques for compact urban settings include on-street parking, narrower vehicle lanes, street trees, sharrows, frequent crosswalks, and wide sidewalks. On thoroughfares that must be wide (four lanes or more), a side access lane should be considered. This lane would include a slower-moving lane, on-street parking, and a wide sidewalk to provide a proper frontage for street-oriented buildings.
- In **connected suburban** settings, the needs of all users are still accommodated, but more priority is given to vehicles because there is a greater separation of uses and more trips require a car. Vehicle lanes are slightly wider than in compact urban settings, and cyclists are typically accommodated in bike lanes rather than sharrows. On-street parking, if provided, can be located on a side access lane to allow vehicles to move unrestricted in center lanes. An interconnected network of sidewalks is provided, sized appropriately for adjacent land uses: wider in mixed-use settings and narrower in residential areas where pedestrian activity will be less.
- In **modern suburban** settings, higher priority in street design is given to motorists, given the sparser road network and greater need for travel by car. Vehicular design speed is typically faster. Pedestrians and cyclists are often accommodated on multi-use trails, separated from traffic.

In compact urban settings, land development regulations should provide appropriate standards for private development, specifically how buildings relate to the street, in order to achieve a walkable, bikeable, transit-ready urban realm. This is best regulated though a form-based code produced for a specific district or corridor to achieve a desired urban character. However, general guidance can also be provided in comprehensive plans. Design elements that can be addressed include:

- Lot access and building-to-street relationship: Pedestrians in compact urban settings feel most comfortable when walking on a continuous sidewalk that is lined by building façades. Parking should be located to the side or the rear of buildings, and access to parking consolidated and provided to the rear when possible to reduce curb cuts and driveway interruptions in sidewalks. Buildings in compact urban settings should be located at the back edge of sidewalks, with doors and windows that face streets and appurtenances that provide shade to pedestrians.
- Infill parcels need urban standards: The development or redevelopment of small lots and infill parcels should be strongly encouraged. Often, these parcels create "missing teeth" in the urban fabric because redevelopment cannot occur under conventional standards. For instance, suburban requirements for on-site stormwater retention and over-sized parking lots often make development infeasible. In compact urban settings, district solutions (such as shared parking, parking in public lots, and shared stormwater facilities) should be encouraged.

The following additional policies should be considered to assist with roadway design and mixed-used issues:

POLICIES/STRATEGIES FOR UNINCORPORATED COUNTY & CITIES

Objective 301. Establish walkable, connected mixed-use development forms that support transit, healthy living, and safe travel for all modes (vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists).

Policy 301.1 All streets should be designed to be part of a connected network, to provide options for mobility and reduce impacts to collector and arterial streets.

- Streets should connect to other streets. Dead-end streets should only be permitted where physical constraints such as highways, sensitive natural resources, or unusual topography provide no alternatives.
- Street stubs should be provided to adjoining parcels to accommodate future street connectivity.

Policy 301.2 All street networks should contain multiple paths for vehicular and pedestrian movement. Additional narrow thoroughfares are better than fewer wide ones; capacity and redundancy should be created by an interconnected network rather than relying on high capacities on a few arterials. When major thoroughfares are spaced too far apart, these consequences are unavoidable:

- The remaining major thoroughfares must be too wide, making them inhospitable to all users.
- Traffic may encroach on neighborhood streets designed for lighter traffic.
- Transit routes along the remaining thoroughfares become very inefficient.
- Intersections with other wide roads greatly restrict their capacity.

Policy 301.3 The character of each thoroughfare should be based on the planned physical context the thoroughfare is passing through in addition to its role in the larger network.

- Thoroughfares in existing or planned compact urban areas are multi-modal, with walkability and transit accessibility as key design features. Design standards include:
  - Vehicle lanes are generally narrower and on-street parking is typically provided to create traffic calming and reduce vehicle speeds, enhancing safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
  - Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street. Sidewalks should be widest in front of mixed-use or retail buildings where pedestrian activity is anticipated to be greatest.

- Cyclists are typically accommodated with sharrows, given slower vehicular design speeds in this context.
- Street trees should be provided at a regular spacing on both sides of streets to provide shade as well as define the public realm.
- Crosswalks should be provided at most intersections. Additional mid-block crossings are encouraged where blocks are larger than a traditional city block.

- Thoroughfares in existing or planned connected suburban areas favor automobiles while still accommodating other modes. Design standards include:
  - Vehicle lanes are generally wider than in compact urban areas. On-street parking, if provided on collectors or arterials, may be located on a side access lane to allow vehicles to move freely in center travel lanes.
  - Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of streets. Sidewalks should connect to other sidewalks to encourage walking between residential neighborhoods and adjacent commercial, civic, and mixed-use development as well as between residential neighborhoods.
  - Bike lanes should be provided along major bicycle routes.
  - Street trees should be provided at a regular spacing on both sides of streets.
  - Crosswalks should be provided at major intersections. Additional crosswalks should be provided at eighth-mile intervals along bus routes.

- Thoroughfares in existing or planned modern suburban areas accommodate walking and bicycling on a network of paths that are separated from traffic. Design standards include:
  - Vehicle lanes are generally wider and on-street parking is not provided to encourage free-flowing traffic.
  - Sidewalks or separated multi-use paths should be provided on at least one side of all streets. Sidewalks and paths should connect to other sidewalks and paths to encourage walking and cycling between residential neighborhoods and adjacent commercial, civic, and mixed-use development as well as between residential neighborhoods.
  - Street trees should be provided at a regular spacing on both sides of streets.
  - Crosswalks should be provided at major intersections. Additional crosswalks should be provided at quarter-mile intervals along bus routes.

Policy 301.4 Lot and building design standards for compact urban areas should accommodate the needs of the many users that activate compact urban areas (motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users).

Policy 301.5 In compact urban areas, the design of access to individual lots should seek to balance vehicular and pedestrian needs.

- A continuous network of rear and side alleys or lanes should serve as the primary means of vehicular ingress to individual lots, to reduce curb cuts and enhance the pedestrian realm.
- Parcels that face auto-oriented thoroughfares (particularly those four or more lanes wide) should incorporate a side access lane as part of future redevelopment to allow a slow-moving street frontage and a sidewalk for new buildings.

Policy 301.6 In compact urban areas, building site design (specifically how a building relates to the street, and how parking is accommodated) should prioritize pedestrian function and comfort.

- Building facades facing streets or public spaces should include doors and windows; large expanses of blank walls facing primary streets or public spaces should be avoided.
- Mixed-use buildings should protect pedestrians with awnings, balconies, colonnades, or arcades along at least 50% of the front building façade.
- The front façade of mixed-use buildings should be located at the back edge of a sidewalk or directly facing a public park or plaza; parking should be located to the side or rear of the building.

Policy 301.7 In compact urban areas, development or redevelopment of small lots and infill parcels in mixed-use walkable forms is strongly encouraged.

- Suburban minimum parking requirements on individual lots should be reduced or eliminated where compact urban building site design standards are met.
- Shared infrastructure such as parking and driveways is encouraged between adjacent parcels.

Strategy 301.A To implement design standards of greater specificity in compact urban areas, changes to the land development regulations should be initiated. Steps include:

- Identify areas that are or should become compact urban.
- Create overlay districts, form-based codes, and detailed regulating plans to guide future development in those specific areas. Code revisions should address the private realm (new development on individual lots) as well as the public realm (street design), and include:
  - Urban Standards, which include dimensional requirements for building height and massing, and defining how buildings are placed relative to the street, including:
    - Prescribed build-to locations (establishing the location where the front building wall must be placed) rather than setbacks, to guide placement of new buildings in relationship to the street and sidewalk.
    - Minimum transparency requirements to activate streetscapes, such as establishing a minimum percentage of the building façade that is fenestration, and a maximum spacing between doors along the street.
  - General Standards, which include requirements for basic urban infrastructure such as parking, stormwater, and other utilities, that permit shared facilities to fulfill requirements (rather than on a per-lot basis).
  - Street Standards, which specify the minimum and maximum dimensions of vehicular lanes, on-street parking, sidewalks, bike lanes or sharrows, and medians/ planting areas, to balance the needs of cars, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.
  - Optionally, Architectural Standards, which may specify permitted materials and building element configurations to unify the design of buildings.

6. DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS ALONG COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Several alternatives for land development along commercial corridors are illustrated on the following pages. These patterns were generated to evaluate alternate development strategies for the segments of land between commercial corridor intersections.

The physical condition chosen for these alternatives includes multiple property owners, recent commercial development near the major intersections, and an existing local street. See aerial photograph below.

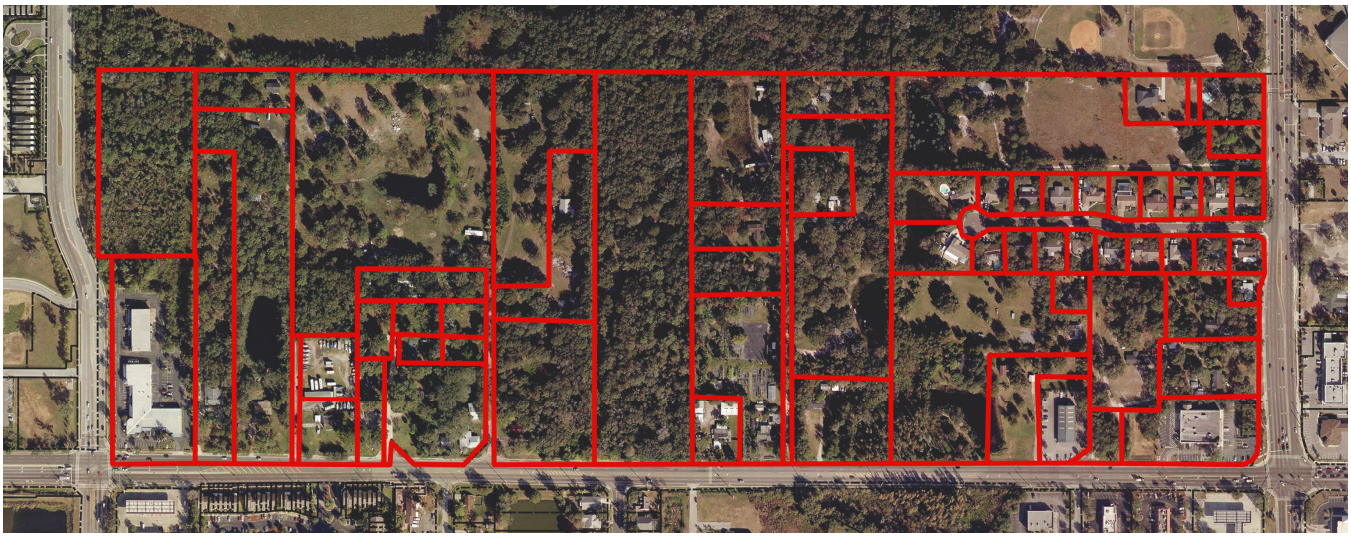
A typical expectation for this multi-owner condition would be a series of individual requests for commercial zoning that would result in a suburban commercial strip between the intersections. If the land were owned by a single entity, a wider range of alternatives would be possible.

Five alternatives are shown for future development. The first three alternatives include conventional shopping at the intersections, but with different patterns in between:

- residential lots facing the arterial
- residential lots facing inward
- a suburban commercial strip

The other alternatives include:

- an improved commercial strip with a reverse access street
- a walkable street network that accommodates varying intensities and land uses

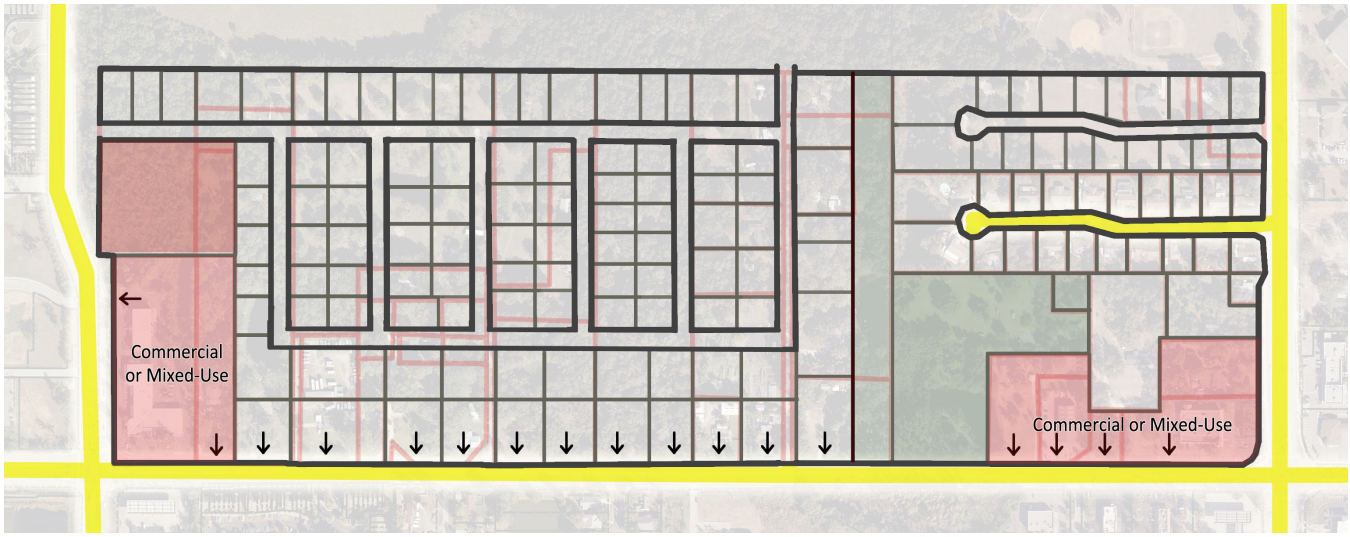


Existing conditions are shown above. A major east-west corridor is located to the south. This segment has remnants of a more rural pattern on the north side of the corridor.

The alternatives on the following pages are conceptual only, not actual site plans. Input from property owners and the community would be needed to test these concepts.

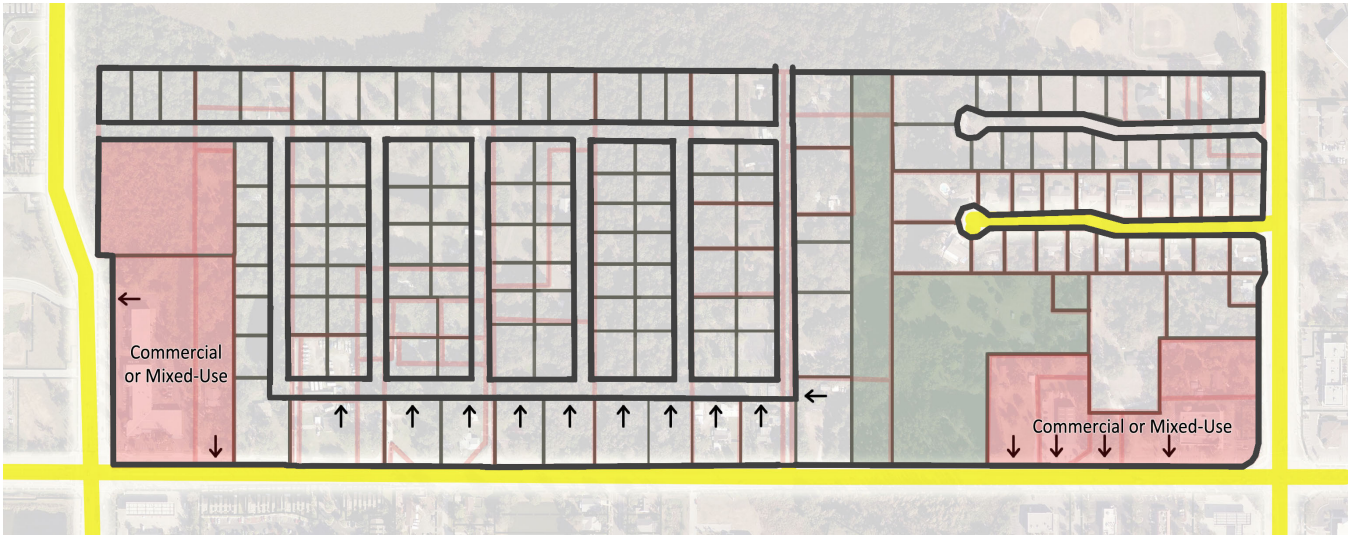
Residential Lots Facing the Corridor

This pattern includes conventional shopping at each major intersection and conventional residential lots in between. This is a common pattern when traffic on the corridor is fairly light. *(Arrows indicate vehicular access from each lot along the arterial.)*



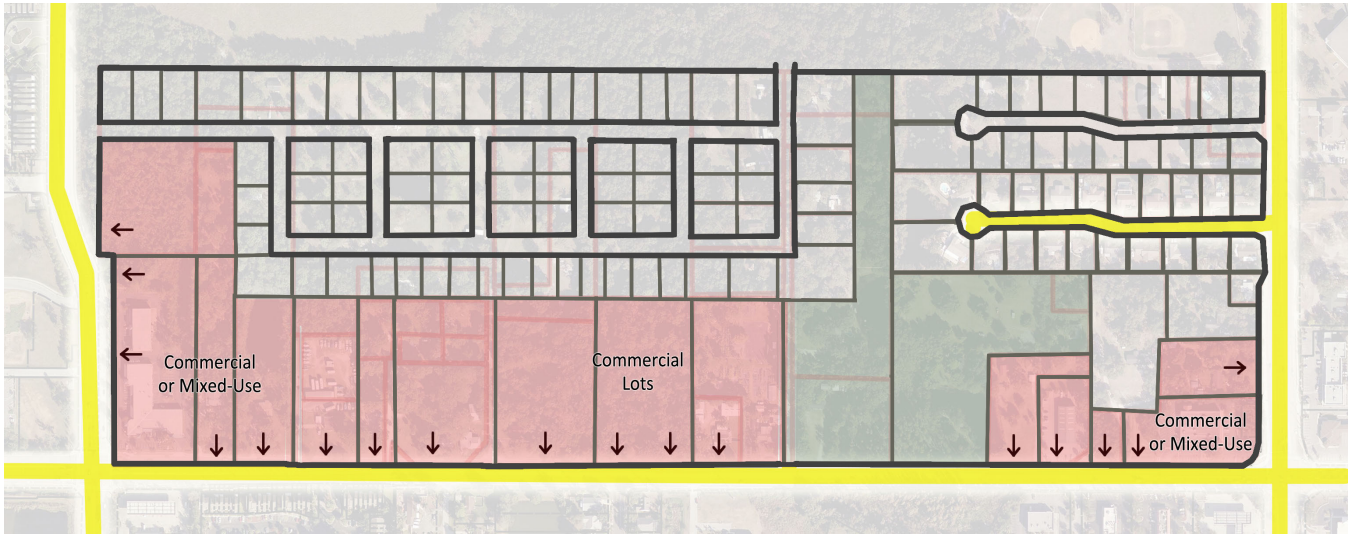
Residential Lots Facing Inward

This pattern includes conventional shopping at each major intersection and residential lots in between that are part of a master-planned community that isolates itself from the corridor.



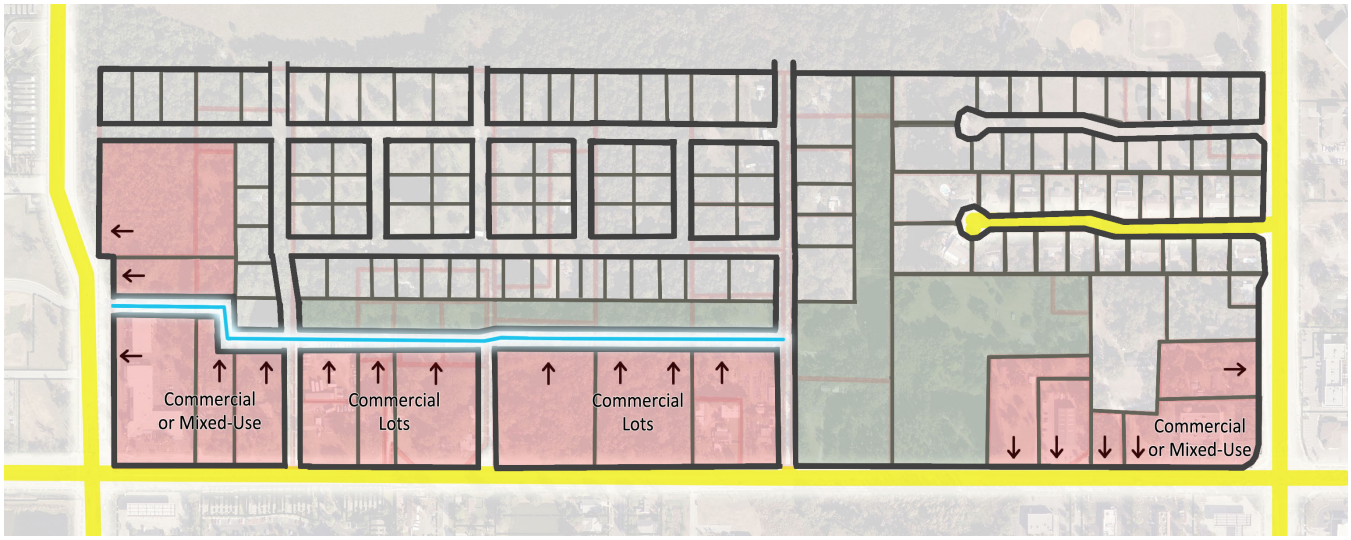
Suburban Commercial Strip

This pattern includes conventional shopping at each major intersection and a suburban commercial strip in between.



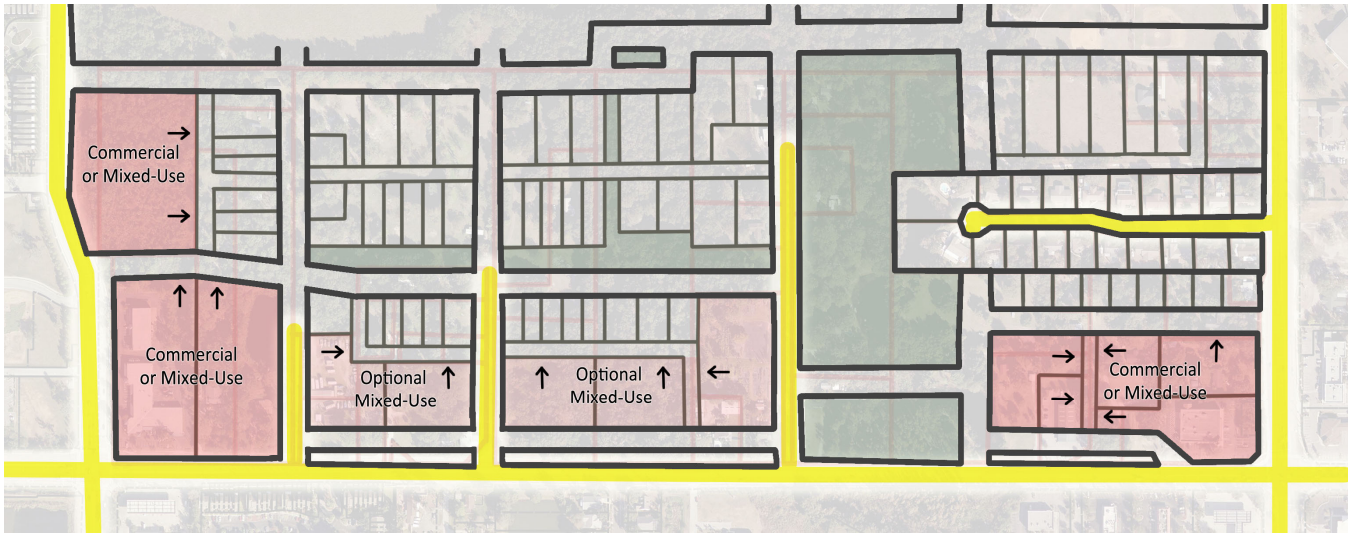
Improved Commercial Strip With Reverse Access Street

This pattern shows an alternative commercial strip. This pattern still has individual commercial lots facing the arterial, but it includes a parallel vehicular access street that provides the primary access to the commercial lots. The parallel lane would connect to the corner commercial parcels and to both major north-south roads. Connections from the corridor to the access street are spaced at city-block intervals; some of these connections would extend to the north (at ¼-mile intervals).



Walkable Street Network That Accommodates Varying Intensities & Land Uses

This pattern shows how existing streets (highlighted in yellow) could be extended and new cross streets added to create a walkable street network. By locating future streets before new development is designed, individual property owners can develop as market conditions allow, setting the stage for future connectivity as other parcels are developed. *(Existing parcels are shown in red; potential rights-of-way are black.)*



The regulating plan below shows these new streets and also the potential intensity of new development. Darker shades indicate a higher intensity and a greater variety of uses near major intersections. Lighter shades indicate lower intensity and less or no mixing of uses. Preserve areas are shown around existing stormwater ponds; additional green open spaces are shown on the plan to form a connected network throughout the district, rather than being a percentage of "left-over" space on each lot. A network of rear alleys is included, to reduce curb cuts on streets and promote vehicular access/parking to the rear.

(NOTE: These diagrams are examples of the regulating plan technique, not a specific master plan. Input from property owners and the community would be needed to test these concepts.)

Analysis of Five Patterns Along Commercial Corridors

The five patterns illustrated on the preceding pages create very different physical arrangements. Each pattern changes the visual landscape and has differing impacts on transportation and quality of life.

Residential Lots Facing the Corridor: This pattern can be appropriate and is often found in rural areas where traffic is light. This pattern becomes undesirable when development intensifies to suburban levels and traffic levels rise. Its shortcomings include at least one driveway for each lot, with vehicles often backing out. The lack of street connectivity requires all vehicular trips to use the arterial road, increasing traffic and delays. This pattern sometimes evolves into a suburban commercial strip.

Residential Lots Facing Inward: This pattern is typical in modern suburban developments. One drawback is the lack of street connectivity, which funnels all new traffic back onto the arterial, in this case from a single entrance road rather than individual driveways. The second drawback is that the rear yard, a home's most private outdoor space, is close to the arterial, reducing privacy for the homeowner and damaging the public realm for those traveling on the arterial.

Suburban Commercial Strip: Conceptually, this pattern presents a similar connectivity challenges as the first pattern. The driveways are fewer and rarely have vehicles backing out, but traffic levels are dramatically higher. Once a corridor is developed in this manner, it is difficult to retrofit. As commercial preferences change, or as newer strip locations become available on new or wider roads, suburban commercial strips quickly reach obsolescence and decline faster than any other urban pattern.

Improved Commercial Strip With Rear Access Street: A rear access street improves a suburban commercial strip by allowing better circulation and establishing a framework for future intensification. In this pattern, buildings can be placed closer to the corridor, with parking to the side or rear and directly accessed from the rear. The reduction in curb cuts improves vehicular and bicycle travel on the corridor and greatly benefits pedestrians by removing repeated conflict points on the sidewalk.

The rear access street differs from a typical street because it may be faced by dumpsters and loading areas; it is designed primarily for vehicular mobility. It may be buffered from adjacent lots with landscaping but may, at least initially, not include sidewalks or street trees. This secondary corridor can evolve over time; the rear access street could be converted to a complete street with sidewalks and street trees, making it an attractive frontage for additional development.

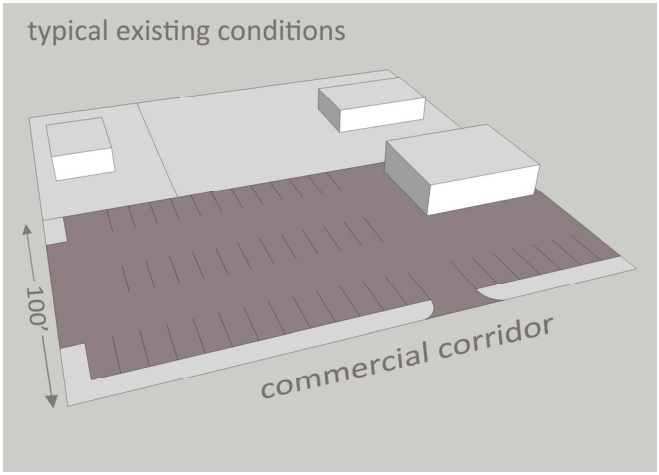
Walkable Street Network That Accommodates Varying Intensities & Land Uses: This pattern comfortably accommodates higher levels of intensity due to enhanced circulation; vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians all benefit from multiple connected routes. This pattern also provides pedestrian-oriented urban form with vehicular access provided through alleys. The block and street network creates "good bones" for walkable development that can evolve over time. Initial development may be at a lower density or intensity; if market demands improve (for example, if transit is enhanced on the corridor), lots can be subdivided or redeveloped without changing any basic infrastructure.

CONCLUSION: A comparison of these patterns demonstrates the importance of street connectivity. The first three patterns show patterns that typically emerge from piecemeal development in the absence of effective urban policy. Locational criteria may restrict commercial uses to the intersections (as in the first two patterns), but access and connectivity issues may not be resolved and often are permanently blocked. The fourth pattern improves access and circulation around commercial lots but doesn't comfortably integrate commercial uses with surrounding neighborhoods. The fifth pattern fully integrates residential and commercial uses on a connected street network, allowing higher intensities while providing a better transition from the arterial to quieter neighborhoods behind.

7. BUILDINGS FOR SHALLOW LOTS IN TAMPA

Many of the neighborhood shopping districts in Tampa have shallow (100′ deep) lots that constrain redevelopment options. In midblock areas, new multifamily housing or mixed-use buildings would often be a desirable alternative standard commercial buildings.

Housing developers often hesitate to face their buildings onto an auto-oriented corridor. The following diagrams show some options for mixed-use or residential building types that fit this condition.



1. **Buildings fronting on a semi-public space**. New buildings can be oriented so that a majority of units front a small green space introduced as part of the site design, with the narrow end of the buildings facing the street.

   Two site design options are shown on the diagrams at right – buildings flanking a new green (top) and an L-shaped building creating a new courtyard space to the front (bottom).

   In both cases, parking is located to the side rather than the front of buildings. A low wall or hedge should be used to shield the view of parked cars from the sidewalk. Parking should be planned in coordination with adjacent lots so that drive aisles can be shared, for efficiency as well and to minimize curb cuts from the main corridor. In some cases it may also be possible to "park under" the rear of the building utilizing a private drive or alley between the rear property line and the building.

2. **Buildings fronting on side access lane**. A side access lane with one lane of slow moving traffic, on-street parking, street trees, and a wide sidewalk could be added to adjoining lots to provide a pedestrian-friendly frontage for new buildings.

   This option creates a shallower buildable area; parking can be accommodated under or at the first floor of the building to maximize usable floor space. At the first floor, design standards should require parking to be screened and architecturally treated. Regulations could require small vertical openings oriented similar to building windows, and parking accessed from the side or rear rather than from the front street, ensuring that a walkable street frontage would be continued, as shown in these photos from Winter Park. With a deeper lot, usable space should occupy the first floor facing the street, even with "tuck under" parking in the rear.

   Some buildable area that would be lost because of the access lane may be recaptured by utilizing square footage above a colonnade over the sidewalk. Removing or thinning the sidewalk in the public right-of-way is a way to increase the landscaped area (as the sidewalk is now provided on the lot, between the access lane and building).

Below: Eastern Parkway (side access lane precedent); Brooklyn, New York

APPENDIX A

CASE STUDIES & BEST PRACTICES FOR DISCOURAGING STRIP COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission is preparing updates to the comprehensive plans for Tampa, Temple Terrace, Plant City, and unincorporated Hillsborough County.

A critical task is improving the methods these plans currently use to discourage strip commercial development. This appendix summarizes research conducted to that end.

Strip Commercial Development

Strip commercial development in its post-World War II form has been one of the most common patterns for new stores, restaurants, and service businesses. Despite this prevalence, the planning profession is generally contemputuous of strip commercial development for its visual impacts, its impact on adjoining neighborhoods, and its congestion-inducing effects.

> Stretching for miles in what seems to be an undifferentiated landscape of signs, driveways, parking lots and cheap buildings, the American commercial strip is one of the most exasperating and yet ubiquitous urban forms ever created. Occurring in nearly every settlement of any size in the country, the strip is everywhere the same and everywhere an eyesore.
>
> *--- Brenda Case Scheer*

Comprehensive plans in Florida take a uniformly negative stand against strip commercial development. In part this reflects the planning profession's stance, but it is also a direct outcome of Florida's program that governs local comprehensive plans. For instance, state law says that a primary indicator of urban sprawl is a plan that "promotes, allows, or designates urban development in radial, strip, isolated, or ribbon patterns . . ." (F.S. 163.3177(6)(a)9.a.iii)).

> Palm Beach County Policy 2.2.2-a: "In order to **discourage strip commercial development**, to limit commercial development to nodes, to foster interconnectivity, and to promote the development of innovated mixed use projects inside the Urban Service Area, all new commercial future land use designations shall meet one of the following location requirements . . ."

> Sarasota County: "A third tenet of the Future Land Use Plan is the aggregation of commercial uses in centers, and **avoidance of any additional strip commercial development** along roadways."

This Appendix

The Planning Commission's consulting team identified a wide variety of methods used in comprehensive plans from other communities to discourage or repair strip commercial development.

Brief case studies are presented in the following pages for the following jurisdictions:

- Sarasota County (redevelopment corridors)
- Palm Beach County (variety of approaches)
- Lee County (site location standards)
- Orange County (commercial location standards)
- Arlington County VA (retrofit)
- Miami-Dade County (retrofit)

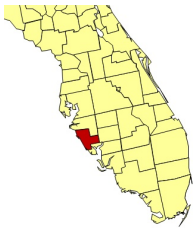
Two examples are then provided to show built examples of new street-oriented development at different scales: the first an individual building on a small infill site (in South Miami, FL), and the second a walkable mixed-use center with a new network of blocks and streets (in Atlanta, GA).

This document then summarizes best practices suggested by the Urban Land Institute and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The case studies and best practices helped the Planning Commission team formulate policy proposals to discourage strip commercial development. The case studies and best practices are provided here for reference.

CASE STUDIES

SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA



Sarasota County's comprehensive plan received a major refinement in 2002 when a new section was added, widely known as Sarasota 2050.

Much of Sarasota 2050 dealt with an optional process that allowed major landowners east of Interstate 75 to consolidate their development rights and build compact villages or hamlets. That portion of Sarasota 2050 has remained controversial and is undergoing major revisions at the present time to loosen the requirements that the development community believes have inhibited the successful creation of villages.

A lesser-known portion of Sarasota 2050 dealt with the potential for urban infill in the unincorporated county. The map on the next page designated land (in red) as "Economic Development RMAs" (Resource Management Areas). Some of the larger tracts are vacant and awaiting first-generation development. Most of the linear areas on this map face major arterials and are identified as "redevelopment corridors," even if they had not been fully developed at that time.

The RMA designations did not change the underlying Future Land Use Map; the designations identified areas where landowners could choose to use new policies and approaches in place of the pre-existing rules.

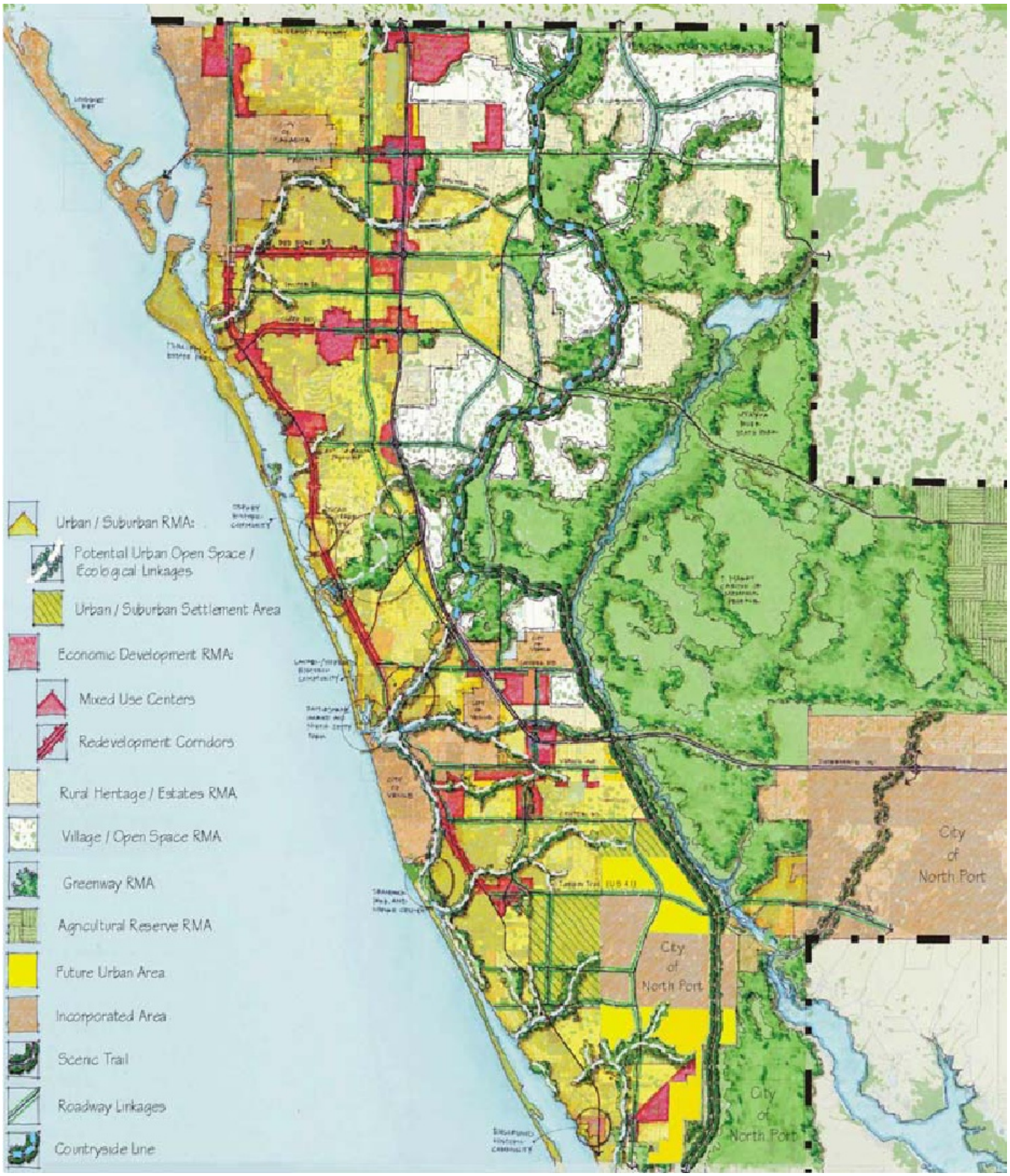
To incentivize activity in the Economic Development RMAs, the comprehensive plan committed to a series of immediate steps:

- A new zoning district that would facilitate economic development and re-development.
- A special planning process that would combine a community plan with simultaneous rezoning for affected properties.
- After completion of the planning process, the affected areas would become priority spending areas for county infrastructure.
- Rezoning and development applications would receive expedited review.
- Design standards were included to ensure the creation of walkable city blocks that can accommodate varying uses over time.

Since 2002, Sarasota County has adopted two new form-based zoning districts that are available to landowners in Economic Development RMAs. Both require landowners to prepare detailed site plans that will become binding upon rezoning.

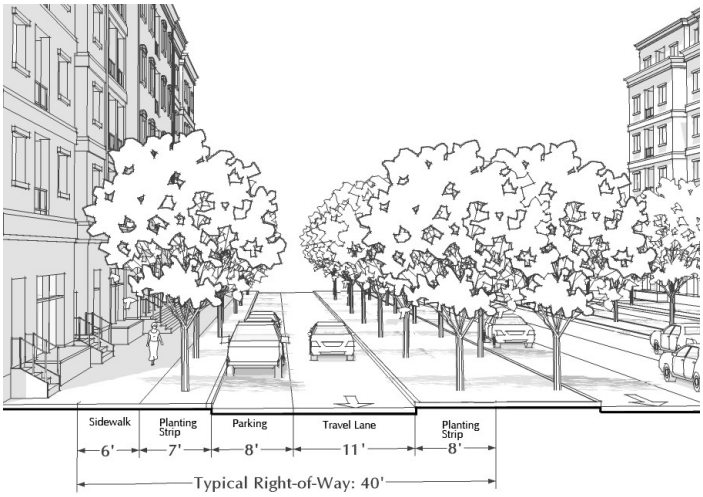
The newer zoning district is called Planned Mixed-Use Infill (PMI) and was adopted in 2007. It has several attributes to avoid strip commercial development or convert existing strips into walkable environments:

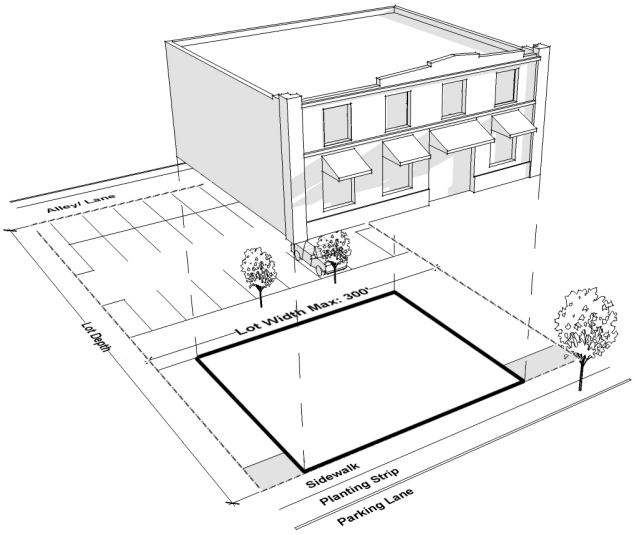
- Site planning must include a collaborative charrette where citizens and adjoining property owners can identify their concerns, understand site constraints, and explore alternatives.
- A highly interconnected network of streets is mandatory, with maximum block perimeters of 1,600 feet (2,000 feet under certain conditions).
- Transect zones are a major organizing principle. An "Edge" transect zone, which has a scale similar to suburban neighborhoods, can be used along the perimeter in place of buffer strips.
- A pre-approved palette of lot types is provided for each transect zone. Each lot is allowed a series of compatible uses so that uses can change over time without rezoning.
- The primary entrance of every building must directly face a street or civic space. Parking lots cannot be placed between a building and the street.
- Shared on-street parking is provided to reduce the size of individual parking lots, which if provided must be placed in side or rear yards or embedded in buildings.

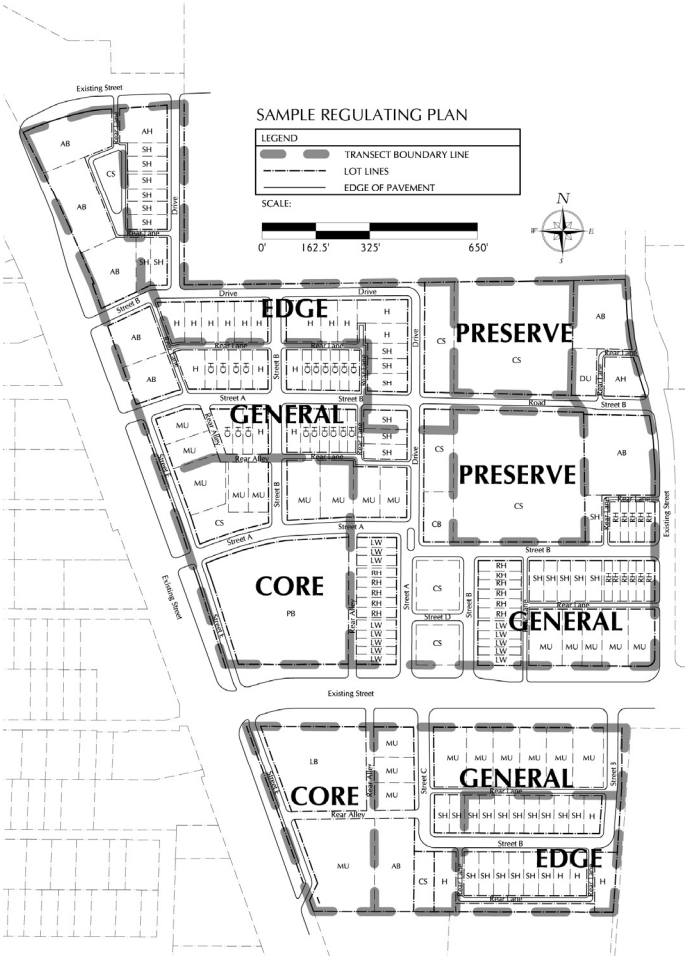

Urban / Suburban RMA:
Potential Urban Open Space / Ecological Linkages
Urban / Suburban Settlement Area
Economic Development RMA:
Mixed Use Centers
Redevelopment Corridors
Rural Heritage / Estates RMA
Village / Open Space RMA
Greenway RMA
Agricultural Reserve RMA
Future Urban Area
Incorporated Area
Scenic Trail
Roadway Linkages
Countryside Line
City of North Port
City of North Port
City of North Port

The upper figures on this page, included in the PMI zoning district, are examples of pre-approved street and lot types for the PMI zoning district.

The lower left figure on this page shows the kind of illustrative plan that must be prepared for each PMI zoning application. The lower right figure is a schematic regulating plan that would be adopted by the county commission if the PMI zoning is approved, showing transect zones, street types, and lot types, but not showing specific building footprints or other non-binding details from the illustrative plan.







In 2009, county officials studied how this code could be used to help retrofit commercial strips.

The county choose Bee Ridge Road at S. Beneva Road. Potential reconfigurations included:

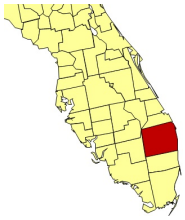
- New north-south local streets to break up over-sized tracts
- New access drives along Bee Ridge Road (see cross-section on previous page)
- Landscaped medians along S. Beneva Road

Aerial views (existing and reconfigured) are shown below, along with an image sequence that shows how this transformation could take place over time.

Images courtesy Moule & Polyzoides & Urban Advantage

PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

The Palm Beach County comprehensive plan contains a clear definition of strip commercial development:



> *"A form of development that is designed primarily for vehicular access and is hazardous or inconvenient for pedestrians to use. Strip commercial development may include any of the following:*
>
> 1. *intense, largely non-residential development, which is shallow in depth, and lies along a length of roadway*
> 2. *poorly coordinated site plan, with buildings organized in a linear pattern or in isolated "islands"*
> 3. *separate driveways or curb cuts from adjacent properties*
> 4. *separate parking lots from adjacent properties*
> 5. *inadequate accessibility and circulation for pedestrians and bicycles"*

After early attempts to forbid any new strip commercial development, Palm Beach County has experimented with a wide variety of techniques to control the location of new commercial uses.

In 1991 the county adopted strict commercial location criteria. These were applied to comprehensive plan amendments, which were required before new commercial development could be approved in residential categories on the future land use map. The criteria were based largely on the proximity to intersections of major arterials, a major arterial and a collector, or two collectors.

In 1995, much of this system was replaced by a formal site-specific consistency/compatibility analysis. After 1997, the formal analysis was no longer required, but compatibility policies were still applied in order to discourage strip commercial. Examples include compatibility between land uses including adjoining neighborhoods, impacts on road capacity, and environmental constraints. In 2005, the county discontinued all requirements for Commercial Needs Assessment/Location Studies.

Specific policies in the current plan still establish some location criteria for commercial development based on intensity and location (see chart on the next page); detailed lists of exceptions also apply.

The intensity and compatibility policies have been adjusted in accordance with a 'tiered' growth plan that the county added to its comprehensive plan in 1999. The following context zones or tiers are currently mapped (see map immediately following chart). These tiers were based on the area's existing and proposed character:

- Urban/Suburban
- Exurban
- Rural
- Agricultural Reserve
- Glades

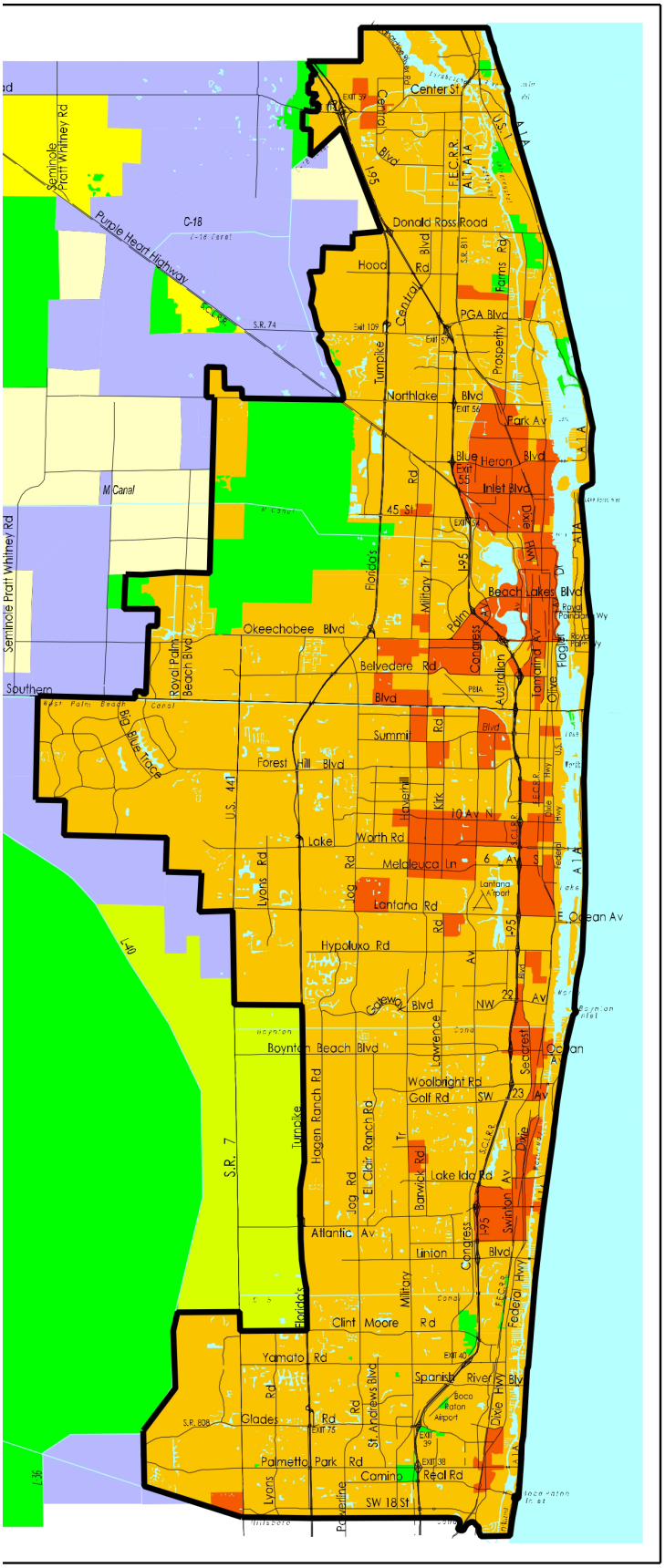
The tiers have played a role in Palm Beach County's efforts to avoid strip commercial development, but at this time the distinctions have been blurred.

In the Exurban and Rural tiers, the county only allows new commercial development on land with frontage on two arterials or on an arterial and a collector.

In the Urban/Suburban tiers, the rules are similar but less demanding. For instance, the frontage requirement doesn't apply if a proposed commercial parcel shares a property line with another commercial parcel.

The Urban/Suburban tier also includes a revitalization and redevelopment infill overlay and an Urban Redevelopment Area (URA), which is similar to the revitalization and redevelopment overlay but doesn't include any peripheral tracts. Within the URA are designated Priority Redevelopment Areas (PRAs), where two new urban mixed-use Future Land Use Designations have been established: Urban Center and Urban Infill. As currently configured, these overlays don't provide any special policies or regulations to discourage strip commercial development.

Table III.D.1 Additional Criteria for Determining the Depth, Width, and Use for Commercial and Industrial Designations	
IF:	**THEN:**
A. 1.A lot extends beyond the commercial or industrial land use designation line on the FLUA; and 2.the land area beyond the line on the FLUA totals less than one acre.	The County may rezone the area beyond the line to commercial with cross-hatching or industrial, provided: 1. the entire lot is developed as a unified site plan; and 2. the amended lot area on the FLUA is only be used for water retention, landscaping, and/or at-grade parking.
B.1.A lot extends beyond the commercial or industrial land use designation line on the FLUA; and 2.the width of the lot does not exceed 300 feet; and 3.the lots adjacent to both sides of the subject lot have previously been granted a commercial or industrial designation beyond the line on the FLUA.	The County may rezone the lot area beyond the line to commercial or industrial to the same depth as exists on the adjacent lot with the lesser depth designated commercial or industrial, provided: 1.the remaining portion of the lot would not be substandard for residential or another use permitted under its future land use designation. 2.both lots are not cross-hatched. If both lots are designated as commercial with cross-hatching, then the portion of the subject lot behind the line shall be amended to commercial with cross-hatching.
C. 1.A lot has a commercial or industrial land use designation on the FLUA; and 2.does not front on a collector or arterial roadway.	The lot may be rezoned to commercial or industrial provided: 1.it is combined through a unity of title with a lot which fronts on a collector or arterial roadway; and 2.the lots are developed through a unified site plan.
D.A lot does not have a commercial or industrial land use designation, but: 1.has frontage on a collector or arterial roadway; 2.has a maximum width of one hundred and fifty (150) feet; and 3.is situated between and adjacent to lots with commercial and/or industrial land use designations.	The County may rezone the subject lot to commercial or industrial. This shall apply even if one or both of the adjacent commercial and/or industrial designated lots are located within a municipality.
E.A lot with a commercial land use designation on the FLUA has a portion which is indicated by cross-hatched lines.	The portion of the lot that is cross-hatched: 1.must only be used for water retention, landscaping, and/or at-grade parking; or 2.may be developed as residential based on the underlying residential land use designation.
F. A portion of a lot: 1.was granted commercial or industrial zoning prior to August 4, 1980; and 2.has a commercial or industrial land use designation on more than fifty percent of the lot area.	The County may rezone the entire lot to commercial or industrial. Lots that meet this criteria may not be restricted by the requirements of A through E above; however, the County may impose cross-hatching on the parcel to address compatibility concerns.
G.1. A lot was granted a commercial designation on the FLUA at the time of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan; and 2. its sole frontage is on a local street.	The lot shall be limited to single or double occupancy professional offices; or may be rezoned to commercial or provided: 1.it is combined through a unity of title with a lot which fronts on a collector or arterial roadway; and 2.the lots are developed through a unified site plan.
Note: 'Lot' is defined in the Introduction and Administration Element. The intent of the above language which references rezoning to "commercial or industrial" is meant to grant commercial land use designations and zoning to those parcels located between or adjacent to commercial parcels and grant industrial land use designations and zoning to those parcels located between and adjacent to industrial parcels. Properties utilizing the provisions of A, B, C, or D, above, may be the subject of a County initiated land use amendment after the rezoning.	



MAP LU 1.1

MANAGED GROWTH TIER SYSTEM

- Urban/Suburban Tier
- Revitalization and Redevelopment Overlay
- Exurban Tier
- Rural Tier
- Ag Reserve Tier
- Glades Tier
- United Technologies Area Overlay/North PBC General Aviation Airport
- Conservation
- Urban Service Area Boundary

SOURCES:

PBC PLANNING, ZONING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT
PLANNING DIVISION
PBC DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLAN AMENDMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

PALM BEACH COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAP SERIES

Scale: N.T.S.

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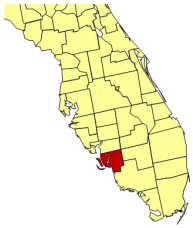
LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA



In 1984, Lee County adopted an entirely new comprehensive plan that contained specific site location standards and policy statements regarding commercial development.

New standards, variations on which are still in use today, were established for the following types of commercial centers:

- Minor commercial (<30,000 SF of floor area), to be located within 300 feet of intersections of local and collector, local and arterial, or collector and collector; or 'at the intersection' of collector and collector or arterial and arterial streets.
- Neighborhood commercial (30,000 to 100,000 SF), to be located 'at the intersection' of collector and arterial or arterial and arterial streets.
- Community commercial (100,000 to 600,000 SF), to be located 'at the intersection' of arterial streets.
- Regional commercial (>400,000 SF), to be located on an arterial between ½ and 2 miles from a freeway.

These categories were based on then-current shopping center types and sizes, which are only one type of commercial development. An early amendment added the following clarification:

- "The location standards . . . shall apply to the following commercial development: shopping centers; free-standing retail or service establishments; restaurants; convenience food stores; post offices; gas stations; car washes; car sales; and other similar retail and service development. These location standards shall not apply to the following: banks and saving and loan establishments (with drive-in facilities); hotel or motels; marinas; general, medical or professional offices; industrial, warehouse or wholesale development; and other similar development."

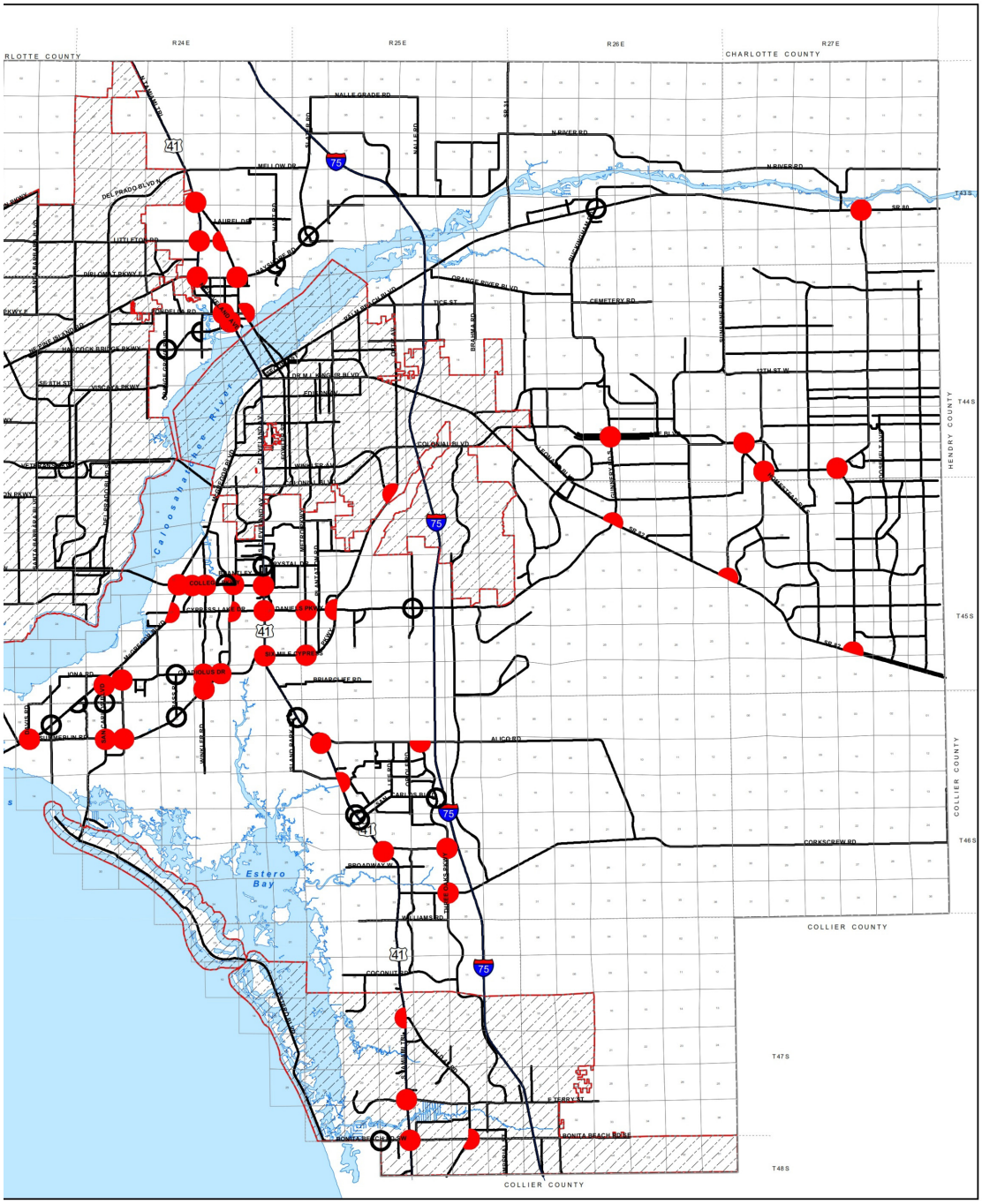
Even with this clarification, this categorization proved overly rigid when applied during the rezoning process, resulting in a variety of exceptions being added over time.

Related policies (since superseded) included:

- *"Commercial development 'at the intersection' shall extend no more than one-quarter mile from the centerline of the intersection and include proper spacing of access points, with the following exception. Commercial development 'at the intersection' may extend beyond one-quarter mile from the intersection, provided that" (a) direct access is provided to the development within one-quarter mile of the intersection; and (b) a parallel access road or frontage road provides access to the intersecting street."*
- *"Application for neighborhood and community commercial zoning and development shall provide a professional market analysis indicating among other things a demonstrated need for commercial development at the proposed location, the types of marketable commercial activities, and the projected trade area needs of the proposed development."*

In 1996, the comprehensive plan was amended to replace the abstract 'local and arterial' or 'collector and collector' standards with a map that identified which specific intersections met the neighborhood commercial and community commercial standards, instead of relying on the previous 'local and collector' and similar designations.

This map, shown on the next page, eliminated the uncertainty caused by occasional reclassifications of collector and arterial streets by transportation planning agencies. This map also provided a more nuanced analysis of suitable commercial locations, including instances where commercial development would be desirable on some but not all quadrants of an intersection.



COMMERCIAL SITE LOCATION STANDARDS

LEGEND

- Intersection meets Neighborhood Commercial Center Standards (Policy 6.1.2.2)
- Intersection meets Neighborhood and Community Commercial Center Standards (Policy 6.1.2.2 and 6.1.2.3)
- City Limits

Notes:

1) Circles designating intersections are not shown at any set scale.

2) This map implements policies 6.1.2.2 and 6.1.2.3. It is not an assurance that commercial zoning will be approved for any particular parcel within the designated intersections. Nor does it supersede the various exceptions to the standards within the plan.

3) All development within the designated intersections must be consistent with the Lee Plan, including the direct access requirements in policies 6.1.2.2 and 6.1.2.3.

4) Commercial development within interchange areas is regulated by policy 6.1.2.9.

LEE COUNTY
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
DIVISION OF PLANNING

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Miles

Map Generated: January 2008
City Limits current to date of map generation

October 28,1994

Lee Plan Map 19

In the intervening years, the Lee County comprehensive plan has been amended to provide additional exceptions, especially where community plans have identified potential commercial locations. Much of the original language supporting the site location standards has been replaced by more generic policy statements which are used during the rezoning process to evaluate development proposals. These policies remain:

- *"Commercial development must be consistent with the location criteria in this policy except where specifically excepted by this policy or by Policy 6.1.7, or in Lehigh Acres by Policy 32.2.4 or located in the Mixed Use Overlay utilizing Chapter 32 – Compact Communities of the Land Development Code."*
- *"The approval of existence of commercial development on one corner of an intersection shall not dictate the development of all corners for commercial development, nor does the existence of commercial development on an arterial dictate that all frontage must be similarly used."*
- *"Prohibit commercial developments from locating in such a way as to open new areas to premature, scattered, or strip development; but permit commercial development to infill on small parcels in areas where existing commercial development would make a residential use clearly unreasonable.*

It has been thirty years since Lee County's site location standards appeared in the comprehensive plan. County planning officials are now proposing to delete the site location map and replace most of the standards with these two policies:

POLICY 3.4.6: *Commercial development approved or existing on one corner of an intersection does not mean all corners are appropriate for commercial or mixed use development. Further, the existence of commercial development on an arterial or collector road does not dictate that all frontages must be used in a similar manner.*

POLICY 3.4.7: *Permit limited commercial uses, agriculturally related services, and other needs of the rural area in non-urban areas as follows:*

a. ***Location:*** *The retail use, including buildings and outdoor sales area, must be located as follows except where this plan provides specific exceptions:*

   1. *At the intersection of an arterial and collector or two arterials with direct access to both intersecting roads. Direct access may be achieved with an internal access road to either intersecting road. On islands with intersecting network of collectors and arterials, commercial development may be located at or near the intersection of local and collector, or local and arterial, or collector and collector roads; and*

   2. *Consistent with the Communities Element;*

b. ***Site Area:*** *Two acres or less; and*

c. ***Range of Gross Floor Area:*** *Less than 30,000 S.F.*

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Arlington County's Columbia Pike corridor is an example of retrofit and revitalization of an aging strip commercial corridor.

Columbia Pike is the historic "main street" of south Arlington County. The first development along the corridor was built to house government workers, in proximity to DC (and later to the Pentagon); commercial areas emerged to serve this residential population. In the 1990s, the primary urban form observed in the 3.5-mile-long corridor was strip commercial development with surface parking, surrounded by aging garden apartments. Existing zoning and development regulations had deterred development. While explosive growth had occurred in much of the D.C. region, the Pike was stuck in time with a large amount of underutilized land.

A *Special Revitalization District* for Columbia Pike was designated on the General Land Use Plan by the County Board in 1986. The goal was to build a safer, cleaner, and more competitive corridor. The goals and vision for this district were defined in *Columbia Pike 2000: A Revitalization Plan,* and later updated in 2002's *Columbia Pike Initiative: A Revitalization Plan*. The plan focused on economic development and commercial revitalization, land use and zoning, urban design, transportation, open space and recreational needs, envisioning a traditional "Main Street" environment. The elements described include:

- Mixed-use development districts (retail, office, residential, cultural)
- Street frontage at a pedestrian scale with articulated ground-floor retail
- Buildings placed at back of sidewalk, oriented to Columbia Pike, and built close together forming a continuous "street wall" characteristic of an urban environment
- Parking located underground or to the rear of buildings
- Appropriate transitions to residential neighborhoods
- Enhanced public and pedestrian transportation, enhanced streetscape

Based on recommendations from this plan, the "Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District" in the GLUP was expanded in 2002. In February 2003, the "Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form Based Code" was adopted by the County Board, codifying Plan elements. The form-based code regulates land development, setting clear controls on building form (height, siting, and building elements), with broader parameters on building use, to shape public space.

The plan and form-based code have unlocked development potential:

- The code, which is optional, provides for a quicker review than the standard County process; in addition, the code increased new development potential for many sites, regulating through building height and massing rather than density, and prescribing mixed-use buildings in previously commercial-only zones.
- Since 2003, 1,500 residential units and 300,000 SF of commercial space were added through redevelopment projects under the new code, including 200 committed affordable units and 64,000 square feet of community uses. Additional sites are currently in various stages of the approvals and construction process.

At left: existing conditions in 2002

At left: 2010, new building under the Plan/ Code

Arlington County GLUP

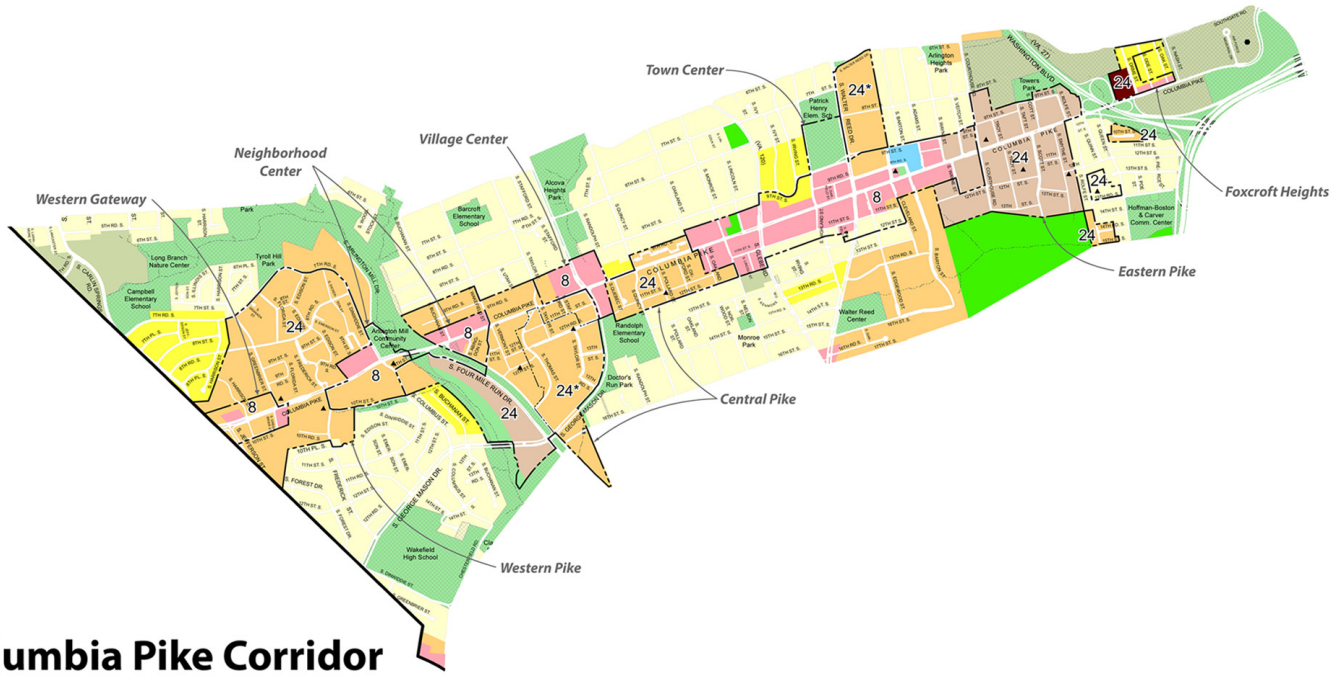
The General Land Use Plan (GLUP), one of several elements of the Comprehensive Plan, is the primary policy guide for future development in Arlington County. Where special conditions or circumstances exist, the County Board may initiate special planning processes for designated areas ("Special Planning Areas"), and amend the GLUP to include a specific district to guide future land use according to the Plan. Columbia Pike is one of these Special Planning Areas (the GLUP for the Columbia Pike Commercial Centers is included on page 14).

Commercial Revitalization

The Arlington County Board has endorsed a land use policy that concentrates high-density development within Transit Corridors and preserves lower-density residential areas throughout the County. The revitalization of commercial corridors to best serve residents in surrounding neighborhoods is a priority. In support of this overall policy, the following is one of five adopted land use goals incorporated into the General Land Use Plan:

5. **Preserve and enhance neighborhood retail areas**. The County encourages the preservation and revitalization of neighborhood retail areas that serve everyday shopping and service needs and are consistent with adopted County plans. The Commercial Revitalization Program concentrates public capital improvements and County services in these areas to stimulate private reinvestment.

The *Commercial Revitalization Program* is a "Special Planning Program" developed to implement the GLUP goals and fuel revitalization efforts through capital improvement projects. Civic associations, neighborhood groups, county commissions or committees, county agencies, business or commercial property owners or individual residents may submit proposals for locations to be considered for funding. Improvements (such as streetscape enhancement, utility undergrounding, or new parks/public spaces) are aimed to complement and stimulate additional investment from the private sector. Improvements to Penrose Square on Columbia Pike were partially funded through this program.



Columbia Pike Corridor

Columbia Pike Commercial Centers

Adopted Plans: Columbia Pike Initiative - A Revitalization Plan - Update 2005; Columbia Pike Form Based Code, 2003.

Corridor Concept: Mixed-use development districts, oriented to Columbia Pike (linked by residential transitional areas and open spaces) and primarily consisting of office, residential, retail, and cultural uses.

Plan/Form Based Code Features:

Town Center (S. Oakland St. to S. Courthouse Rd.):
- Maximum height of 6 stories
- Incorporate historic structures with heights up to 8 stories
- Creation of public square at Adams Square and Fillmore Garden Shopping Center sites

Village Center (S. Taylor St. to S. Randolph St.):
- Maximum height of 6 stories (except northwest corner which has 54 ft. height maximum)
- Day-lighting of Doctor's Run (south of development district)

Neighborhood Center (S. Frederick St. to S. Wakefield St.):
- Maximum height of 4 stories east of Four Mile Run, oriented to park and Columbia Pike
- Maximum height of 6 stories west of Four Mile Run

Western Gateway (County Line to S. Greenbrier St.):
- Maximum height of 6 stories except 10 stories on the south side of Columbia Pike at S. Greenbrier Street

Special Planning District: "Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District"

Neighborhood Conservation Plan Areas: Arlington View (Plan accepted 1964); Penrose (Plan accepted 2004); Arlington Heights (Plan accepted 2008); Douglas Park (Plan accepted 1998); Alcova Heights (Plan accepted 1999); Barcroft (Plan accepted 2008); Claremont (Plan accepted 1990); Columbia Forest (Plan accepted 2004); Columbia Heights West (Plan accepted 2000); Columbia Heights (Plan accepted 2000), Foxcroft Heights (Plan accepted 2009).

Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Areas

Adopted Plans: Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Area Plan, 2012; Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Form Based Code, 2013.

Corridor Concept: Generally residential uses with special provisions for affordable housing within the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Redevelopment District. For purposes of mapping, the special planning district has been divided into three (3) subareas: Western Pike, Central Pike and Eastern Pike which includes Foxcroft Heights.

Special Planning District: "Columbia Pike Special Neighborhoods Revitalization District"

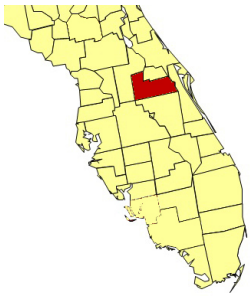
Neighborhood Conservation Plan Areas: Arlington View (Plan accepted 1964); Penrose (Plan accepted 2004); Arlington Heights (Plan accepted 2008); Douglas Park (Plan accepted 1998); Alcova Heights (Plan accepted 1999); Barcroft (Plan accepted 2008); Claremont (Plan accepted 1990); Columbia Forest (Plan accepted 2004); Columbia Heights West (Plan accepted 2000); Columbia Heights (Plan accepted 2000), Foxcroft Heights (Plan accepted 2009).

To view full-size map, visit:

http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2014/03/GLUP-Map-2013.pdf

ORANGE COUNTY

Orange County's Comprehensive Plan *Destination 2030* provides an example of locational criteria for commercial development; there is also guidance for retrofit into mixed-use formats.



Urban Framework

The Urban Framework portion of the plan provides location and development criteria to guide the location of commercial uses:

- The location of commercial development shall be concentrated at major intersections and within Activity Centers and Neighborhood Activity Nodes within the Urban Service Area.
- Guidance is provided to evaluate future land use amendment requests:
    - Criteria is provided for acceptable acreage and square footage of leasable area for different types of commercial (Neighborhood, Village, and Lifestyle Centers, and Wholesale/Retail)
    - The FAR for new commercial development is set at 3.0, unless otherwise restricted by County policy or code (this increased density/intensity is aimed to make more productive use of land)
    - The County may require a market study to validate land use requests
    - Policy states the County is seeking more integrated forms of commercial and non-residential development (see *Urban Strategies*)
- Commercial activity larger than a Neighborhood Center is limited to the Urban Service Area and Growth Centers.
- Village Center Commercial uses shall be located at or near major road intersections where one road is an arterial.
- The full retail/general commercialization of an intersection shall be avoided unless sufficient justification of need is provided. Office, hotel, and multi-family uses can be used to avoid the full commercialization of an intersection.

Specifically related to strip commercial, the plan states:

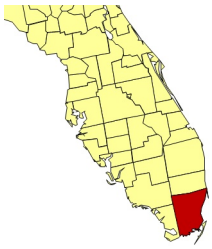
> *FLU1.4.10 Strip commercial land uses shall be defined as commercial uses adjacent to roadways that are located outside the reasonable zone of influence of the intersection to which they relate. They are characterized by individual curb and median cuts and lack visual landscaped buffers. Strip commercial land use patterns shall be avoided by requiring a transition of land uses, encouraging a mix of land uses, or requiring incorporation of a buffer into the development's design. Strip commercial land uses do not include outparcels in shopping centers, malls, or similar developments where access is provided internally from the shopping center/mall or similar development, or via a system of shared or common driveways. More compact, clustered pedestrian and transit-friendly development options shall be encouraged.*

The locational criteria in the Urban Framework section help make future land use choices to scale the amount of commercial development and avoid continuous stretches of strip commercial. However, this section does not address urban design (pedestrian-friendliness, bikability, transit-worthiness, sustainability). The strip commercial policy focuses primarily on vehicular access (curb cuts) but not on other shortcomings of this approach (reliance on autos, visual blight, etc). These topics are addressed in the *Urban Strategies* and *Urban Form* policies.

Mixed-Use Strategies & Activity Centers

Orange County's comprehensive plan contains policies to develop, adopt, and implement mixed-use strategies and incentives; these strategies can be used to retrofit existing strip commercial areas. In addition, the Plan promotes pedestrian-friendly, compact, transit-ready and transit-oriented development in Mixed-Use Development Activity Centers. Although not specifically targeted to retrofit of strip commercial corridors (Activity Centers may be implemented in sites throughout the County), the requirements of this set of policies, specifically design/ development standards and a charrette requirement, render this approach promising to achieve the desired physical results. (For additional information, refer to the Mixed-Use Development case study).

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY



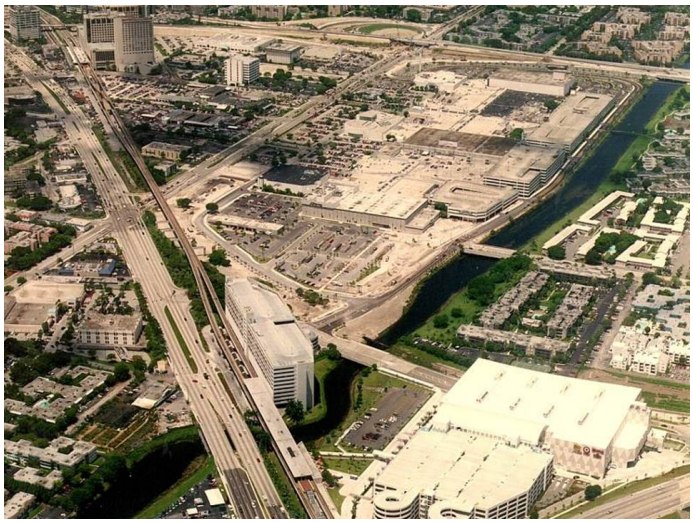
Downtown Kendall, located at the intersection of the US-1 and Kendall Drive corridors in Miami-Dade County, demonstrates the transformation of strip commercial development form into a walkable urban center.

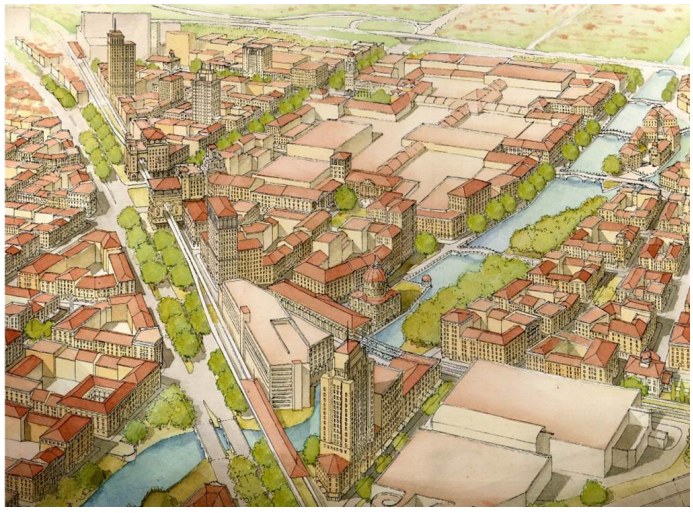
Thirty years ago Kendall Drive was a narrow country road and Dadeland Mall's first buildings were sprouting at the rural edge of a young metropolis. By the 1990s, this location was embedded in the suburban growth that followed, typified by strip commercial development with poor pedestrian accessibility. In addition to major regional roadways, there are two Metrorail stations in the area. The economic vitality of the area was stable, but the suburban setting left the area with a lack of sense of place.

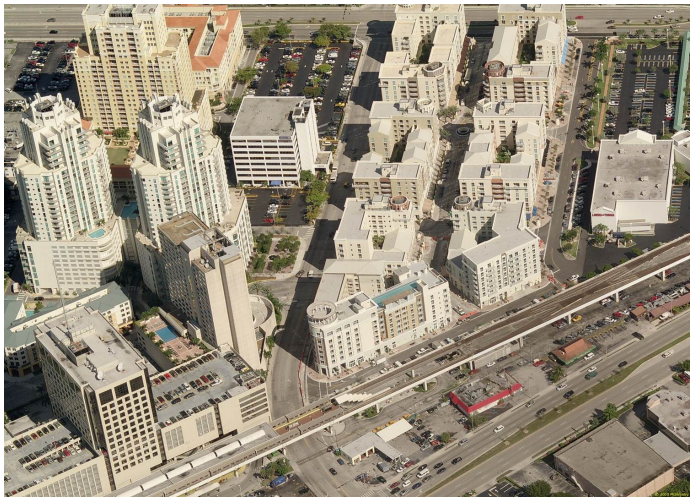
In the early 1990s, the Miami-Dade County Comprehensive Plan designed the Downtown Kendall/ Dadeland area a Regional Activity Center. Requirements included a minimum and maximum density within proximity to transit stations, as well as minimum open space requirements.

A public charrette planning process created a vision for the site that met the Comprehensive Plan requirements. The Downtown Kendall Urban Center District was created as a result to implement the vision and guide new development. This form-based code contains three Regulating Plans: *a Sub-District Plan*, which designates core, center and edge areas to meet Plan density requirements; *a Street Frontage Plan*, which designates frontage types A through E to the network of streets (each designation has a corresponding set of development standards for buildings: build-to location, height, etc.); and a *Designated Open Space Plan*, which ensures the 15% open space Plan requirement is met through new squares and plazas rather than swales and useless open areas. The big ideas in the code include:

- Regulating by specific building placement and design parameters, not just abstract controls such as FAR







Downtown Kendal aerial view, from top to bottom: Existing conditions 1998; Plan Vision; Existing Conditions 2010

- Habitable Space requirement creates pedestrian friendly streets -- no blank walls
- Open space is coherently organized in squares and plazas, not just leftovers
- Building height regulated by stories, not feet; step-back at top of pedestal & pent-house level

Since code adoption, more than 350,000 sf of retail / commercial, 110,000 sf of office space, and more than 3200 new dwelling units in mixed-use settings have been approved. Over 200,000 square feet of commercial square footage, and 2,500 residential units have been built.

The urban form of new development, which includes new buildings that line streets in a walkable urban setting, have been praised, and the project has been featured in numerous publications, including a special issue of Business Week *21 Ideas for the 21st Century*, as a case study for retrofitting sprawl. However, much of this transformation has occurred on private property; early plans to transform Kendall Drive into a walkable boulevard remain unrealized due to resistance from implementing agencies, which compromises the functionality of buildings which directly front on auto-oriented thoroughfares. In addition, the FBC is silent on the placement of mechanical equipment, and does not include strong architectural controls – which has allowed some less desirable implementation choices.

Downtown Kendall (master plan and code completed in 1999) served as an important precedent; building upon its success, the County refined it's approach for "Activity Centers". The current Plan identifies "Urban Centers" of differing scales; from the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP):

> *Diversified urban centers are encouraged to become hubs for future urban development intensification in Miami-Dade County, around which a more compact and efficient urban structure will evolve. These Urban Centers are intended to be moderate- to high-intensity design-unified areas which will contain a concentration of different urban functions integrated both horizontally and vertically. Three scales of centers are planned: Regional, the largest, notably the downtown Miami central business district; Metropolitan Centers such as the evolving Dadeland area; and Community Centers which will serve localized areas. Such centers shall be characterized by physical cohesiveness, direct accessibility by mass transit service, and high quality urban design.*

The current CDMP contains guidelines for new development in Urban Centers such as:

- Uses and Activities: a mix of uses to be provided, including requirements for residential uses;
- Streets and Public Spaces: streets to be designed for pedestrians as well as vehicles; streets create a network of blocks; minimum of 15% of site area for public open spaces;
- Parking: shared parking is encouraged; reductions from standard parking requirements authorized where there is a complimentary mix of uses and nearby transit stations;
- Buildings: buildings shall be built to the sidewalk edge to frame the street ; continuous blank walls at street level are prohibited; weather protection by awnings, canopies, arcades, and colonnades provided in areas of significant pedestrian activity;
- Density and Intensity: Range of average FAR and max densities established. In addition, minimum densities and intensities set within designated Community Urban Centers and near transit stations should not be lower than provided in Policy 7F:

  > ***LU-7F**. Residential development around rail rapid transit stations should have a minimum density of 15 dwelling units per acre (15 du/ac) within 1/4 mile walking distance from the stations and 20 du/ac or higher within 700 feet of the station, and a minimum of 10 du/ac between 1/4 and 1/2 mile walking distance from the station. Business and office development intensities around rail stations should produce at least 75 employees per acre within 1/4 mile walking distance from the station, 100 employees per acre within 700 feet, and minimum of 50 employees per acre between 1/4 and 1/2 mile walking distance from the station. Where existing and planned urban services and facilities are adequate to accommodate this development as indicated by the minimum level-of-service standards and other policies adopted in this Plan, and where permitted by applicable federal and State laws and regulations, these densities and intensities shall be required in all subsequent development approvals.*

As pioneered in the Kendall example, Urban Centers with an adopted area plan have these CMDP guidelines codified in a form-based zoning overlay district to direct new development.

BUILT EXAMPLES

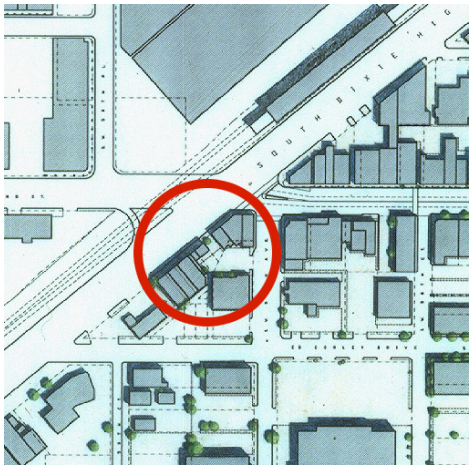
Corridor Infill in South Miami

The Amster Building is an example of a small increment of mixed-use infill on a shallow lot made possible through a change in the land development regulations.

This area of South Miami has a number of small lots that front the primary north-south corridor (US 1). This parcel was unbuildable under the previous zoning, which required parking to be provided on each lot. In 1992 a form-based code was adopted for South Miami's downtown; among other changes, the new code allows for shared parking and transit-proximity parking reductions, allowing small lots such as this to be developed.

The code also requires new development to be pedestrian-friendly and contribute to a connected downtown commercial district. For example, it requires buildings to be located at the back of the sidewalk (with any on-site parking to the rear), and doors and windows (not blank walls) to face the street. The Amster Building was the first "main street" type building constructed on US-1 in over 50 years.

Right: Existing Conditions, 1992



Below: The Amster Building on US 1

Mixed-Use Development in Atlanta

Atlanta's Edgewood retail district, located about three miles east of downtown, provides an example of national big-box retailers fitting into a walkable urban center following a master plan and form-based design principles.

The national tenant mix found here is similar to what can be found in Hillsborough County:

- Target
- Lowe's
- Best Buy
- Bed Bath & Beyond
- Barnes & Noble
- Kroger
- Ross
- Office Depot,

What is different is design. The urban form prioritizes the needs of pedestrians on the street side, with buildings lining the back of wide sidewalks, street trees separating pedestrians from moving vehicles, and awnings and canopies providing shelter from the elements. Parking is located to the rear, in both surface lots and structures.

On the main street, shopfront buildings with upper stories contain office, retail, and residences. There are also new residential buildings on side streets which transition to adjacent neighborhoods.

BEST PRACTICES

Ten Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Strips

In 2001, the Urban Land Institute published *Ten Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Strips*. This prescient report proposed many ideas that have since moved into mainstream public-sector planning.

The ten principles are:

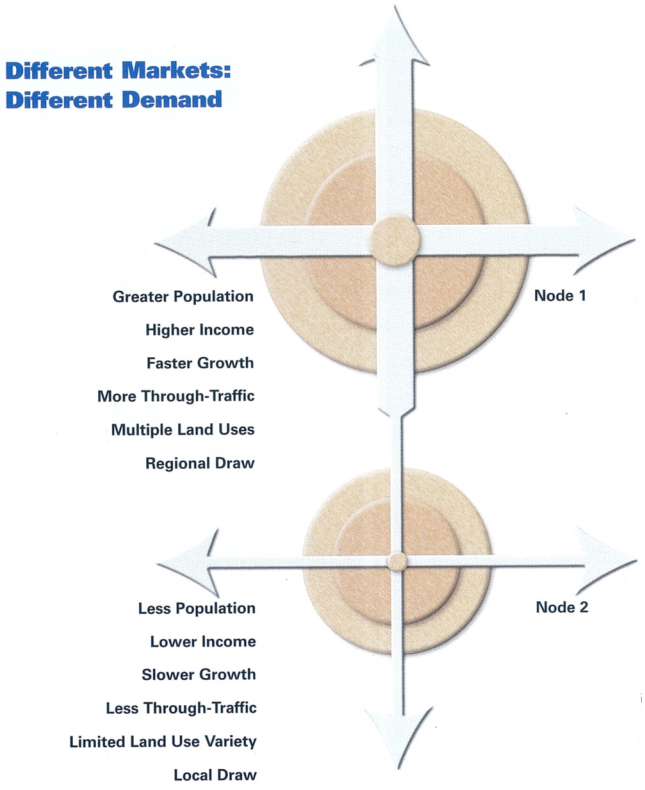
- Ignite Leadership and Nurture Partnership
- Anticipate Evolution
- Know the Market
- Prune Back Retail-Zoned Land
- Establish Pulse Nodes of Development
- Tame the Traffic
- Create the Place
- Diversify the Character
- Eradicate the Ugliness
- Put Your Money (and Regulations) Where Your Policy Is

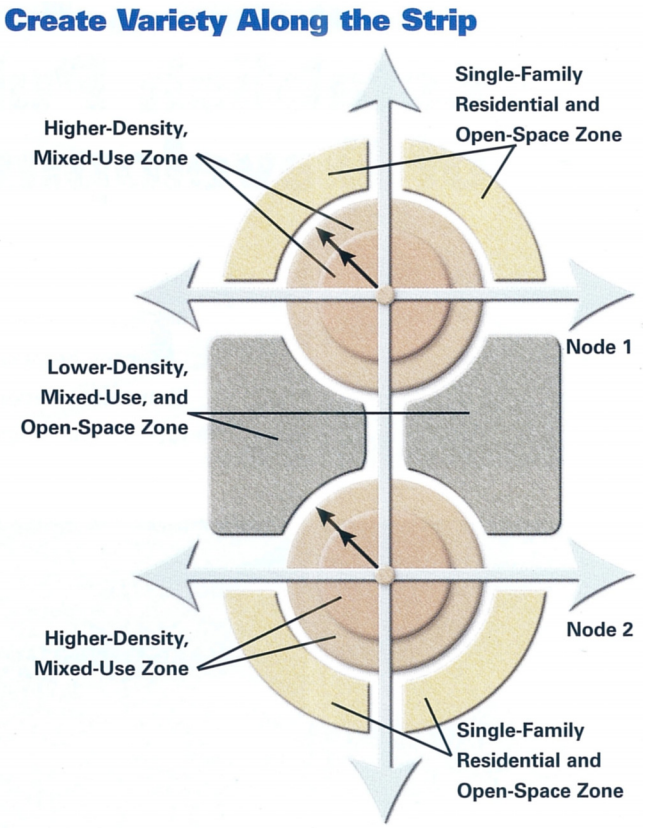
> The zoning technique used by most suburban communities is to designate everything along the arterial highway strip for commercial uses and wait for retailers and developers to gradually fill in all of the individual sites. In this type of environment, new development sprawls outward even as sites closer to the city remain vacant and older retail centers deteriorate. Retail overzoning thus has had the effect of extending strips prematurely in discontinuous and inefficient ways as developers leapfrog over one another onto sites farther and farther away from the city.
>
> By pruning back the amount of land zoned for retail, suburban communities can stimulate retail growth, encourage revitalization, and improve the quality of their shopping strips. It simply is not necessary for every major parcel along every arterial to be zoned for commercial or retail use.
>
> *--- Ten Principles*

Here are some quotations from this report that are relevant in Hillsborough County:

- Recognize that a corridor will likely be composed of many distinct neighborhoods with different populations, incomes, growth rates, and levels of access. These differences should lead to wide variations in activity and character along different parts of the strip.
- Structure zoning in mature strips to encourage denser forms of development that can be reached by multiple access modes.
- Reserve some of the previously zoned retail land for housing, office space, civic uses, recreational facilities, and open space.
- The success of strip commercial development is predicated on free and plentiful parking. Unfortunately, parking lots commonly dominate the landscape of the strip. Conventional practice requires that every development along the strip provide for all of its parking needs on its own site between its structure and the roadway, even though this is inefficient and contributes substantially to the wasteland aesthetics of today's commercial strip.
- Pedestrian connections should be provided … along corridors that are designated for future retail growth.
- Transit stations obviously are not the solution to most strips' problems, but some strips have matured and densified enough to become urban places with opportunities for transit. In fact, it is the increased density that makes transit feasible and reduces dependence on the automobile.
- Surround big boxes with "sleeves" of retail and service uses to minimize blank walls and dead spaces.
- As development pressures increase and land values rise along suburban strips, the character of the strips should densify and diversify, and mixed-use development should become an essential part of this change. This will add a new and exciting diversity to the strip, bring new services, create a more lively human dimension, and reinforce a sense of place.

- Accommodate a range of nonretail uses, including housing, hotels, offices, civic uses, and cultural, entertainment, and recreational activities.
- Arrange the diverse land uses in ways that encourage walking and discourage driving for short trips and errands.
- Rezone designated areas in mature strips for urban mixed-use projects and higher-density housing.
- Landscape the main arterial with mature trees [and] plants in the median.
- Be creative with parking by placing it in courtyards, behind buildings, above stores, and in innovative arrangements as properties are redeveloped in new and denser configurations; this will reduce the visual blight of endless parking lots.
- Design and landscape parking areas so that cars are in a park rather than that trees are in a parking lot.
- Create a secondary street pattern where appropriate, and modify setback requirements to pull retail and restaurant facilities close to the arterial and secondary streets.
- The public sector must be prepared to make investments and take actions to support its own public policies for reinventing suburban strips.
- Design zoning regulations that facilitate private developers in implementing the public's strategy. Zoning must be clearly linked to the public's implementation plans, including effective by-right development standards as well as transfer of development rights in mature strips. Not every developer has the wherewithal to go through a rezoning or a replanning effort.





Restructuring the Commercial Strip

In 2010, EPA's Smart Growth Program commissioned *Restructuring the Commercial Strip: A Practical Guide for Planning the Revitalization of Deteriorating Strip Corridors* to help communities revitalize these corridors, re-use land already served by infrastructure, and expand economic activity.

Prior to commissioning this report, EPA had assisted five communities with corridor development and redevelopment issues. Each effort was summarized in this guidebook, with a link to the formal report for each community.

This guidebook was then prepared to lay out specific steps communities can follow to revitalize their aging and often underused commercial corridors.

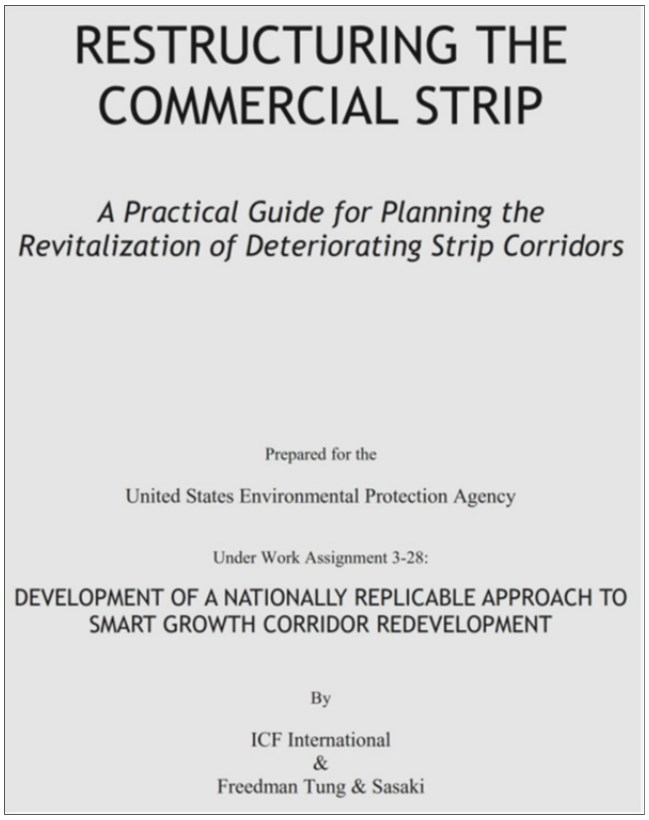
A brief history is provided about the advent, reign, and dissolution of America's commercial strips , which today often have prosperous businesses at major crossroads and disinvestment on sites in between. The "in-between" sites are often hampered by inflexible lots, a legacy of low-quality construction, and competition from an oversupply of vacant retail-zoned sites.

The guidebook recommends a deliberate process of restructuring aging commercial strips into a form which property owners, developers, and communities will once again invest.

Complementary strategies are required. The first is restructuring the physical form of retail activity from a linear to a nodal pattern, based on a hierarchy of crossroads locations and industry-standard shopping centers formats. Another is redesigning the public right-of-way to serve the new pattern.

The guidebook provides specific principles for reconfiguring typical auto-oriented superblock shopping centers into mixed-use developments that can be served by transit and are comfortable for pedestrians.

Segments between major crossroads often lose value over time. However, where these segments have stable clusters of specialized auto-accessed uses such as car dealers, motels, or quasi-industrial uses, planning should bolster them and encourage continued investment.



When retail uses have been out-competed by better locations, new uses and development types may be the answer to restoring value. Residential and office uses are often the most viable and predominant alternate use for segments experiencing disinvestment. These uses are easily integrated with the neighborhoods they border and they don't need to compete with crossroads locations for shoppers and retail investors,

> In the post-strip suburban city, it is easier for corridor frontages to attract value by integrating with the neighborhoods they border than by trying to compete with far-away crossroads properties for shoppers and retail investors.
>
> *--- Restructuring the Commercial Strip*

In older communities, zoning often persists from the heyday of the strip when the highest and best use was assumed to be the same for the crossroads as for the segments in between. Typical commercial-only strip zoning leaves property owners in the segments with limited options, as rezoning is often a barrier to reinvestment.

Residential uses can simply be added to commercial zoning districts. A more effective technique would be to replace underperforming commercial zoning with residential zoning on segments that are well-suited for housing. Without the anticipation of a lucrative (but unlikely) purchase by a retail developer, residential investment will occur sooner.

The new zoning should permit a wide range of housing types including single-family homes, duplexes, attached or stacked townhomes, courtyard housing, and flats to accommodate a variety of incomes and family structures.

Compatibility of building types is the key to mixing uses in these segments. Building type compatibility can only be ensured by establishing and enforcing a development code that offers flexibility of use but is quite specific with regard to physical form (the opposite of most strip zoning codes).

> Re-making the corridor to put housing on frontage parcels is an opportunity to finish the residential neighborhood—to transform it from a place that ends with dumpsters to one that is bounded by housing and punctuated by the neighborhood centers.... Residents in strip corridor-abutting neighborhoods would typically support a plan that would reduce or eliminate noise, odor, and privacy impacts of strip development by replacing it with properly designed housing
>
> *--- Restructuring the Commercial Strip*

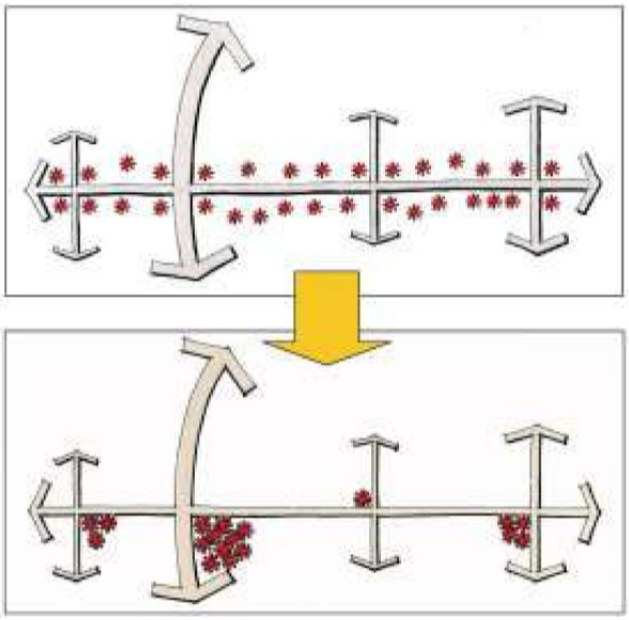


Figure15. Diagram illustrating the essence of the shift from linear strip retail (top) to retail clustered at primary crossroads. Image: Freedman Tung & Sasaki

The development code must establish the characteristics and positioning of building types to ensure that all permitted uses are good neighbors to each other and particularly to a potential residential development. The same setbacks, building orientation, buffering devices, and architectural consistency required for corridor-fronting housing must be applied to office, lodging, live-work, and any permitted commercial uses within the segment.

Corridor zoning should be organized by center and segment, instead of by commercial or residential. These regulatory changes would promote lasting value of the entire corridor.

The guidebook also provides specific suggestions for restructuring the right-of-way to match the anticipated private redevelopment. The guidebook ends with practical observations about the role of local government in orchestrating the restructuring of strip commercial corridors.

This guidebook describes very specific planning and coding techniques designed to be used on specific strip corridors. The concepts behind the techniques are broadly applicable and could be introduced at the comprehensive planning stage.

APPENDIX B

CASE STUDIES & BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

The Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission is preparing updates to the comprehensive plans for Tampa, Temple Terrace, Plant City, and unincorporated Hillsborough County.

A critical task is improving the methods these plans currently use to promote mixed-use development. This appendix summarizes research conducted to that end.

Mixed-Use Development

Until the 1950s, mixed-use development didn't have a name because most development didn't segregate large expanses of land into pods restricted to a single use. It wasn't unusual for block upon block to be dedicated to one use, but proximity and easy access to complementary uses was taken for granted.

Florida's comprehensive planning program is generally supportive of mixed-use development. State planning statutes repeatedly encourage mixed use development (F.S. Chapter 163, Part II). Yet without noting the irony, these same statutes require local governments to designate residential and commercial zones separately on their future land use maps. (F.S. 163.3177(6)(a)(10)a).

> Suburban planning is all about separation and segregation of uses: buffers, enormous setbacks, masking, and high speeds
> Urban planning, by stark contrast, strives for mixed and shared use, permeability, modest speeds, and compact dimensions.
>
> *--- Dom Nozzi*

> Palm Beach County Policy 2.2.2-a:
> "In order to discourage strip commercial development, to limit commercial development to nodes, to foster interconnectivity, and to promote the development of innovated mixed use projects inside the Urban Service Area, all new commercial future land use designations shall meet one of the following location requirements . . ."

This Appendix

The Planning Commission's consulting team identified a wide variety of methods used in comprehensive plans from other communities to encourage mixed use development. Brief case studies are presented in the following pages for the following jurisdictions:

- Southeast Lee County (new mixed-use communities on greenfield sites)
- El Paso TX (variety of techniques)
- Miami-Dade County (designated "Urban Centers")
- Gainesville (variety of techniques)
- Austin TX (mapped growth areas coupled with incentives)
- Orange County, FL (mixed-use corridors and activity centers)
- Sarasota County (new villages outside the urban service boundary)
- Sarasota County (mixed-use planning)

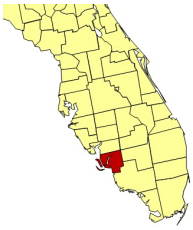
After the case studies, this document summarizes best practices suggested by others:

- Oregon's *Commercial and Mixed-Use Development – Code Handbook*
- ULI's *Mixed-Use Development Handbook*

The case studies and best practices helped the Planning Commission team formulate policy proposals to promote mixed-use development. The case studies and best practices are provided here for reference.

CASE STUDIES

LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA



Lee County's comprehensive plan received a major refinement in 2010 when a new plan was adopted for the undeveloped quadrant of the county south of Lehigh Acres and east of I-75.

Like Sarasota 2050, this plan provides an optional incentive-based process that would allow major landowners to consolidate their development rights and build compact mixed-use communities while permanently preserving open spaces.

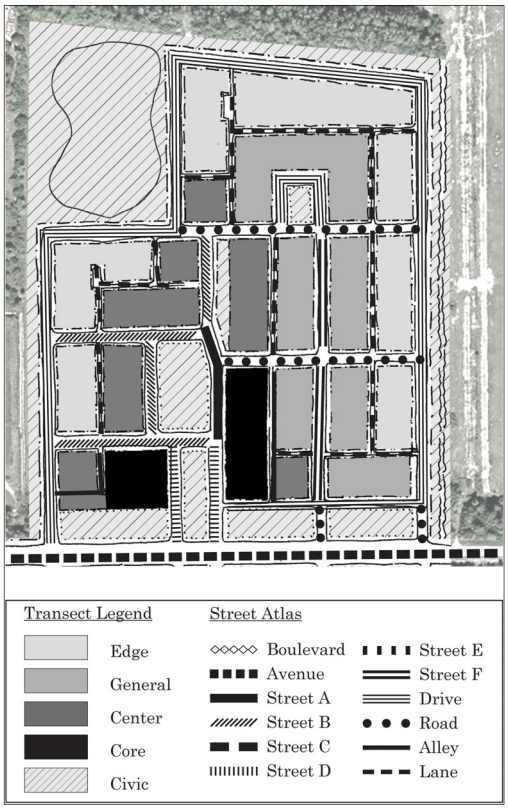
An overlay on the future land use map, shown on the next page, designates five potential mixed-use communities along the northern and western edges of Lee County's southeast quadrant.

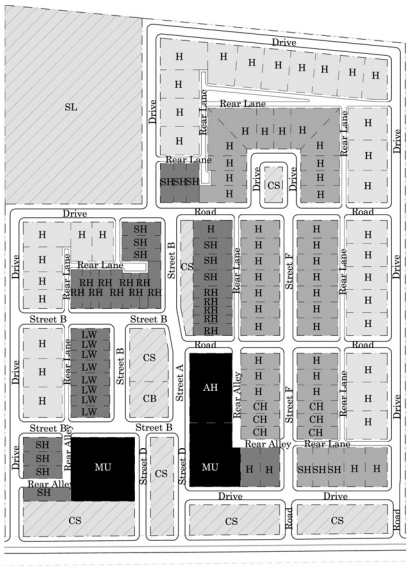
This plan does not set fixed percentages of uses that each mixed-use community must meet when site plans are prepared and reviewed. County commissioners wanted to incentivize mixed-use development by removing potential obstacles to approval.

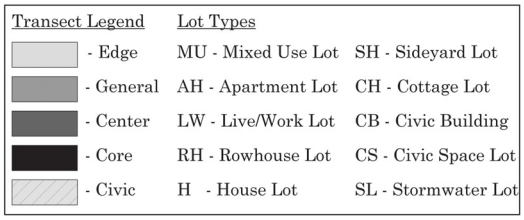
In place of numerical criteria, the land development code includes a conceptual regulating plan for each mixed-use community that includes multiple transect zones and a walkable block network (see upper right plan). Developers choosing to use or modify this regulating plan do not need to rezone their land; they submit a detailed regulating plan like the one shown on the lower right, which can be approved administratively. Developers may choose rezoning if they want to deviate considerably.

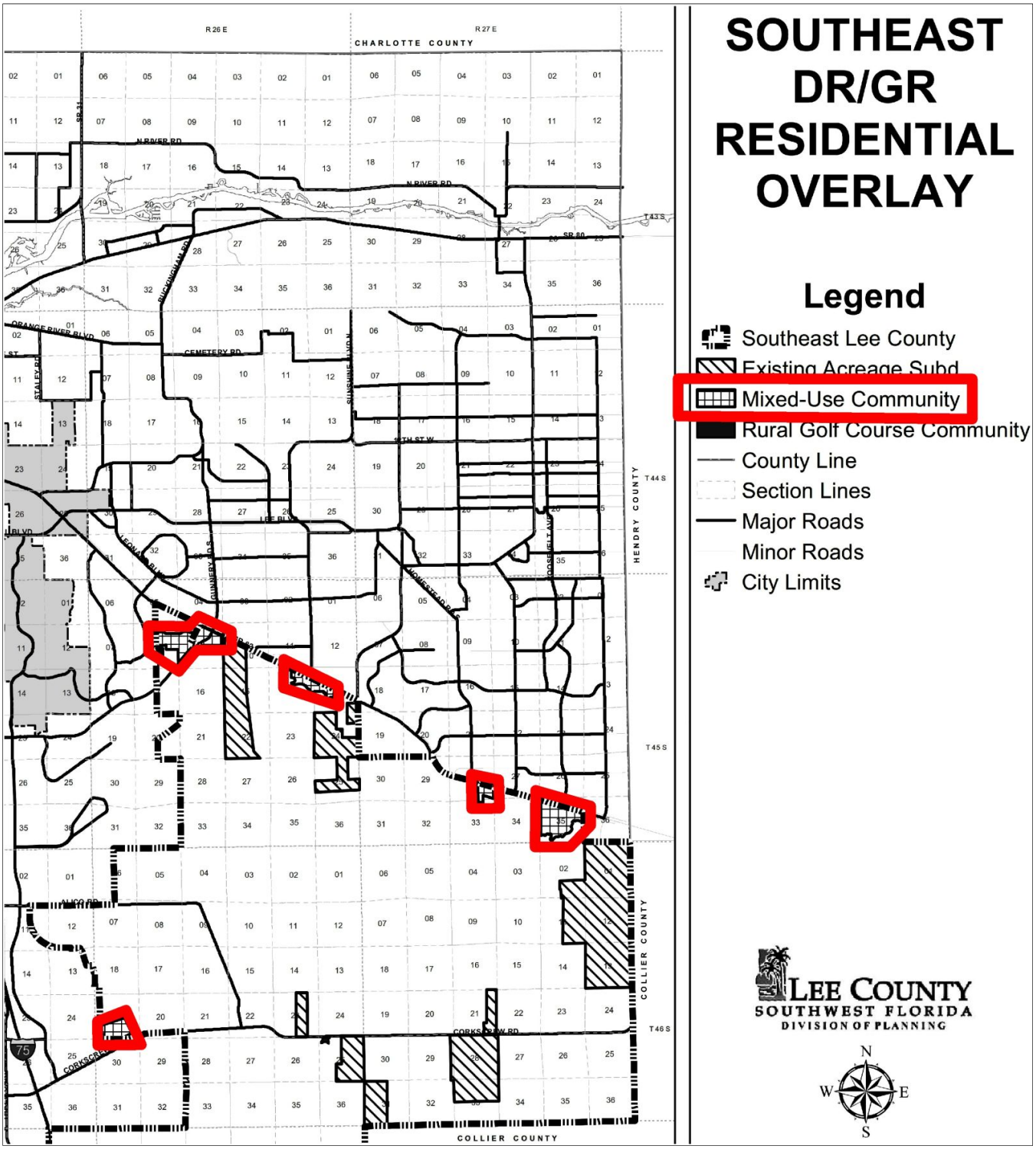
Each conceptual regulating plan includes several different transect zones and a variety of walkable street types chosen from a pre-approved palette of types. Without rezoning, developers may alter the transect zone assignments provided the diversity of transect zones is not eliminated; and they may modify block sizes and shapes provided the blocks continue to meet the code's standards.

This system was developed to avoid artificial percentages of different uses, while still ending up with a mix of uses in each community and precluding a monoculture of any single housing type. Under this system, portions of each community can be developed by different parties instead of by a single developer, with the regulating plan ensuring that the overall diversity and walkability will be maintained.








SOUTHEAST DR/GR RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY
Legend
Southeast Lee County
Existing Acreage Subd
Mixed-Use Community
Rural Golf Course Community
County Line
Section Lines
Major Roads
Minor Roads
City Limits
CHARLOTTE COUNTY
HENDRY COUNTY
COLLIER COUNTY
R 26 E
R 27 E
T 43 S
T 44 S
T 45 S
T 46 S
LEE COUNTY
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
DIVISION OF PLANNING
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EL PASO, TEXAS

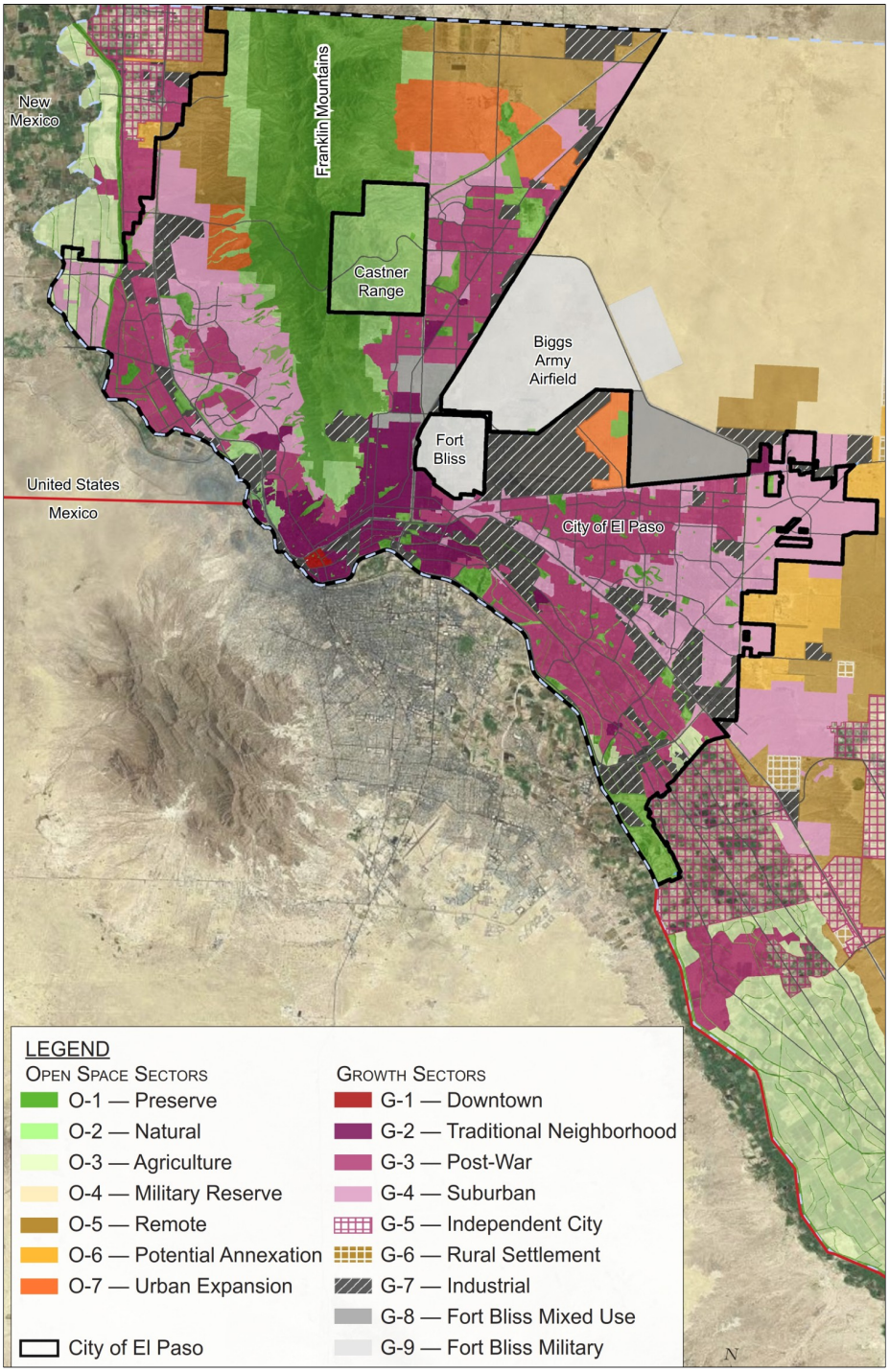
The City of El Paso, Texas, adopted *Plan El Paso* in 2012, an entirely new comprehensive plan for this border city of 650,000 residents. Many aspects of this plan strongly support mixed-use development and redevelopment. Several examples are provided on the following pages.

Future Land Use Map

An entirely new future land use map was created for *Plan El Paso*.

One distinguishing feature was the elimination of most of the prior zoning-type designations that had specified a single use of land (residential, commercial, etc.).

In their place, this map identified a series of 'open-space sectors' for land that would not be developed over the life of the plan, and another series of 'growth sectors' that varied by the character and intensity of existing and proposed land uses.



Design Guidance

Plan El Paso contained specific 'design guidance' for the most common growth sectors. Summaries are shown below for the "Traditional Neighborhood" growth sector, which applies to areas developed prior to World War II, and the "Suburban" growth sector, which applies to modern single-use residential subdivisions and shopping centers.

G-2 – Traditional Neighborhood: This sector includes the remainder of central El Paso as it existed through World War II. Blocks are small and usually have rear alleys; buildings directly faced streets; schools, parks, and small shops are integrated with residential areas. This sector is well-suited for use of the SmartCode as a replacement for current zoning when planned in conjunction with specific neighborhood plans or identified in this Comprehensive Plan.

Design Guidance: G-2 neighborhoods already have walkable thoroughfare grids, a mix of uses and housing types, historic buildings, parks, and a strong sense of character. The City's priorities are improving public infrastructure, restoring any abandoned buildings, and infilling empty lots and parking lots with street-oriented buildings.

Many G-2 neighborhoods are challenged by recent, auto-oriented development that turns its back to the street. Many of the new buildings feature blank walls toward the street or poorly proportioned façades that contribute little to the public realm. These buildings could be improved with windows and doors that add visibility, openness, light, and natural supervision to the sidewalk. Restoring a continuous street frontage will restore the sense of place in older neighborhoods.

Design References:

- Urban Design Element of this plan.
- *Connecting El Paso*: See pages 3.4 through 3.5, 3.11, 4.11 through 4.27, and A.7 through A.12.

G-4 – Suburban: This sector applies to modern single-use residential subdivisions and office parks, large schools and parks, and suburban shopping centers. This sector is generally stable but would benefit from strategic suburban retrofits to supplement the limited housing stock and add missing civic and commercial uses.

Design Guidance: Suburban retrofits usually take one of two forms. The first is new development on vacant skipped-over tracts, in which case the design guidance is similar to the O-6 and O-7 sectors. The other form is major redevelopment of well-located but underutilized land, typically obsolete shopping centers or industrial sites. Occasionally this redevelopment is carried out in a single stroke, but usually it occurs incrementally as the market arises, through the creation of new streets and blocks and the replacement of existing buildings with new street-oriented buildings. Additional buildings fill in empty lots that create the "missing teeth" along the streetwall.

New development should include a mix of uses, including housing, offices, and stores. Street connections are made to nearby neighborhoods along with streetscape improvements and the addition of green and civic spaces.

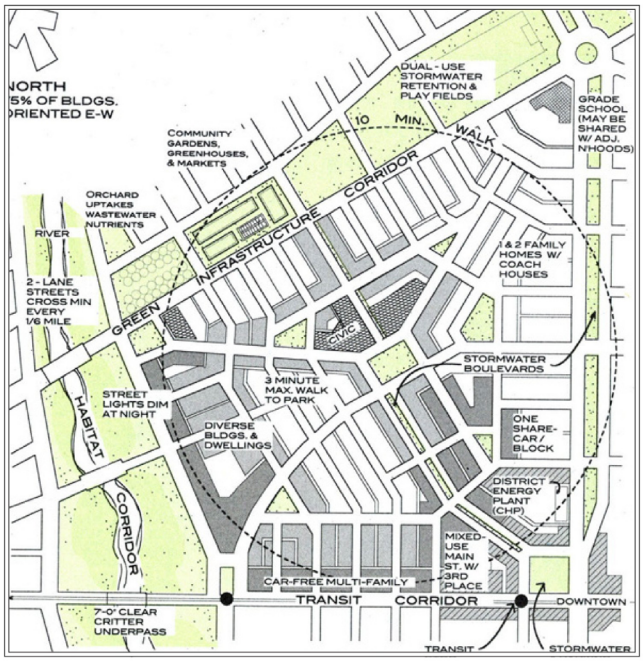
Design References:

- Urban Design Element of this plan.
- *Connecting El Paso*: See pages 3.6 through 3.10; 4.28 through 4.39; and A.13 through A.16.

Community Design Manual

A heavily illustrated community design manual was included as an appendix to this plan. This manual explained and illustrated five basic components of great neighborhoods:

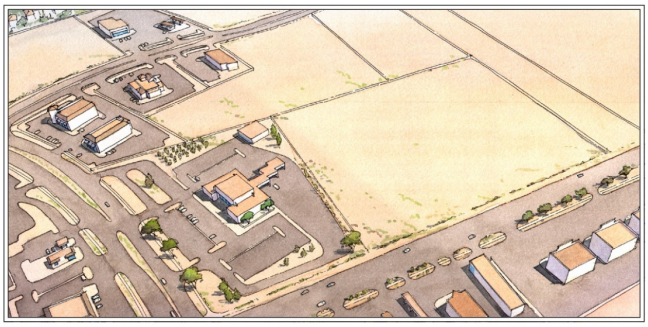
- Identifiable center and edge for each neighborhood
- Walkable size
- Mix of land uses and housing types, with opportunities for shopping and workplaces close to home
- Integrated network of walkable streets
- Special sites reserved for civic purposes



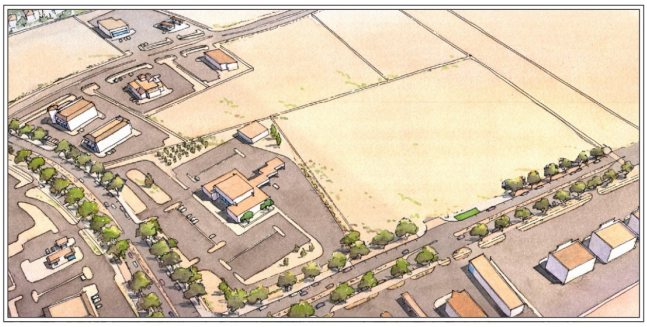
From *Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design with Nature*
This Sustainable Neighborhood diagram, which is an adaptation of Clarence Perry's 1929 illustration, shows how the traditional neighborhood block, coupled with new infrastructure, an added mix and density of housing, and new transit modes can serve our modern needs.

Urban Design Element

Plan El Paso's urban design element combines goals and objectives with illustrative plans for a dozen places with specific problems or opportunities for growth and redevelopment, such as a potential transit-oriented development site and commercial strips that could evolve into much more.

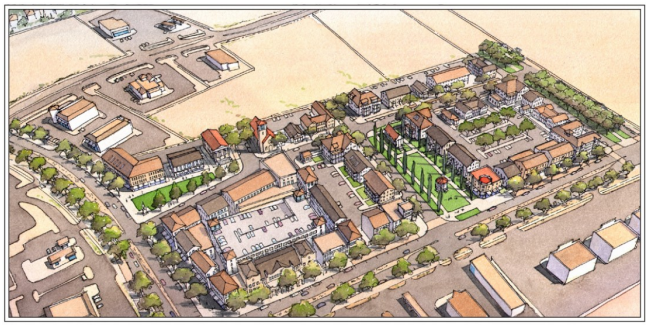


Existing Conditions: Suburban commercial development



Step 1: Adding trees, sidewalks, and on-street parking in the public ROW

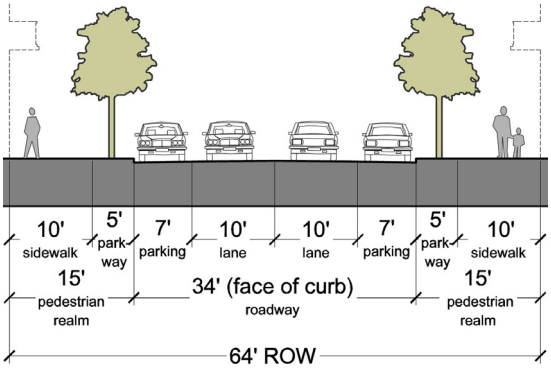
Step 2: Initial private investment in street-oriented infill development

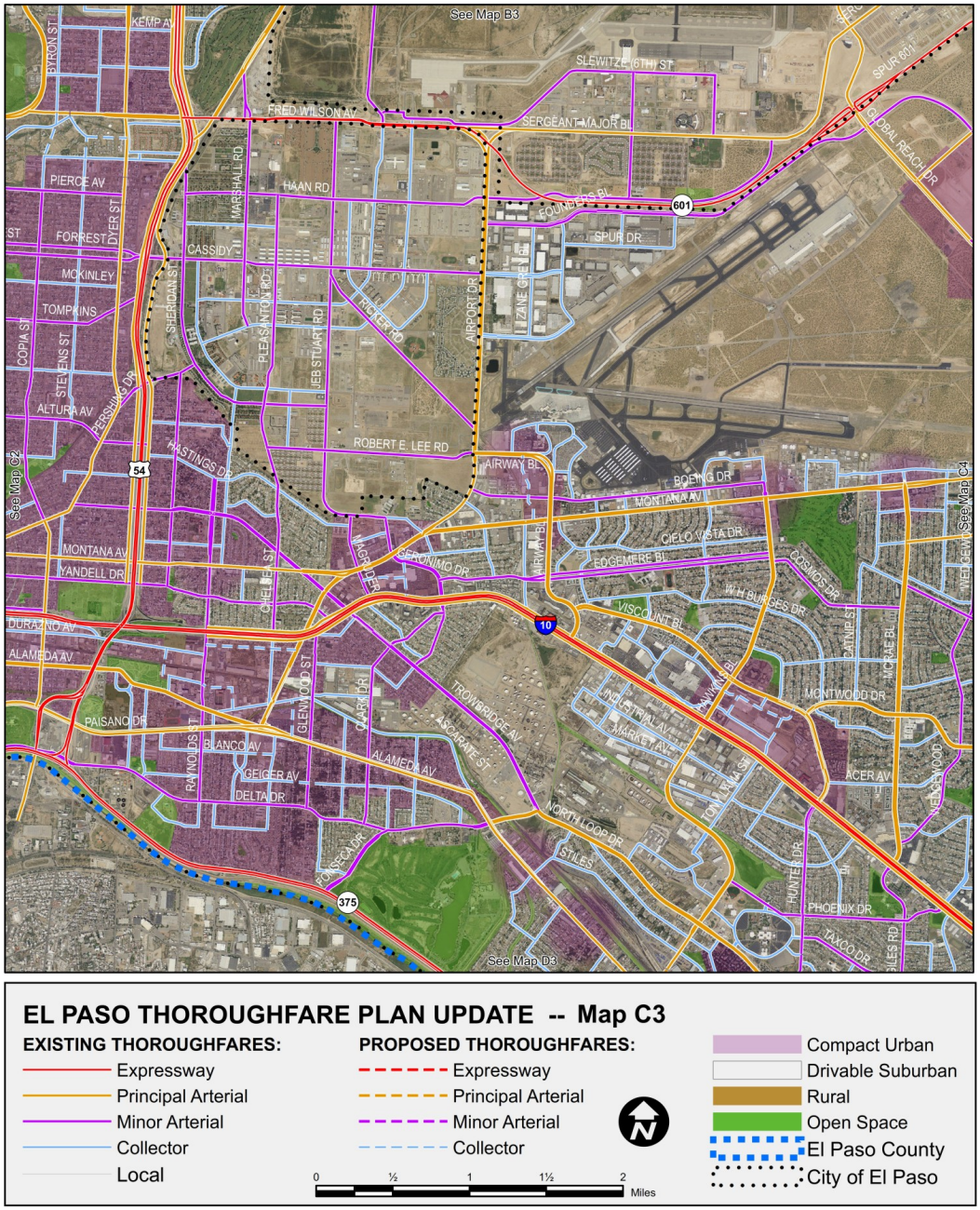


Step 3: Incremental infill links seamlessly to previous development

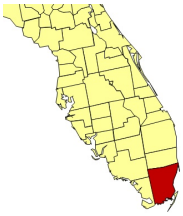
Thoroughfare Plan

To match the design of new and retrofitted streets with the character of development, El Paso's new Thoroughfare Plan was based on the *Plan El Paso*'s future land use map. The growth and open-space sectors were grouped to identify areas where streets should have **urban character** (slower speeds, curbs, on-street parking), **suburban character** (faster speeds, bike lanes, turn lanes), or **rural character** (swales, trails). The Thoroughfare Plan created cross-sections for each character type.





MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

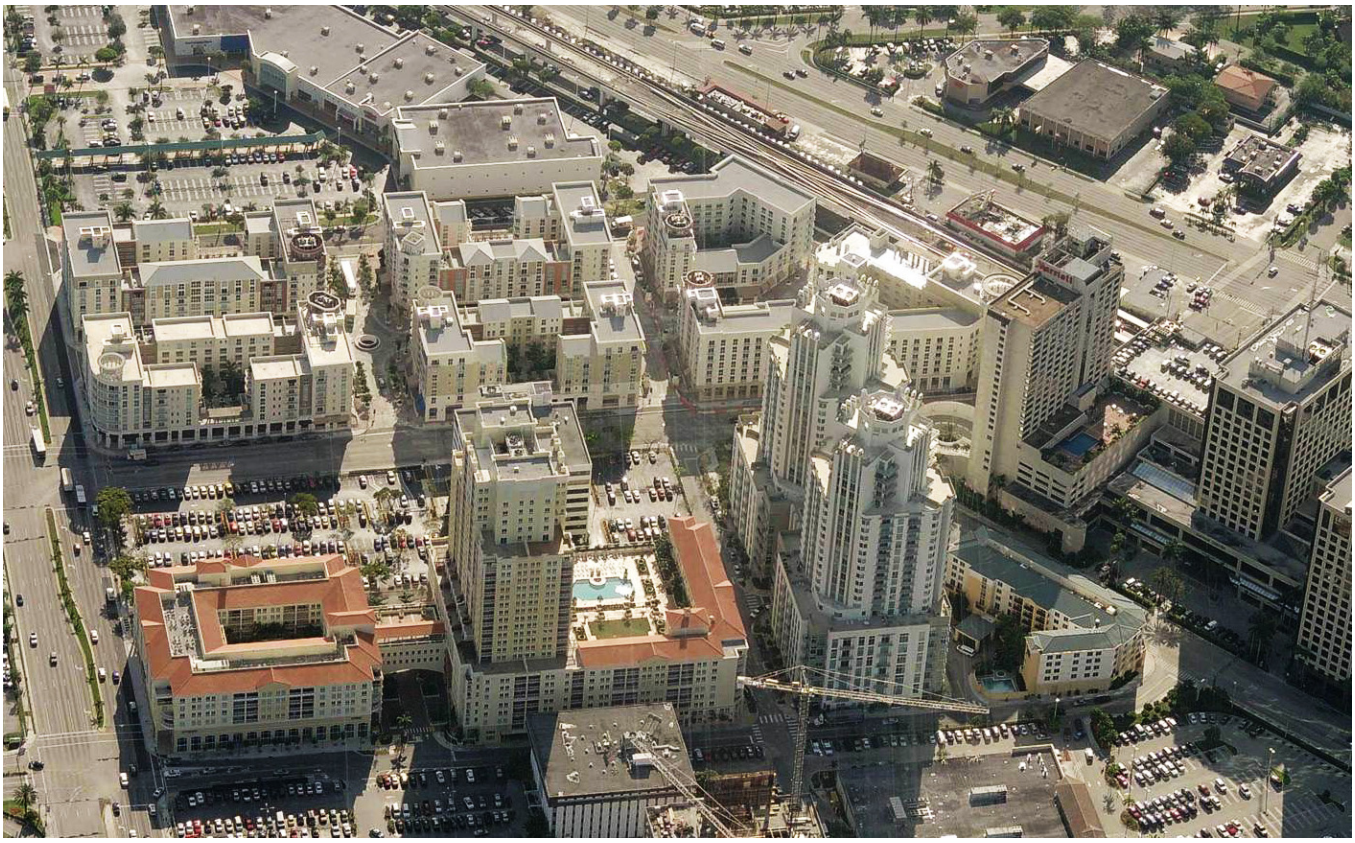


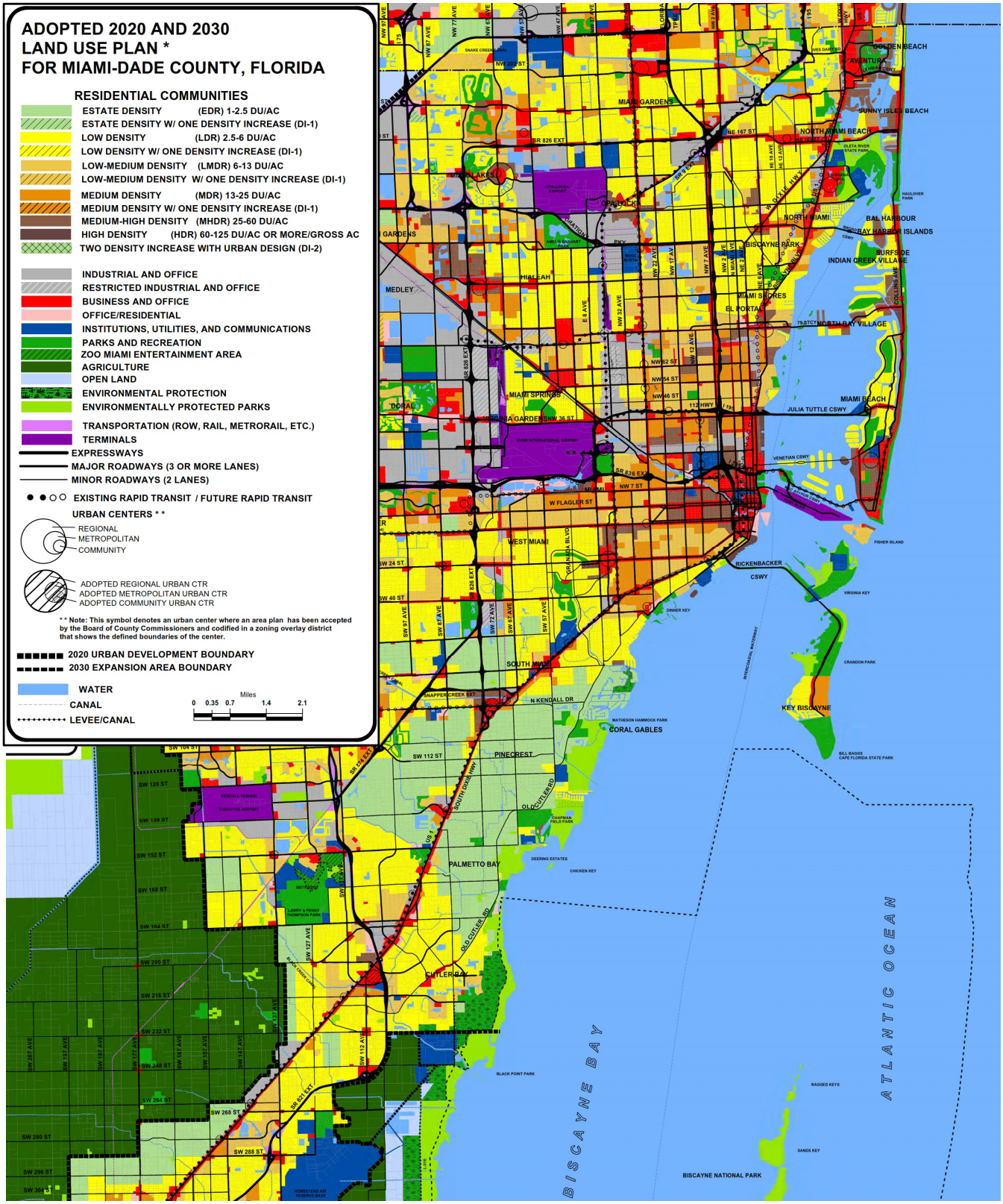
In the early 1990s, many communities in Miami-Dade County were experiencing rapid development, and conventional suburban zoning standards were in place throughout the region. In an effort to allow higher density and to accommodate development with a mix of land uses, the county altered the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Development Master Plan to designate "Activity Centers", which has been refined in the current plan as "Urban Centers."

"*Urban Centers*" are defined as "*…moderate- to high-intensity design-unified areas which will contain a concentration of different urban functions integrated both horizontally and vertically*." There are three types of Urban Centers, which range in scale (from large to small): Regional Activity Centers, Metropolitan Urban Centers, and Community Urban Centers. Each type has a minimum FAR and a maximum density. The land within each Urban Center is characterized by being located in the core, the center, or along the edge.

Specific language in the Plan encourages shared parking, prohibits blank walls, and notes that buildings should be built to the sidewalk edge in these areas. A diversified mix of uses is prescribed in all Urban Centers including: retail, business, professional services, hotels, restaurants, recreation, entertainment, public space, and moderate-to-high density residential uses.

> *"The locations of urban centers and the mix and configuration of land uses within them are designed to encourage convenient alternatives to travel by automobile, to provide more efficient land use than recent suburban development forms, and to create identifiable "town centers" for Miami-Dade's diverse communities. These centers shall be designed to create an identity and a distinctive sense of place through unity of design and distinctively urban architectural character of new developments within them."*





To view full-size map, visit:
http://www.miamidade.gov/planning/library/maps/Adopted-2020-and-2030-Land-Use-Plan-Map.pdf

To stimulate mixed use, the County requires an average FAR and density for each Urban Center:

- In Regional Activity Centers, the average FAR is required to be greater than 4.0 in the core and not less than 2.0 in the edge, with a maximum density of 500 dwelling units per gross acre.
- In Metropolitan Urban Centers, the average FAR must be greater than 3.0 in the core and not less than 0.75 in the edge, with a maximum density of 250 dwelling units per gross area.
- In Community Urban Centers, the average FAR must be greater than 1.5 in the core and not less than 0.5 in the edge, with a maximum density of 125 units per gross acre.

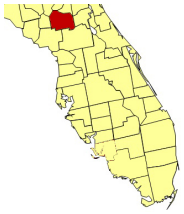
The Land Use Element designates Downtown Kendall as the "Dadeland Regional Activity Center." Requiring a minimum density and allowing a higher density has resulted in mixed-use development in downtown Kendall — a location previously in the form of a strip commercial corridor with vast amounts of surface parking. In the new development, big box stores that are typically part of sprawling, single-use buildings are located on the ground floors, with residences located above. Restaurants and hotel chains have also successfully adapted to this building format. Additionally, the combination of shared parking spaces and parking garages creates a built environment that is urban in character.

It is important to note that in Downtown Kendall a form-based code was created to codify the comprehensive plan's requirements. Three Regulating Plans (the Street Frontage Plan, the Designated Open Space Plan, and the Sub-District Plan) are used to guide new development. However, it was the initial policy mechanism in the comprehensive plan that first defined Activity Centers and required a minimum and maximum density for this area. For details of the requirements of the CMDP and form-based code, see the Miami-Dade County strip commercial case study.

The combination of the comprehensive plan vision and requirements and the subsequent implementation of the area-specific form-based code are transforming this area into a walkable urban center.

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

The Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the Gainesville outlines a series of policies that promote (and in some cases require) a mix of land uses in an effort to create walkable and sustainable communities.



> *"To the extent possible, all planning shall be in the form of complete and integrated communities containing housing, shops, workplaces, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents."*

The development goals outlined by the City describe the need to establish standards that allow conventional shopping centers to be retrofitted or redeveloped into mixed use centers:

> *"Adopt land development regulations that guide the transformation of conventional shopping centers into walkable, mixed use neighborhood (activity) centers."*

To implement the vision for mixed use, the City identifies land use categories that prescribe a range of density requirements for a series of character areas. Mixed-use categories include:

- Mixed-Use Residential: up to 75 units per acre
- Mixed-Use Low-Intensity: 8-30 units per acre
- Mixed-Use Medium-Intensity: 12-30 units per acre
- Mixed-Use High-Intensity: up to 150 units per acre
- Urban Mixed-Use 1 (UMU-1): 8 -75 units per acre; and up to 25 additional units per acre by special use permit
- Urban Mixed-Use 2 (UMU-2): 10 to 100 units per acre; and up to 25 additional units per acre by special use permit.

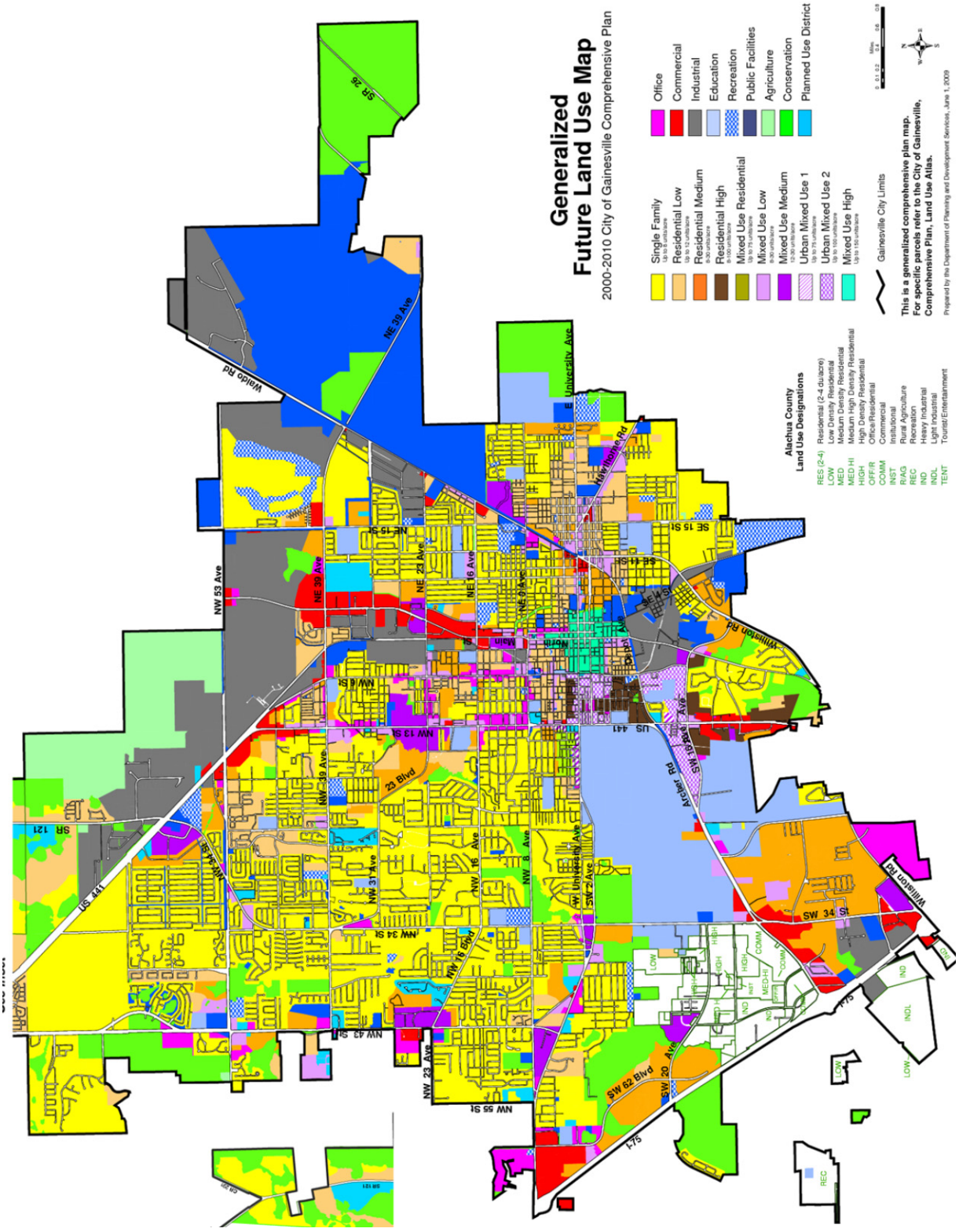
Within the Mixed-Use categories, the plan specifies that development conform to the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) ordinance—an ordinance that encourages compact, walkable communities.

The Urban Mixed-Use categories describe the need to be connected as being related to conducting collaborative research. (These zones are located adjacent to the University of Florida facilities.) The description notes that an "essential component of the district is orientation of structures to the street and multi-modal character of the area." A maximum allowable density in specified for the Mixed-Use zones; a minimum and a maximum density is specified in the Urban Mixed-Use zones.

The City also designates a series of Planned Use Districts (see map) based on location and future use. While the requirements of each are slightly varied, the language requires mixed-use development patterns. For example, The Orton Trust Planned Use District is required to include a mix of residential and non-residential uses while also complying with the following requirements:

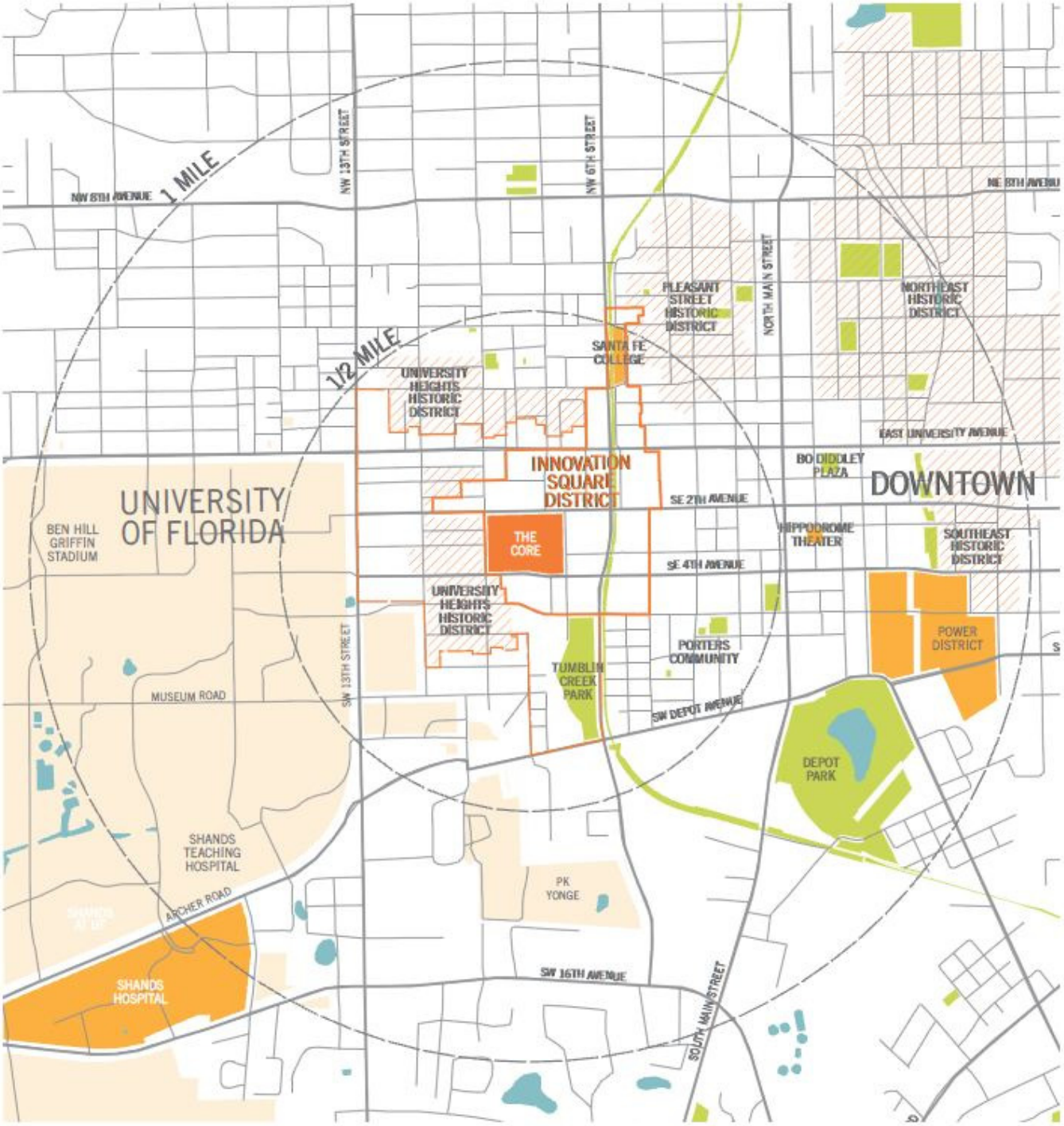
- A minimum of 40,000 square feet of residential use shall be required above the first or second story of non-residential uses, and may be placed above the first or second story of any part of the 80,000 square feet of non-residential use authorized.
- The maximum allowable square footage for any one-story retail/ commercial building where the entire building is in a single use is 15,000 square feet.
- A maximum of 2 businesses shall be allowed to have drive-through facilities.
- The planned development zoning ordinance shall prescribe a phasing schedule in order to ensure a mixed use project including residential and/or residential infrastructure from the first phase of construction.
- The internal road network shall be designed using Traditional Neighborhood Development Street Design Guidelines as published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, as updated from time to time.

The Urban Village District includes many of the same requirements, but also prohibits development that conflicts with mixed-use communities. Neither single-story, large scale retail (defined as a single retail use with a ground floor footprint exceeding 100,000 square feet), nor development where surface parking is the principal use are allowed in the Urban Village. In essence, the City has designated areas where sprawling commercial strips cannot be developed.



To view full-size map, visit:

http://www.cityofgainesville.org/Portals/0/plan/cg_LU_Map_11X17.pdf



The Plan maps and describes another interesting overlay, called the "Innovation Zone." The character and intended development within the zone will be urban and walkable. Given the proximity of the zone to both downtown and the University of Florida, it is deemed essential that the street network be tightly interconnected to encourage collaborative research. Specific requirements for the overlay area are discussed in a related document, the *Innovation Square Development Framework*.

While the exact method of requiring a mix of land uses varies slightly in each mapped District, the intent to include a minimum amount of residential development along with compact commercial development remains intact. The City is also

careful to note that effective design is necessary in order to accommodate for higher density.

> *"Design standards in the Land Development Code…ensure that higher densities are livable."*
>
> *"Redevelopment should be encouraged to promote compact, vibrant urbanism, improve the condition of blighted areas, discourage urban sprawl, and foster compact development patterns that promote transportation choice."*

In addition to the Future Land Use Element, Gainesville's comprehensive plan also provides an illustrated Urban Design Element that offers specific design standards for centers of mixed-use development. The Urban Design Element describes in-depth methods for achieving "connected" streets and public spaces that can easily be utilized by pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. The guidance is simply depicted and is prescribed to be applied to "select locations within the City."

> *"Objective 1.2: Promote urban livability and aesthetics, including the safety, comfort, and convenience of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, while still providing for the needs of car drivers."*
>
> *"Gridded, interconnected street networks with a generally north south, east-west orientation are encouraged. Streets should be connected with other streets to the maximum extent feasible."*
>
> *"Blocks are encouraged to be generally rectangular in shape. Block length and perimeter are encouraged to be modest."*

These guidelines are intended to encourage the design of neighborhood centers and town centers that are walkable and mixed use in character, with the following requirements:

- Commercial build-to lines that pull the building up to a wide sidewalk with a row of trees.
- Modest instead of abundant off-street parking, located at the rear or side of buildings, and away from pedestrian areas.
- A sense of arrival and departure.
- A connected sidewalk and path system promoting safety, comfort and convenience by linking buildings within the Center and to adjacent properties.
- Building facades facing the street and aligned to form squares,
- A vertical mix of residences above non-residential uses within the center, and a required percentage of Center floor area that is residential and retail.
- No free-standing retail establishment within the center exceeding 30,000 square feet (or some set maximum) of first floor area.
- First floor uses promoting entertainment and retail uses, and articulation and glazing for pedestrian interest.
- Rules that restrict establishment of auto-oriented uses, or uses that generate significant noise, odor, or dust.

AUSTIN, TEXAS

In *Imagine Austin*, the comprehensive plan for Austin, Texas, the initial policy objectives describe a future for the City that promotes mobility, livability, and sustainability while also adapting to rapid growth. A mix of uses—including residential, commercial, entertainment, office, and civic activities—are central to the development of the neighborhoods and communities outlined in the Plan.

The method for defining future growth in *Imagine Austin* is depicted in the "Growth Concept Map." (see page 15) Essentially, the City has mapped a sequence of activity centers and corridors where a mix of all uses is desired. These centers range in scale—from largest to smallest—and are called Regional Centers, Town Centers and Neighborhood Centers. By definition, these centers are required to develop as mixed use nodes within the City. *"These centers and corridors allow people to reside, work, shop, access services, people watch, recreate, and hang out without traveling far distances."*

Imagine Austin contains parameters for regional, town and neighborhood centers that prescribe a minimum and a maximum for the residential population and the number of jobs. Regional Centers are the largest of their type and are intended to be the most urban of the mixed-use centers. They are also intended to have the highest density. *"Regional centers will range in size between approximately 25,000-45,000 people and 5,000-25,000 jobs."* Town Centers are intended to be less intense than Regional Centers, but still large enough to accommodate a mix of housing types and a range of employers. *"Town centers will range in size between approximately 10,000-30,000 people and 5,000-20,000 jobs."* Neighborhood Centers are places that are walkable, bikable and located near transit—but they are the least intense of the three centers. *"Neighborhood centers range in size between approximately 5,000-10,000 people and 2,500-7,000 jobs."* Development within all three categories is allowed as long as it contributes to reaching the thresholds for both population and jobs in a designated area. By utilizing population and job growth as the primary metrics for development, *Imagine Austin* has outlined an original process for encouraging mixed use growth.

The goals and strategies outlined in the comprehensive plan for the City of Austin have been complemented by an incentive-based approach to achieving mixed use within the designated centers. The City has utilized the "Smart Growth Criteria Matrix" as a tool for prioritizing desired development and providing incentives to those proposing new projects.

With the principles of Smart Growth as its foundation (including, walkable, mixed use neighborhoods), the Smart Growth Criteria Matrix is essentially a "scorecard" for proposed developments. Goals from the comprehensive plan, such as building location, density, amount of mixed use, transit coordination and parking, are weighted and ranked in a scorecard format. The resulting score fits within a series of categories. Each category acts as an individual incentive to the applicant. After tallying a total score for all categories, the higher the score the better the incentive for the proposed development. Examples of incentives include: waiver or reduction of process fees for the applicant, a reduction in taxes, or a general streamlining of the approval process. In Austin, the Transportation, Planning and Design Department initiated this process and works with other members of City government to implement the incentives. The Matrix is a helpful way for the City to understand how proposed projects will measure up to the goals listed in the comprehensive plan. At the same time, this method provides incentives and opportunities to developers and other applicants as they plan for future projects.

The Austin comprehensive plan clearly communicates that implementation of mixed use communities at the regional, town, and neighborhood scale are of primary importance. This is also clear in the Matrix. This tool allows the City to measure the *amount* of mixed use in each proposal, which then results in an appropriate reward. For example, the item called "Mixed Use per Building" explains the criteria for earning credits in this category. In order to obtain points, the City requires that the proposed development has a minimum of 20% of the building space allocated for each use—residential, retail, and office. After achieving the required minimum threshold for each use, the applicant may receive additional points for different aspects of mixing uses within a building. Additional points can be earned for including residential above the first floor, street level pedestrian uses, and/or having two or three uses within the building. Each of these categories is then weighted. In this case, the location of residential units above the first floor earns the most points.

The Smart Growth Criteria Matrix was employed in Austin as a means for both implementing desired growth and providing financial incentives for proposed development that aligns with the goals outlined by the City in the comprehensive plan. This method has been utilized by a variety of cities, counties and states.

To see the complete Austin scorecard visit: http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/scorecards/austin_matrix.pdf

For further information about the Smart Growth Criteria Matrix, visit: http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/scorecards/project.html

SMART GROWTH CRITERIA MATRIX

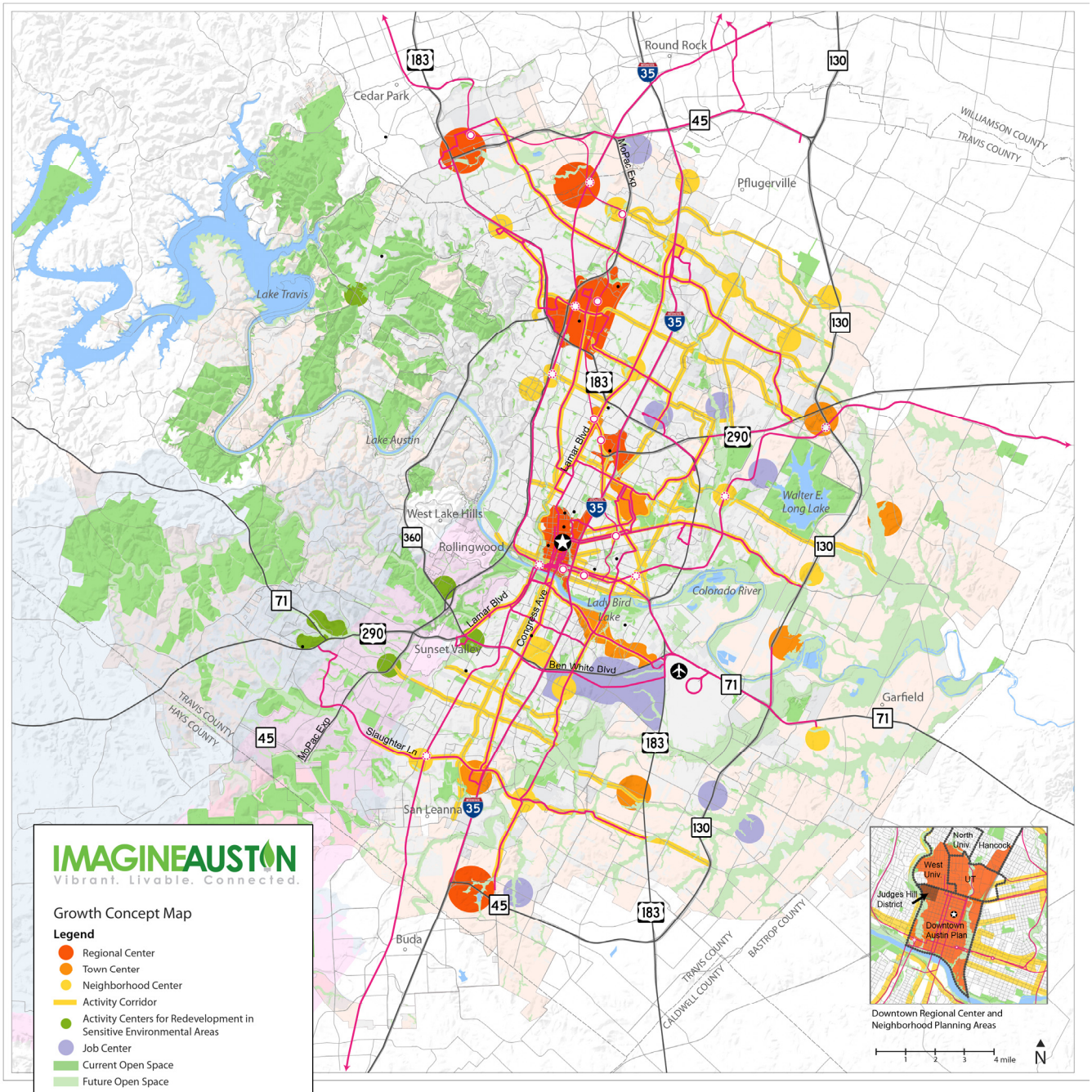
City of Austin Transportation, Planning and Design Department

REVIEWER:

MARK ONE: ☐ SELF SCORE ☐ PRELIMINARY SCORE ☐ FORMAL SCORE

DEVELOPMENT: DATE OF REVIEW:

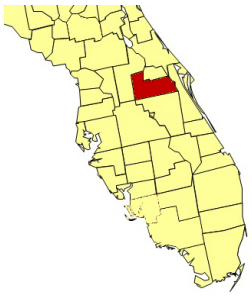
GOALS	CATEGORY	ELEMENTS	CRITERIA	WEIGHT	VALUE	MAX. POINTS AVAILABLE	SCORE	COMMENTS	TOTAL Possible	TOTAL SCORE
			Criteria based on information that is not complete or available for scoring	POINT SYSTEM			SCORE			
	Eligibility	**1. Neighborhood Plans**	**Project does not conflict with adopted Neighborhood Plan for the area.**							
		2. Historic Review	**Projects proposing demolition/modification of historically significant buildings require review.**							
		3. Incentive Package	**Project may not receive Smart Growth Zone Specific incentives.**							
SMART GROWTH GOAL I: Determine How and Where Development Occurs	Location (87 points)	**1. Smart Growth Zones** *(Eligible for only one zone - A,B, or C for a maximum possible 45 points)*								
		A. Downtown	1. Anywhere	5	5	25				
			2. Within a 1 block radius of a CMTA bus stop	5	4	20				
			3. Consistent with transit station area plan							0
		or B. Urban Core	1. Anywhere	4	3	12				
			2. Within one lot deep of a Smart Growth Corridor	4	4	16				
			3. Consistent with transit station area plan							0
		or C. Desired Development Zone (DDZ) inside City Limits	1. Anywhere	3	1	3				
			2. Within one lot deep of a Smart Growth Corridor/park & ride	3	3	9				
			3. Consistent with transit station area plan						45	0
		2. Location Risk	A. Focus on area of economic need	4	3	12				
			B. A "Trail Blazer" in an untested market			30			42	0
	Process (135 pts)	**1. Neighborhood Planning** *(Choose A or B)*	A. Requires dialogue and support by adjacent neighborhoods (Projects outside of Downtown)			75			75	0
			B. Downtown Projects			35				
		2. Design Commission *(Choose A or B)*	A. Presentation & endorsement of plans without conditions (Projects outside of Downtown)	5	2	10				
			B. Downtown Projects			50			50	0
		3. Historic Landmark Commission	A. Presentation & endorsement of plans without conditions	5	5	25				
			B. Historically zoned buildings or buildings within a historic district			50			50	0
	Critical Mass (24 points)	**1. Threshold Density**								
		A. Population (DUA)	1. Meets minimum threshold to support transit (7 to 12 dua average w/in one lot deep of Proposed Smart Growth Corridors. 12-25 dua average in Downtown) (Consistent with transit station area plan)	3	4	12				
		B. Employment (FAR)	2. Meets minimum threshold to support transit (Min. FAR of .35 w/in one lot deep of Proposed Smart Growth Corridors or min. FAR of .5 in Downtown) (Consistent with transit station area plan)	3	4	12			24	0
	Land Use (110 points)	**1. Land Use Contribution** *(Eligible for only one-A,B, or C for a maximum possible 35 points)*								
		A. Downtown Projects	1. Regional draw - retail (anchor retail), entertainment, or cultural center	5	3	15				
			2. Greater than 200 new housing units	5	4	20				0
		or B. Urban Core Projects	1. Regional draw - retail (anchor retail), entertainment, or cultural center	4	3	12				
			2. Variety of housing types (apartments, rowhouses, SF)	4	3	12				
			3. Greater than 200 new housing units	4	1	4				0
		or C. Traditional Neighborhood Projects	1. Meets TND codes and ordinances	3	3	9				
			2. Variety of housing types (rowhouses, gar. apts, sf)	3	3	9				
			3. Town Center with neighborhood retail	3	3	9			35	0



To view full-size map, visit:

ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/GIS-Data/planning/maps/Fig_4.5_Growth_Concept_Map_24x36-2_Map.jpg

ORANGE COUNTY



Orange County's Comprehensive Plan *Destination 2030* provides guidance for retrofit into mixed-use formats, to implement the overarching plan goal of making more efficient use of land, infrastructure, and services within the Urban Service Area. (Additional policies that address locational criteria for commercial development are described in the Strip Commercial case study memo).

Urban Strategies: Mixed-Use

Orange County's Plan contains policies to develop, adopt, and implement mixed-use strategies and incentives; objectives include reducing trip lengths, providing for diverse housing types, using infrastructure efficiently, and promoting a sense of community. Specifically, the Plan states:

> *FLU 2.2.4. Projections indicate that Orange County is anticipated to have an adequate amount of single use commercial land available throughout the planning horizon. As part of the Destination 2030 Plan, Orange County will be transitioning to more mixed-use options available for new commercial future land use requests, including vertical mixed-use. As part of this transition, the County will update its land development code to provide incentives to achieve a complementary mixing of uses by revising development standards to remove constraints for development meeting criteria that may include, but is not limited to, the following:*
>
> *1. Location within the Urban Service Area, with special emphasis on the Alternative Mobility Area and potential Transit Corridors;*
>
> *2. Locations identified in the Infill Master Plan, locations consistent with FLU3.2.2 and FLU3.2.3, and locations identified as Energy Economic Development Zones;*
>
> *3. Locations that will facilitate the County's Mobility Planning efforts, such as those locations that either have or potentially can:*
>
> - *Establish and promote community and neighborhood connectivity;*
> - *Provide multimodal opportunities for enhanced mobility, improved access, and flow of people and goods;*
> - *Have proximity to existing or planned transit corridor or transit stop."*

The following provisions to implement mixed-use development on identified corridors are also included in the plan:

- Properties may be designated a Mixed-Use Corridor (MUC) Future Land Use designation. This option is available only through a staff-initiated process and must consider the following criteria (FLU 2.2.6):
  1. *Access to a 4-lane road within the Urban Service Area;*
  2. *There are opportunities for infill, reinvestment and redevelopment consistent with the Infill Master Plan and Mixed-Use Activity Center (see Urban Form);*
  3. *Locations where infrastructure can be more fully used such as an Alternative Mobility Area;*
  4. *Automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities are adequate to accommodate safe and convenient access;*
  5. *There is potential for compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use opportunities in the surrounding neighborhood;*
  6. *There is potential for a mixture of retail, office multifamily and civic and public uses to discourage underutilized strip-style development;*
  7. *There are opportunities to create linkages with activity centers and other similar mixed-use patterns of development; and*
  8. *Where these locations are supportable by studies.*
- The Plan further states the County may establish Mixed-Use Corridors with minimum FARs, implemented through modifications to the Land Development Code.

Urban Form: Mixed-Use Activity Centers

Orange County promotes pedestrian-friendly, compact, transit-ready and transit-oriented development in Mixed-Use Development Activity Centers. Mixed-Use Development Activity Centers aim to achieve energy conservation and reduce automobile use through greater multi-modal connectivity, supporting transit services, and opportunities for workforce housing, while encouraging quality urban design standards to achieve attractive pedestrian-friendly environments. This option does not require a Future Land Use amendment if the stated policies are met, which include:

- Locational considerations (within urban service area; at locations for multimodal connectivity; environmental factors: wildlife, hydrology)
- Design considerations (proposed mix of uses; pedestrian-friendly design standards; shared parking; transition to neighborhoods)
- The size and location of required sub-districts (Core, Edge, Gateway) determined through a Master Plan or unified Planned Development-Land Use Plan. A charrette process is required to create the Master Plan.
- Criteria is established to determine the appropriateness for promoting a Mixed-Use Development Activity Center at a specific location (see chart, right). Regional Mixed-Use Development Activity Center designation requires at least 14 points; Community Mixed-Use Development Activity Center designation requires at least 10 points. TOD and Neighborhood Activity Nodes are subject to separate criteria. Priority consideration is given for locations adjacent to two major arterials, transit, or freeway of interstate; where transit does not exist, shall be "transit-ready" by providing rights-of-way for future stations or transit corridors.
- Minimum and maximum densities, desired mix of uses established by type (Regional, Community, TOD and Neighborhood Centers)

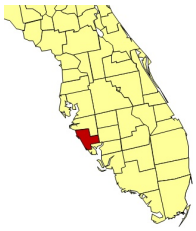
The requirements of this set of policies, specifically the design/ development standards and charrette requirement, render this approach promising to achieve the desired physical results.

B. **Table. Minimum Primary Criteria for Mixed-Use Development Activity Center Eligibility.**

Primary Criteria		*Points*
1.	Required Condition: The parcel must be located within the Orange County Urban Service Area. (Amended 10/10, Ord. 2010-13)	N/A
2.	Existing Employment: (1) Within one-half mile of a building occupied by a top fifty (50) private employer with the greatest number of employees per InfoUSA or Census data, or other major public employer such as a large government building, major university or community college campus, or major entertainment facility with over 100 onsite employees.	1 point for each such employer within a half-mile of the subject site
3.	Proposed Onsite Employment: The proposed development will be occupied by a large employer that meets the employee criteria below. The County will determine the documents needed for the applicant to demonstrate that such employer will occupy the proposed development and that the employees will be located onsite.	
	Employs at least 100 employees Employs over 100 and less than 400 employees Employs 400 or more employees	1 2 3
4.	Commercial Clusters: Defined by distance to larger shopping centers, large clusters of commercial activity located within the USA boundaries (identified using DOR codes), and/clusters of Commercial contiguous FLUM designations totaling 10 acres in size or greater.	
	Within one half of a mile of a parcel or group of parcels with major commercial or office activity Within one-quarter of a mile Within one-eighth of a mile	1 2 3
5.	Clusters of Medium to High Density Residential: the parcel is adjacent to or has LMDR, MDR or HDR Future Land Use Map designation (Amended 10/10, 2010-13)	1
6.	Central Florida Commuter Rail: defined by proximity to the stations along the proposed Central Florida Commuter Rail line	
	Within one mile of a station Within one-half of a mile Within one-quarter of a mile	1 2 3
7.	Proximity to proposed Orlando International Airport (OIA)/Sand Lake Road Connector Light Rail Corridor or any adopted high-capacity transit corridor	
	Within one-half of a mile of the corridor Within one-quarter of a mile of the corridor	1 2
8.	Proximity to a Multi-Modal Corridors: located within a quarter-mile distance of multi-modal roadway corridor, including the proposed Innovation Way corridor, where the transportation system will be designed around opportunities for automobile, high-capacity premium transit (such as light rail, bus rapid transit, or streetcars), pedestrian and bicycle travel to become part of the level of service determination (Amended 10/10, 2010-13)	3
9.	Location on a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor: Located on a roadway corridor where BRT is planned and is on the Orange County Long Range Transportation Plan Located on the roadway corridor where Bus Rapid Transit service exists or will be implemented within 5 years (Amended 10/10, Ord. 2010-13)	1 2
10.	Location within a designated Transportation Concurrency Exception Area (TCEA) or Alternative Mobility Area, as defined in the Orange County Transportation Element	1
11.	Location within a designated Transportation Concurrency Management Area (TCMA) (Amended 10/10, 2010-13)	1
12.	Location within an area identified in the Infill Master Plan (Amended 10/10, Ord. 2010-13)	2
13.	Location within an area identified in the of a mile of a trailhead of an Orange County Trail, such as the West Orange Trail, Cady Way Trail, or other similar component of the Orange County Trailways Plan	1
14.	Certified "Green" Development: The developer or development is registered with the US Green Building Council and there is an intent to apply for certification of each building under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating program, or the development is registered by an alternate green building rating system that Orange County finds appropriate, by resolution	1
15.	Existing concurrency capacity: The applicant can demonstrate that there is sufficient capacity to meet all county-mandated concurrency requirements, including schools to meet the needs of the proposed development	1

SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Sarasota County's comprehensive plan received a major refinement in 2002 when a new section was added, commonly known as Sarasota 2050.



Much of Sarasota 2050 dealt with an optional incentive-based process that would allow major landowners east of Interstate 75 to consolidate their development rights and build compact villages or hamlets while permanently preserving open spaces.

The map shown on the next page designated land (in the lightest color) as "Village / Open Space RMAs" (Resource Management Areas). These are large agricultural or natural tracts that had been precluded from development because they were outside the urban service boundary as established in the county's comprehensive plan.

The RMA designations did not change the underlying Future Land Use Map; the designations identified areas where land owners could choose to use the new policies in place of the pre-existing rules.

Two of the main principles that apply to new villages outside the urban service boundary address how land uses are mixed (or not):

- **Open Space:** An inter-connected system of open spaces would conserve natural habitats and preserve agricultural lands.
- **New Urbanism:** Development must be in villages or hamlets that are compact, walkable, and interconnected, with a variety of housing types and mix of other uses.

Policy VOS2.5 includes this requirement about mixing of uses:

- *"That the integrity of the mixed-use district is not compromised by allowing extensive single-uses. The land use mix shall be phased to provide an adequate mix of non-residential uses to serve residential development within each development phase or sub-phase."*

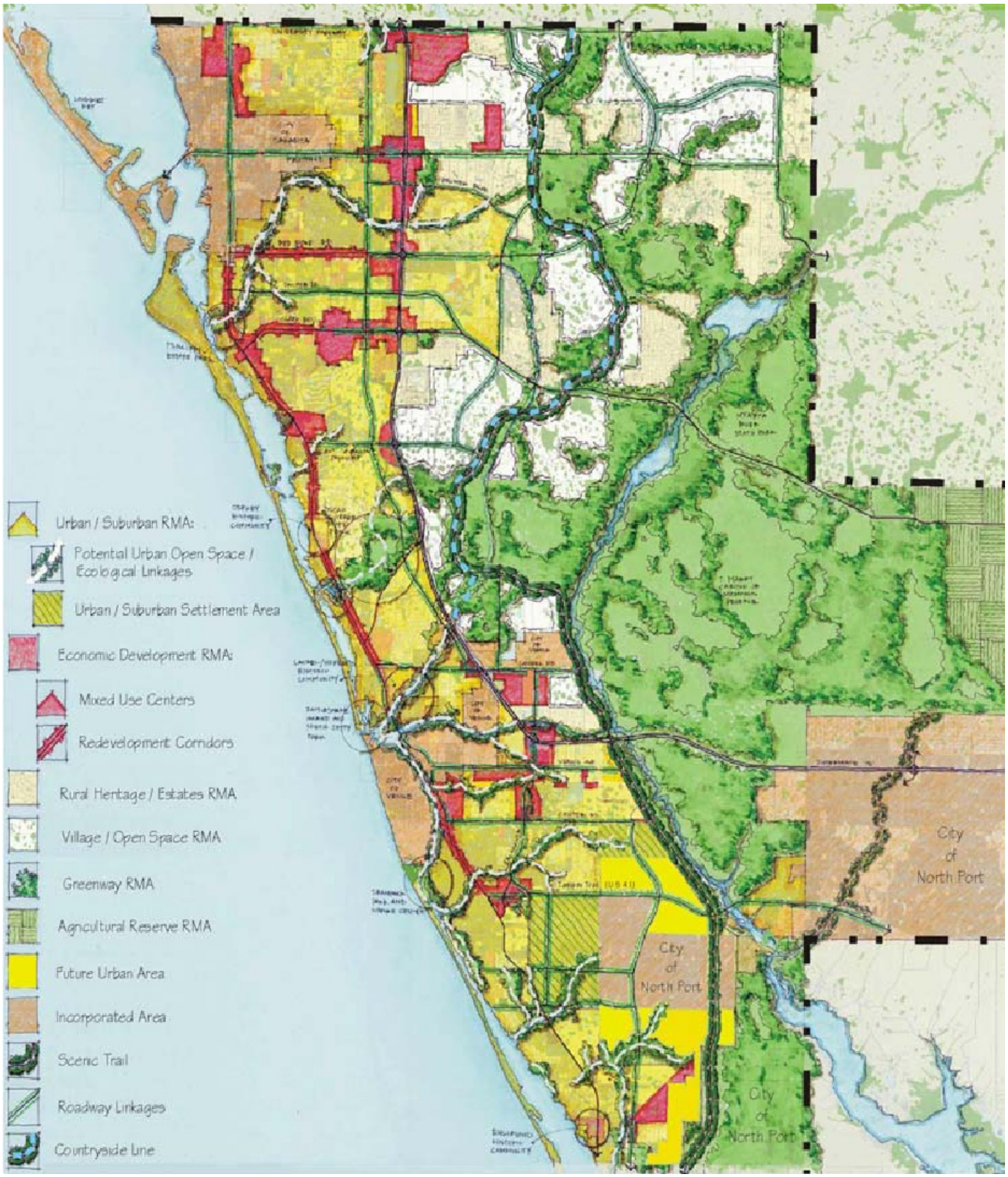
Broad Village/Open Space principles were placed in the comprehensive plan. A new zoning district was created to provide detailed standards plus the processes for submitting detailed site plans that meet the principles and design standards.

The comprehensive plan requires that each village include "a range of housing types that support a broad range of family sizes and incomes." To implement this policy, the land development regulations identify 9 housing types and require that 6 of those types be provided in each village, and 5 types in each neighborhood in the village.

The "adequate mix of non-residential uses" is to be provided in mixed-use village centers designed to serve the daily and weekly needs of village residents. The comprehensive plan requires these minimum and maximum percentages:

LAND USE MIX	MINIMUM AREA	MAXIMUM AREA
Residential	25%	50%
Commercial/Office	30%	60%
Public/Civic	10%	n/a
Public Parks	5%	n/a

The comprehensive plan states the villages are collections of neighborhoods where a majority of homes are within walking distance or ¼-mile radius of a neighborhood center.


Urban / Suburban RMA:
Potential Urban Open Space / Ecological Linkages
Urban / Suburban Settlement Area
Economic Development RMA:
Mixed Use Centers
Redevelopment Corridors
Rural Heritage / Estates RMA
Village / Open Space RMA
Greenway RMA
Agricultural Reserve RMA
Future Urban Area
Incorporated Area
Scenic Trail
Roadway Linkages
Countryside Line
City of North Port
City of North Port
City of North Port

The village portion of Sarasota 2050 has been controversial from its inception. In 2014 it is undergoing major revisions to loosen some requirements that the development community believes have inhibited the successful creation of villages. Some of the requirements being loosened are described here:

- The land development regulations are being changed to require 4 housing types in each village (down from 6); 3 types in each neighborhood (down from 5); and no more than 75% of the homes in each neighborhood being a single type (down from 60%).
- Some of the percentages of the required mix of non-residential uses in village centers are being changed to allow developers more latitude. The new percentages would be as follows:

LAND USE MIX	MINIMUM AREA	MAXIMUM AREA
Residential	15%	65%
Commercial/Office	25%	75%
Public/Civic	5%	n/a
Public Parks	5%	n/a

The site plan below shows the Grand Palm community under development near Venice. This community is the first being built under the existing Sarasota 2050 rules.

Mixed-use Planning in Sarasota County

Sarasota County is experimenting with a coordinated development strategy for 322 acres immediately east of I-75 at the Fruitville Road interchange. The planning area includes five privately owned tracts and one county-owned tract.

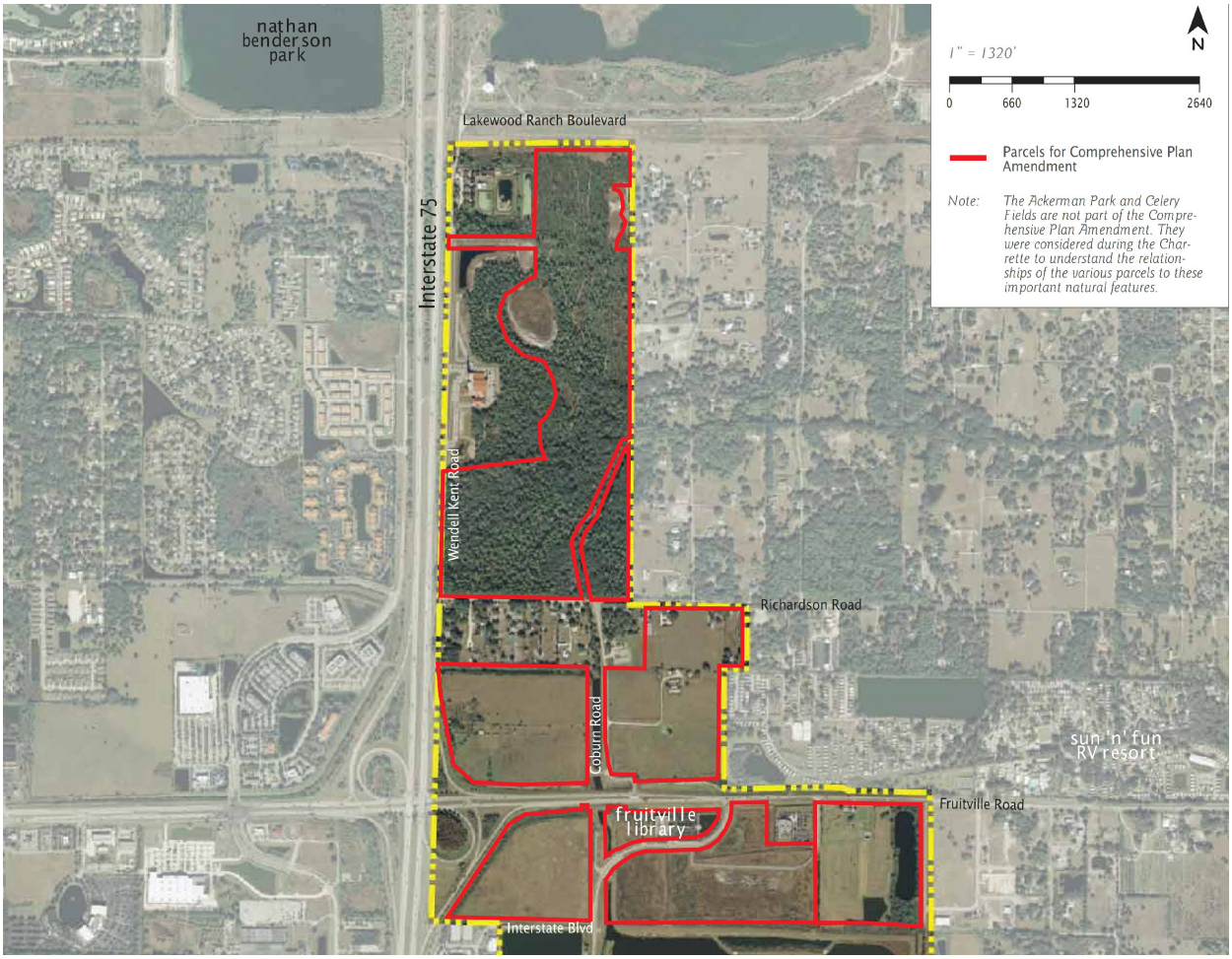
The planning area shares a number of characteristics with major development tracts in Hillsborough County:

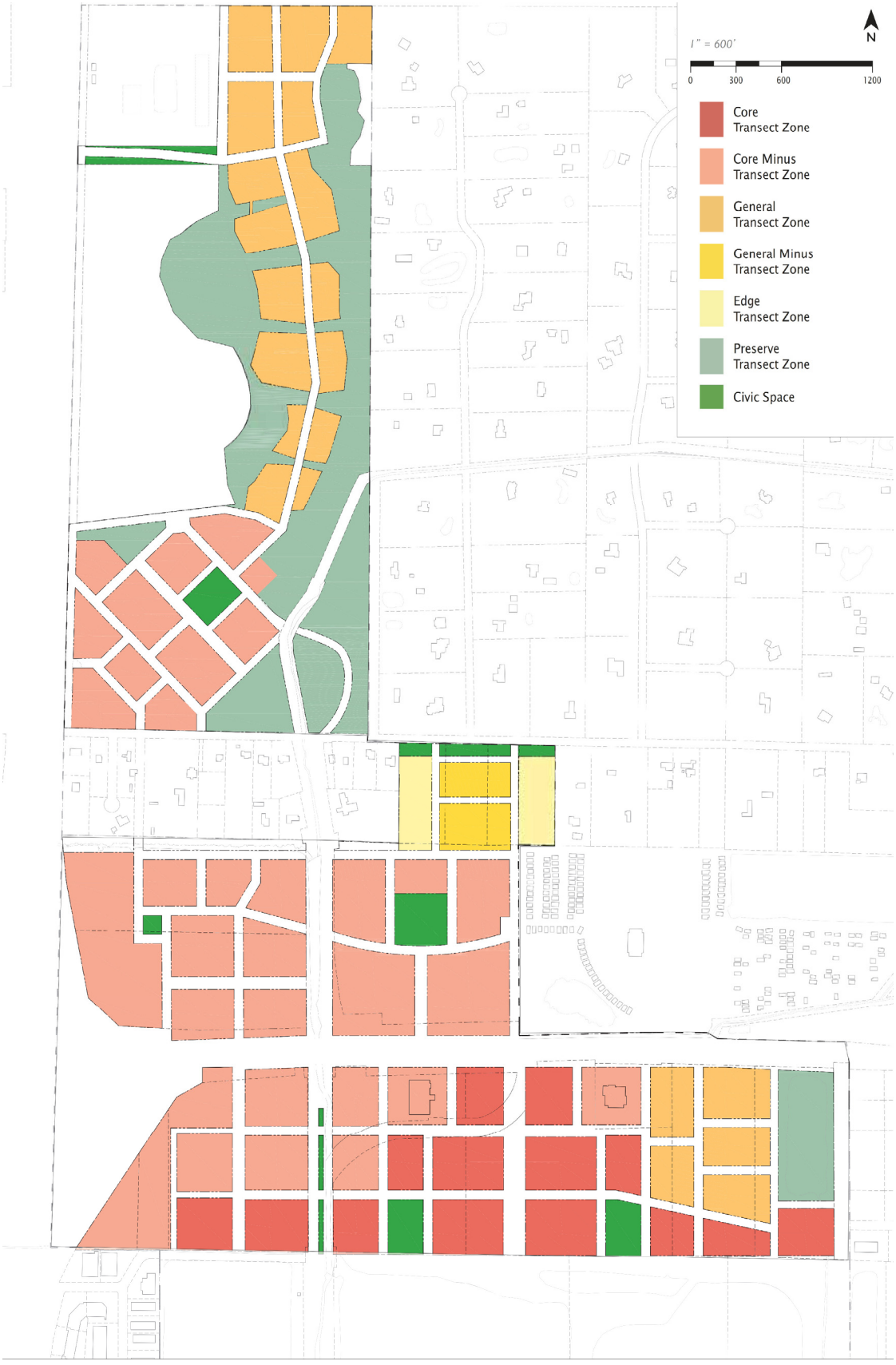
1. Much of the land has been formally designated as a future "major employment center."
2. This land borders major thoroughfares; Fruitville Road is a major east-west arterial that connects downtown Sarasota to I-75.
3. Most other interchanges have been developed according to familiar patterns of "big box" retail and automobile-dominated arterials, but there is enough undeveloped land at this interchange that other patterns are still possible.

The vision for the planning area includes:

1. All tracts are to be connected to each other through a network of local and through streets.
2. Development parcels will be internally configured to adhere to the planning area vision of neighborhoods, districts and corridors.
3. The parcels will be developed on an integrated network of walkable streets and blocks using Sarasota County's "Planned Mixed-Use Infill" (PMI) code.

An aerial photo of the planning area is shown below. The following pages show diagrams that will become part of a regulating plan. The first shows transect zones that ensure a diversity of intensities and land uses; the second shows thoroughfares; and the third highlights essential connections between the six tracts, which probably will be developed at different times.





Conceptual Transect Plan

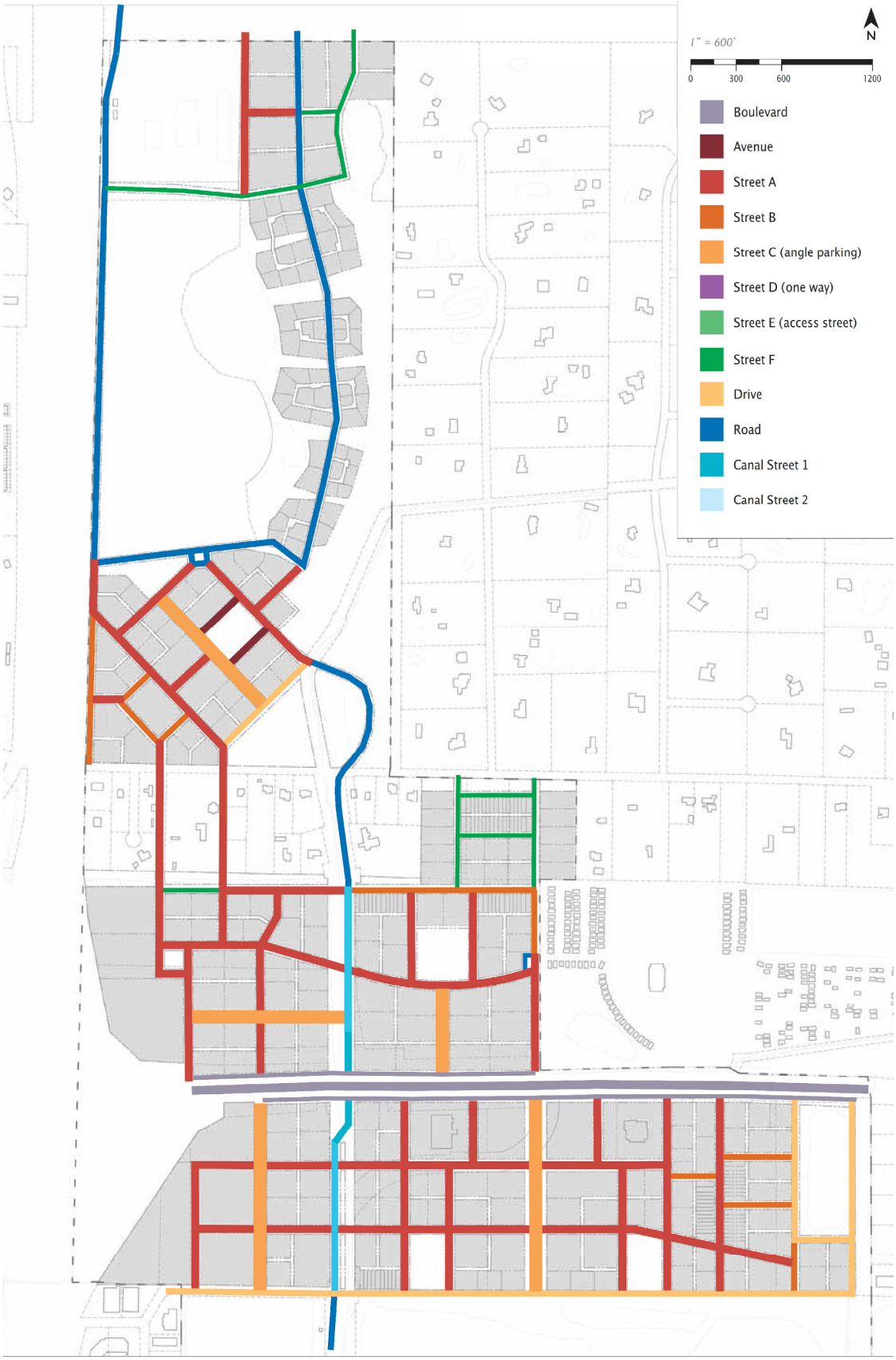
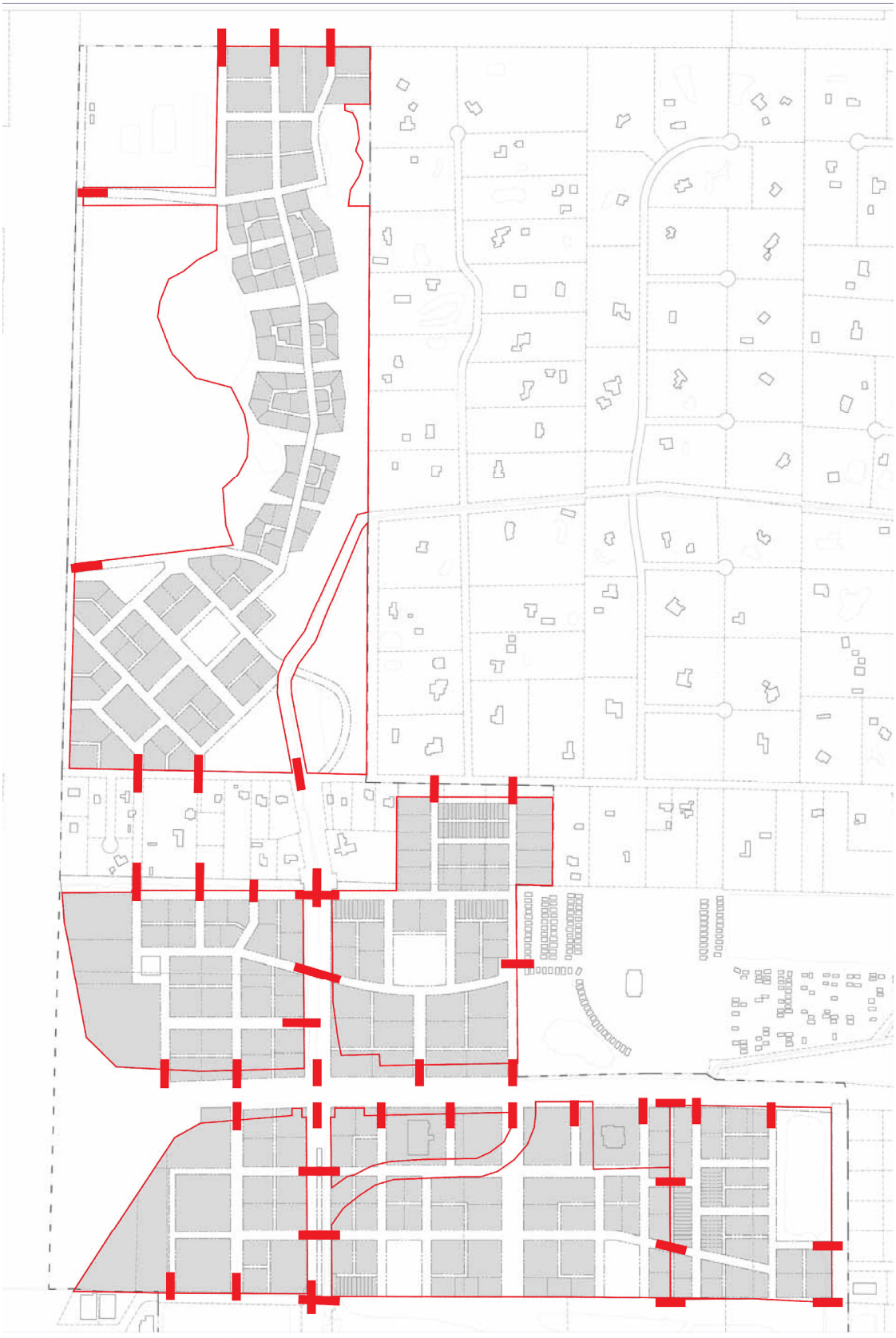


Figure 3.1 - Conceptual Thoroughfare Assignment Plan



Fruitville Initiative Conceptual Connectivity Plan

BEST PRACTICES

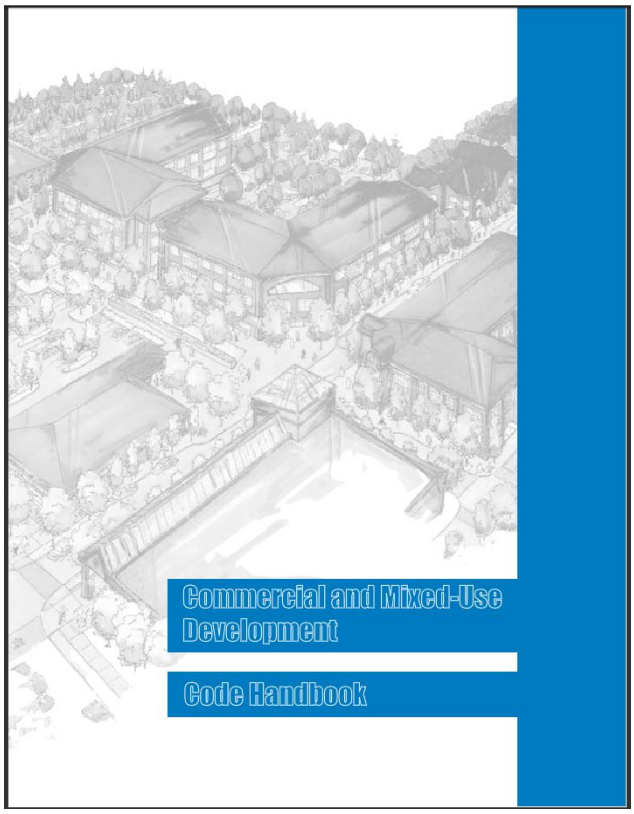
Best practices for successful mixed-use development includes policies that prioritize or reward projects for combining land uses, providing a variety building types, shortening or eliminating automobile trips, and facilitating the use of alternative modes of transportation. Oregon's *Commercial & Mixed-Use Development Code Handbook* and the Urban Land Institute's *Mixed-Use Development Handbook* each offer detailed guidance on methods for implementing policies that work.

Commercial & Mixed-Use Development – Code Handbook

The *Commercial & Mixed-Use Development -- Code Handbook* is a useful "how-to" guide for local governments and organizations that are familiar with public policy. The handbook begins by outlining the basic principles that define effective mixed-use development including: the efficient use of land resources and urban services, compact neighborhoods, a variety of transportation options, and human-scaled design standards (for both streets and buildings). The guide also notes that mixed-use development involves making identifiable "places" full of choices for inhabitants—choices for how to arrive at these destinations, what to buy, where to work, and where to live. Strategies for implementation, best practices, and model ordinances are also contained in the document.

While Chapter 3, titled "Plans and Policies Supporting Smart Development" is most useful for those interested in modifying comprehensive plans and other planning ordinances, the goals that define these policies are outlined in Chapter 2. In order to develop *"compatible land uses close together in appropriate locations,"* independence of movement—for people of all ages—needs to be abundant. Mobility options such as sidewalks, bike lanes, transit stops, and slow-traveling automobiles are cornerstones for this kind of development. Safety and variety are also key in a successful mixed-use environment.

Effective mechanisms for cities, counties, and developers include both regulatory and financial incentives. The handbook notes that comprehensive plans, specific area plans, local street plans, capital facilities plans, and transportation system plans are all potential avenues for adding mixed-use regulations and incentives. A comprehensive plan can be particularly effective by directing



commercial development to nodes and centers instead of continuous strips along corridors. This can be carried out by including growth maps in the comprehensive plan that designate corridors and centers where mixed uses are most appropriate.

Regulating land use in a manner that reflects the principals of Smart Growth by specifically designating areas where mixed use is desired is one of the first steps to improving the quality of development. A series of regulatory incentives can strengthen this initiative. For example, in the case of Portland, Oregon, a streamlined application process for mixed use proposals is in place. This method makes the process of constructing mixed use buildings *easier* for the developer. Other regulatory incentives are also suggested including: utilizing administrative reviews as an option (as long as the project meets stated objectives), providing density, building height and/or floor area ratio bonuses for proposals that have mixed use and pedestrian-friendly design, allowing mixed-master plans to set the development framework, or allowing automatic adjustments (of a specified percentage) for lot coverage.

In addition to regulatory improvements that stimulate mixed-use buildings, financial benefits can also be used. The handbook recognizes that *"Commercial and mixed use projects, like most developments, are fundamentally driven by the profit potential of the deal. If the potential exists for an adequate return on investment within the developer's timeframe, then the project can move forward through the permit process, including obtaining land use approvals."* Many cities in Oregon have utilized benefits of this type in renewal districts or specific areas where mixed uses are preferred. There are several financial mechanisms to be considered, including:

- Tax increment financing that offers funding for land acquisition in targeted locations
- Tax abatement for the housing component of a mixed-use project
- Permit fee reduction
- System development fee reduction or waiver in designated areas
- Utilizing the incentive-based *Smart Growth Criteria Matrix* to alleviate process fees

Financial and regulatory guides can work together and can also be applied to separate plans or areas. The handbook reminds policy-makers and organizations to customize these tools in order to best respond to the specific context in which they are working.

In Chapter 5, the handbook lists a series of charts and graphs that help describe a common language to be used within a community. The intent of this section is to help those that are amending policy to identify clear terminology.

At the conclusion of the handbook, the authors include a model ordinance for implementing mixed use as an example for policy-makers. The model ordinance is intended to be adapted to fit within comprehensive plans, specific area plans, and other planning frameworks. The conclusion reiterates the idea that a standard rule applied universally will not result in successful development. A flexible framework, rooted in the principles of Smart Growth, will be most effective.

2.8 Human Scaled Building Design

Objective: Design buildings to a human scale for aesthetic appeal, pedestrian comfort, and compatibility with other land uses.

Building articulation, entrances, windows, canopies and pedestrian lighting and signs all contribute to a human scale.

This building with its minimal detailing and windows does not respond to the sidewalk-level or human scale.

Variations or "articulation" of a building façade help in creating human scale, even on the outside of a parking garage as shown above.

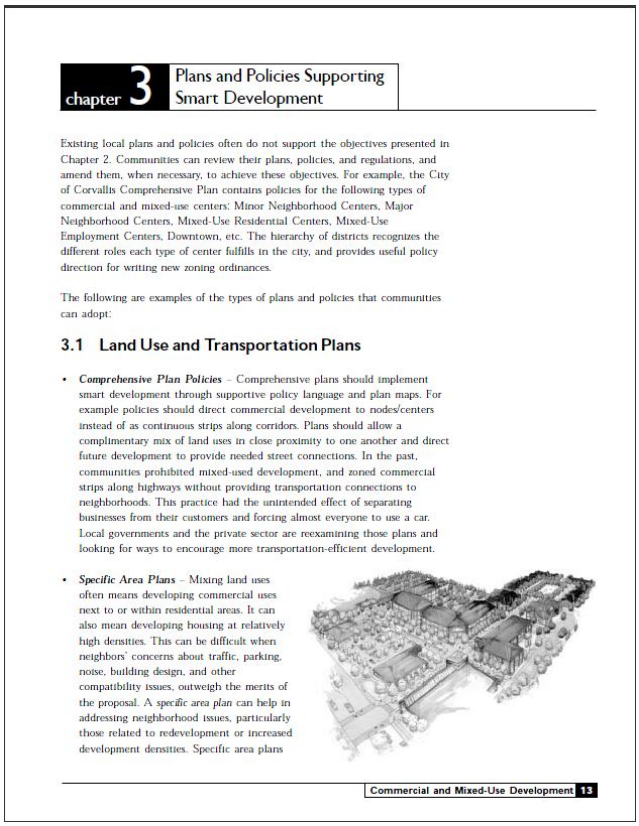
Although the world is large, we perceive it piece by piece. In street design, details count. Things look different close up walking at 2 mph than they do from behind a windshield at 30 mph. Everything seen and experienced from the sidewalk—building fronts, signs lighting, open space—should be designed for human interaction at a pedestrian's perspective.

Likewise, the view of main street from the windshield should be designed for 20 mph or less. Features typically found on higher speed highways—buildings and trees set back from the road, tall signs to attract motorists, generic surroundings stripped of detail—aren't compatible with main street.

Parking lots surrounding buildings and highly car–oriented uses like gas stations or drive-ins distort the human scale of the street by making things too far apart. The pedestrian wants interesting things to look at close at hand, such as windows, display cases, sidewalk cafes, and most of all, other people. Without human scale, the pedestrian will feel unwelcome and go elsewhere.

Community acceptance of compact mixed-use development requires that the design reflect the context of its surroundings or create its own distinct look and identity. This does not mean that it needs to copy or mirror the architectural style of the surrounding buildings (unless that is critical to the historic character of an area). The key elements to consider are the continuity of the building sizes, how the street-level and upper-level architectural detailing is treated, roof forms, rhythm of windows and doors, and general relationship of buildings to public spaces such as streets, plazas, other open space, and public parking. Human scaled design is critical to the success of built places for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike.

12 Commercial and Mixed-Use Development



chapter 3 Plans and Policies Supporting Smart Development

Existing local plans and policies often do not support the objectives presented in Chapter 2. Communities can review their plans, policies, and regulations, and amend them, when necessary, to achieve these objectives. For example, the City of Corvallis Comprehensive Plan contains policies for the following types of commercial and mixed-use centers: Minor Neighborhood Centers, Major Neighborhood Centers, Mixed-Use Residential Centers, Mixed-Use Employment Centers, Downtown, etc. The hierarchy of districts recognizes the different roles each type of center fulfills in the city, and provides useful policy direction for writing new zoning ordinances.

The following are examples of the types of plans and policies that communities can adopt:

3.1 Land Use and Transportation Plans

- ***Comprehensive Plan Policies*** – Comprehensive plans should implement smart development through supportive policy language and plan maps. For example policies should direct commercial development to nodes/centers instead of as continuous strips along corridors. Plans should allow a complimentary mix of land uses in close proximity to one another and direct future development to provide needed street connections. In the past, communities prohibited mixed-used development, and zoned commercial strips along highways without providing transportation connections to neighborhoods. This practice had the unintended effect of separating businesses from their customers and forcing almost everyone to use a car. Local governments and the private sector are reexamining those plans and looking for ways to encourage more transportation-efficient development.

- ***Specific Area Plans*** – Mixing land uses often means developing commercial uses next to or within residential areas. It can also mean developing housing at relatively high densities. This can be difficult when neighbors' concerns about traffic, parking, noise, building design, and other compatibility issues, outweigh the merits of the proposal. A *specific area plan* can help in addressing neighborhood issues, particularly those related to redevelopment or increased development densities. Specific area plans

Commercial and Mixed-Use Development 13

Mixed-Use Development Handbook

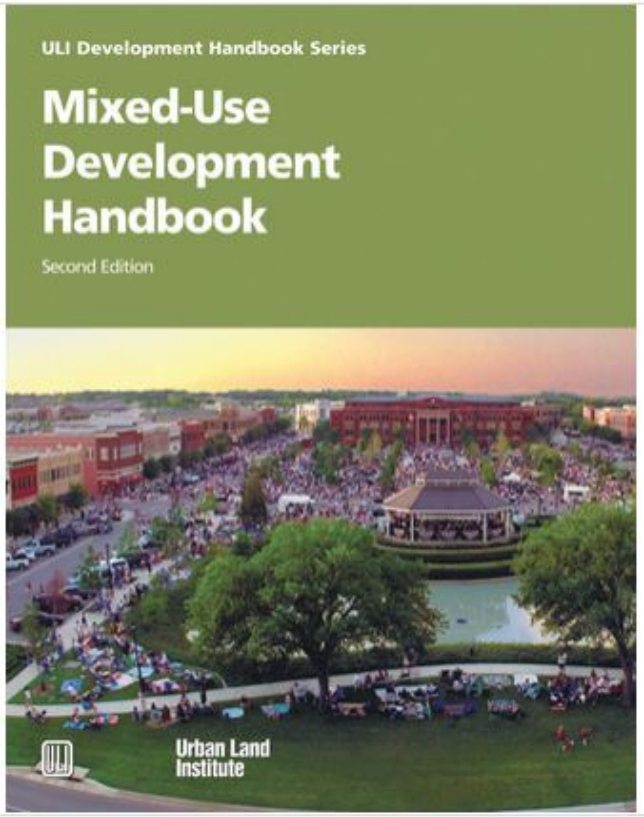
The *Mixed-Use Development Handbook* from the Urban Land Institute is another resource for planners and policy-makers. This reference includes examples of places where mixed uses have contributed to the vibrant character of a place.

The handbook explains various aspects of Smart Growth and New Urbanism in much greater detail than most publications of this type. A recap of the history of the built environment—political, architectural, and financial—is discussed in depth in the first three chapters of the book. The pages are filled with examples of mixed-use development in both the United States and abroad. In Chapter 8, ten case studies are reviewed, each of a different type and size. Each case study includes references to the policy utilized to produce mixed uses and the amount and distribution of each use.

The information contained in Chapter 4 is most useful for municipalities and organizations. Like Oregon's handbook, the Urban Land Institute is quick to point out that financial incentives—when used in the appropriate context—can act as a much-needed stimulus for mixed use development. The Urban Land Institute details methods a municipality might employ to create incentives: simplify the building approval process, clean up brownfield sites (or provide funding to do so), allow tax abatements and incentives, provide public parking infrastructure, provide public financing mechanisms, and/or provide additional public infrastructure such as streetscape improvements. The handbook notes that a successful public/private partnership between the local governments and a developer can improve growth patterns.

A chart in Chapter 4 titled, "Zoning Tools for Encouraging Mixed-Use Development" (see page 26) lists a series of options for altering regulations to encourage mixed-use such as: adding a Mixed Use Zoning District, an Overlay District, a Planned Unit Development, a Specific Plan, or implementing a Performance Standard. The pros and cons of each option are listed in the graphic, highlighting the difference in expense for each method as well as common problems with neighboring communities.

Using several examples, the book compares the success of cities and counties that have *required* mixed use rather than *permitted* it. Cities like



Washington DC that have designated areas where mixed use is required (in either a comprehensive plan, development plan, or related ordinance) have had more success with implementation.

Additional resources:

Additional best practices for mixed use are also available. For a compilation of best practices on many subjects related to compact development and mixed use, see: *New Urbanism Best Practices Guide* and the Urban Land Institute's *Placemaking*.

For more specific resources related to Smart Growth, see *Getting to Smart Growth* http://www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/gettosg.pdf and

Getting to Smart Growth II http://www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/gettosg2.pdf.

figure 4-1

Zoning Tools for Encouraging Mixed-Use Development

	Overview	Pros	Cons
Mixed-Use Zoning District	Zoning district that allows different types of uses (such as housing, shopping, and offices) to locate in the same district, provided these uses are reasonably related and compatible.	Encourages creation of vibrant, pedestrian-oriented community and neighborhood centers. Specifies future locations of mixed-use development, so neighborhood opposition can be addressed in advance.	Requires qualified staff to administer.
Overlay District	Mapped area where special regulations promoting and managing mixed-use development are applied. An overlay is typically superimposed over conventional zoning districts but may also be used as a stand-alone regulation to manage mixed-use development in desired areas of the community.	Encourages creation of vibrant, pedestrian-oriented community and neighborhood centers. Specifies future locations of mixed-use development, so neighborhood opposition can be addressed in advance.	Can add complexity to local development regulations. Requires qualified staff to administer.
Planned Unit Development	Revised land development regulations to encourage developers to propose planned mixed-use developments for sites they choose in the community. Developer's plans are approved only if they meet specified community standards.	Eliminates need for developer to go through burdensome rezoning process. Enables developers to create vibrant, pedestrian-oriented community and neighborhood centers.	Neighbors frequently oppose new planned developments. Requires qualified staff to administer.
Specific Plan	Detailed plan that indicates exactly how a particular area of the community should be developed, down to the location, size, and use of particular buildings. Can be used to promote mixed uses simply by locating different uses close together in the plan.	Gives developers maximum flexibility in designing creative, vibrant, new mixed-use development projects.	Neighbors frequently oppose new planned developments. Can be rather complex to administer, as plans are negotiated project by project.
Performance Standard	Regulation of development based on whether it meets predetermined measures that are usually related to the development's impact on neighboring properties, the environment, or local public service capacity. Does not require separation of uses: a particular use can locate anywhere so long as it meets established performance standards.	Very effective way to manage impacts of development without requiring separation of uses (zoning). Gives developers considerable flexibility in designing creative, vibrant, mixed-use development projects.	Requires qualified staff to administer. Opposition may arise as a result of the uncertainty about particular uses that may locate nearby. Somewhat complex—may be difficult for the average citizen or developer to understand.

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *Encouraging Mixed-Use Development.* http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/toolkit2.asp?ID=14, accessed October 4, 2002.