Build a Better Burb

HOW TO MANUAL

Greenwood Avenue Cottages, Shoreline, WA
Designer: Ross Chapin Architects
Developer: The Cottage Company

HOUSING REINVENTED

New Approaches to Mixed-use Development

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Weaver Research and Consulting Group

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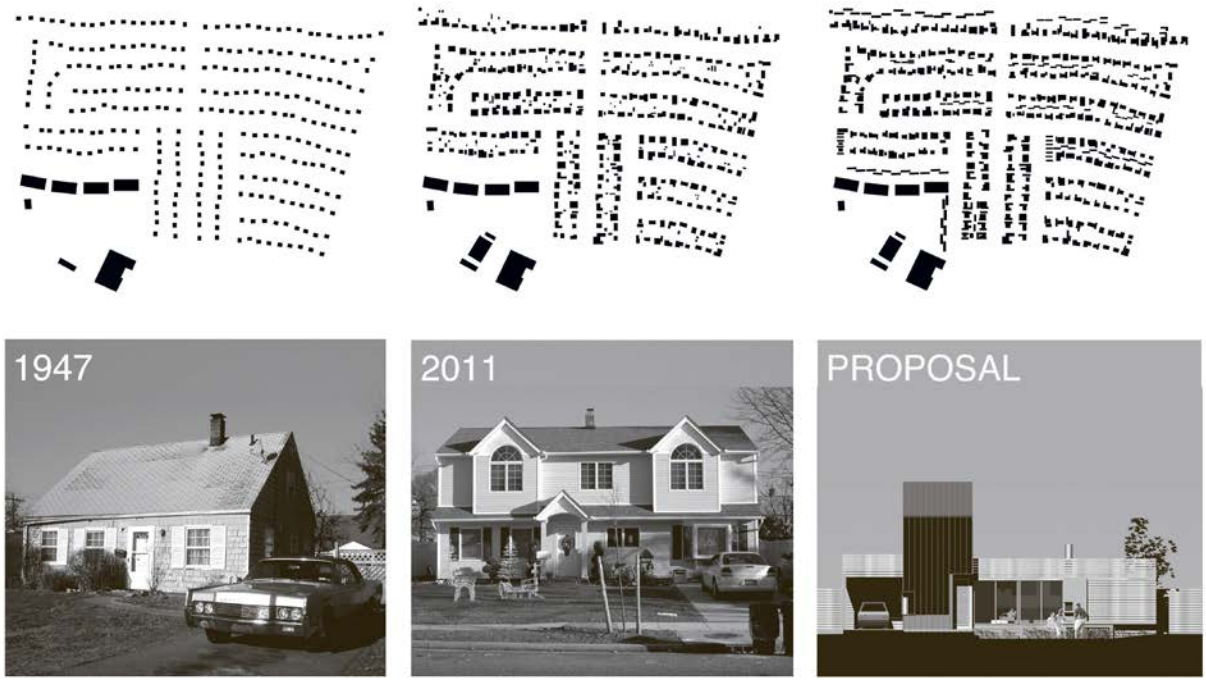
NEW APPROACHES TO MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING



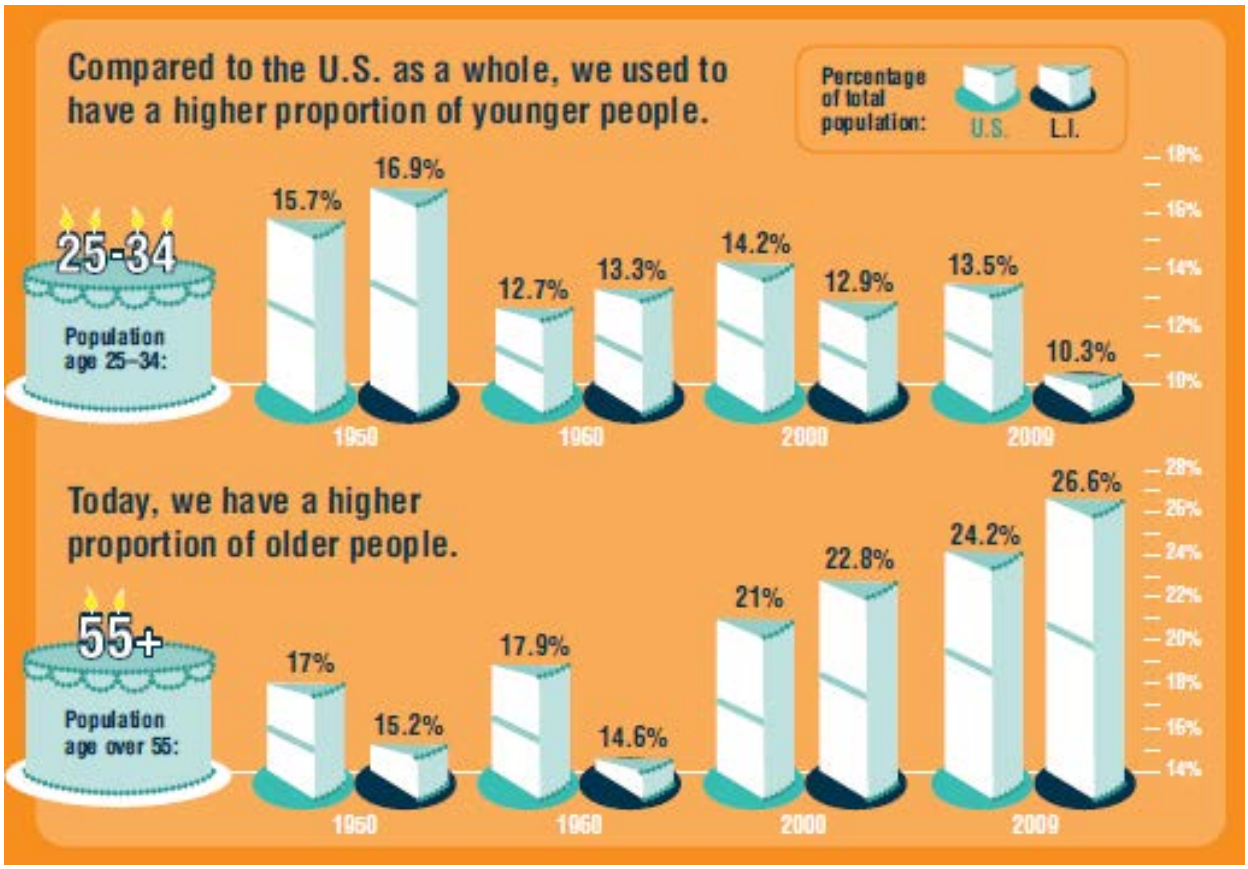
Design submitted to "Build a Better Burb" design competition, 2010, by: Meri Tepper, Ted Porter, Ted Sheridan, John Buckley.

For sixty years, Americans have been living in the Age of the Burbs. The zoning ordinances that created the strictly residential neighborhoods of the Burbs also zoned residential uses out of downtown areas. Now that the Baby Boomers -- whose arrival prompted the suburban residential expansion -- are aging, their preferences and needs argue for more diverse housing options that are closer to shops and services. But the need to mix it up is not just about aging Boomers. Changes in demography and in the world and national economies together with the challenges of overburdened natural resources and an increasingly variable climate also bolster the case for rethinking our approach to the Burbs and directing growth to more compact, mixed-use districts.

Demographic shifts are noticeable on Long Island, where the proportion of young adults (aged 25 to 34) in the population declined by 15% between 2000 and 2009 at the same time that the proportion of people 55 and older increased by 22%. These trends are similar to those seen in the other New York City suburban areas, but both the loss of young people and the increase in seniors are greater on Long Island.[1] The loss of young people should be a major concern because it indicates their needs are not being met locally. Yet theirs is a demographic that is critical to maintaining a healthy economy, in large part because their presence attracts employers but also because their earning power and spending patterns are crucial to supporting local businesses.

[1] Data compiled by Regional Plan Association for Long Island Index. http://www.longislandindex.org/Long-Island-s-Changing-Population.689.0.html

PLAN FOR THE NEEDS OF THE FUTURE RATHER THAN TO PERPETUATE THE PAST



Demographic trends:
The vast number of Boomers in our population is raising the average age of the nation and simultaneously driving a change in housing needs. But successive generations – GenXers, Millennials, and the Internet Generation – each have their own cultural preferences, and these are evidenced by changes in the size and composition of households. These younger generations want and require different types of housing than their parents did. If their needs and preferences are not met locally, they migrate to other areas. In the New York City region, most suburbs lost population in the 25 to 34 year old age group (though at a lower rate than Long Island), but in New York City over the past 10 years this group increased by 5%.

The following changes in household composition and in daily activities across generations are prompting changes in the types of housing and neighborhoods that people prefer.

- Today's households are smaller so the demand for smaller living spaces is growing. The cost of maintaining large properties – both in money and time – is also driving the shift in demand toward smaller properties.

- The percentage of households with children has steadily decreased since 1960 when it was 48%. By 2000, only 33% of households had children. Only 27% are forecasted to by 2040.[2]

[2] Arthur C. Nelson, *Atlanta Metro 2040: Future Shock*, Community Planning Academy presentation March 23, 2006.

- Family activities have changed and there is less need for large backyards than in years past. Modern children engage more and more in sports that require large game fields (e.g. football and soccer) or specialized facilities (e.g. skate parks, skating rinks)[3] and spend more time indoors watching T.V., using computers or playing video games when at home than in times past.[4]

- New York is one of six states in which the number of homes offered for sale exceeds the number of potential buyers, and Baby Boomers are selling more single-family homes than they are buying in the state, and at relatively early ages (55 to 57 years) compared to residents of other states.[5] Nationally, housing market researcher Arthur C. Nelson found that 80% of those who move after the age of 65 sell a detached single-family residence, but only 41% of those movers purchase another one.[6]

- Older residents prefer smaller spaces that require less maintenance and are within walking distance of shops, services and transit connections, according to a 2004 survey by the National Association of Realtors and Smart Growth America. The survey also revealed that a majority (65%) also prefer neighborhoods that offer a mix of housing that accommodates people across all stages of life.

Economic forces:
Over the last decades, the structure of our local and national economies have changed drastically. The infrastructure we built during our manufacturing heyday does not serve the needs of our current service-based economy, but we still plan our cities as if it were the 1950s.

- The national transition from a manufacturing economy to primarily a service economy has all but eliminated the conditions that caused communities to strictly segregate work areas from residential areas. Allowing a mix of commercial and residential uses has many advantages.

- In the age of the internet, the location and size of workplaces is changing. Increasingly, people are working for themselves or as independent contractors working from home. Employers often maintain virtual offices with employees working remotely via the internet.

- Cities and towns across the nation are staggering under the weight of the rising cost of providing municipal services to sprawling communities. In an effort to contain these costs, they are increasingly directing new growth to vacant spaces within their communities and places in need of redevelopment.

- Rising energy costs make maintaining large residences and long commutes to work extravagantly expensive and put them increasingly beyond the means of middle-class households. Compact development is more energy-efficient and hence less expensive.

[3] Laura Hilgers, "Youth sports drawing more than ever." CNN.com, July 15, 2006.
[4] Tara Parker-Pope, "Chores to video games: How children spend their time," New York Times On-line, September 19, 2008.
[5] Dowell Meyers, SungHo Ryu, "Aging Baby Boomers and the Generational Housing Bubble: Foresight and Mitigation of an Epic Transition," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 74:1,17-33, December 31, 2007.
[6] Arthur C. Nelson, presentation April 11, 2011, American Planning Association National Conference, Boston, MA.

Climate conditions and resource constraints:
Frequent climate fluctuations and increasing demands for water, energy, agricultural and open space mean 21st century communities must be more frugal and adopt more compact patterns of development.

- Smaller lots mean that more households within an area of a given size can be served by fewer and shorter municipal water and sewage lines. Shorter lines cost less to build and maintain.

- More compact development patterns contribute to both energy and water conservation and make open space and agricultural land preservation possible, as well.

- More compact development helps build the population density needed to support public transportation and helps keep down the cost of providing and maintaining roads. Compact, mixed-use development contributes to reduced reliance on private automobiles, thereby reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas and other pollutant emissions.

- Adapting existing buildings to new uses reduces environmental impacts by requiring fewer building materials and by contributing to more compact development patterns.

SIX ZONING UPGRADES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

1. MIX IT UP IN THE DOWNTOWN AND TRANSIT AREAS

Upgrading your community to bring it into the 21st century means rezoning your downtown, transit corridors and station areas for a mix of uses, including housing, ground-floor retail space, offices, restaurants, entertainment venues and civic uses. Ideally, the emphasis should be on how the buildings relate to the street and surrounding structures.

There are two methods used to accomplish this goal. One approach is to adopt a **form-based zoning code** for the whole community. A form-based code dictates the form of buildings and their relationship to the other elements of their environs (other buildings, streets, parks, etc.). It allows for a mix of uses in most neighborhoods, though not all uses are allowed in all areas. The major intent of form-based coding is to build attractive, compact, and walkable communities.

The second approach, creating an overlay zone, is less comprehensive and works best for communities that are focused on a more limited area, such as their downtown. With the adoption of an overlay zone, existing commercial districts can be rezoned to allow residential uses.

Locations for mixed-use zoning:

- **Downtown –** the central business district
- **Transit Adjacent Areas** - Areas within a ½ mile radius (or walking distance) of Long Island Rail Road stations or along frequent service bus routes
- **Neighborhood Center** - Neighborhood-serving commercial areas
- **Commercial Corridor** - Existing strip commercial development

Allowed Uses	Why
Residential	A wide variety of residential structures, including multi-family, live/work and accessory units should be allowed in mixed-use districts.
Retail	Retail should be a permitted use in any mixed-use zone.
Restaurants	Dine-in restaurants should be an allowed use in any mixed-use zone. Any restaurant with a drive-thru should require a special permit.
Entertainment	Enclosed entertainment venues should be allowed in downtown areas. Outdoor venues should be allowed by special permit.
Offices	Offices (including medical offices) should be allowed in all mixed-use areas.
Mixed-use buildings	Buildings that include a mix of residential, retail and commercial uses should be allowed in all mixed-use zones. To increase the pedestrian-oriented nature of your mixed-use areas, require ground-floor space with street frontage to be occupied by retail, with office and residential uses situated to the rear of the property (horizontal mixed-use) or on upper stories (vertical mixed-use).
Lodging	Hotels should be permitted by right in downtown mixed-use areas.

Civic uses	Parks, schools and government offices are integral to all mixed-use areas.
Auto-related sales/services	Allow some auto-related businesses by special permit in downtown and station areas; however, these uses are most appropriate in commercial corridors.
Industrial uses	Allow these in mixed-use zones by special permit only, unless they are small-scale art/artisan studios or other operations that are appropriate in live/work units.

Critical Development Standards for Mixed-use Districts: Building Height

Credit: Dover, Kohl & Partners; Columbia Pike Form-Based Code, Arlington Virginia

Height limitations will help shape the character your community wants to maintain in its mixed-use districts, but since limits on height also bear on intensity of use and density, it is important to strike a good balance. Where density is desired, but a less urban appearance is desired, architectural guidelines can help minimize the appearance and other impacts of height, so that sufficient density to support business and transit can be inconspicuously achieved. Regardless of the height limit that is set for an area, it is important to require building design to take surrounding buildings and other features into account, and to require graceful transitions between mixed-use areas and adjacent residential ones.

As applied in model communities

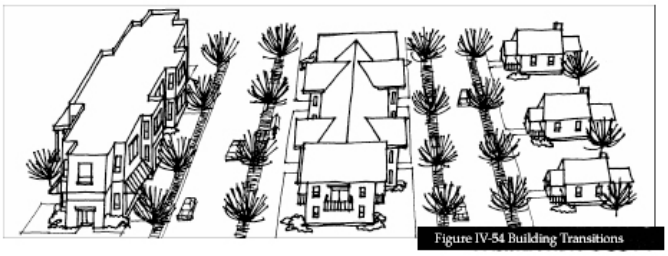
Clarendon, Arlington, VA

Maximum building heights in Clarendon, which range from 35 to 110 feet, are set on a block-specific basis and are coupled with a maximum number of stories allowed. Along the periphery of the mixed-use district, where the district meets adjacent residential areas, buildings are limited to 3 or 5 stories and 35 to 55 feet in height, depending on location and adjacent property characteristics. In the center of the mixed-use district, buildings above 10 stories may be allowed. Exceptions may be made to exceed the height and story limitations if there is sufficient community benefit, and to height and setback requirements if plans are sensitive to surrounding existing development. In most cases, upper stories must be set back by 20 feet when buildings are taller than 60 feet.

Source: Clarendon Sector Plan 1

Colorado Springs, CO

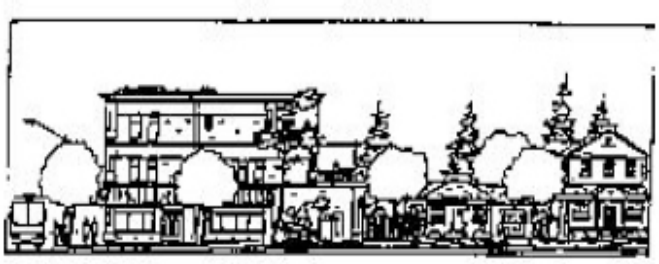
In newly developing mixed-use areas of Colorado Springs, building height limits range from 35 to 65 feet. In established areas, the limit is the lesser of 125% of the average height of surrounding structures or 5 feet more than the height of immediately adjacent buildings. Plaza space and landscaping may be used to soften transitions between areas.



Source: Colorado Springs *Mixed Use Development Design Manual*

Port Townsend, WA

In Port Townsend's neighborhood-serving mixed-use areas, where smaller scale businesses are expected to serve the daily needs of the residents of the immediate neighborhood, principal structures must be a minimum of 2 stories but may not be higher than 40 feet. In the community-serving mixed-use areas, where businesses that require a larger customer base are expected to draw customers from throughout the City, principal buildings must be at least 2 stories and are limited to a maximum height of 50 feet if the building includes a residential component; otherwise, the height limit is 40 feet.



This multistory commercial building "steps back" to conform to the abutting lower density property. This use of modulation helps the commercial building fit into the neighborhood.

Source: Port Townsend Municipal Code Chapter 17.44

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Density

How dense is density? What does it look like on the ground?

Residential neighborhood in Boulder, CO. Gross density of 9.1 dwelling units per acre.

Gross density of 15.6 dwelling units per acre.

Source: Boulder, CO, *Understanding Density and Floor Area Ratio*

FAR helps determine density and intensity of development when coupled with building height and setback requirements. A FAR of 1 means that the total floor area of any buildings on a property cannot exceed the area of the parcel—for example, a 4,000 square foot lot could have structures comprising 4,000 square feet. FAR stated alone says nothing about the configuration of structures, and in the above example, without setback, lot coverage or other regulations, theoretically a single story building covering the whole lot could be constructed, as could any multi-story building configuration so long as the combined area of all stories did not exceed 4,000 square feet. Typically, communities will establish only maximum FARs. These vary by zone depending on how much density is desired. Higher FARs equate to denser development and are usually applied to downtown areas. In smaller towns and suburban areas, FARs are often in the sprawl-inducing 0.25 to 0.5 range.

In mixed-use areas (especially those that are transit-oriented) it is important to establish a minimum FAR as well as a maximum, so that there is sufficient density to support neighborhood businesses and transit. Businesses make location decisions based on how many people live or work within specified distances from the places they are considering setting up shop, because once in business, they require that population to sustain them. Low FARs spread population out over wider distances, which is less attractive to businesses, but setting minimum FARs can help increase an area's attractiveness by allowing a concentration of population and jobs within a short distance of shops, restaurants and services.

Since FAR alone is a rather crude tool that says nothing about how the interior of structures is to be configured or used, your community should also set density ranges for your mixed-use areas. In areas served by bus transit, the minimum gross density should be no less than 7 dwelling units per acre with a minimum FAR ranging from 2.0 to 3.0. Gross densities in areas served by rail should be significantly higher – ranging from 15 to 35 dwelling units per acre and minimum FARs ranging from 3.0 to 10.0.

As applied in model communities

Clarendon, Arlington, VA

The Clarendon Sector Plan's policies use density to meet the community's goals of preserving its single-family residential neighborhoods while fostering a lively mixed-use transit-oriented center. These policies provide for lower densities and lower height limits in areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods, and medium densities in the areas close to the Metro station.

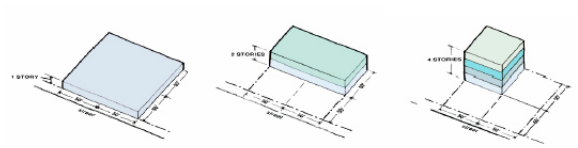
The FARs established for Clarendon range from 3.8 in the central part of the mixed-use district to 1.5 to the east and southeast of the center. Additional density may be allowed on certain Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) receiving sites within the mixed-use area.

Transfers of Development Rights allow property owners and developers to move the right to build additional commercial space or dwelling units from areas where they are permitted but not desired to areas where they are wanted but not allowed by right. The mechanism allows the owners of properties from which the rights are being transferred to be compensated for giving up the opportunity to build additional commercial square footage or dwelling units on their property. The transfers benefit the community by concentrating density close to the transit-oriented mixed-use district.

Colorado Springs, CO

A minimum FAR of 0.25 is established for mixed-use areas, but there is no set maximum. The minimum residential density is 8 units per acre. A minimum FAR of 0.25 means that the area of a building on a parcel can be no less than ¼ of the total parcel area, but it says nothing about the configuration of the building, as illustrated below, which is why FAR is a tool best used in combination with other dimensional and design standards.

Colorado Springs also controls building mass, height and the way improvements are situated on the parcel. Building and site design — what buildings look like and how they relate to surrounding structures and contribute to the environment of the street— are more important under the form-based approach than establishing a maximum FAR.



Possible building configurations under a 1:1 FAR – a one-story structure covering the whole of the lot, 2 stories covering ½ of the lot and 4 stories covering ¼ of the lot.

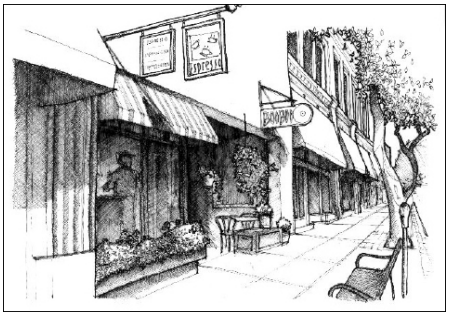
Source: Boulder, CO, *Understanding Density and Floor Area Ratio*

Port Townsend, WA

In neighborhood-serving mixed-use areas, the maximum FAR is 2 square feet gross floor area per square foot parcel area. The maximum residential density is 17.4 units per acre. Both of these standards are higher than those found in many smaller communities, and while slightly on the low side, they are within the ranges needed to support neighborhood businesses and bus transit services. In communities serving mixed-use areas, strictly commercial projects are restricted to 0.25 square feet of gross building area per square foot parcel area. Mixed-use projects are allowed up to 3 square feet gross building area per square foot parcel area. The maximum residential density is 26.1 units per acre. The FAR bonus for mixed-use and the allowable residential density provide reasonable support for bus transit and a wider range of businesses.

Build-to lines and setbacks

Credit: Dover, Kohl & Partners; Park Avenue, Winter Park, Florida



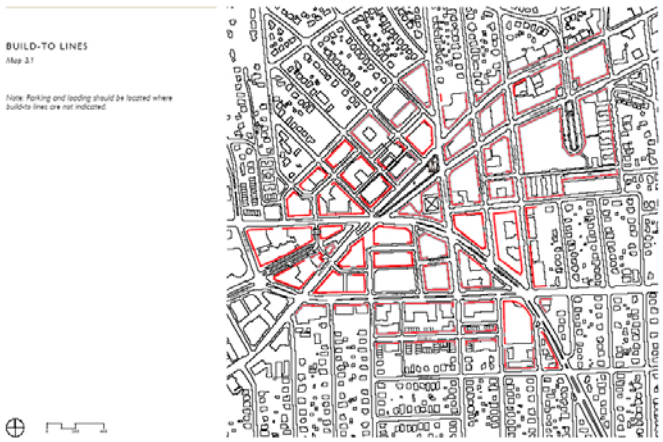
In mixed-use/downtown areas, it is preferable to set a build-to line rather than establish a setback distance. A setback is the minimum distance a building must be from the street right-of-way/property line. In contrast, a build-to line requires that buildings be located close to the street and in alignment with other buildings along the street. The build-to line approach establishes a coherent relationship between buildings, the street, and the intervening pedestrian space, which with proper streetscaping will be inviting, comfortable and safe.

Source: San Luis Obispo Community Design Guidelines

As applied in model communities

[Clarendon, Arlington, VA]

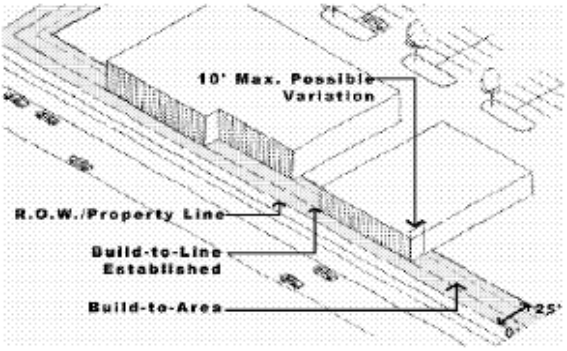
Build-to lines are established on a street-by-street basis, generally at the back of the sidewalks, in mixed-use areas. Building faces are required to occupy at least 75% of their parcel's street frontage. "Modest" setbacks are permitted to provide additional sidewalk space for outdoor dining areas, to accommodate plazas, or as a design concession necessary to prevent the new structure's detracting from an adjacent historically or architecturally significant structure.



Source: Clarendon Sector Plan Urban Design Guidelines

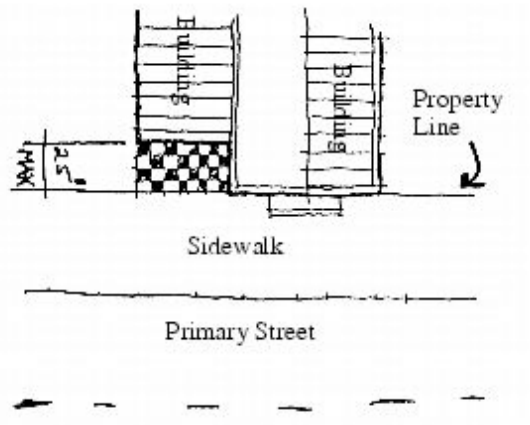
[Colorado Springs, CO]

Build-to lines are established for mixed-use areas based on the type of street and range from a minimum of 0 feet up to 25 feet. Buildings may be placed up to a maximum of 10 feet behind the build-to-line to accommodate outdoor seating, landscaping and other amenities that enhance the pedestrian environment.



[Port Townsend, WA]

No front, side or rear setbacks are required for buildings in either the neighborhood or community mixed-use areas unless the property abuts a residential zoning district. New buildings may not be set back more than 25 feet from the property line abutting a street. Where the property adjoins a residential zoning district, rear yards ranging from 5 to 20 feet are required, as are side yards ranging from 5 to 10 feet.



Source Port Townsend Municipal Code Chapter 17.44

Streetscaping and landscaping

The presence of street trees, benches, lighting, trash receptacles, directional signage and planting areas make the space between the street edge and building faces habitable, comfortable and attractive, which both facilitates and encourages walking.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers manual divides this space into 4 zones:

- The Edge Zone immediately adjacent to the street, where parking meters, lighting poles and street signage are placed;
- The Furnishings Zone where public benches, trash receptacles, bicycle parking and the like are located;
- The Thoroughfare Zone, which provides for unimpeded pedestrian travel; and
- The Frontage or "Shy" Zone between the thoroughfare (walking) zone and the fronts of buildings. The Frontage/Shy Zone allows space for private street furniture and signage, merchandise displays, outdoor dining, and for window shoppers to stand without blocking the sidewalk.

Street trees and other landscaping features have environmental benefits, in addition to making sidewalks more pedestrian-friendly. Standards should be set for distance between street trees, types of trees allowed, and for additional landscaping based on sidewalk width.

Arlington Street Scene
Credit: C. Cizauskas under Creative Commons License

As applied in model communities

Clarendon, Arlington, VA

Source: Clarendon Sector Plan Urban Design Guidelines

Standards for streetscapes from the Clarendon Sector Plan Urban Design Guidelines:
"Streetscapes…are a key ingredient in the public space system for the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor …Four types of sidewalks are …described based on optimum total width, with typical dimensions for each zone of the streetscape including a Tree and Furniture Zone, a Clear Walkway Zone, and a Café/Shy Zone. The definitions and dimensions for each are based on several factors including anticipated levels of activity, existing and planned land uses, right-of-way constraints, and position within the larger network of streets and public spaces. It is expected that streetscapes will be improved and enhanced primarily through private development projects.

The **Tree and Furniture Zone** exists as the space adjacent to the vehicular travel lanes within which is placed a variety of elements and amenities. Trees are the primary element of this zone and can be located in tree pits, grates, planters, or planting strips depending on the level of activity of the streetscape and associated street. Within the zone, the tree area is defined by a 4" curb, 8" brick soldier course, and at least a 5' tree pit. The 6' wide Tree and Furniture zone is typical in Clarendon. However, in constrained conditions where narrowing travel lanes may not be possible or retention of historic buildings is desired, tree grates may be used to gain additional pedestrian circulation space.

The **Café and Shy Zone**, like the Tree and Furniture Zone, is a place where pedestrians will enter; however, it may be occupied by building-related elements such as shopfronts, blade signs, outdoor displays, café space, kiosks, standpipes, planters, awnings and doors that could impede mobility. At a minimum, the 2' adjacent to a building front is considered part of the Shy Zone. Unlike the Tree and Furniture Zone, which has public facilities such as lights, the elements in the Café and Shy Zone relate to the private uses occupying adjacent buildings. These elements help define the character of Clarendon, offer shelter from sun and rain, and provide visual interest for both pedestrians and motorists.

As accessories to formal public space, cafés and outdoor dining areas provide an opportunity to enhance the urban experience in Clarendon. Café spaces provide for both active and passive social interaction and add visual appeal, variety and interest to the streets…"

Required sidewalk widths range from 20 feet on the main arteries to 12 feet in adjoining neighborhoods, though the clear walkway can be reduced to as little as 8 feet on main and secondary streets and 6 feet on tertiary streets to accommodate a Café and Shy Zone. Trees are to be set 30 feet apart on center and must be 4 to 6 inches in diameter (measured using a caliper) and 16 to 30 feet tall.

Colorado Springs, CO

Figure IV.20– Pedestrian friendly streetscape

Figure IV.17– Pedestrian-friendly facade

Source: Colorado Springs Mixed Use Development Design Manual

Design standards in Colorado Springs emphasize the pedestrian environment.

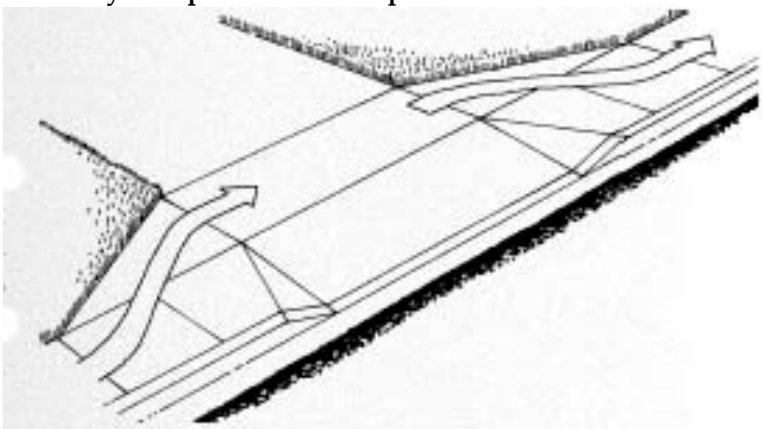
"All on-site pedestrian walkways shall have and maintain a minimum unobstructed width of six feet (6'), except that walkways for both pedestrian and bike use shall provide an unobstructed minimum pathway width of twelve feet (12'). Pedestrian walkways through parking areas shall be at least seven feet (7') wide, unless concrete wheel stops, bollards, curbing, landscaping, or other similar improvements are provided that prevent parked vehicles from obstructing the walkway. Pedestrian and bicycle pathways connecting to greenways or trail systems are subject to standards in the City's *Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan*."

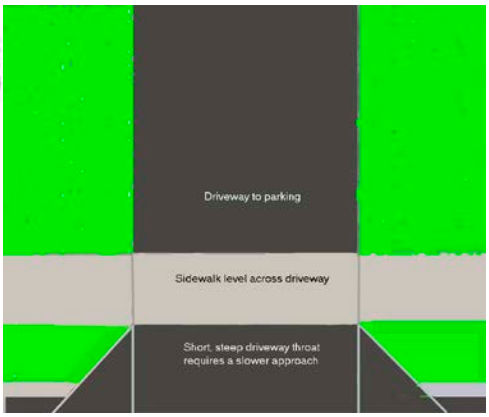
Colorado Springs' regulations also minimize the inconvenience posed to pedestrian traffic by driveways and parking facilities: "Walkways shall be designed to create a safe and uninterrupted pedestrian way, and shall avoid frequent crossings by driveways or streets. Walkways shall be separated from streets and parking lots by curbs or other means to create physical separation."

Port Townsend, WA

Chapter 17.44 of the Port Townsend Municipal Code includes requirements to ensure that development in the mixed-use zone will be both pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly. Of particular note is the requirement that driveways must ramp over sidewalks rather than interrupting them. The shorter, steeper driveway entrance creates a sort of speed bump that requires vehicles to slow down as they approach the intersection of sidewalk and drive-throat. This serves as a subtle signal that pedestrians have the right of way in this instance and automobiles must yield to them. It also improves accessibility for people in wheelchairs or with other mobility problems because it eliminates problematic changes in grade that often lead to trips and falls.

Driveways ramp over uninterrupted sidewalks





Source: Federal Highway Administration

"1. Walkways shall be provided between the primary abutting street and the main pedestrian entrances to buildings.

2. The interruption of sidewalks by driveways should be minimized. Where driveways cross sidewalks, the sidewalks should remain raised with a curb cut and ramp over the sidewalk provided so cars may pass over the sidewalk rather than requiring pedestrians to step down to an interrupting driveway.

3. Pedestrian access shall be provided between commercial sites and adjacent areas. Existing informal pathway locations and future walkway locations shown in the non-motorized transportation plan shall be taken into consideration when locating new paths.

4. Bicycle locking racks that support the entire bicycle frame, not just the front wheel, shall be provided. Bicycle racks shall be located as closely as possible to primary building entrances (generally within 20 feet) and shall be lit during evening business hours. New buildings should provide covered bicycle racks, especially those used by employees."

Design standards

Credit: Dover, Kohl & Partners, Glenwood Park, Atlanta, Georgia

Design standards are important auxiliary regulations to ensure that building heights, FAR, doorway and window placement, and other dimensional standards are compatible with existing development and result in an aesthetically pleasing public space. They also help establish and maintain a distinctive image and sense of place for mixed-use districts/downtowns.

Given their role in establishing a distinctive image, design standards will vary widely from community to community. A guide that includes numerous illustrations is preferable, as it makes clear what is and is not acceptable. Clearly communicated expectations minimize misunderstandings and, when guidelines are followed, reduce the time needed for design review and approval.

See "How to Manual: Creating a Sense of Place" for more on this topic.

As applied in model communities

Clarendon, Arlington, VA

The Urban Design Guidelines of the Clarendon Sector Plan do not dictate any particular architectural style, but they do give explicit guidance regarding architectural elements. The following elements are required:

- Storefronts (windows) of corner buildings are expected to wrap around the corner
- Doorways are expected to be recessed
- Awnings must be proportional to the entry or window they overhang
- Signage is expected to be attractive
- Windows and doorways must provide a degree of ground-floor transparency appropriate to the street type on which the building is located.
- Spacing between entrances must establish an attractive and balanced rhythm

Design standards are also established for service areas that contain loading zones, parking structure entrances, etc.

Corner Storefront Treatment
Source: Clarendon Sector Plan Urban Design Guidelines

Storefront Transparency -- Market Common, Clarendon
Source: Clarendon Sector Plan Urban Design Guidelines

Colorado Springs, CO

Colorado Springs explicitly requires new buildings to "create visual interest in ways that are compatible with the architectural character of the surrounding area. This may be accomplished through the use of such elements as similar rooflines, materials, colors, fenestration, and other architectural details." The emphasis is not on a particular architectural style, but on how a project relates to adjacent properties and how it contributes to the pedestrian environment.

Source: Colorado Springs Mixed Use Development Design Manual

Port Townsend, WA

Use corner entrance, signage, and landscaping to accentuate a corner site.

Source: Port Townsend Municipal Code Chapter 17.44

In keeping with its small town atmosphere, Port Townsend emphasizes the need for new development to be compatible with existing structures.

"New development should recognize the City's historic architectural heritage through the use of building materials and proportions compatible with those design principles inherent in historic architecture without replicating historical buildings."

Design guidelines also emphasize the pedestrian environment and require corner storefronts to address both streets.

Parking standards

Parking standards and placement should be designed to enhance walkability of the mixed-use district/downtown. Parking should be located behind buildings, rather than in front of them. Driveway cuts through sidewalks should be minimized to avoid dangerous conflicts between pedestrians and motor vehicles. Centralized and strategically placed parking facilities (structures or fields) contribute to compact development patterns that encourage people to park once and walk between destinations. Parking structures are preferable to surface parking lots, but should be designed to be inconspicuous. For example, parking decks can be wrapped by buildings or can include active uses at the street level, such as restaurants and shops. Regulations should promote shared parking arrangements, allowing parking spaces to be shared by multiple uses. This helps ensure that parking spaces are used efficiently and occupied round-the-clock.

Mid-block parking structure, Staunton, VA
Credit: EPA Smart Growth

See How to Manual: Better Transit/Less Parking, Parking by Design section for more on this topic.

As applied in model communities

Clarendon, Arlington, VA

Along "Service Street" frontages, quality materials, careful detailing are encouraged.

The Clarendon Sector Plan calls for sufficient parking based on the mix of uses, but also notes that the location of parking should be in keeping with the pedestrian environment embodied in the plan. It calls for locations that permit and encourage pooled parking arrangements and parking structures designed so that they can be adapted in response to changes in parking demand. Parking pricing should reflect the true cost of providing parking space so that drivers can make informed decisions about whether, where and how long to park. "Free public parking" is a misnomer. Everyone – even people without cars – pays for "free" parking, but the monetary cost is hidden in higher development costs and merchant tenant rents that are passed on to all consumers. "Free public parking" also imposes other hidden costs on City government and on the environment.[7]

To further enhance the pedestrian environment, parking structure vehicular access is limited on primary and secondary streets, and generally expected to be provided on tertiary streets or alleys.

New projects are required to provide a substantial amount of shared parking. These spaces are to be unreserved and available throughout the day and into the evening. All spaces provided for retail and restaurant use are to be shared spaces, and 10% of required commercial parking is to be shared. Any commercial parking proposed over the minimum required must be shared.

Colorado Springs, CO

Colorado Springs places heavy emphasis on providing pedestrian linkages through parking fields, requiring site designers to provide passages every 400 feet. Building entrances are to orient to the street, and where there is a continuous building face longer than 400 feet, pedestrian pass-throughs are expected.

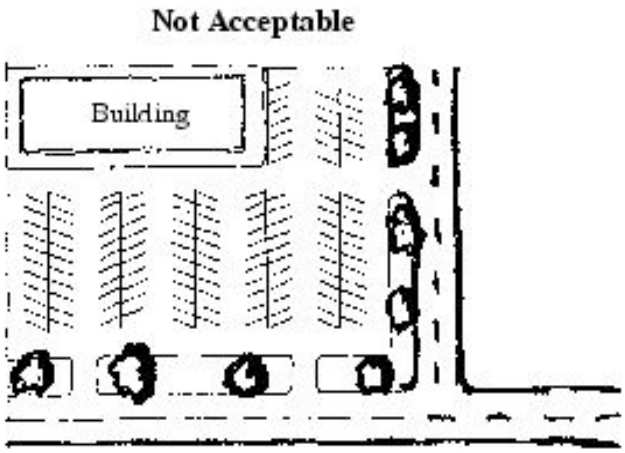
Parking access illustrations: Clarendon Sector Plan Manual

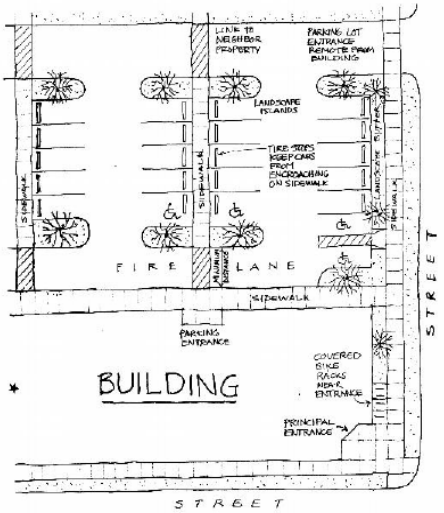
Illustrations source: Colorado Springs Mixed Use Development Design

[7] Shoup, Donald. *The High Cost of Free Parking.* Chicago, IL: American Planning Association, 2005.

Port Townsend, WA

In keeping with its small town atmosphere, Port Townsend encourages on-street parking in its mixed-use district in order to reduce the need for parking lots. Additionally, the City's mixed-use district design guidelines provide graphic examples of how parking is expected to relate to the buildings, streets and sidewalks.





Illustrations from Port Townsend Municipal Code Chapter 17.44

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Districts

TOD districts are a special breed of mixed-use district because they are specifically intended to increase support for transit services by increasing population density within walking distance of train stations and bus stops. TOD districts have been adopted widely for areas served by heavy commuter rail or light rail, but have also been established for corridors served by regular bus service or bus rapid transit lines.

In order to achieve the purpose of the TOD, properties within the TOD should be subject to both minimum and maximum density standards. These should be set so that there will be a minimum average of 7 to 10 dwelling units per acre within a ½-mile radius of the transit stations. The number of dwelling units per acre can vary with distance. Many communities use the concept of average density for their TODs, in which case relatively high densities (20 to 30 units per acre) are required in areas adjacent to stations, with densities tapering off as distance decreases to surrounding lower density neighborhoods. Along the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor in Arlington County, population densities in the station areas range from a high of 48.7 persons per acre in Court House to a low of 21.0 in Clarendon, while for the County as a whole it averages 12.7.[8]

To ensure that residents have easy pedestrian access to train stations and bus stops, block lengths should be limited to increase walkability and connectivity within the district. Requiring pedestrian amenities like crosswalks and passageways through large developments also increases pedestrian access. TODs are typically designed to include uses geared to the daily needs of neighborhood residents, but many serve as regional shopping, entertainment or employment hubs as well. For example, there are 1.27 jobs for every resident in Arlington's Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor – 44.5 jobs per acre, compared to the county average of 12.5 jobs per acre.[9]

TOD Code Examples

Arlington, VA (population 217,483) was an early adopter of TOD, jumping on-board in the 1970s. The county has been stunningly successful in concentrating growth along it commuter lines, in particular the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor. Carefully drafted plans resulted from intensive and inclusive community workshops. A rich mix of housing types, both for sale and for rent, is offered within the corridor. While creating density near the Metro stations, the plan also ensures graceful transitions between these areas of intense activity and their surrounding single-family neighborhoods by requiring well-designed projects that take the character and scale of surrounding development into account.

Resources:
Arlington County, VA, Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development planning documents:
http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/planning/docs/CPHDPlanningDocsMain.aspx

Large Community Case Study: Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor, Arlington, VA
http://www.longislandindex.org/fileadmin/Reports_and_Maps/2011_Index/Case/Case_Study_Rosslyn-Ballston_Corridor.pdf

[8] Arlington County, VA, Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, *Planning Research Brief #7: Forecast 8.0 & Density*, December 2010.
http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/planning/data_maps/pdf/Planning%20Research%20Brief%207%20Forecast%208.0%20and%20Density.pdf
[9] Ibid.

Cleveland, OH (population 431,363) established a TOD zoning overlay for the Midtown section of its bus rapid transit Euclid Corridor Transportation Project. The zoning requires multi-story mixed-use buildings along Euclid Avenue with commercial uses occupying 60% of the ground floor area.

Resource:
City of Cleveland, OH, Zoning Code Chapter 344 – Midtown Mixed-Use District
http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/clevelandcodes/cco_part3_344.html

Lower Merion Township, PA (population 59,850) applies a Mixed-use Special Transit (MUST) overlay to those portions of its Ardmore Special Development District that are within a 1,500-foot radius of the Ardmore rail commuter station. Mixed uses are allowed and special design standards are imposed. Density bonuses are awarded to projects that provide a mix of housing types and sizes so that moderate-income residents can be accommodated.

Resource:
The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 155, entitled Zoning, Article XVIIB, Mixed Use Special Transit District, Section 155-87.20
http://www.lowermerion.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=3659

No transit station? Mixed-use development is still a 21st century necessity.

Even if your community is not on an existing transit line, mixing uses in your downtown is still a 21st Century necessity. Locating residential buildings in the downtown within walking distance of work, shops and services reduces reliance on automobiles. Increased walkability is conducive to healthier lifestyles, increases the vitality of neighborhoods by creating lively streets and helps build support for future transit service. Mixed-use districts are typically safer places than single-purpose areas simply because people are present round-the-clock. Residential neighborhoods are in many cases nearly deserted for much of the workday; strictly commercial districts are vacated at the close of regular business hours. But in a mixed-use area, the resident population and the activity that businesses bring to the street act as deterrents to crime by making sure that potential witnesses are always present.

Below are three examples of smaller communities that have adopted mixed-use districts scaled appropriately for their populations:

Nunda, NY (population 1,276) has based its Village Mixed Use district regulations on its historic village center and surrounding hamlets. Allowable uses in the district include single- and multiple-family dwellings. Apartments are allowed over ground-floor commercial or as a component of mixed-type residential development. The size of retail and service-oriented businesses is limited. Retail in mixed-use structures must occupy the ground floor, with offices and residential uses either to the rear of the property or on upper floors.

Resource:
Village of Nunda, NY, Zoning Code section 1-39
http://www.town.nunda.ny.us/nundazonecodenov2005.pdf

Pinehurst, NC (population 12,422) adopted a Village Mixed Use district in support of its NewCore master plan with the expressed intent of ensuring "cohesive, high quality" development in its downtown area. A variety of housing types is allowed. Mixed-use development is required to include 35 to 45% residential uses, 25 to 35% commercial uses and 25 to 35% office or professional space. Commercial uses are limited to a 7,500 square foot maximum, but there are exceptions for projects that adaptively reuse historic buildings.

Resource:
Village of Pinehurst, NC, Ordinance 08-33
http://www.villageofpinehurst.org/Portals/0/Planning/Ordin.%2008-33%20PDO-%20Special%20Mixed%20Use%20Districts,%2010-21-08.pdf

Windsor, VT (population 3,596) has both a Central Business District designation that allows for mixed-use development and a Village Mixed Use district. The purpose of the district is to promote economic vitality by allowing not only the intermingling of commercial and residential uses, but of light manufacturing, as was the case historically.

Postcard view of Main Street
Windsor, VT, c. 1910

Resource:
Zoning Regulations for the Town of Windsor, VT, Section 2.7
http://www.windsorvt.org/wordpress/wp-content/files/zoningregulations.pdf

2. ESTABLISH MINIMUM DENSITIES ALONG PUBLIC TRANSIT CORRIDORS AND IN MIXED-USE ZONES, AND MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM LOT SIZES IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Credit: Jonathan Rose Companies, Highlands' Garden Village, Denver, Colorado

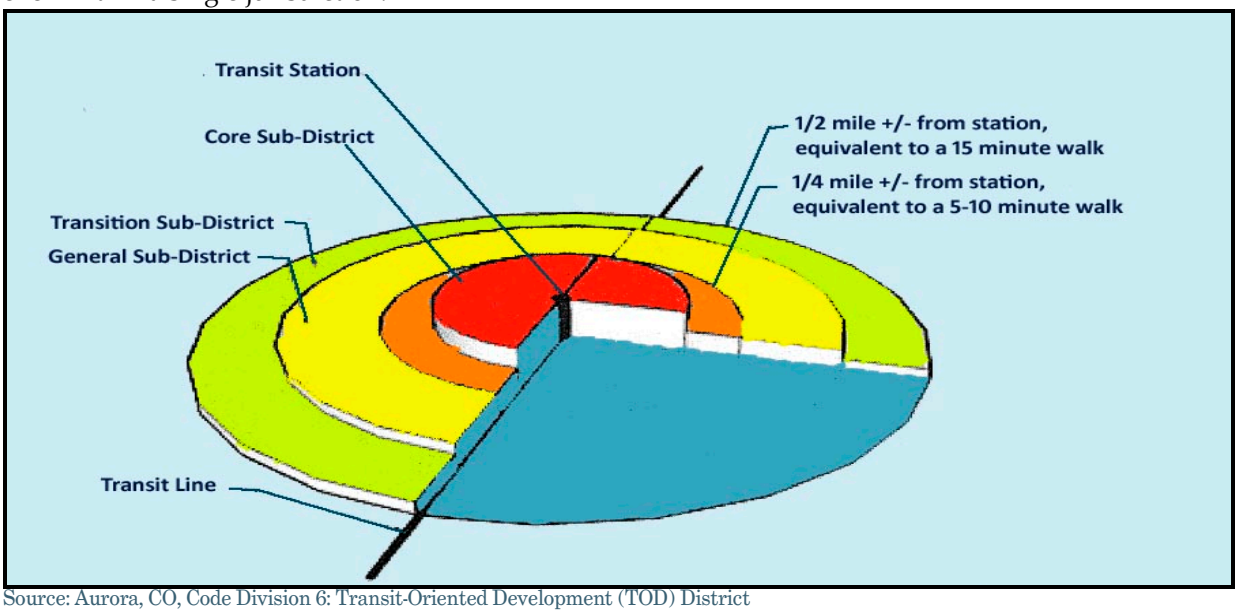
The vast majority of communities in the U.S. establish minimum lot sizes to control population density. Because this practice sets only a density ceiling and not a floor, it tends to contribute to sprawl and the increased infrastructure costs associated with low-density development. Minimum lot size requirements make housing costs higher, in some cases making communities prohibitively expensive for young adults. These regulations can prevent communities from achieving the population density needed to support public transit. To make sure that your community's mixed-use or TOD district achieves its purpose, it is essential to establish **minimum density** standards. For residential neighborhoods that are adjacent to your downtown, consider establishing maximum lot sizes along with the standard minimum lot size restrictions to ensure that the population necessary to support transit can be accommodated within walking distance of transit stops.

Minimum Density Code Examples

For its Residentially-Oriented TOD-R district, Charlotte, NC (population 174,524) sets "a minimum density of twenty dwelling units per acre within ¼ mile walking distance from a transit station or a minimum density of fifteen dwelling units per acre between ¼ mile and ½ mile walking distance from a transit station…based on the residential portion of the site." (Charlotte Code Section 9.1202[1])

Resource:
Charlotte Code Part 12: Transit Oriented Development Districts
http://ww.charmeck.org/Planning/Rezoning/TOD-TS-PED/ZoningOrd_TOD.pdf

Aurora, CO (population 303,582) has similarly established minimum densities by district based on distance from transit stations within their TOD zones. The minimums in Aurora are 60 dwelling units per acre for the Core Sub-District (5-minute walk to station), 40 dwelling units per acre for the General Sub-District (5 to 10-minute walk to station) and 20 dwelling units per acre for the Transition Sub- District (10 to 15-minute walk to station). The type of transit being supported—conventional city bus service, bus rapid transit, light rail, or heavy rail—dictate the population density required and vary from TOD to TOD even within a single jurisdiction.



Source: Aurora, CO, Code Division 6: Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) District

Resource:
City of Aurora, Colorado: Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) District
https://www.auroragov.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/article-publication/049917.pdf

Onondaga County, NY, (population 454,753) has adopted the Onondaga County Settlement Plan: Traditional Neighborhood Development Code[10] that establishes both a minimum and maximum parcel size for the two most urbanized districts. Within the Urban Center district, parcels must be between 18 and 54 feet wide by at least 80 feet deep (1,440 to 4,320 square feet). In the General Urban district, the width may range from 36 to 72 feet, with a minimum depth of 80 feet (2,880 to 5,760 square feet).

[10] Duany Plater-Zyberg & Company, Environmental Design & Research, *Onondaga County Settlement Plan: Tradtional Neighborhood Development*, 2001, for the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency.

3. PROMOTE *ADAPTIVE REUSE* - THE RENOVATION AND REPURPOSING OF OLDER BUILDINGS

Credit: Scott Shigley and Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects, Uptown Normal Circle, Normal, Illinois

Adaptation is one of the keys to sustainability. Picture the great cities of the world, and no doubt the images you conjure up will include historic buildings that have been preserved, renovated and reconfigured multiple times through decades and even centuries. Through adaptive reuse, neighborhoods endure even though housing needs and commercial uses change. The entire community is richer for its preserved heritage and culture.

Adaptive reuse also reduces the number of vacant buildings in transitioning neighborhoods and this helps strengthen the social fabric of the neighborhood. When adaptive reuse involves the addition or reintroduction of residential uses into a commercial district, it also helps establish a better balance between where jobs and housing are located relative to one another. Housing located within close proximity to jobs helps reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled by commuters, which reduces traffic congestion, lowers fuel consumption and helps reduce greenhouse gas and other air pollutant emissions.

Special concessions are necessary not only to encourage adaptive reuse but to make it possible at all. Older buildings generally do not comply with current standards for placement on the building site (setbacks), parking space and loading zone provisions. It may also be necessary to provide alternative ways for meeting access and safety requirements by retrofitting.

***Downtown Precedent:** reuse of historic structures maintains a distinct urban character*

Source: Pasadena, CA, *Central District Specific Plan*

Adaptive Reuse Code Example

The City of Los Angeles' Adaptive Reuse Ordinance is one of the best in the nation. It encourages the adaptive reuse of buildings constructed before 1974 by relaxing certain building standards and providing permitting process concessions that reduce the time between planning and construction. Key features have made the L.A. program highly successful. These include:

- Designated incentive areas. Targeting specific areas helps direct growth, but also encourages the preservation of locally important architectural resources.

- By-right entitlement for buildings that are being renovated to include rental housing and are located in either commercial or high density residential areas, within the incentive areas. This means that proposed projects will only have to undergo review by planning and building officials and will be approved as long as they comply with the applicable adaptive reuse codes and standards. No public hearing is required. This eliminates the risk of a project being denied because of neighborhood opposition and cuts the amount of time required to obtain a building

permit. Adaptive reuse projects that are outside the designated areas, have industrial zoning, or include for-sale units (condominiums) may also be approved, but the approval process is discretionary, which entails public hearings before the appropriate boards and/or commissions.

- Alternative standards for density, parking, and site dimensions. These are necessary because it might otherwise be physically impossible for older buildings to meet standards set for new construction. Regardless of their site placement or building height, adaptive reuse projects are "grandfathered," meaning that they are considered legal for as long as the building stands. Similarly, the underlying density limits do not apply. Instead, the City imposes minimum square footage and minimum average square footage requirements on apartments and live/work units and requires hotel rooms to include bathing and toilet facilities. Apartments and live/work units can be no smaller than 450 square feet, and the average for all units in a building must be no less than 750 square feet. Also, the original height of the building must be maintained; no new stories may be added. No new parking is required for adaptive reuse projects, but any existing parking must be maintained. No loading space is required. While disabled access is not required for private residential use, it must be accommodated for any work space or commercial uses.

  Resource:
  City of Los Angeles Adaptive Reuse Program
  http://www.ci.la.ca.us/LAHD/AROHandbook.pdf

4. ENCOURAGE ADAPTABLE BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES THAT WILL ALLOW BUILDING INTERIORS TO BE MODIFIED AS BUSINESS MODELS AND THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY CHANGE

Adaptability should be a concern with newer buildings, too. It is good practice from the standpoint of environmental sustainability because it minimizes the resources required to accommodate changing uses. But it also enhances economic sustainability because downtown property owners will be more readily able to respond to changing economic circumstances.

There are several aspects of building design that should be addressed in design guidelines for a downtown area to promote adaptable building design, and density bonuses or other considerations should be offered to promote adaptable building design. Design issues include:

i. Story height – Nothing limits the conversion of a building more than story heights. Minimum floor-to-floor heights should be established for ground floors (e.g., 15 feet) and upper stories (e.g., 12 feet) that will provide sufficient ceiling heights plus space for lighting, heating, air conditioning and wiring requirements for a variety of uses (e.g., ground-level retail, offices, residential)

ii. Structural design – The supporting grid should allow interior spaces to be easily and economically reconfigured as tenants and uses change.

iii. Site design – Building placement on the site and architectural design should provide for good access to natural light and take views, privacy, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation into consideration.

iv. Interior circulation – Since elevator service needs are greater for offices and hotels than for residences, accommodating elevator shafts and stairwells for possible future uses should be addressed in the design stage.

v. Cladding – Standards for exterior surface coverings should be carefully considered to enhance adaptability, too. Aspects that need to be taken into account to ensure building longevity include energy efficiency, acoustic qualities (particularly important for residential and hotel uses), ventilation properties, and use of natural light.

Adaptable Building Design Example

In Montgomery County, MD, projects proposed in the mixed-use zones may be allowed increased density if buildings are designed to be adaptable to various uses. In order to qualify, buildings must have an internal structural system that allows spaces to be reconfigured with only minor modifications. Ground-level stories must have a floor-to-floor height of no less than 15 feet, and all other stories must have a floor-to-floor height of at least 12 feet. The basic density increase for adaptability is 10%, but additional density may be awarded if the structural system is designed to support future additional density and if space can be easily converted to residential, retail or office uses as demand changes.

Resource:
Montgomery County, MD, CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines
http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/documents/CRzoneguidelines.pdf

5. ALLOW LIVE/WORK UNITS

As the nature of work changes and more and more people are either self-employed or work as independent contractors, another increasingly popular way to expand the range of housing options available in both new and existing neighborhoods is to allow what are called "**live/work units**" in mixed-use areas/downtowns. Live/work units typically combine ground-floor retail or work space with living quarters either to the rear or on upper floors. Frequently there are restrictions requiring both spaces to be occupied by the business owner and his/her family, and generally the type of business activity is also restricted. Live/work arrangements differ from home-based businesses in that they require a storefront, more space, or involve a more intensive use than is usually allowed in a strictly residential zone. For those who have these needs, live/work units offer a convenient and more affordable option than owning and/or renting separate spaces.

Live/Work Code Examples

Live-work units in the Kentlands, Gaithersburg, MD
Credit: EPA Smart Growth

Live-work units in Issaquah, WA

Issaquah, WA (population 11,974) allows live/work units in its Mixed-Use Residential district, which provides for limited scale commercial and retail uses. Design standards apply to ensure attractive and cohesive neighborhoods. Live-work units serve to meet the objectives of the district, which include locating urban services with walking distance of housing, providing a variety of housing types, and encouraging the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

Resource:
City of Issaquah, WA, Municipal Code section 18.06.100(F)
http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/issaquah/

Under the recently revised form-based zoning code of Denver, Colorado (population 610,345), live/work units are widely permitted. In areas with mixed-use, commercial corridor and main street zoning designations; in the urban center; and in the industrial mixed-use zones, whatever commercial uses are allowed in the zone are allowed as the commercial activity associated with the live/work unit. Live/work units are also permitted to function as art galleries, professional studios and non-medical offices. In the light industrial I-A and general industrial I-B zones, they are limited solely to art studios and have an occupancy restriction of four if residents are unrelated. There is no limit if residents are family members.

Resource:
City of Denver, CO, Zoning Code Article 11 Use Limitations and Definitions
http://denvergov.org/Portals/646/documents/DZC/11_UseLimitations_DZC_122310.pdf

6. ALLOW ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Many communities are increasing housing options in existing neighborhoods that are zoned for single-family residences by allowing property owners to build what are commonly called granny flats. Planners refer to granny flats as accessory dwelling units. How and where these can be added varies between and within communities depending on lot sizes and configurations. In some places they are only permitted if they are interior to or attached to the main dwelling, while in others they can be constructed over a detached garage or as a separate unit or guest house, as long as minimum distances are maintained from lot lines and other structures on the property.

Accessory dwelling unit in Haile Village Center
Gainesville, FL

Accessory dwelling units can serve several functions. For aging homeowners who need assistance, they can provide caregiver or caretaker quarters. Some communities attempt to limit accessory dwelling units to these uses by requiring residents to be members of the homeowner's family. Where no tenancy restrictions are imposed, accessory dwelling units can accommodate guests or produce rental income for the property owner.

Accessory Dwelling Unit Code Examples

Arlington, VA (population 217,483) allows accessory dwelling units in single-family residences and only if they are interior to the home. They may have a separate entrance, but this entrance cannot be located on the same side of the house as the main entrance. Accessory dwelling units may have their own kitchen and bath, but they can legally accommodate only 2 people. They are also limited in size depending on the size of the main residence. The homeowner must reside on the property. These regulations became effective in 2009, and the intent stated during the adoption process was two-fold – first to allow homeowners to age in place, and second to increase the number of affordable units. For aging homeowners on fixed incomes, having an accessory dwelling unit that they could rent out could ease the financial burden of maintaining their own home.

Resource:
Arlington, VA, Zoning Ordinance Elements of Accessory Dwellings
http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/housing/pdf/file65473.pdf

South Pasadena, CA (population 24,339) allows accessory dwelling units to be built either as part of the main residence or separately, but does not allow them to be build above a garage. The unit may have only one bedroom, must have its own kitchen and bath, but may not have separate utility meters or a separate street address. South Pasadena, like all California cities and counties, is required by the State to allow accessory dwelling units in order to help ease a severe statewide affordable housing shortage. South Pasadena's ordinance is designed to comply with state law while protecting the existing character and integrity of residential neighborhoods.

Resource:
City of South Pasadena, CA, Municipal Code section 36.350.200

http://www.qualitycodepublishing.com/codes/southpasadena/view.php?topic=36-3-36_350-36_350_200&frames=on

In its accessory dwelling unit ordinance, Rindge, NH (population 6,420) explicitly cites the need to "provide expanded housing opportunities and flexibility in household arrangements" as the motivation for allowing them. Restrictions are such that they function mainly to provide room for family members or caregivers.

Resource:
Town of Rindge, NH, Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance
http://www.town.rindge.nh.us/Accessory_20Dwelling.pdf

In the Traditional Neighborhood Development master-planned community of Haile Village Center near Gainesville, FL, every single-family home has the option of having an accessory dwelling unit.

The City of Santa Cruz, CA, encourages property owners to add accessory dwelling units to their properties with a multi-pronged approach. The City provides homeowners with an Accessory Dwelling Unit Manual that outlines the process they will have to follow in order to build an accessory dwelling unit on their parcel. The manual includes design information to help property owners plan their accessory dwelling unit. In addition to the manual, the City offers technical assistance for site planning and six prototype plans.

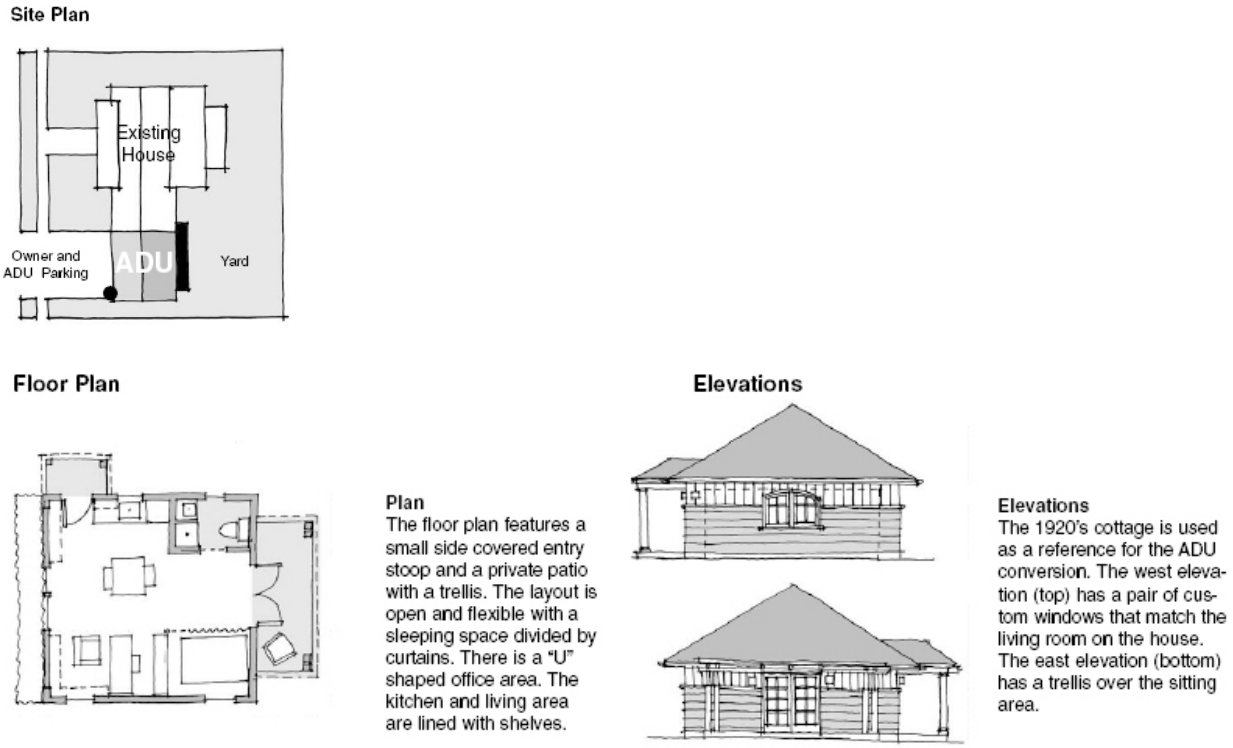


Illustration of a Prototypical Attached Garage Conversion to Accessory Dwelling Unit
Source: City of Santa Cruz, CA, Accessory Dwelling Unit Manual

Resource:
City of Santa Cruz, CA Accessory Dwelling Unit Manual
http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=8875

Model Communities- Additional Information

Clarendon, Arlington, VA
Clarendon is a neighborhood of about 4,950 people in Arlington County, VA. Located in the greater Washington, D.C. metro-area, Clarendon is a stop on the Rosslyn-Ballston Metro commuter rail line. Since the 1970s the neighborhoods adjacent to the Rosslyn-Ballston line have transformed themselves into transit-oriented districts, each with a different emphasis. Surrounded by quiet single-family residential neighborhoods, Clarendon's urbane downtown mixes high density residential options with commercial offices, retail, restaurants, night clubs and other entertainment venues that have proven highly attractive to young adults.

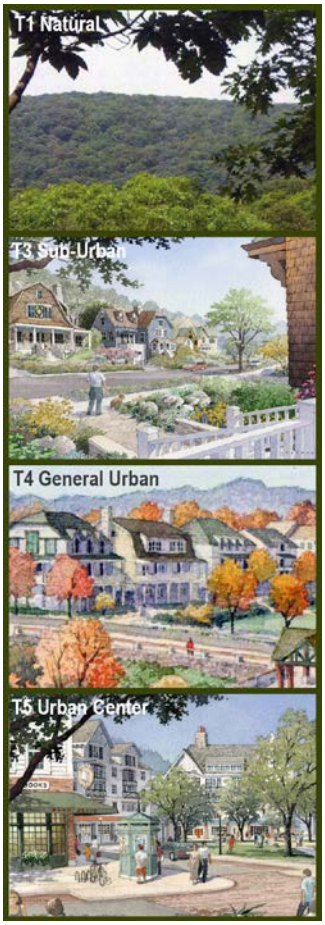
Colorado Springs, CO
Frequently cited as one of the best places to live in the U.S., Colorado Springs is located in south central Colorado at the foot of Pike's Peak. Though a fairly large city –its 2009 population was about 399,800 – Colorado Springs developed largely in a low-density suburban pattern. The City has now adopted a form-based code for its downtown and encourages mixed-use development.

Port Townsend, WA
Situated on the northeast tip of Washington's Olympic Peninsula, Port Townsend is a community of about 9,150 people. A Victorian-era seaport, Port Townsend is now a tourist destination that works hard to preserve its picturesque historic buildings and its small town, pedestrian-oriented ambiance for residents and visitors alike. In keeping with this, the City has designated several mixed-use zones and its regulations promote development of attractive, walkable neighborhoods.

GLOSSARY

Form-Based Codes

A form-based code can help turn a downtown into a more unique, attractive place, or help maintain a downtown's established character. Form-based codes regulate new development based on building size, design and performance standards, rather than use.[11] Under a form-based code, the density and intensity of uses allowed increase the closer development is to the urban core, and decrease as development approaches natural areas.



Smart Code Transect Zones, Image courtesy of Center for Applied Transect Studies

The Smart Code is a well-known type of form-based code that was developed by the planning and architectural firm Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company. The Smart Code template is provided free of charge by the Center for Applied Transect Studies[12], and may be modified to meet a community's specific needs. Most places that adopt a form-based code, whether based on the Smart Code or drawn up from scratch, hire a consultant to help draft the new code. As a result, there are almost as many variations of form-based codes as cities that have adopted them.

Form-based codes hark back to the days before tract development became the norm. Single-family houses, duplexes and apartments may be built side-by-side in urban neighborhoods, providing places suited to residents of differing ages, space needs, and income levels. What matters more than the interior use of buildings is how they relate to surrounding structures and contribute to an aesthetically pleasing, walkable neighborhood.

The Smart Code includes six transects or zones, ranging from rural to urban. In the T1 or Natural Zone of the Smart Code, housing is either prohibited or severely restricted so as to preserve wilderness areas. The T2 zone is designated as Rural, and housing options are limited with the intent of conserving natural and agricultural resource lands. The T3 Sub-Urban Zone provides for a gradual increase in density, with single-family residences, accessory dwellings, and live/work units allowed. The T4 General Urban Zone and T5 Urban Center accommodate a mix of uses, including all types of housing ranging from single-family to townhouses and apartments. The variation in size and tenancy (for sale or for rent) allow people to stay in their neighborhood, close to family and friends as their needs change. The T6 Urban Core is a very high density, mixed-use zone found at the heart of major cities.

Depending on size, location, and economic profile, not every place will adopt every transect zone. Smaller rural towns might have a T4 General Urban zone as their densest and most intensely developed area. In T4 zones there will be some variation in how buildings are situated relative to streets, and streets will generally have medium-length blocks. T5 Urban Centers are typified by buildings set close to the edge of sidewalks, short blocks and a finely gridded network of streets, and will be found in larger towns and cities with highly developed commercial and/or industrial sectors.

[11] For general information on form-based codes see http://www.formbasedcodes.org/
[12] For detailed information on the Smart Code see: http://www.transect.org/

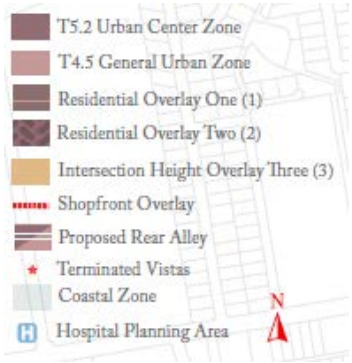
The transect zones can be divided into subzones (e.g., T4.1, T4.2, T4.3, etc.) to allow for fine-grained changes in character and intensity of use on a block-by-block or street-by-street basis.

Jurisdictions that have adopted a jurisdiction-wide form-based code include but are not limited to: Denver, CO (population 610,345), Miami, FL (population 433,136), Hamden, CT (population 58,119), Grass Valley, CA (population 12,298), and Pass Christian, MS (population 4,081).

Resources:
City of Denver, CO, Community Planning and Development:
http://denvergov.org/cpd/Zoning/NeighborhoodContext/tabid/438572/Default.aspx
Town of Hamden, CT, Zoning Regulations:
http://www.hamden.com/filestorage/43/85/138/655/Hamden_Zoning_Regulations_Effective_08-15-10.pdf
City of Grass Valley, CA, Development Code:
http://www.cityofgrassvalley.com/services/departments/cdd/DEVELOPMENTCODE/GVDeveloCode102307_Complete.pdf
City of Pass Christian, MS, Smart Code
http://www.planthepass.org/

Though preferable to adopt a comprehensive form-based code, some cities have elected to do so only for selected areas. This is the approach taken by the City of San Buenaventura, CA for its Midtown Corridors Development Code, which seeks to transition automobile-centric corridors to pedestrian-oriented mixed-use zones bordering established residential neighborhoods.

Source: Midtown Corridors Development Code, City of San Buenaventura



Resource:
City of San Buenaventura, CA, Midtown Corridors Development Code, December 2007.
The Ventura Midtown Corridors Development Code only addresses two transect zones – T5.2 Urban Center Zone and T4.5 General Urban Zone. Additional refinements to each of these zones are provided by overlay zones.

http://www.cityofventura.net/files/community_development/planning/planning_communities/resources/midtown/main_thompson_adopted.pdf

be bold

Long Island Index

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