Traditional Neighborhood Corridor Development

Older multi-family structures were usually developed along the streetcar lines after 1908. Two such examples are Ingersoll/Grand Avenues west of the downtown and 6th Avenue north of the downtown. These apartment buildings or flats were often designed by an architect, constructed from durable materials, and usually occupied by well-to-do tenants. The buildings have a strong street connection and presence on the street. There was minimal parking because of the streetcar system so there was also little vehicular encroachment into the nearby single family houses. The development did not break the grid system. The streets upon which the buildings were located generally had more pedestrian-friendly amenities and were within walking distance of services.

Des Moines has lost a large number of its multi-family buildings located near the downtown because of redevelopment. In addition to this, several buildings located along Sixth Avenue have been abandoned. Those buildings that remain have sometimes been subdivided into additional units. They often retain built-ins, architectural distinction, and location near the downtown. However, there is constant conflict to provide today’s parking requirement for the units and other amenities to make them competitive in the rental market.

Proposed Policy:
- Encourage the rehabilitation of older and historic multi-family housing along corridors by developing unique parking solutions and encouraging nearby commercial centers.

Traditional Neighborhood Mixed Use and Density

The Sherman Hill Neighborhood and some residential corridors combine different densities of residential with limited retail and office uses. The existing character of these areas requires a land use classification that allows a mixture of housing densities, including low/medium density and some areas over 17 units per acre. Limited commercial use can complement the residences and spur investment in the buildings. Mixed residential and commercial use can exist within a single building. This designation will be used sparingly and will be assigned to areas that are already developed with limited area for new development. Administrative review will need to be provided with appeal to either the Plan and Zoning Commission or Historic District Commission.
Post World War II
Corridor Development

After World War II, transportation arterials continued to provide an environment for multi-family housing. Multi-family housing along corridors was encouraged because of accessibility to transportation for large numbers of persons, the reluctance to encourage single family housing with multiple driveways along busy arterials, and the "buffering" multi-family housing could provide to protect adjacent single-family neighborhoods.

Multi-family development along arterials built since the 1960s has generally not been integrated into surrounding neighborhoods through street connections. The scale and intensity of development along arterials often conflicts with conditions in adjacent single-family areas. The lack of transition causes the single family and multi-family to turn their backs on each other. Also wide streets and the volume and speed of traffic discourage a cohesive relationship between development on opposite sides of the street. Without pedestrian amenities on the street, multifamily developments become internalized and isolated from their surroundings.

The linear nature of development along arterial strips precludes clustering of activities or providing a public focus. The multi-family housing has been built randomly along the strip, not clustered as was the case in the traditional neighborhoods. Instead, activities and housing are strung out along the strip, often separated by distances that discourage walking. There are no sidewalks or other pedestrian amenities to encourage walking. While individual apartment buildings may be more dense than development in adjacent areas, the overall density of development confined to the strip is not sufficient to support pedestrian activity or the mix of uses characteristic of more traditional neighborhoods.

Proposed Policies
- Develop an overlay district requiring Administrative review for multi-family housing located within commercially zoned areas. Additional design principles to be considered include:
  - Amenities such as garages and adequate storage;
  - Proximity of the housing to other residential property or "destination retail points";
  - Continuity of established street pattern;
  - Integration with single family neighborhood;
  - Building orientation and design compatibility; and
  - Garage/Auto parking to the rear of the lot.
Post World War II and Newly Developing Large-Scale Multi-Family Development

Just as commercial uses have become larger and been separated from single family dwellings since the second World War, multi-family structures have also grown in size and been developed separately from the rest of a neighborhood. Such developments are often referred to as “pods” because of their separation from the single family housing and neighborhood pattern.

“Pods” are usually large, multi-family developments in which a moderate number of units (eighteen to twenty-four) are contained in several buildings situated on a large tract of land. The development is usually buffered from the surrounding land uses either by created transitions or natural land features. Such developments generally have an internal network of private streets, parking lots, and recreational areas. The architectural style of many of these developments are similar to those along corridors since the 1960s.

Quality construction and amenities are needed in multi-family housing. Apartment complexes with good management and amenities for tenants have provided quality housing for Des Moines residents. Amenities, management and good design are the key for encouraging quality multi-family housing.

Because of the poor quality of design and lack of amenities of some of the large developments, nearby homeowners have grown to fear the construction of multi-family units. A large number of units has sometimes caused problems for providing recreational areas and storm water detention. Multi-family housing is needed, and new land use policies must work to overcome these problems.

Proposed Policies

- Encourage the preservation of existing, large, multi-family developments through zoning codes, tax abatement for renovation, and housing inspection.
- Encourage the development of multi-family housing through the Planned Unit Development process to provide maximum flexibility for the developer and to achieve the highest quality design.
- Encourage developments that incorporate both single family and multi-family housing that is well connected through the streets and pedestrian paths.

These apartments in the Douglas Acres Neighborhood maintain a strong sense of continuity to the street with parking in the rear of the buildings. A duplex provides a transition between the single family housing and the apartment buildings.
Higher Density within Existing Neighborhoods

The term higher density is context dependent and can mean many things. Higher density in a new development may mean single family detached houses on slightly smaller lots. Within an established neighborhood, it may mean a well-planned and executed townhouse project to provide an alternative housing type as people downsize but want to stay in the same neighborhood. It could also mean a mixed-use development along a commercial corridor. The policies outlined in this section should guide the Plan and Zoning Commission in any increase in density.

Increased density provides for a more walkable city and one in which city services can be delivered more efficiently. A basic tenet of this plan is that carefully planned small increases in density can have a positive impact on a neighborhood. The increase should primarily be new construction rather than conversion of housing. A mixed use development that incorporates a small amount of commercial may be ideal for a neighborhood that currently has no commercial center.

Within current low or medium density neighborhoods, a mix of multi-family housing types to increase owner occupancy and affordable home ownership may be workable. Growth can be directed to areas that have lost housing, if the new development is compatible with existing development and there is no economic pressure for the clearance of sound housing. A redevelopment of small town houses or up to four unit buildings could be an attribute to the neighborhood with proper design and amenities.

Proposed Policy
- The Plan and Zoning Commission will consider the merit of increases in density as a conditional use if an existing or proposed building or development meets the following conditions:
  - Designed to be compatible with the existing housing;
  - Provides amenities of storage;
  - Provides adequate parking in the neighborhood pattern;
  - Causes no disruption to the existing neighborhood land use pattern;
  - Integrates the neighborhood street network into the project;
  - Is a planned mix of complementary land uses; and
  - The land use change occurs at rear property lines or on new block.
Neotraditional Areas

It is difficult to determine the optimum mix of multi-family and single family housing within a Des Moines neighborhood. Des Moines is a city with a higher percentage of home ownership than many other cities including Seattle, Chicago, and Portland. Yet, rental housing is needed.

For the purpose of recommending a healthy mix of single family and multi-family housing for new developments, an analysis was done on the mixture of single family and multi-family housing in traditional neighborhoods. The neighborhoods chosen were recognized neighborhoods that had most of the attributes of a traditional neighborhood as defined by this plan. The neighborhoods were considered stable and contained residential structures with over 10 housing units. The multi-family structures within the neighborhood could exist in a section of the neighborhood or could be concentrated along a corridor. In addition, the analysis excluded those neighborhoods that had an unusually high amount of single family rental or areas with significant conversions of structures to higher density. Those factors indicated a weakness in the market for single family housing.

The resulting analysis revealed that an average of 30% of the housing units within these neighborhoods is multi-family. Owner-occupancy of single family housing equaled 90% or more within each of the neighborhoods.

Proposed Policies

- A mix of housing types and costs are a basic tenet of this plan. Future developments should encourage the integration of both single family and multi-family housing.
- It is recommended that areas of the city currently being developed should be composed of a mixture of between 25% to 35% multi-family housing to 65 to 75% single family housing. To complement the multi-family housing, the single family detached units should be at least 90% owner-occupied. However, these statistics can not be looked at in isolation. It is important that the neighborhoods also incorporate the other underlying principles and policies that are written in this plan. Specific area plans, currently being developed, will more closely detail the placement and number of units in a particular district or neighborhood.

A Neotraditional town development in Ames, Iowa that is currently under development
Land Use Transitions

The co-existence of dissimilar land uses directly adjacent to each other has the potential to create nuisances. There are currently many situations in Des Moines where a lack of careful site planning for infill commercial development and institutions adjacent to, or within a neighborhood has resulted in serious nuisance issues for residences. The consequence of these conflicts may be a disinvestment in the residential property.

This plan promotes a healthy mix of commercial and residential land uses for Des Moines and recognizes the importance of institutions, such as churches and schools, as important components of a neighborhood. However, there is an accepted level of privacy associated with the immediate environment of one's home. The yard area of residence is private, not public space, and interventions to it such as light, noise, or people is an infringement on one's privacy. On the other hand, undesirable views of parking lots, and service areas, from a residential property is also an infringement.

New commercial development and expansion of existing coommercial along major corridors should front upon and have primary access from the major corridor and not from an adjacent residential side street. It is inapppropriate to introduce commercial traffic into or through a residential area. The impact of such commercial expansion upon the adjacent residential neighborhood, as outlined in this section, should be a primary consideration in determining the appropriateness of the development request.
Impacts of Commercial and Institutional Establishments on Adjacent Residences

One of the major issues with the co-existence of commercial and residential land uses is noise. It is reasonable to expect noise to be minimal before 7:00 am and after 10:00 pm in neighborhood settings. Yet there are 24 hour gas stations and convenience stores located next to residential structures resulting in noise nuisances from automobiles or people. Finally, there may be noise from people congregating outside of a nighttime establishment such as a bar, that infringes on the privacy of residents.

There can also be odor problems for residents living adjacent to commercial land uses associated with their trash receptacles, automobile exhaust, or noxious fumes related to cooking.

There may also be a number of visual nuisances such as the following:

- headlights of automobiles circulating in a commercial lot, shining into residential unit’s windows;
- ambient light at night from automobile scaled commercial lighting;
- the appearance of unkept service areas, such as trash receptacles, or large unsightly parking areas;
- the potential for a new building to block sunlight to a residence.

The analysis of negative impacts of commercial or institutional establishments on adjacent residences also needs to consider unsightly views of the establishment as one approaches their home from the street, (in addition to nuisances incurred while on one’s property) as this also has the potential to influence one’s property values.

Mitigating Tools

Zoning and site plan review are mechanisms for mitigating or removing adjacent incompatible land uses.

1. The zoning ordinance can specify that certain types of commercial land uses are not allowed adjacent to single family residences.

2. Site planning standards and site plan review for commercial and institutional development, or for particular corridors in the city can specify the expected amount of landscape intervention between dissimilar land uses.

A fence alone is insufficient to create an acceptable transition between commercial and residential land uses.
Performance Criteria
This plan proposes new standards for landscape or edge treatment at the
seam, the area that separates the two adjacent land uses, to mitigate nuis-
ances to residences. Landscape techniques include establishing:
- horizontal distance or space, and;
- vertical landscape elements such as fences or plant material.

This plan recommends applying both horizontal distance and vertical land-
scape elements to mitigate nuisances. It also recommends using perform-
ance criteria to determine the level of landscape intervention needed.
The performance criteria will determine the impact a commercial or in-
stitutional use will have on a residential property, and therefore the level
of landscape intervention required. The following are the aspects of a
development to be considered in determining the level of landscape inter-
vention required. A series of questions about the development helps to
determine the level of mitigation.

Commercial or Institutional Use
- the type, size and hours of operation of the commercial establishment;
  - What is the daily average number of visitors arriving by car?
  - Is it a 8:00 am-5:00 pm business, or a nighttime establishment?
  - Does the business produce noxious fumes?
  - Does the establishment require automobile scale lighting?
- the site planning of the development;
  - What faces the adjacent residential property- a parking lot, the
    back of the building, the service area?
  - Where is the building located on the site?
  - What are the implications of each?
- the pattern of automobile circulation associated with the development;
  - Do automobiles circulate close to residence?
  - Does the circulation result in headlights shining on residential
    units?
- the commercial or institutional building height, and its proposed
  site location relative to an adjacent residential building.
  - Will the building block sunlight from reaching windows of the
    residential property?
Residential Property
- the distance from the body of the house to the edge of the commercial or institutional development.
- the orientation of the house relative to the new development;
  - Is it the back, side or front and does this make a difference?
- the makeup of the residential building facade facing a new development;
  - Are there windows or an entryway?
  - Is this an active living space (vs. a stairway.)
  - Is there an existing buffer between the residence and the commercial property such as a garage or a shed?
- a significant change in topography between the commercial and residential property.
  - Does the residential property sit at a higher elevation than the commercial?

Proposed Policies
- Establish site planning standards for commercial development to include the required use of "cut-off" light fixtures which direct the light downward. Do not allow the use of flood lights.
- Establish performance landscape standards to be included in the zoning ordinance for the transition area between potentially conflicting land uses to include the following:
  - Require a minimum distance of 25' between the house and the active commercial area.
  - Require an additional 7' landscaped curb from the property line to the commercial parking lot or loading area if the 25' is on the residential property.
  - Require mid-story trees and understory vegetation of a certain density. The plantings may all occur on one property, or all on the other, or on a combination of both.
  - Require fences and vegetation for buffers between land uses. Fences alone are insufficient to meet landscaping standards between residential and non-residential land uses.
  - The commercial property shall establish tree plantings in the street r.o.w. along their property that are consistent with the existing tree planting patterns along the street.

The transition plantings and fence can occur either on residential property, commercial property or a combination of both.

A 7" curb extension is required from the property line on commercial property when the 25' distance minimum is located on the residential property.
existing character of commercial land use

chapter 5

Chapter Four and Chapter Five analyze the three major land uses that comprise Des Moines: Residential, Commercial and Industrial. The analysis results in the identification of categories or types of development within each land use. The categories are then assembled into a typology. The composition of the categories within the typology is unique to Des Moines, although it has characteristics common with the land uses of other cities.

Des Moines is the host to both small-scale, traditional commercial areas as well as large-scale commercial facilities on large parcels. Commercial areas must accommodate the needs of both the pedestrian and the motorist. Chapter 5 analyzes the unique qualities of commercial areas that were developed early in the city's history and the qualities of those developed in the more recent past. Policies recommend that all commercial areas accommodate the automobile but also provide pedestrian amenities that will encourage a quality environment for patrons. The policies focus on quality development that enhance the community and provide the business with a market edge.

Introduction to Commercial Typology Identification

As Des Moines has grown and evolved over the years, so has the character of its commercial areas. The purpose of this section is to categorize and analyze the various commercial areas throughout the city and understand the diverse character of each, as well as the function and service they each provide. It will enable Des Moines to capitalize on development opportunities and maximize appeal and benefit for the community.

The Commercial Typology makes distinctions between those commercial areas that are primarily oriented toward the motorist and those that were developed when there were fewer automobiles and more walking and mass transit. All commercial areas in Des Moines will continue to accommodate the automobile and to provide easy parking. This analysis looks further to determine what can encourage connections among and between business and neighborhoods and encourage alternative transportation. A great city and neighborhood is one where walking is an option.
Goal of Commercial Typology Identification

The commercial typology results in development principles that establish a framework for new development and guide changes and improvements to existing development. A new zoning ordinance and site plan standards will be an implementation step for the development principles. Each commercial type has viable and appealing features worth enhancing, as well as issues and less desirable features which must be addressed. The analysis explores the strengths of each commercial category and how each may best be enhanced to offer continued business success and customer appeal. The analysis also looks at the weaknesses of each category and how those weaknesses may be best managed or reduced to offer a positive form of commercial development to the community.

The information used in the analysis reflects physical trends such as transportation patterns and the need for larger areas of land to accommodate parking caused by the increasing use of the automobile for shopping. The phenomenon of the “big box” large scale development of a particular category of retail, such as home improvement centers, are examined for placement in the city considering transportation and average needs. The analysis also reflects social trends such as how and why we shop and the customers greater insistence on convenience and easy access to commercial services from home and work.
Pedestrian-Oriented Features

Pedestrian-oriented commercial areas are generally those in which the site orientation is balanced between the needs of the pedestrian and the convenience of the motorist. The pedestrian-oriented categories for this typology are identified as “Neighborhood Nodes”, “Neighborhood Commercial Centers”, and “Commercial Corridors.” Although each of these categories has differences, they share common features that identify them as friendly to the pedestrian:

- The buildings and parking areas are generally compact and reflect a pre-World War II construction date. The buildings have minimal or no setback and frame the street.
- The building’s site orientation, design, and detail generally offer good visibility and have a comfortable human scale.
- Viable pedestrian-oriented areas have some off-street parking behind or beside a business but at lower numbers than required by current zoning. This compact form of development encourages pedestrians to walk from one business to another to accomplish their shopping needs.
- On-street parking is important to the viability of the business and the character of the neighborhood.
- Well-defined connections exist to the adjacent residential areas. The established street grid is typically incorporated into the commercial development and connections to adjacent residential development are continuous through public sidewalks and streets.
- Commercial developments are bordered by multi-family and single-family housing and serve the needs of the near-by residents. As the commercial development has grown, specialty retail and/or restaurants that appeal to the larger community may have located there.
- Pedestrian amenities are provided such as wide sidewalks, street trees and other plantings, storefront windows with product displays, on-street parking, and pedestrian-scaled lighting and signs.

Neighborhood Node

Area shown is approximately 65 Acres

Definition

The smallest-scale of commercial development and with no connection to an anchor store. It saw predominant growth between the early 1900s and late 1940s, often along the city’s streetcar routes and was intended to serve the immediate surrounding, low density neighborhood(s), typically 2,000–10,000 people, within a 10 minute walking radius. Uses include neighborhood-oriented services such as dry cleaners, shoe repair shops, hardware store, coffee shops, specialty retail, etc.

Site Characteristics

Parcels are typically no more than 150’ (one half block) deep and generally conform to existing street grid pattern. Buildings tend to be at the property line or use a minimal setback, in part to keep building signage and product displays close to pedestrian traffic for notice. Parking is often on-street. Minimal off-street parking may be available behind the building, such as for business owner, and/or employees. Pedestrian amenities are common.

Building Characteristics

Buildings are often 1 or 2 stories with offices or residential uses in upper floors. Buildings are designed with storefront windows and a prominent entry facing the commercial street to attract shoppers. Individual business floor area may range from 1,200–6,000 sq. ft. and a cumulative maximum total for the commercial node of approximately 25,000–50,000 sq. ft.
**NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL CENTER**

Small-to-moderate scale commercial development with small scale businesses (1,200-6,000 sq. ft.) connected to or clustered around an anchor store (approx. 35,000 sq. ft.), such as a grocery store. This typology, which typically saw much of its growth from the mid-1940s to the 1960s, is often at the intersection of two heavily traveled streets and sometimes evolved from a neighborhood node. It generally serves 10,000-20,000 people, within approximately a 1 mile radius of the commercial center. Uses may include neighborhood node type businesses, professional and medical-related offices, veterinary clinics, restaurants and grocery stores.

Site depth typically ranges from 150'-200' and generally conforms to existing street grid pattern. Buildings tend to have a moderate setback to allow for some parking in front but maintain on-site circulation that comfortably accommodates pedestrian scale, safety and comfort. Business signage is larger than in the neighborhood node and is often on the building face as well as freestanding sign(s) identifying the various businesses in the commercial center.

One story buildings are typical, 2 story buildings may be present as a carry over from earlier years of development and office or residential use may still occur in the upper level. Business entries are clearly defined and easy to locate from commercial street(s) and parking area. Individual business floor area may range from 1,200-6,000 sq. ft. for support businesses, up to 35,000 sq. ft. for the anchor business. A cumulative total is typically about 75,000 - 100,000 sq. ft.

**COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

Small-to-moderate scale commercial development in a linear pattern along a primary street which had often served as an earlier street car line and continues to be a bus line and a collector or arterial street in the city. This development has evolved over time since the 1930s and is reflected in changing building styles, scale, materials, etc. A commercial corridor serves the neighborhood residents within a 1 mile radius, and draws heavily from passing motorists for its customer base. Uses may include restaurants, larger volume retail, professional offices, grocery store, etc.

Site depth varies from double frontage lots, a full block deep, to one half block, approximately 150' deep or less and generally conforms to existing street grid pattern. Small-scale parcels often still use on-street parking while moderate-scale, more auto-oriented businesses, provide on-site parking in front, along side and/or behind the building. The needs and convenience of the motorist is typically balanced with pedestrian scale, safety and comfort. Business signage and displays vary to accommodate good visibility for the motorist and easy, attractive identification for the pedestrian.

One story buildings are typical, although there may be an occasional 2-story building with offices or residential in the upper level. Buildings range from more traditional small-scale storefronts (either with party walls or as stand-alone structures) to moderate-scale freestanding, destination-type retail stores. Building styles vary as development has evolved over time to address more needs of motorists.

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**PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL TYPOLOGIES**

EXISTING CHARACTER • Chapter 5 • Commercial Typology • Pedestrian-Oriented

2020 COMMUNITY CHARACTER PLAN
Neighborhood Nodes are the smallest-scale, neighborhood oriented business clusters. They originally located at key street intersections, often at streetcar stops, and were geared to serve the day-to-day needs of surrounding neighborhood residents. Today these nodes are often home to specialty retail, local coffee shops and/or restaurants, and start-up businesses that draw customers from beyond the neighborhood but also accommodate residents’ daily needs. These nodes are often a strong physical image for defining the “heart of the neighborhood.” A few examples include the Uptown and Roosevelt Shopping Centers.

Service Area
- 2,000 to 10,000 people within approximately 1/2 radius.
- Surrounding residential density is approximately six to eight units per acre.

Unique Characteristics
- Original building is typically from the early 1900’s to the 1940’s but may have been altered to accommodate Post World War II development patterns and exterior materials.
- Cumulative building square footage of 25,000 to 50,000 sq. ft. Individual businesses range from 1,200 to 6,000 sq. ft.
- Location is typically on two or more corner lots at the intersection of two well-traveled streets.
- Parcel depth is not more than 150’

Conclusions
The city is reasonably well-served in the west-central, northwest and some northeast areas. However, residents in other parts of the city must travel further for the most basic goods and services. This type of development contributes to the character of a neighborhood as well as providing services and should be encouraged in newly developing areas, and, where appropriate, in existing areas that are currently underserved.

A Neighborhood Commercial Center is a collection of small-to-moderate scale businesses which offer more diversity of retail and services than the typical Neighborhood Node. They are generally located at crossroads of heavily traveled streets that offer businesses high visibility and convenience for adjacent neighborhood residents. These centers have evolved over time to be more vehicular oriented, but pedestrian amenities and connections to the neighborhoods remain intact.

Service Area
- 10,000 to 20,000 persons within approximately 1 mile radius.
- Residential density averages 6-8 units per acre in the surrounding area and may include multi-family units at a higher density.

Unique Characteristics
- May have evolved from a neighborhood node. Original buildings are typically of pre-World War II era design, but have been altered to accommodate larger businesses and the need for more parking.
- Small-to-moderate scale anchors, approximately 35,000 sq. ft. with small scale 1,200 to 6,000 sq. ft. support businesses.
- On-site circulation may be by car or foot.
- Off-street parking is provided.

Conclusion
Most of the city is within reasonable distance of a Neighborhood Commercial Center, except for the southeast area (Easter Lake) which is seeing significant new residential development. It is critical that this type of development be planned at specific locations and promoted for development within this area. Existing Neighborhood Commercial Centers should be enhanced to ensure equitable distribution of and accessibility to general goods and services throughout the community.

Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Corridor is a linear form of small to moderate scale business development, that originated during the street car routes and major auto thoroughfares in the first part of the century. Businesses serve current day needs and special interests of nearby residents and commuters. There are few of these corridors that remain but their importance to the identification of the community warrants special efforts for their preservation.

Service Area
- Customer base is dependent on type of business.
- Surrounding density is important for neighborhood services. Multi-family presence increases the number of small coffee shops and bakeries.
- For many businesses, the customer base is largely drawn from passing motorists.

Unique Characteristics
- Character defining buildings date from before 1950.
- A linear form of development, instead of a node or cluster.
- Building scale and parcel size is varied but may be as large as 35,000 sq. ft. for a building.
- Some auto-oriented businesses may exist.

Conclusion
The City has three of these corridors remaining relatively intact. Other traditional commercial corridors have evolved into more auto-oriented strip-type development. The three remaining Commercial Corridors need to be retained and enhanced according to design and development guidelines. Other linear forms of commercial development should copy the pedestrian-oriented design character of the pedestrian-oriented developments with attractive and appropriate linkages to adjacent neighborhoods.
Common Issues among Pedestrian-Oriented

- Buildings may be considered obsolete because of age of mechanical systems, deferred maintenance, and small floor plate.
- Lower rents that encourage desirable incubator businesses may not encourage maintenance of the building.
- Buildings that are “grandfathered in” often do not conform to current standards for buffering or ADA compliance.
- Expansion of businesses or commercial development and the need to provide adequate parking causes encroachment into adjoining residential areas.
- There are few buffers provided to residential properties because of the small development site. Parking areas are often not screened.
- There is ongoing pressure to extend commercial development onto side streets and into residential areas. Older buildings are left empty while requests for rezoning are made in other areas.
- The loss of population and a relative decline in median income in some neighborhoods, has siphoned retail expenditures away from pedestrian-oriented commercial areas.
- Businesses struggle to maintain their customers and address increasing competition from new commercial development with “front door” parking.
- New development must meet current parking, setback, and storm water management requirements which are counter to the established character, scale, compactness and appeal of the existing neighborhood.
- If too many auto-oriented businesses are developed, the character of a pedestrian-oriented commercial area is lost.

Desirable Physical Design Elements

- Attractive and inviting transitions and linkages to surrounding neighborhoods are important. Connections should be safe and easy to traverse to encourage residents and customers to walk among businesses or between businesses and residences.
- Well-maintained buildings that offer viable services to area residents. Visual appeal should be added through the use of color, material selection, detailing, lighting, signage, banners, awnings, and window displays. An entry or doorway should be created at the sidewalk.
- Buildings that frame the street and define outdoor space by using awnings, overhangs, street furniture, tree canopies and special paving.
- A well-designed, human scale streetscape that provides compatibility and continuity along the street and enhances the neighborhood image.

It should create a street edge that buffers the pedestrian from moving traffic balances the needs of the pedestrian and the motorist.
- Parking which is convenient but does not dominate. Perimeter and interior landscaping and paving treatments should be used to break up the scale, reduce the harshness of the paving materials, and define pedestrian routes through the site.
- Signage which is geared toward the pedestrian and attached to the building. Any corporate logos should be incorporated into the scale and character of the building and the adjacent neighborhood.
- Transparent windows and doors near the sidewalk and parking areas that allow people inside commercial buildings to keep a casual eye on pedestrians and cars increasing security.
Design Guidelines
Additional design guidelines, to be implemented through the site plan review process, will be developed to create the desired physical design elements and help address many of the common issues. The goal is to create and enhance viable business districts that will balance a strong orientation to pedestrians with necessary accommodations for motorists.

Design guidelines for buildings and sites will address:

- Appropriate massing and scale of the commercial building(s) as it relates to the surrounding commercial buildings and residential neighborhood.
- Bulk regulations that allow buildings to frame the street and create a sense of enclosure for the pedestrian. The percentage of the street frontage that a building should occupy to help create a frame the street must also be addressed.
- Parking to be placed on-street, behind, and beside the building rather than between the building and primary street. The corner is a particularly prominent pedestrian-oriented area and parking should be avoided on a corner.
- Parking areas should be landscaped along the perimeter and within the interior.
- Large amounts of transparent glass in the storefront create visual interest and a sense of security for pedestrians along the street.
- Traditional building materials such as stone, brick and wood clapboards to complement existing buildings.
- Visually dividing the building into smaller parts through techniques such as the fenestration patterns, appearance of smaller bays created through structural elements, protruding and recessed bays and architectural details.
- The design of storm water management facilities that consider the character of the neighborhood, particularly in the placement of retention basins.

Example of desirable design features and scale for pedestrian-oriented commercial
Auto-Oriented Features

Auto-oriented commercial areas are generally those in which the site orientation is primarily focused on the needs and convenience of the motorist. The auto-oriented commercial categories for this typology are “Small-scale Strip Development”, “Community Shopping Center”, and “Regional Shopping Mall”. Although each of these categories has differences, they share common features that identify them as primarily oriented to the automobile.

- The scale of buildings and adjacent parking areas are larger, particularly for the community shopping center and regional shopping mall.
- The buildings have increased setbacks from the commercial street with parking between the building and the street.
- The building(s) occupy a smaller proportion of the site with a significant portion of the development given over to vehicular needs, such as parking and driving aisles.
- The size of the parcels often require a disruption of the established and/or adjacent street grid system.
- Signage, site, building design, window display, and details are scaled and located to attract the passing motorists’ attention, with little or no attention given to pedestrian needs.
- Few connections are provided between adjacent land uses. The large auto-oriented businesses create problems for adjacent residential neighborhoods, such as increased traffic, noise, business hours incompatible with residential needs, etc.
- Few or no pedestrian amenities are provided such as pathways separating pedestrians from vehicular traffic and clear pedestrian circulation routes within the development.

### SMALL-SCALE STRIP DEVELOPMENT

**Definition**

Small-to-moderate scale (2,000-35,000 sq. ft. per business) commercial strip-type development along a major thoroughfare which relies on passing motorists for its customer base. Minimum service area is one mile radius from edge of commercial uses, but may be larger since people come by car. This type of development saw much growth in the late 1960s through the early 1980s. Adjacent land uses are generally low density or low to medium density residential development. Uses may include car repair garages, auto parts stores, hardware stores, gardening stores, fast food restaurants, specialty retail and services.

**Site Characteristics**

Buildings are typically one story with leasable/structural bays which average 25’-35’ wide. Buildings which accommodate several businesses may use a single bay per business or multiple bays, as per each particular business needs. Buildings usually face the street and parking (which is usually in front) for optimum visibility. Retail business fronts often use a lot of glass for higher visibility of products and/or activities within.
**COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL**

Area shown is approximately 170 Acres

Moderate-to-large scale (50,000-150,000 sq. ft.) anchor(s) and may include small-to-moderate scale (typically 2,500-20,000 sq. ft.) support businesses attached to the anchor(s) and/or freestanding out-parcel development. Businesses usually have a shared parking lot. This type of development is often at an intersection of 2 major transportation routes and has seen significant growth from the 1970's to the present. Area served is generally a quadrant of the city with a population range from 20,000 to 50,000. Adjacent density is less important because people arrive by car or mass transit and it serves as a retail destination point.

Parcel size ranges from 20 to 35 acres and due to scale, disrupts surrounding street patterns and traffic circulation. Distance between the commercial street and building is significantly increased and is often used for parking, 200' or more. Adjacent land uses are usually commercial and/or low to medium density residential. The separation between different land uses is greatly increased from earlier pedestrian-oriented commercial typologies. Signage, site, building design and details are scaled and located to attract the motorists' attention.

One story is standard with the anchor store(s) using a high volume and, smaller scale support businesses using a typical building volume. A cumulative total area for building is generally in the range of 200,000-300,000 sq. ft. Support businesses may be clustered in a typical strip-type building and connected to the anchor(s), built as freestanding structures or a combination. Signage is often scaled to be read at a distance from a moving car. Window area is generally minimal and limited to the entry area. Exterior building materials tend to have little detail, except what may be noticed by the motorist.

**REGIONAL SHOPPING MALL**

Area shown is approximately 165 Acres

The largest scale commercial category. Self-contained, enclosed facility uses single ownership and features multiple (3 is common) anchor stores, more than 100,000 sq. ft. each, and many specialty retail stores and services, restaurants (usually a food court arrangement), and entertainment such as video arcade(s) and/or movie theaters. Entire facility is typically 1,000,000 sq. ft. A mall is usually at the edge of town near a major highway, serves approximately 100,000 people, including from outlying areas. Mall businesses share various facilities and amenities such as parking, ingress and egress roads and interior common spaces. Enclosed mall development started in the 1970's and has continued strong through the 1990's.

Parcel size is about 100 acres and disrupts surrounding street patterns due to parcel depth typically ranges from approximately one half (150') to one full residential block (300') and may disrupt the existing street grid pattern. Site orientation is focused primarily on the needs and convenience of the motorist, not the pedestrian. Parking is generally in front of the building, clearly visible from the street. Signage is scaled and located to attract passing motorists' attention.

On the interior, multiple levels are common, 2 sometimes 3, and high volume spaces. Exterior reads as a large massive single block, or group of blocks, which turn blank walls to the surrounding parking lots. Entries are marked with some windows, material detailing and large signage. Interior offers diversity of scale with shops ranging from 12' frontage to large, multi-bay stores and anchors. Pedestrian amenities, such as benches, fountains, art, landscaping, special lighting, etc. are part of the common interior spaces, but minimal or absent from the exterior.
Auto-Oriented Commercial Development