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Affordable Housing Area Typologies Workbook



Mixed-use Downtowns and Village Centers

Typically these are the historic centers of communities. They are characterized by compact, mixed-use, buildings and are organized around a well connected street and block grid.

Some diagnostic questions:

- Are the commercial and mixed-use areas surrounded by, and well connected to, the surrounding neighborhoods?
- Do residents identify this area as the center or “downtown” of their community?
- Are the uses mixed, including a residential component?
- Are the buildings in compact configurations including zero set-back, zero-lot-line buildings?
- Is there a connected street network with blocks typically no wider than 300 to 400 feet or longer than 600 or 700 feet?

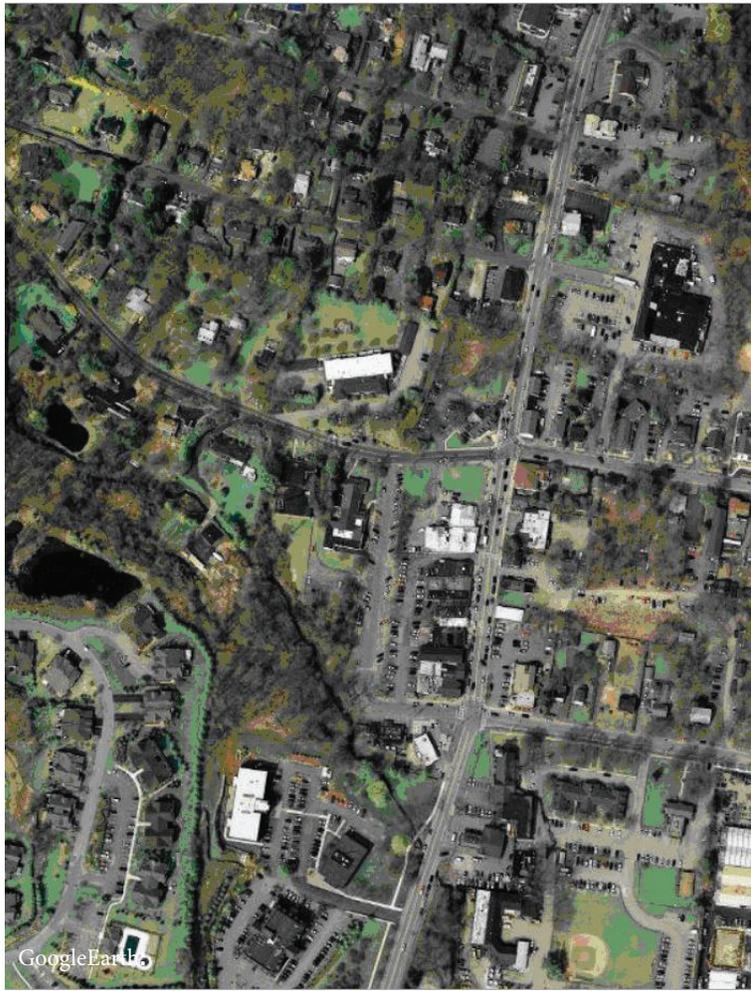
Some use and design implications:

- Reduce parking and set back requirements, and increase coverage allowances to enable the replication of compact development patterns, including zero-lot-line buildings.
- Buildings should respond to the design of the neighboring buildings along the street, including fenestration patterns and features of the roof line.
- Promote mixed-use buildings by having flexible use regulations

Design Implications for Affordable Housing:

- Affordable housing in the commercial core or along the main shopping streets can be accommodated in apartments on the upper stories of existing buildings or in new mixed-use and mixed-income buildings.
- Buildings along shopping streets should have active ground floor uses.
- A wide variety of building types can be used to accommodate affordable housing. Contingent on the context, new buildings with affordable housing can be higher density building types including attached townhouses and small apartment buildings.

Mixed-Use Downtowns and Village Centers



Commercial Corridors and Crossroads

These areas are almost entirely commercial areas. If there is no real mixed-use village or town center in the municipality, these places can become identified as the “downtown” even if they are largely single use. They may be more like “main streets” or “strips”. Also, they are not to be surrounded by, or well connected to, residential neighborhoods.

Some diagnostic questions:

- Are the uses almost entirely commercial, with little or no residential uses?
- Is the area basically auto-oriented with ample or even excessive surface parking provided?
- Are there few cross streets connecting from the corridor to a surrounding residential neighborhood?

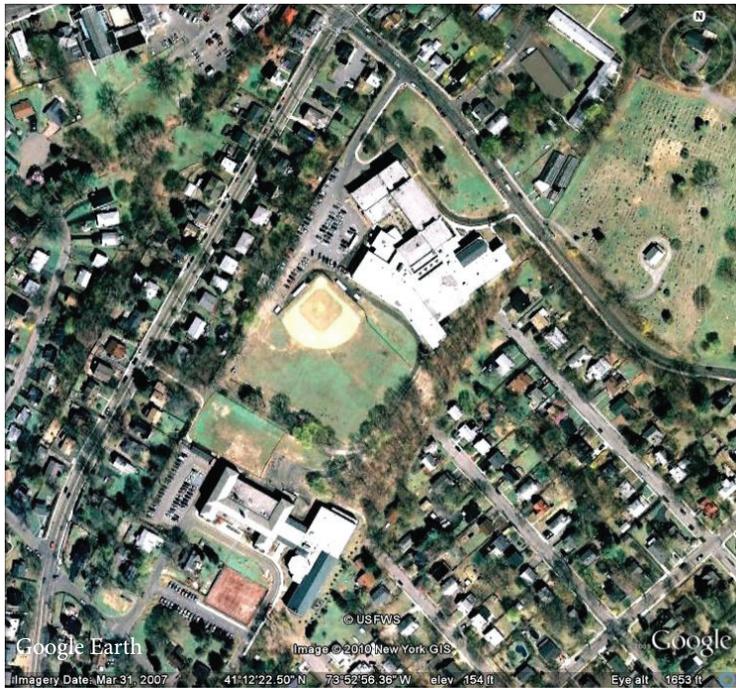
Some use and design implications:

- Create corridor design guidelines that begin to set up a consistent relationship with the road and with adjacent buildings.(see discussion of Corridor sites). This includes placing parking behind and to the sides of buildings so that
- Find opportunities to make connections, both automobile, bike and pedestrian, from the corridor to surrounding areas.
- Buildings should be oriented towards the street.
- Building setbacks along the corridor should be uniform and should be landscaped.
- Parking should be to the sides and behind buildings so that it is not necessary to traverse a parking lot to get to the primary building entrance.
- If it is possible to create a residential presence on the corridor, it should be in mixed-use buildings.

Design Implications for affordable housing:

- Affordable housing can be accommodated in a number of building types: Likely housing types include mixed-use buildings or townhouses along the corridor, or townhouses and small-lot houses immediately adjacent to the corridor.
- New development that is just off of the corridor should be well connected to the corridor.

Suburban Commercial Nodes



Residential Neighborhoods

These areas are high and moderate density and are organized around a connected street and block network.

Some diagnostic questions:

- Is the street network one that is primarily a grid, even if an irregular grid, with intersections that are between 300 and 600 feet apart?
- Is it zoned for parcels that are between a quarter acre and two acres?
- Are the uses almost entirely residential except for civic and institutional uses?

Some use and design implications:

- New development should conform to the bulk and coverage patterns of the street and larger area.
- If sites are large enough to be subdivided, consider opportunities to make new connections within the street and block network.

Design Implications for Affordable Housing development

- Within single family neighborhoods, and especially at the edges of these neighborhoods, townhouse development is appropriate if it is designed in away that makes it compatible with the rest of the neighborhood and the character of the street.
- Affordable housing can also be accommodated in single-family and multi-family buildings that are designed to be compatible with adjacent buildings on the street.
- Affordable housing can also be accommodated in accessory units and in “granny flats” over garages.

Residential Neighborhoods



Rural Residential

These areas are very low density with lots that are at least three acres and can be much larger. There are few services nearby. There may be significant open space resources nearby.

Some diagnostic questions:

- Does the landscape create the character of this area?
- Is the street network one that is primarily winding streets widely separated?
- Is it zoned for three to five acre parcels?

Some use and design implications:

- Where a site is large enough to be subdivided, conservation subdivision strategies should be used to protect the continuity of natural systems.
- Where a site is large enough to be subdivided, consider opportunities to make connections to other places – to other streets, to the resource area.
- The degree to which structures are visible from the road, should be in character with the rest of the area.
- The landscape quality of the front of the lots should be in keeping with the surrounding area.
- Visible access to natural resources should be maintained. Physical access is desirable where it is possible.

Design Implications for Affordable Housing Development

- There may be some opportunities for accessory housing.
- There may be opportunities to subdivide properties to create small lot residential neighborhoods. Where this is done conservation subdivision principles should be followed. The view from the road should not be compromised.