

T4-CC Urban Community Center

Policy Intent

Maintain, enhance, and create urban community centers. Encourage their development or redevelopment as intense mixed use areas that provide a mix of uses and services to meet the needs of the larger surrounding urban area.

General Characteristics

T4 Urban Community Centers (T4-CC) are served by multiple modes of transportation and accommodate sidewalks, bikeways, vehicles, and existing or planned transit. Where transportation infrastructure is insufficient or not present, enhancements may be necessary to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connectivity.

T4-CC areas are suitable for creating services to meet the needs of surrounding neighborhoods. T4-CC areas are pedestrian-friendly, generally located at intersections of prominent urban streets and consist of the following:

- Commercial, mixed use, and institutional land uses, with residential land uses in mixed use buildings or serving as a transition to adjoining policy areas;
- Services to meet the daily needs of residents within a five- minute drive or a five- to ten- minute walk, as well as services that are needed less frequently and provide a draw to the larger community;
- Intensity generally placed within edges not exceeding a quarter-mile in diameter;
- Regularly spaced buildings built to the back edge of the sidewalk with minimal spacing between buildings;
- Parking behind or beside the building, or on-street;
- Consistent use of lighting and formal landscaping;
- Highly connected street networks, sidewalks, and existing or planned mass transit leading to surrounding neighborhoods and open space;

EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE LAND USES*

- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Office
- Institutional
- Transitional Residential
- Artisan manufacturing and other low impact industrial and warehousing uses

ZONING*

- MUL-A
- MUG-A
- OR20-A
- OR40-A
- ORI-A
- RM20-A
- RM40-A
- Design-based zoning

BUILDING TYPES

- Low-rise Townhouse
- Mid-rise townhouse
- Courtyard Flat
- Low-Rise Flat
- Mid-Rise Flat
- Low-Rise Mixed Use
- Mid-Rise Mixed Use
- Low-Rise Commercial
- Institutional

**Disclaimer: This information is provided as an aid for general reference and should not be construed as all data that may apply to each property. Users should independently verify the accuracy of the information.*

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- Clearly distinguishable boundaries identified by land uses, building types, building placement, and block structure; and
- Firm edges with transitional residential between the center and less intense urban residential and open space areas.

Application

T4-CC policy is applicable to areas where there is a concentration of land that is zoned, used, or intended to be used as commercial and mixed use. An area is situated to serve an urban community and where the center's intensification is supported by surrounding existing or planned residential development, adequate infrastructure, and adequate access, such as an arterial-boulevard or collector-avenue.



Vertically mixed use building

Commonly used boundaries to define T4-CC areas include, but are not limited to: boundaries defined by evolving or intended development patterns (considering lot size, mass, spacing, orientation of buildings), environmental features, human-made features (rail lines, major utility easements, prominent roads and streets), and transitional uses (open space, institutional, residential). Intensification should take place within the current boundaries of the center rather than through expansion of the policy. The application and boundary delineation of this policy are established during the Community Planning process.

Design Principles

Building Form and Site Design

The building form is in character with the existing T4 Urban development pattern in terms of its mass, orientation, and placement. The building form also complements the adjacent neighborhoods that it serves and is sufficiently served by the infrastructure to which it has access.

A mix of building types is expected in T4-CC areas with preference given to vertically mixed use buildings. These buildings use land efficiently and contribute to the vitality and function of the center by providing combined opportunities to live, work, and shop and by supporting both consumer business viability and the feasibility of public investments such as sidewalks and transit. Commercial, office, institutional, and transitional residential buildings are also found within T4-CC areas.

Massing – The massing of non-residential and mixed use buildings results in a footprint with moderate lot coverage. This may be achieved with individual, first floor tenant space of 30,000 square feet or less, each with its own entrance(s). To accommodate greater mass, buildings are encouraged to add stories. Additional individual first floor tenant space square footage may be considered in cases of exceptional development design that is especially attentive to:

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Outdoor dining

- Strongly articulating the façade of large buildings and including such elements as windows and doors;
- Placing the parking in a manner that breaks up large expanses of pavement, provides safe pedestrian movement, and deters speeding vehicles (parking standards below still apply);
- Orienting the large buildings and using smaller buildings to frame the large buildings all in a manner that creates a town center environment that serves as a destination within the center; and
- Providing one or more areas of publicly accessible, usable, and inviting open space within the development.

Solely residential buildings in T4-CC areas are typically multifamily buildings with moderate to high lot coverage.

Orientation – Non-residential and mixed use buildings, including entrances, are oriented to the street. Façades are articulated with plentiful windows and doors. Additional design features such as recesses and awnings are used to break up long façades.

Residential buildings, including entrances, are oriented to the street or an open space, which may vary and could include courtyards or other types of functional and accessible open spaces.

Buildings at intersections, including their main entrances, face the highest-order intersecting street. Property consolidation to create larger development sites within the T4-CC policy area may be needed to achieve adequate dimensions for building and site design that is consistent with this policy category. Development within the transitions along side streets that are between the T4-CC and adjacent policy areas does not inhibit or discourage redevelopment of the properties on the higher-order street.

Setbacks – Setbacks are shallow and consistent, providing some distinction between the public realm of sidewalks, internal walkways, and open spaces and the private realm of the residence. Stoops and front porches are common to encourage some interaction between the public and private realm and to create a pedestrian-friendly environment. Courtyards for courtyard housing are appropriate.

The front building façade is built to the back edge of the sidewalk so that it engages the public realm and creates a pedestrian-friendly environment. Exceptions may be made to accommodate outdoor dining or retail display. Notwithstanding these exceptions, a significant portion of the building façade is built to the sidewalk. There is minimal spacing between buildings. Automobile-related uses that include outside storage or parking should provide knee walls or other design features to separate the public and private realms.

Building Height – Buildings of all types in T4-CC areas are generally three to five stories tall but taller buildings may be found at major intersections along arterial-boulevards that are sufficiently wide to avoid the effect of a building overshadowing the street; in Tiered Centers and along priority corridors. The appropriate height is based on the building type, surrounding context, architectural elements, and location within the center.

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Consideration of taller heights is given based on the following factors:

- Proximity to other policy areas and the role of the building in transitioning between policies (see below for further details on transitions);
- Location within a Tiered Center or High Capacity Transit corridor as identified in NashvilleNext;
- Planned height of surrounding buildings and the impact on adjacent historic structures;
- Contribution that the building makes to the overall fabric of the center in terms of creating pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, plazas and open space, public art, innovative stormwater management techniques, etc.;
- Relationship of the height of the building to the width of the street and sidewalks, with wider streets and sidewalks generally corresponding to taller building heights;
- Prominence of the street or intersection on which the building is located, with locations at or within a few hundred feet of the highest-order intersection in the center being favored for taller buildings;
- Capacity of the block structure and rights-of-way to accommodate development intensity;
- Proximity to existing or planned transit, with increased height benefits for areas within 0.25 mile of a High Capacity Transit station;
- Use of increased building setbacks and/or building stepbacks to mitigate increased building heights;
- Topography and other unique site and locational characteristics;
- Ability to provide light and air between buildings and in the public realm of streets, sidewalks, internal walkways, multi-use paths, and open spaces; and
- Extent to which affordable or workforce housing as defined in the Glossary of this document is provided by the development.



Street trees

Major Corridors and Intersections – Locations at key intersections and corridor segments within a T4-CC area are reserved for mixed use or non-residential development unless the applicant can document an appropriate, design-based reason for placing a solely residential building at such a location.

Landscaping – Landscaping is formal. Street trees, shrubs, and other plantings are appropriate. In surface parking lots, trees, shrubs, and other plantings are provided. Landscaping screens from public view automobile-related uses, ground utilities, meter boxes, heating and cooling units, refuse storage, and other building systems. Fencing and walls that are along or are visible from the right-of-way are constructed from materials that manage property access and security while complementing the surrounding environment. Consideration is given to the use of native plants and natural rainwater collection to minimize maintenance costs and burden on infrastructure.

Parking – Parking is provided on-street or on-site in surface lots or in structures, and shared parking is encouraged. On-street parking offsets parking needs and creates a buffer between the street and the pedestrian.

Limited parking is allowed beside the buildings and is designed to cause minimal disruption to the way the buildings frame the street and create a

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pedestrian-friendly environment. Parking is screened from view of the primary street(s) and from view of abutting residential properties. Surface parking is divided into sections by landscape islands and internal street networks. When establishing parking quantities, other design principles are not compromised. Bicycle parking is provided.

Parking is primarily behind the building. An exception is made for automobile-related uses such as vehicle sales lots. These may have more parking or outside storage in front of structures provided design techniques, such as a knee wall, are used that effectively separate the private and public realms.

Signage – Signage alerts motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists to their location and assists them in finding their destination in a manner that is not distracting or overwhelming to the center or the streetscape. The design and location of signage complements and contributes to the envisioned character of the Center. Signage is generally scaled for pedestrians, and building-mounted signs, projecting signs, or awning signs are appropriate. In rare occasions, based on the use and classification of the street, signage scaled for vehicles may be appropriate. In that case, monument signs are appropriate and are encouraged to be consolidated to the greatest extent possible.

Transitioning

Higher Intensity – Solely residential buildings may be used to provide a transition from higher-intensity commercial or mixed land uses in the center to adjacent lower-intensity residential land uses within a neighborhood.

Buildings at the edges form transitions in scale and massing where it adjoins lower-intensity policy areas. Thoughtful attention should be given to the placement and orientation of buildings within these edges as they relate to their surroundings. Implementation through rezoning occurs as proposals are judged on their merits and ability to meet the goals of the Community Plan.

Buildings at the edges of T4-CC areas:

- Step down in height as they move closer to adjacent lower-intensity areas. This may require different heights within an individual structure and/or more varied building types including courtyard flats, plex houses, detached accessory dwellings, etc.;
- Avoid placing parking garage entrances and unlined parking structures opposite lower-intensity areas;
- Respond to differences in topography to avoid buildings that loom over lower-intensity buildings at lower elevations;
- Are oriented so that there is a back-to-back relationship between the higher-intensity buildings and lower-intensity buildings;
- Are separated from lower-intensity areas by rear alleys or service lanes; and
- Have articulated façades that face lower-intensity policy areas.

Connectivity

Access – Streets and alleys provide access. Shared access is used to avoid multiple curb cuts and pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicular conflict points. Access into developments is aligned, where applicable, with access for development across the street. Cross access between multiple developments within a center is required. Coordinated access and circulation create a center that functions as a whole instead of as separate building sites. Access is designed to be easily crossed by pedestrians.

As redevelopment occurs along the corridor, access from existing alleys is encouraged. Where an alley does not exist, the development of an alley system or adding to the existing alley system is also encouraged.

The impact of access to the corridor on adjacent neighborhoods is considered, balancing the impacts of increased traffic with the need to provide connectivity to offer multiple route choices and spread traffic to multiple streets.

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Block Length – Blocks are linear with short distances between intersections.

Pedestrian/Bicycle – Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and existing or planned transit is high and, where available, is provided in the form of sidewalks and bikeways. Pedestrian connectivity within the T4-CC area is high in order to allow pedestrians to park and walk from business to business. Sidewalks are present within the center, and crosswalks are provided at intersections, across parking lots, and at vehicular access points and are clearly marked to distinguish the pedestrian zone from the vehicular zone.

Transit – Access to existing or planned mass transit is provided in convenient locations coordinated with sidewalks and bikeways.

Vehicular – Vehicular connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and corridors is high. The T4-CC area is generally located at an intersection of arterial-boulevards or an arterial-boulevard and a collector-avenue, with vehicular access provided from alleys and side streets. Connectivity within the center is provided through coordinated access and circulation, which may include the construction of new streets, drives, and alleys.

Zoning

The following is a list of zoning districts that may be appropriate within a given T4-CC area subject to the applicant's ability to prove that the requested zoning district is consistent with the other provisions of

T4-CC policy that are detailed above. A site's location in relation to centers and corridors will be weighed when considering which zoning districts would be appropriate in a given situation. The size of the site, environmental conditions on and near the site, and the character of adjacent Transect and policy areas will be considered. Another factor that will be considered is whether there is potential to redevelop sites that are not consistent with T4-CC policy in a manner that brings them closer to conforming to the policy. These situations may warrant the use of zoning districts that the policy might otherwise consider inappropriate.

- MUL-A
- MUG-A
- OR20-A
- OR40-A
- ORI-A
- RM20-A
- RM40-A

More intense alternative zoning districts may be appropriate based on locational characteristics of the subject property.

- Design-based zoning

Other existing or future zoning districts may be appropriate based on the locational characteristics and surrounding context of the subject property and the ability of the applicant to document that the proposed zoning district is consistent with the policy. Site plan-based zoning may be required to achieve planning objectives such as access management, coordination among adjacent developments, or to mitigate potential negative impacts to nearby environmentally sensitive features.