T3-NC Suburban Neighborhood Center

Policy Intent

Enhance and create suburban neighborhood centers that are compatible with the general character of suburban neighborhoods as characterized by the service area, development pattern, building form, land use, and associated public realm.

General Characteristics

T3 Suburban Neighborhood Centers (T3-NC) areas are suitable for creating pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented services to meet some of the daily needs of the surrounding neighborhoods within a five-minute drive. Where transportation infrastructure is insufficient or not present, enhancements may be necessary to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connectivity. T3-NC areas are pedestrian-friendly areas, generally located at intersections of suburban streets and consist of the following:

- Mixed use, commercial, office, residential, and institutional land uses;
- Intensity generally placed within edges, not exceeding the four corners of an intersection of prominent streets;
- Buildings regularly spaced and generally built to the back edge of the sidewalk with minimal spacing between buildings;
- Parking generally behind or beside buildings or provided on-street;
- Consistent use of lighting;
- Generally formal landscaping; and
- Moderate to high levels of connectivity with well-connected street networks, sidewalks, and mass transit leading to surrounding neighborhoods and open space.

EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE LAND USES*

- Mixed Uses
- Commercial
- Office
- Residential
- Institutional

ZONING*

- MUN-A, MUN
- CN-A, CL-A, CN, CL
- OR20, OR20-A
- ON, OL, SCN
- RM9-A, RM15-A, RM20-A
- Design-based zoning

BUILDING TYPES

- Manor House
- Low-Rise Townhouse
- Mid-Rise Townhouse
- Low-Rise Flat
- Mid-Rise Flat
- Low-Rise Mixed Use
- Mid-Rise Mixed Use
- Low-Rise Commercial

**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.*

T3-NC Suburban Neighborhood Center

Application

T3-NC 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, that is situated to serve a suburban neighborhood, and where the center's intensification is supported by surrounding existing or planned residential development, adequate infrastructure, and adequate access such as arterial-boulevard and collector-avenue streets.

Commonly used boundaries to define T3-NC 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. Intensification takes 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 T3 Suburban development pattern in terms of its mass, orientation, and placement. The building form also complements the adjacent neighborhoods that the center serves and the infrastructure to which it has access.

A mix of building types is expected with preference given to mixed use buildings. These buildings use land efficiently and contribute to the vitality and function of the center by providing opportunities to live, work, and shop. They also support both consumer business viability and the feasibility of public investments such as sidewalks and existing or planned transit. Commercial, office, institutional, and residential buildings are also found. Locations at prominent intersections are reserved for mixed use or non-residential development unless the applicant can document an appropriate, planning-based reason for placing a solely residential building at such a location.

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 10,000 square feet or less, each with its own entrance(s). First-floor tenant space greater than 10,000 square feet may be considered in cases of exceptional development design that is especially attentive to:

- 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 for safe pedestrian movement, and deters speeding vehicles (parking standards below still apply);
- Orienting the large buildings and using smaller buildings to frame the large building 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.

Orientation – Buildings, including entrances, are oriented to the street or to internal streets and drives, not onto parking.

Mixed use building at a prominent intersection

T3-NC Suburban Neighborhood Center

Developments at intersections are oriented so that buildings, including their main entrances, face the highest-order street. Property consolidation to create larger development sites within the may be needed to achieve adequate dimensions for building and site design that are consistent with this policy category. Development within the transitions along side streets that are between the T3-NC and adjacent policy areas does not inhibit or discourage redevelopment of the properties on the higher-order street.

Setbacks – Building setbacks are shallow and consistent and may be deep enough to allow two rows of parking (one drive aisle) or additional pedestrian access and areas for patios and street furniture. Spacing between buildings is minimal.

Building Height – Buildings of all types are generally one to three stories tall at any location within the center, but taller buildings may be found in limited instances. The appropriate height is based on the building type, surrounding context, architectural elements, and location within the center.

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);
- Planned height of surrounding buildings and the impact on adjacent historic structures;
- Contribution 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.;
- Proximity to existing or planned transit, with increased height benefits for areas within 0.25 mile of a High Capacity Transit station;
- 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;

Low-Rise Townhouses oriented to open space

- Prominence of the intersection on which the building is located, with locations at intersections of two arterial-boulevard streets being favored for taller buildings;
- Capacity of the block structure and rights-of-way to accommodate development intensity;
- Use of increased building setbacks and/or building stepbacks to mitigate increased building heights;
- Topography;
- 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.

Landscaping – Landscaping is generally formal. Street trees, shrubs, and planting strips are appropriate. In surface parking lots, landscaping in the form of trees, shrubs, and other plantings is provided.

Landscaping is used to screen ground utilities, meter boxes, heating and cooling units, refuse storage, and other building systems that would be visible from public streets. Fencing and walls that are along or are visible from the street are constructed from materials that manage property access and security

while complementing the surrounding environment and furthering Community Character Manual and Community Plan urban design objectives. Native plants and natural rainwater collection are used to minimize maintenance costs and the burden on infrastructure.

Parking – Parking is provided on-street or on-site on surface lots. When provided on-site, one row of parking may be allowed between the building and the street. The remaining parking is behind or beside the building. Limited parking is allowed beside the building and is designed to cause minimal disruption to the street wall created by buildings. Parking is screened from view of the street and from view of abutting residential properties. When establishing parking quantities, other design principles and community plan policies are not compromised. Shared parking is encouraged. Bicycle parking is provided. The use of pervious pavement and additional LID stormwater management techniques beyond those required are strongly recommended.

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 vehicles, and monument signs are appropriate. Appropriate signage scaled for pedestrians includes building-mounted signs, projecting signs, or awning signs. Any lighting on signage is minimal.

Transitioning

Adjacent Neighborhoods - Building form on the edges complements the adjacent neighborhoods that the center serves and the infrastructure to which it has access.

Higher Intensity – Buildings at the edges form transitions in scale and massing where it adjoins lower-intensity policy area. 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 as judged on their merits and ability to meet the goals of the Community Plan. Buildings at the edges of T3-NC 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, quads, triplexes, detached accessory dwellings, etc.;
- 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 – Access is generally provided from an arterial-boulevard or collector-avenue street or alley or rear service lane. Shared access is used to avoid multiple curb cuts and limit pedestrian and vehicular conflicts. 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.

Block Length – Blocks are linear with moderate distance between intersections.

Pedestrian/Bicycle – Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and existing or planned transit is high and is provided in the form of sidewalks, bikeways, and greenways. Pedestrian connectivity within the center is high giving customers arriving by automobile the opportunity to park and walk from business to business. Sidewalks are present within

the center, and clearly marked crosswalks are provided at intersections, through parking lots, and at vehicular access points to distinguish the pedestrian zone from the vehicular zone. Bicycle connectivity is provided in the form of on-road facilities.

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

Vehicular – Vehicular connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods is moderate. The impact of connectivity to the center on adjacent neighborhoods is considered, balancing the impacts of increased traffic with the need to provide connectivity to offer multiple route choices. Connectivity within the center is provided through coordinated access and circulation.

Zoning

The following is a list of zoning districts that may be appropriate within a given T3-NC area subject to the applicant's ability to prove that the requested zoning district is consistent with for the other provisions of T3-NC policy that are described above. 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 T3-NC policy in a manner that brings them closer to conforming to the policy. These situations may warrant the use of zoning districts that might not otherwise be considered appropriate.

- MUN-A, MUN
- CN-A, CL-A, CN, or CL may be appropriate in certain circumstances depending on factors
- OR20, OR20-A
- ON, OL, or SCN may be appropriate in certain circumstances depending on factors
- RM9-A, RM15-A, or RM20-A 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. Design-based zoning may be required to achieve planning objectives such as access management, coordination among adjacent developments, or to deal with potential effects on nearby environmentally sensitive features and the overall health of the watershed in which the site is located.