COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER

% OF CHARLOTTE IS CATEGORIZED AS COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER

GOALS:
- Accommodate XX% of future growth.
- Provide a concentration of primarily commercial and civic activity in a well-connected, walkable format.
- Serve many retail and service needs and some employment for several neighborhoods within a 10-15 minute drive.

LAND USE:
- Today many of these places are single use shopping centers but over time it is expected that these places will redevelop or experience infill and support a greater mix of uses due to their high level of accessibility from multiple neighborhoods.

URBAN DESIGN:
- Most buildings are low- to mid-rise and uses are designed to be connected by a comfortable walking environment both within the Center itself and from surrounding neighborhoods and other places.
- In the future, vertically integrated mixed use buildings with structured parking facilities will accommodate expected growth.

TRANSPORTATION:
- Scale and intensity are less than Regional Activity Centers, but the transportation network should function similarly to support highly walkable Complete Neighborhoods.
- Supported by a very well-connected Local Street network, with short blocks.
- Easy access and direct connections to surrounding residential neighborhoods and other places encourage transit use, walking, or bicycling.

A. LAND USES:

- 10% Residential
- 80% Non-Residential
- 10% Common Open Space

B. ZONING DISTRICTS:
This place type has a range of zoning districts that acknowledge the diverse character of the areas they serve. Districts will have varying standards related to height, intensity, uses, parking, building placement, and other site design elements. Specific Zoning Districts will be developed for this place and included here.
C. BUILDING TYPES:
- The predominant building type is low- (C1) to mid-rise (C2) commercial or mixed use buildings.
- Some places may have vertically integrated mixed use buildings, and over time this building type is expected to become more prevalent in Community Activity Centers.
- Mid-rise multi-family buildings may also be integrated into some Community Activity Centers.

D. BUILDING SIZE:
- There are typically at least 2 to 3 large non-residential tenants in Community Activity Centers that are usually 45,000-150,000 square feet each.
- The overall non-residential square footage of the center is typically around 400,000 square feet.
- Residential building sizes may vary but are expected to conform to typical building footprint and height policies.

E. BUILDING LENGTH ALONG THE STREET FRONTAGE:
- Shorter building lengths provide a more interesting and comfortable pedestrian environment and allow for better block structure.
- Buildings should be less than 250 feet long along a block face.

F. BUILDING HEIGHT:
- Buildings are no more than 8 stories and are typically between 2 and 4 stories.
- Height should be adjusted to minimize visual impacts to adjacent neighborhoods.

G. YARDS:
- Varies by context.

H. BUILDING ORIENTATION:
Note: Arterial Streets are higher volume streets (not freeways) that travel to and through Places. The terms Main Street, Avenue, Boulevard, and Parkway refer to the more specific design classifications (from the Urban Street Design Guidelines) that refine the generic Arterial Streets into context-based streets. Arterial Streets is used generically here, with USDG classifications applied where necessary to make distinctions between expected design and context. Local streets are lower-volume streets that provide direct access to land uses off of Arterial Streets.
- Community Activity Centers are typically located along Arterial Streets, and also include Local Streets external or internal to the site.
- These Centers should not orient to Parkways, but should instead be accessed by and oriented to other types of streets (other Arterial or Local Streets).
I. BUILDING FRONTAGE ALONG STREETS:
- Community Activity Centers serve multiple neighborhoods, but must be accessible by multiple modes from nearby neighborhoods.
- Sites should be designed to provide direct Local Street connections and a safe, interesting public realm from nearby neighborhoods and transit stops, thereby encouraging walking, cycling, and transit use.
- Buildings and open spaces should also establish clear connections to adjacent Arterial Streets, to encourage pedestrian travel between developments throughout the Center and create a park-like environment.
- Buildings should include operable entrances and significant transparency along street frontages, particularly along Main Streets, Avenues, and Local Streets.
- Buildings set farther back from an Arterial Street (along Boulevards, e.g.) should still include clearly visible pedestrian connections and operable entrances from the Arterial Street at intervals no greater than 250 feet.
- Buildings on corner lots are encouraged to have entrances that front on both streets or provide an entrance from the corner of the building. Vehicular entrances should be aligned with existing or future planned pedestrian facilities where feasible.
- Corners of streets and driveways from Arterial Streets into Community Activity Centers should be wrapped by a building to create an inviting, comfortable route for pedestrians from the Arterial Street.
- Parking (other than on-street parking) should typically not be located between the building and street. One bay of parking may be allowable along Parkways, Boulevards, and some Avenues.
- Space between the building and the sidewalk may provide appropriate locations for outdoor seating or usable open space, which can positively contribute to an improved public realm.
- Street frontages should be substantially built out, with minimal driveways, to maintain a good pedestrian environment and public realm.
K. BUILDING COVERAGE AND IMPERVIOUS SURFACE:
• Impervious surfaces typically cover 70% of development within a Community Activity Center. This may include driveways, streets, parking, plazas, and buildings.
• Building coverage is typically up to 25%.
• Approximately 30% of the land in a Community Activity Center is pervious. These areas are typically grassed or landscaped and designed to provide a pleasant pass-through environment or a place to stop and enjoy.
• Pervious areas can accommodate trees that contribute to the city's tree canopy.

L. OPEN SPACE:
• Usable open space should be incorporated into Centers, in addition to vegetative buffers that provide transitions to neighborhoods.
• These spaces should be designed to provide a pleasant pass-through environment or a place to stop and enjoy.
• They may be designed as plazas, courtyards, or more passive park space and can be the focal point of a Center.
• These areas are an opportunity to contribute to the tree canopy in the Center, in addition to the street trees and others that may serve as buffers.
• Common open spaces of various types should occupy about 5-15% of a Center.
• Buildings adjacent to open spaces should orient to them and include accessible building entrances from the space and ground floor activity to activate the open space.

M. CONNECTIVITY:
• Community Activity Centers are typically located along a major street or at the intersection of two major streets. An important goal is to make centers accessible by several modes from nearby neighborhoods and destinations by connecting to street, transit, greenway, pedestrian, and bicycle networks.
• Local Street networks and well-designed connections to Arterial Streets are critical to support activity throughout the Center.
• Block lengths are preferably no greater than 500', and should be closer to 400' to promote walkability, particularly if the Center is also in a Transit Station Area.

N. PEDESTRIAN NETWORK:
• The Local Street network provides a high-quality pedestrian environment by being both well-connected and designed to accommodate large groups of people.
• Arterial Streets also support walkability by providing a high quality public realm and frequent crossing opportunities.
• The external pedestrian network (along adjacent Arterial or Local Streets) should include clear and visible on-site sidewalk connections directly to buildings and/or the internal pedestrian network.
• Off-street sidewalks should include connections from streets to adjacent greenways, parks, schools, and other streets where possible.

Q. PARKING:
• Most Local Streets and Main Streets will have on-street parking, as well as some Avenues.
• Structured parking is encouraged, with access provided off of Local Streets rather than Arterial Streets.
• Surface parking is ideally located to the side or rear of primary buildings.
• If limited parking is located between the building and the street, it should screened from view of the street, while maintaining open sightlines for pedestrian comfort and direct pedestrian connections into the site at least every 250 feet of frontage.
• Existing surface lots are opportunities for future infill development.

P. VEHICULAR ACCESS:
• Driveways should typically be located along internal streets (Local Streets), not from Arterial Streets.
• Driveways should be limited (preferably not more than one per block) to maintain a high quality pedestrian environment. For the same reason, shared driveways and cross access are highly encouraged.
• Parking lots should be designed and located to provide vehicular cross-access between streets.
• Parking lot entrances should be designed and located so that driveways align on either side of Local Streets.
• For some uses and locations, alley-fed parking is appropriate.

Q. STREETS:
• Arterial streets provide access to the Center, and often carry traffic through or by the Center, so they should be designed to allow convenient crossings and a public realm that supports pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access.
• Most Arterial Streets will be Avenues or Boulevards, but Main Streets may be appropriate in lower volume locations within the Center.
• Due to the higher intensity of development, Local Streets should include on-street parking.
• Target speeds should be low (preferably 20-25mph on Local Streets and Main Streets, maximum 35mph on Arterial Streets).
• Arterial Streets in Centers will typically have more frequent traffic signals and other crossing opportunities than Arterial Streets located outside of Neighborhood Nodes and Centers.

R. SIDEWALKS:
• Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate heavy pedestrian volumes and maintain unobstructed walking space when adjacent to outdoor seating and displays (in the setback).
• Internal Local Streets should have 8 to 10 foot wide unobstructed sidewalks, depending on the intensity of development.
• Arterial Streets typically have minimum 8 feet wide unobstructed sidewalks on Avenues and Boulevards or minimum 10 feet wide unobstructed sidewalks on Main Streets.
• Additional sidewalk width or hardscaped area between the building and the street is needed to accommodate outdoor dining and display.
• There should be clear and visible on-site sidewalk connections from arterial streets directly to buildings and to the internal pedestrian network.
S. GREEN ZONE:
- The Green Zone is typically no less than 8 feet wide to accommodate shade trees, grass, and/or hardscape elements. It provides separation between pedestrians and vehicles, helps calm traffic, provides an attractive public realm, contributes to the City's healthy tree canopy, and shades the streets and users.
- In Community Activity Centers, an 8 foot hardscaped amenity zone with trees in grates and curbed planters is ideal for most building types on Local Streets, particularly for commercial and mixed use buildings. Hardscaped amenity zones (with trees in grates or curbed planters) should always be used on Main Streets, Avenues with on-street parking, and in areas with heavy transit use.
- Grass planting strips are appropriate on Parkways, Boulevards, and Avenues without on-street parking. They are also appropriate adjacent to most residential uses without on-street parking.

T. BICYCLE FACILITIES:
- Dedicated bicycle facilities are expected on most Arterial Streets, due to higher motor vehicle speeds and volumes.
- Dedicated bicycle facilities are not typical on internal Local Streets and Main Streets, since motor vehicles speeds and traffic volumes should be low and bicycles and motor vehicles can safely share the travel lane.
- Design of the bicycle facility varies (see general provisions, p. XX, for factors influencing bike facilities).

U. STREET FURNISHINGS:
- Street furnishings should be located in the Green Zone or areas behind the sidewalk, not in the sidewalk.
- The Green Zone (typically hardscaped), combined with building setback, should be wide enough to include trees in grates, pedestrian lighting, benches, transit stops/facilities, trash receptacles, outdoor seating/displays, doors and entrances, and bike parking.