Chapter 5: Principles of Design and Residential Density Evaluation Criteria

Through this Comprehensive Plan, the city is focused on improving the quality of design within the community to offer an attractive, thriving environment for residents and visitors to live, work, and play. This chapter contains more detailed guidance on how development, redevelopment, and infill projects should be designed to meet the long-term goals expressed in this Plan. Where directly referenced within one of the Land Use Categories, the appropriate "Principles of Design" should be used in reviewing projects within the given land use category.

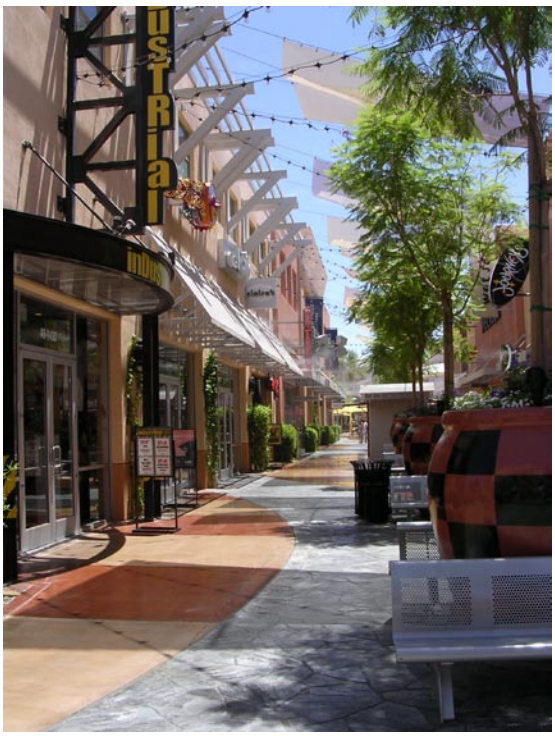
In addition, this chapter provides a detailed explanation of how residential density should be determined for the several residential land use categories displayed in Figure 4-1: Land Use Plan map. This explanation illustrates the decision-making framework that will be used by the city to promote quality, predictability, and transparency in the residential development process. This will be implemented through the city's development regulations.

Principles of Design

Intent and Applicability

The following Principles of Design provide guidance on desired design elements for new developments in the city. These principles are divided into three general categories, each addressing a particular type of development:

- Master Planned Communities,
- Mixed-Use Development, and
- Transit-Oriented Development.



An overarching objective of this plan is to achieve high-quality design in new, infill, and redevelopment projects throughout the city.

Each set of principles describes where they are to be applied. In addition, this section contains detailed descriptions to provide further guidance on two concepts included in each of the three categories: designing for pedestrians and creating a distinct sense of place. These are intended to offer another, more detailed, layer of description on how developments can achieve those two concepts.

Master Planned Communities

Where are the principles to be applied?

Master Planned Community development will continue to be a significant trend in residential areas within the city. As the Bureau of Land Management releases land for auction to private developers, it is anticipated that this land will develop as Master Planned Communities, as illustrated on the Land Use Plan map. Given the ever-changing market within the valley, the description for this land use category does not denote a specific density or density range. Rather, the emphasis is on the quality of site and building design. New Master Planned Communities (MPCs) (see Figure 6-1: Planning Framework) should adhere to the four principles described below. Evaluation and negotiation of allowable densities will be tied to the ability and willingness of the developer to achieve these principles.

The variety in housing style and setbacks of this residential street create an inviting neighborhood.

Principle 1: MPCs Should Provide a Variety of Housing Types and Character

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The development provides a range of housing options and densities from single-family neighborhoods with a mix of housing types and lot sizes to apartments, townhomes, and high density lofts.
- ☑ The variety of housing options in the development offer a range of pricing to meet the needs of people at different income levels as well as with different housing needs. Variety of housing type and price are included within a single neighborhood (mixed income neighborhood) rather than segregated within different areas of the MPC.
- ☑ The development has a unified sense of place, a distinctive image, and avoids homogenous, "look-alike" development.

See Figure 5-1: Developing Mixed-Use Neighborhoods.

Figure 5-1: Developing Mixed-Use Neighborhoods

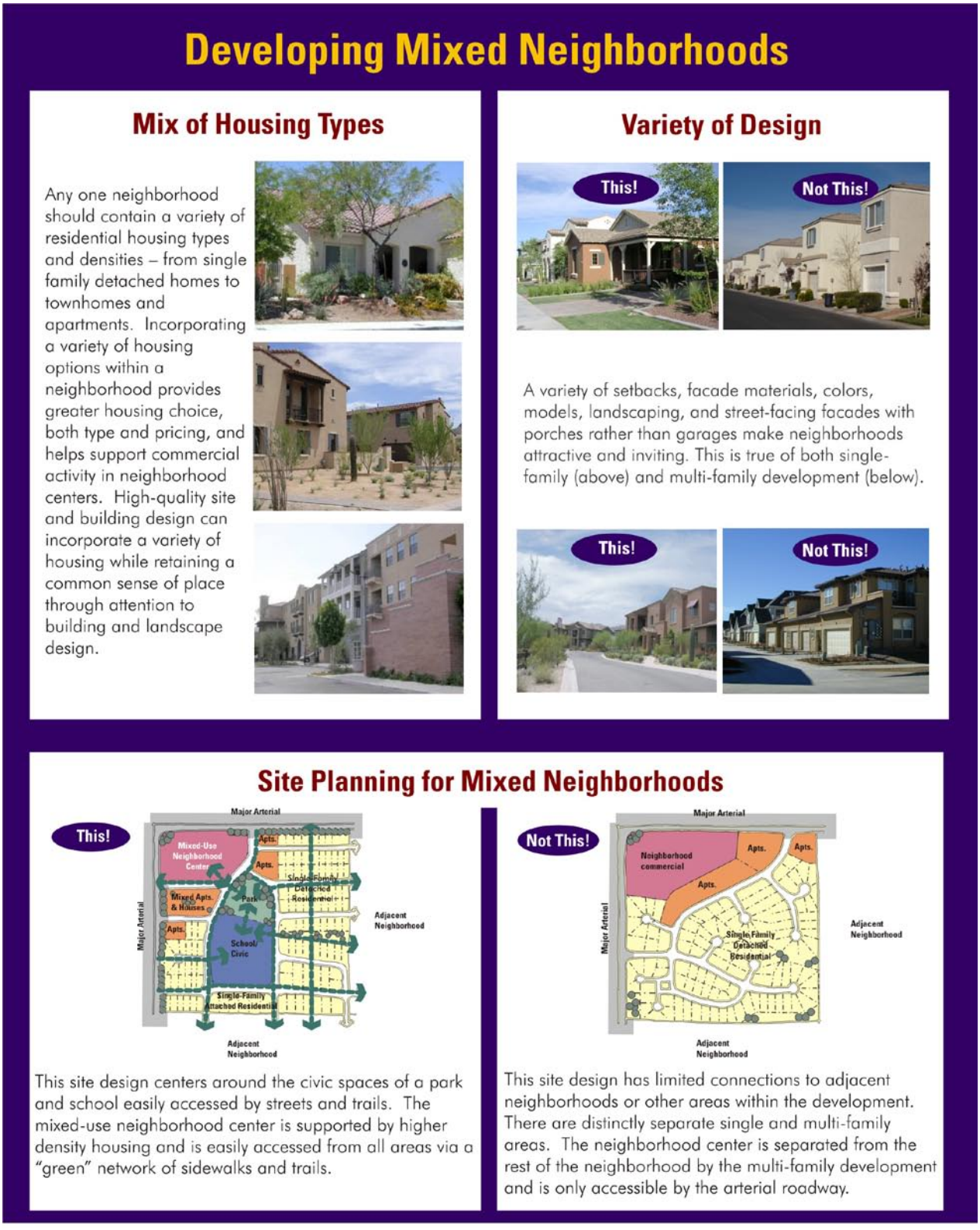


Figure 5-2: Designing Neighborhood Centers

Principle 2: MPCs Should Contain One or More Mixed-Use Neighborhood Centers to Provide Residents Opportunities for Jobs, Housing, Goods, and Services

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The MPC design incorporates one or more mixed-use "Neighborhood Centers." These offer retail goods and services as well as higher-density housing and are well-integrated through compatible scale, design, and transportation access - streets, trails, and sidewalks - to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- ☑ The Neighborhood Center is built around a central park or plaza that serves as a focal feature and civic space for the surrounding development.

See Figure 5-2: Designing Neighborhood Centers.

Neighborhood centers include convenience retail and services, but can also contain office space and residences.

Principle 3: MPCs Should Provide a Connected System of Trails, Parks, and Open Space

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The MPC provides a number of neighborhood parks throughout the development that are easily accessible to residents. These parks provide a range of amenities to support the recreational needs of a diverse population.
- ☑ Neighborhoods are linked to each other, neighborhood center(s), and parks via a connected system of trails and open space.
- ☑ The system of trails and open space within the development connects into the citywide and/or regional trails network.
- ☑ The system of parks, trails, and open space builds upon the natural attributes of the landscape (e.g., washes, slopes, and existing vegetation) and is designed with water-efficient, natural landscaping.

Trails should connect housing, parks, and centers within an MPC.

This mixed-use center provides amenities and design features such as wide sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, stylized lighting, and coordinated landscaping to promote pedestrian activity.

Principle 4: MPCs Should Promote Multi-Modal Travel Through Building and Street Design

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The connected system of trails and sidewalks accommodate both bicycle and pedestrian circulation and promote its use through a variety of amenities including benches, lighting, and multiple and convenient points of access.
- ☑ Mixed-use neighborhood centers are designed to promote pedestrian activity through building design, scale, and spacing as well as amenities such as connective trails and sidewalks, lighting, benches, and safe street crossings.

See Figure 5-3: Designing Pedestrian-Friendly Places.

Mixed-Use Development

Where are the principles to be applied?

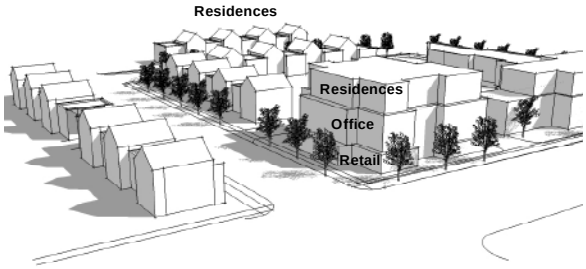
The Future Land Use Plan map illustrates three mixed-use land use categories:

- Mixed-Use Neighborhood
- Mixed-Use Commercial
- Mixed-Use Employment

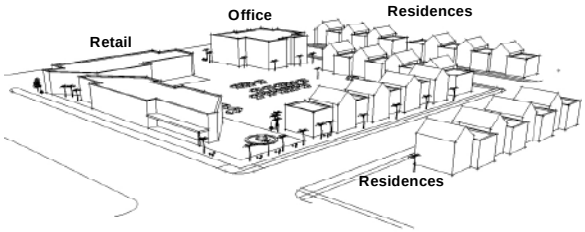
Mixed-Use Neighborhood and Mixed-Use Commercial development is identified within activity centers. In addition, the inclusion of these types of mixed use is encouraged within neighborhoods as infill or redevelopment and new Master Planned Communities to offer distinctive neighborhood "centers." Mixed-Use Employment is designated within the Northern Development Area and in and around the Cheyenne Technology Corridor. The intent of these areas is to promote live-work opportunities and offer the convenience of supportive services for a "campus" style business environment. The following Principles of Design should be incorporated into all areas of mixed-use development within the city.

The Types of Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use developments should contain a mix of complementary and connected uses (such as retail, offices, and residential) with a variety of densities as well as lively public spaces. The design of mixed-use areas should emphasize pedestrian comfort and safety and should include and support connections to other parts of the community. Mixed-use development can occur in two primary configurations: vertical mixed-use or horizontal mixed-use.



Vertical mixed-use refers to two or more land-use types within a building, occurring on different floors. A typical example of a vertical mixed-use building would incorporate active uses such as stores, offices, and restaurants at the street level and residential or office uses on the upper floors.



Horizontal mixed-use refers to a pattern where several types of uses or buildings are included as part of a cohesive development in proximity to each other with each building containing its

own separate use. An example would be a development site that might include an area for residential uses, an office building, and a retail center. They would be designed as a set of coordinated uses with common parking areas, strong pedestrian connections, and similar design features, but they would contain separate uses in each building.

Principle 1: Mixed-Use Development Should Contain Uses that Complement and Support Each Other

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The uses within the development are mutually supportive and in keeping with the use emphasis portrayed on the Future Land Use Plan map. For example, an area of mixed-use employment emphasizes primary employment activity and contains uses that support the needs of these businesses and their employees such as offices, restaurants, and high-density housing; a mixed-use commercial center contains numerous retail establishments as well as restaurants, offices, residences, entertainment, hotels, and other uses that compliment an active day-night destination.

This vertical mixed-use development offers stores and restaurants on the first floor with residences and offices located above. The wide sidewalk, shade coverings, and landscaping promote pedestrian activity.

Principle 2: Mixed-Use Development Should Be Compatible in Size and Scale with the Surrounding Area and Intended Function

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The mixed-use area is compatible in design and scale with surrounding development. Where the mixed-use area is larger in size, increased density may be appropriate at the center of the development but should gradually transition to lower density as appropriate to transition into the adjacent development.
- ☑ The mixed-use development is at a size and scale appropriate to the market they are designed to serve and the context of the area in which they are located.

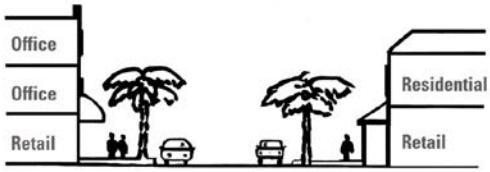
Principle 3: Mixed-Use Development Should Be Designed to Support Mobility and Circulation Using a Variety of Transportation Means

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The circulation pattern of the mixed-use development supports safe and convenient movement by pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and car.
- ☑ The development provides amenities to support multi-modal transportation including regularly spaced benches, lighting, bus shelters, bike racks, and safe crossings.

Figure 5-3: Designing Pedestrian-Friendly Places

Designing Pedestrian-Friendly Places



Pedestrian-Oriented Design is a key component for the desired design of future transit station areas, mixed-use activity centers, and neighborhood centers. Developments that incorporate some of the following elements offer mixed-use areas with a distinct sense of place and a bustling street life. These elements can serve to create a stronger sense of community and interaction, decrease traffic, and support small and local business activity.

Appropriate Use Mix and Density

A well-designed mixed-use area includes a balanced mix of stores, services, and residences at appropriate densities to promote an active street life.

Buildings Designed for People, Not Cars

Commercial storefronts are oriented to streets and pedestrians in their setbacks and proximity to each other.

Well-Planned Parking and Access

Parking is placed on-street, behind or to the side of buildings, or in structured parking areas conveniently located to destination areas.

Amenities for Safety, Comfort, and Aesthetics

Numerous pedestrian amenities are provided including public plazas or squares, areas of shade, benches, landscaping, lighting, crosswalks, way-finding signage, etc.

Connected Streets, Trails, and Sidewalks

Sidewalks and trails have a high level of connectivity to promote pedestrian and bicycle travel.

This commercial area offers a wide sidewalk for pedestrians, storefronts oriented to the sidewalks, short blocks, landscaping, and other amenities to support an attractive and safe environment. Parking is provided in lots behind the building or in parking structures, eliminating the need for up-front parking lots.

This strip-style commercial plaza lacks landscaping and architectural variety between stores. The parking lot lines the entire front of the plaza and does not facilitate a safe or attractive pedestrian environment, nor does the lack of other amenities such as benches, lighting, or trash containers.

Mixed-use developments should offer a healthy balance of housing, employment, and recreation.

Principle 4: Mixed-Use Development Should Be Designed to Provide an Active and Inviting Pedestrian Environment

How is this principle accomplished?

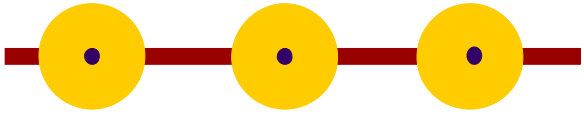
- ☑ The development is designed so that distances between buildings and destinations remain short, safe, and inviting, and can be accessed using a connected system of streets, sidewalks, and trails.
- ☑ Buildings have street-level storefronts to provide visual interest to pedestrians. Restaurants at ground level provide areas of open-air/outdoor seating.
- ☑ The mixed-use development includes wide sidewalks, shade trees and structures, benches, lighting, public art, landscaped public spaces such as plazas, and other design features to make them vibrant and inviting places.
- ☑ Auto-serving amenities, such as parking, are placed on-street, in structured parking garages, or in lots at the rear or to the side of buildings to keep the focus of activity on the people and uses within the development.

See Figure 5-3: Designing Pedestrian-Friendly Places.

Transit-Oriented Development

Where are these principles to be applied?

The future Land Use Plan map indicates the locations of several future transit station areas and their areas of influence. These stations reflect the location and planning framework of the North 5th Transit Supportive Corridor Plan. Transit-oriented design works to support the use of transit by creating station areas that are convenient, attractive, and active areas for people to live and visit. By creating station areas with a healthy mix of uses, compact development patterns, public spaces, and pedestrian amenities, station areas become destinations that further support the use of public transit. The concepts and principles discussed below are applicable for stations along transit corridors for either Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or Light Rail Transit (LRT).



The development pattern for transit station areas is not so much a continuous corridor as it is a system of nodes along a transit route.

Successful transit-oriented projects generally adhere to the following principles in the design of station areas:

Principle 1: The Station Area Should Incorporate a Complementary Mix of Uses in an Economically Sustainable Manner

This vertically mixed station area places residences over retail.

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ As the station area is developed or redeveloped as a mixed-use area, the project is phased appropriately to be economically sustainable given market demand. Residential and office uses, for example, should precede supportive uses that will be more dependent on the activity of the area, such as restaurants and retail.
- ☑ The station area should incorporate a variety of housing, both type and range of price, into the overall use mix including affordable housing.
- ☑ Vertical mixed use development with active uses (such as retail and restaurant establishments) on the ground level is concentrated near the station area.

Figure 5-4: Designing Gateways and District

Designing Gateways and Districts

Districts...
are particular areas within the city that possess a clear identity. This can be united around a cultural, artistic, activity, or other theme.

Gateways...
help establish positive and recognizable community image and identity, a stronger sense of place. They can be used to denote entry into the city or a district, such as the downtown. There are two primary types of gateways:

- Community Gateways are larger and share a common appearance with each other rather than to surrounding development.
- District Gateways are smaller gateways that denote entry into a certain area of the City and should be directly coordinated with the scheme of that district.

Where do these design recommendations apply?
The following recommended components of design should be employed to create attractive gateways and districts within the City. This includes community gateways illustrated on Figure 6-1: Planning Framework map, as well as particular districts or areas wishing to establish a distinct identity or sense of place including neighborhood centers, the University-Medical District, Downtown, Cheyenne Technology Corridor, and Station Areas.

Colorful banners define the gateway to the 16th Street Mall in Denver.

(Left and below) Common architectural style and building materials can help define an area, regardless of the type of use.

How is this accomplished?

A well-designed Gateway or District should employ a variety of elements, as appropriate to the size and function, to clearly convey a distinct and attractive visual presence.

- Common architectural elements and building materials.
- A unified landscaping scheme.
- A coordinated system of amenities, such as signage, benches, lighting awnings, etc. that denote entry and presence within a distinct area.
- Incorporate a common theme, such as denoting a particular ethnic, historic, or use district.
- Employ banners and public art including sculpture, fountains, murals, and other detail work that provide a distinct appearance.

(Top) Common colors, materials, benches, landscaping and awnings define this district. (Bottom) Public art is a creative way to define a Gateway or District.

Principle 2: The Station Area Should Incorporate Public Spaces and Greenways into the Overall Development Plan

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The station area incorporates a public space, such as a plaza, as a central feature of its design.
- ☑ The station area offers a hierarchy of parks and civic spaces from small informal squares to larger multi-use parks. Smaller plazas and squares are typically concentrated in the more urban or dense portions closer to the station. Larger parks and recreational amenities are used to help transition to lower intensity use areas at the periphery of the station influence area.
- ☑ Parks are connected with a comprehensive and well marked system of greenways and trail or sidewalk connections.

A public square can serve as a focal point for surrounding development.

Principle 3: The Station Area Development Plan Focuses The Most Dense, Compact Development Closest to the Station

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The development within a designated station area is compactly designed with higher densities closer to the station area. Typically, the most intense activity is focused within ¼ mile of a station.

Principle 4: The Station Area Should Have a Distinctive and Attractive Identity

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The station area creates a distinctive identity that draws upon and complements the predominant character of existing or planned adjacent development.
- ☑ The station area uses common architectural elements, art, banners, awnings, landscaping, etc. to help define a unified sense of place.

See Figure 5-4: Designing Gateways and Districts.

A thorough system of signage helps people navigate to locations within the development.

Principle 5: The Station Area Should be Designed to Support and Facilitate Pedestrian Activity

How is this principle accomplished?

- ☑ The station area is designed for pedestrian activity including connected sidewalks and pathways, shorter blocks and setbacks, parking on the street or behind buildings, and other amenities such as lighting, parks, and benches.
- ☑ The station area has a clear, thorough, and well-coordinated system of signs to assist with way finding.
- ☑ The station area has a parking strategy in place well in advance of station area development. This may include a multi-phased strategy that accounts for and adjusts to the changing parking needs of the station area as uses develop or densities increase. Other considerations may include opportunities for shared parking, such as the use of commercial, church, or multi-family parking areas during weekdays for park and ride areas.

See Figure 5-3: Designing Pedestrian-Friendly Places.

Residential Density Evaluation Criteria

Overview and Intent

Three residential categories designated on the Land Use Plan map are subject to a density bonus system:

- Single-Family Low
- Single-Family Medium
- Mixed-Use Neighborhood

This system is intended to provide an opportunity for a greater degree of flexibility in allowable densities to promote infill and redevelopment that places a strong emphasis on high-quality site design, variety of housing types, and amenities.

The density bonuses create an incentive for developments to achieve the city goals relating to increasing amenities in neighborhoods, improving pedestrian mobility and neighborhood connectivity, open space and trail connections, neighborhood services and amenities, and fostering a greater sense of community cohesion.

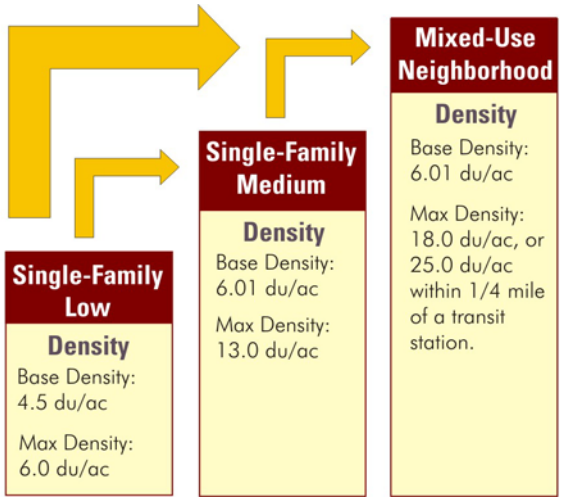
Achieving Maximum Allowable Densities

In order to achieve the maximum allowable densities within any of these three residential categories, developments would need to incorporate certain features and amenities. This density bonus award system would be proportional; for example projects that provide a minimal level of amenities would be eligible for a lower density than those that provide a broader range of amenities. The features and amenities that would be required to achieve a desired density would be based on a "menu" approach, whereby the developer can mix and match from the list of options to increase the allowable density of the development.

Criteria for determining allowable density in mixed-use districts would consist of three categories:

- Building and site design,
- Site amenities, and
- Mix of housing types.

Figure 5-5: Residential Density Bonus System Density Increase Diagram



Procedural Note

A site design must be submitted for review and consideration by the Planning Commission to achieve higher densities within any one category. To shift into a higher density land use category, a site design must be submitted with the Amended Master Plan (AMP) request.

How Will This be Implemented?

The City will implement this Residential Density Evaluation Criteria system through adoption of provisions within its Municipal Code. It is anticipated that the Municipal Code revisions, to directly follow adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, will take several months to draft and adopt. In the interim, these criteria will be used by City planning staff,

Planning Commission, and City Council to determine the appropriate density for development projects.

This description is intended to provide guidance to the revisions regarding the desired general structure for the density bonus system. The criteria required for each residential category, the specific standards and percentage requirements needed to achieve each item, and how achievement of various criteria relate to increases in the allowable densities using a menu approach will be specifically defined within the Municipal Code.

Single-Family Low

Base density: 4.5 du/ac.
Maximum allowable density pending inclusion of site plan review recommendations: 6.0 du/ac.

Single-Family Medium

Base density: 6.01 du/ac.
Maximum allowable density pending inclusion of site plan review recommendations: 13.0 du/ac.

Mixed-Use Neighborhood

Base density: 6.01 du/ac.
Maximum allowable density pending inclusion of site plan review recommendations: 18 du/ac or 25 du/ac within ¼ mile of a designated future transit station.

The18 du/ac maximum density level applies in any area planned as a Mixed-Use Neighborhood on the land use plan map. Allowable densities would vary, based on the mix of housing types and level of amenities provided as part of the development plan (see "Building and Site Design" discussion below). The second density level is intended to apply only within one-quarter mile of a designated future transit station. Future transit stations include stations designated by the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) that support Bus Rapid Transit, Light Rail Transit, and other modes of public transit. The additional densities within these station areas are intended to support increased use of transit infrastructure and should be developed according to the principles of transit-oriented design (see earlier discussion in this chapter). These standards shall be used as guidelines to determine appropriate densities until such time that they are incorporated into Title 17 of the Municipal Code.

1. Building and Site Design

- ☑ **Quality of building materials**. Building exteriors are constructed of materials with product warranties or an industry expected life of a 25-year minimum.
- ☑ **Architectural Variety**. Housing incorporates architectural details and variations in the structure of the façade to offer visual interest and appeal. Architectural variety should be applied at a block level for maximum effect and is achieved through inclusion of at least two (2) of the following within the development:
  - Front Porches or arcades (minimum of 8' x 10');
  - Façade articulation (e.g., through the incorporation of recesses, projections, windows, architectural detailing, etc.);
  - Distinct variations in primary façade materials and accent materials and/or color;
  - Distinct variation in the location and proportion of windows and doors;
  - Distinct difference in architectural styles (e.g., Mediterranean, Santa Barbara, Tucson, Spanish);
  - Garages that are recessed a minimum of 12 inches behind the front façade of the home (applies only to front-loaded).
- ☑ **Variety of housing models.** The development contains a minimum number

of distinct home models on each block of the development. This number is scaled in proportion to the number of units contained within the development (e.g., developments containing fewer than 100 units must use at least three (3) distinct model types. Developments that contain 101-200 units must use at least four (4) distinct model types. In either case, no single model type can exceed 30% of the total homes on any one block. Mirror images of the same home model do not count as two (2) distinctly different home models. Individual housing models must have distinctly different floor plans and can be further distinguished by variation in:

- Garage placement and design (front loaded, side loaded, or alley-accessed);
- Mix of 1- and 2-story homes;
- Width and proportion of the front facade; and
- Substantial variation in roof lines and/or pitch.

☑ **Compatibility and Transitions.** The height and massing of structures with frontage on residential streets bordering adjacent developments, or homes adjoining adjacent existing neighborhoods, should provide transitions. These transitions may be accomplished by:

- A step down in building height to adjacent development to the approximate height of structures on the fronting block face, and
- Locating lower intensity residential uses along the periphery of the site where it adjoins an existing residential neighborhood to provide a transition from higher intensity residential or non-residential uses.

2. Site Amenities

☑ **Landscaped Perimeter Streets.** All exterior walls and/or streets include a landscaped buffer area with separated sidewalks, regularly spaced street trees, and vegetative coverage as described in Title 17 of the Municipal Code.

☑ **Landscaped Interior Streets.** All streets within the development provide separated sidewalks with shade trees in a planted area that is a minimum of five (5) feet in width.

☑ **Neighborhood Centers/Access to Commercial Areas.** The development contains a neighborhood center consisting of two or more neighborhood-serving, non-residential uses that is accessible through a well-connected trails system and compatible in use and design with the adjacent neighborhood(s).

☑ **Parkland.** The development meets Title 17 minimum parkland requirements for pocket and community/neighborhood parks(public or private).

☑ **Park Amenities.** Each pocket park provides at least four (4) of Group 1 amenities. Each private neighborhood/community park provides at least four (4) of Group 1 and two (2) of Group 2 amenities.

Group 1 Amenities

- Shade structure or awning
- Park benches (regularly spaced)
- Downward-facing lighting
- Picnic area
- Trash receptacles
- Landscaping with shade trees

Group 2 Amenities

- Playground equipment

- Playing fields
- Covered pavilion

☑ **Connected Trails/Pathways.** The development is linked together by a system of connected off-street trails other than required sidewalks that accommodate both bicycle and pedestrian traffic. These trails provide access to schools, parks, adjacent neighborhoods and commercial activity, and the neighborhood center (if applicable).

☑ **Trail Amenities.** The connected system of trails provide at least three (3) of the following regularly-spaced amenities:

- Lighting
- Benches
- Shade structures
- Landscaping with shade trees

☑ **Connected Open Space., accomplished through the following:**

- **A**. The site plan utilizes undevelopable areas including utility and drainage easements as the basis of a connected system of open space. Swale and drainage areas are constructed of natural materials not concrete, as described in Title 17.
- **B. In addition to A**, the on-site open space connects into a larger city or regional open space network via a trail connection.

3. Mix of Housing Types

☑ **Mix of Housing Types** - ***Accomplished through achieving one of the two following options:***

- *Project includes two (2) or more distinct housing types* (each housing type should comprise no less than 30% of the total units). Distinct housing types shall mean a combination of attached or detached single-family, townhomes, and multifamily units.
- *Project includes three (3) or more distinct housing types* (e.g., each housing type should comprise no less than 20% of the total units).

☑ **Mixed-Income Development.** The development incorporates a range of home pricing in a well-integrated neighborhood that intermixes homes at different price-points throughout the development, not segregated by area or block. Criteria for establishing the pricing range (i.e., price differential and minimum % of each type) will be established in the Municipal Code.