

Commercial Land Use Goals

Issue: Guidelines are needed to allow for the retention and expansion of development in the established commercial areas of the City.

Goal 1: Established Commercial Area Development

Allow for the formation, retention, and expansion of commercial development in the established areas of the City.

Policy 1.1: Ensure Compatibility of Development -

Encourage investment in new and existing commercial development that is compatible in size, architectural design, intensity, and signage with the surrounding land uses in established areas.

Policy 1.2: Contain Commercial Development -

Encourage the formation, retention, and expansion of commercial development within the existing commercial boundaries as shown on the Future Development Plan.

Issue: Guidelines are needed to allow for a compatible transition from commercial development to residential neighborhoods and other less intensive land uses (churches, schools, and parkland). These guidelines are needed for application throughout the City including both established areas and those currently developing.

Goal 2: Compatible Transition from Commercial Development to Less Intensive Uses

Ensure compatible transition from commercial development to residential neighborhoods and other less intensive land uses.

Policy 2.1: Use Appropriate Transitional Methods -

Appropriate transitional methods should be considered at all locations where the development or expansion of commercial land use abuts residential property (either built or zoned). The City strives to meet the following objectives when compatible transition is necessary:

a. Site Orientation:

- (1) Site design should be oriented toward thoroughfare or commercial streets.
- (2) Site access should be off of thoroughfare or commercial streets.
- (3) Where appropriate, streets may be used as boundaries between commercial and residential land uses.

b. Building Orientation:

- (1) Commercial activities and parking, pedestrian access, and main building entrances should be oriented toward the street.
- (2) Allow front-to-front building orientations especially for pedestrian-intensive and smaller scale commercial uses. A back-to-back relationship may be preferred when intense commercial uses are proposed adjacent to residential uses.
- (3) The use of similar building height and roof forms should be utilized to enhance compatibility with surrounding development, especially adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- (4) Commercial buildings and parking should not have lesser setbacks than abutting residential buildings.

c. Land Features:

- (1) When possible, use stream corridors, forestation, hedgerows, ponds, or open areas to naturally separate commercial and residential areas.

- (2) Where possible, use existing topography to naturally separate commercial and residential areas.
- (3) Encourage development of green spaces, courts, plazas or other similar features to act as transitions where no naturally occurring land features are present.

d. Buffering and Landscaping:

- (1) Where other transitional methods are not possible or do not provide adequate buffer, a combination of landscaping, berming, and fencing may be necessary.
- (2) Avoid the use of fences as a sole means of providing screening or buffering.
- (3) Promote the use of existing land features, vegetation such as stands of trees and hedgerows, and stream corridors as natural buffers.
- (4) Encourage the use of high quality materials in the construction of fencing and landscaping to decrease long-term maintenance costs and to decrease the likelihood that neglected, unsightly areas will occur.

e. Lighting:

- (1) Any lighting used to illuminate an off-street parking area, sign or other structure shall be arranged so as to deflect light away from any adjoining property or from public streets through fixture type, height and location.
- (2) Exterior lighting of buildings shall be limited to low level incandescent spotlights and similar illuminating devices hooded in such a manner that the direct beam of any such light source will not glare upon adjacent property or public streets.

Policy 2.2: Locate Less Compatible Uses Toward the Interior of Commercial Areas -

Encourage higher intensity and or less compatible commercial uses because of height, bulk, parking, lighting, noise, traffic generation, or hours of operation to locate in the interior of commercial areas and not adjacent or in close proximity to residential neighborhoods.

Policy 2.3: Screen Unsightly Views -

Ensure adequate screening of unsightly views of commercial developments (loading docks, rooftop equipment, service entrances and corridors, parking garages and decks, trash containers, satellite dishes, and storage areas) through the use of extensive landscaping, berms, fencing, architectural design, open space, setbacks, building orientation, or any combination of these methods.

Policy 2.4: Allow the Option of Higher-Density Residential as Transitional Use -

Allow the use of higher-density residential development as a transitional land use between commercial developments and the surrounding low-density residential neighborhoods.

Policy 2.5: Allow the Option of Low-Intensity Office as Transitional Use -

Allow low-intensity office development as an alternative transitional land use into low-density residential neighborhoods with these conditions:

- a. Such development must be compatible in architectural design, height, bulk, and building materials to the adjacent low-density residential developments.
- b. Such development must demonstrate compatible site design by the use of extensive screening, building and parking orientation, and preservation of natural site amenities.
- c. Traffic generated by such development must be directed away from residential areas and on to commercial streets.

- d. Such development is limited to areas shown as Office on the Future Development Plan and/or as discussed in a Comprehensive Plan study area report.

Issue: Guidelines are needed to provide direction on how much, where, and at what scale commercial development is appropriate and justified by the market it is intended to serve.

Goal 3: Locational Criteria for Commercial Development

Plan for sufficient and varied choices in the location of commercial activities that serve a definite market need within the City, but avoid over building.

Policy 3.1: Follow Locational Criteria for All Commercial Development -

The locational criteria for all commercial development are:

- a. Limit commercial development to the areas shown as Commercial on the Future Development Plan and, where applicable, on specific plan maps.
- b. Discourage the formation or expansion of strip commercial development by focusing new growth in a more clustered pattern.
- c. Promote the assembling of small tracts to form larger, more cohesive parcels to enable well planned, and orderly development to occur.
- d. Encourage commercial development to form as part of existing or new shopping centers as opposed to isolated parcels along commercial strips.
- e. Limit the principal access of commercial development to thoroughfare, reverse frontage, or commercial streets as defined in the Comprehensive Plan.
- f. Encourage commercial development to locate on sites having minimal slope to avoid substantial grading and disruption of natural drainage and vegetation. Avoid areas with substantial stream corridors.

- g. Promote the retention of stands of trees, natural vegetation, and environmentally sensitive areas whenever possible to act as buffers between developments and as site amenities within developments.

Policy 3.2: Follow Locational Criteria for Neighborhood Centers -

The locational criteria for new neighborhood commercial centers are:

- a. Limit to one corner of the intersection of thoroughfares.
- b. Sites spaced from one and one-half to two-mile intervals, depending upon the density of the surrounding residential developments. In areas where Very-Low-Density Residential is the dominant land use, sites for neighborhood commercial centers may be located at greater than two-mile intervals.
- c. Other uses such as office (limited to one corner), public and semipublic, parks and recreation, or higher-density residential could be located at the remaining corners to avoid excessive concentrations of commercial traffic and unnecessary duplication of commercial services.
- d. Low-density residential is also an appropriate use at any of the other three corners, but may require screening measures to mitigate traffic noise and views of the intersection.
- e. Neighborhood commercial centers should be integrated into the surrounding residential neighborhoods by:
 - (1) Designing for pedestrian access.
 - (2) Use of appropriate transitional methods (see Goal 2: Compatible Transition from Commercial Development to Less Intensive Uses).
 - (3) Location of public and semipublic uses or parks and recreational uses adjacent to the neighborhood commercial centers.

- f. The site size for neighborhood commercial centers should be limited to a maximum of 150,000 square feet of building space or a 16-acre tract, whichever is less. The maximum square footage is all-inclusive whether the use is retail commercial, banking, office, restaurant, day-care facility, or mixture of these uses.

Policy 3.3: Follow Locational Criteria for Community Centers -

The locational criteria for community commercial centers are:

- a. Limit to key intersections of thoroughfare streets.
- b. Limit the size of community commercial centers to 400,000 square feet of building space or a 43-acre tract, whichever is less.
- c. Compatible transition from community commercial centers to less intensive adjacent uses is essential, and may require extensive on- and off-site measures (see Goal 2: Compatible Transition from Commercial Development to Less Intensive Uses).
- d. Unless other site factors do not permit, the boundaries of commercial centers on any of the four corners of an intersection should go no further back from the intersection than those of the adjacent commercial or office centers. This clustering of the nonresidential uses near the intersection will help avoid the need for extensive on-site screening of any low-density residential developments that would otherwise be directly across from the commercial centers.
- e. Other optional uses for any remaining corners of intersections where community commercial centers are shown would include: office, business park, public and semipublic, parks and recreation, and with extensive on-site screening, higher density residential.
- f. Low-density residential development should be discouraged from intersections where community commercial centers are shown because of the intensity of uses concentrated at these locations. Exceptions to this criterion may be appropriate where only one or two of the corners are committed to high intensity nonresidential uses, such as, commercial, office, or business park.

In these circumstances, extensive on-site screening would be needed.

Policy 3.4: Follow Locational Criteria for Regional Centers -

The locational criteria for regional commercial centers are:

- a. Locate at intersection corners of thoroughfares within major growth corridor areas such as Metcalf Avenue, U.S. 69 Highway, College Boulevard, K-150, and other similar future corridors.
- b. Sites should be within one-half mile of an interstate or limited access state or federal highway interchange.
- c. The size of the regional commercial center may range from 400,000 or more square feet of building space on tracts of 43 or more acres.
- d. Compatible transition from the regional commercial center to less intensive adjacent uses is essential and requires extensive on- and off-site measures (see Goal 2: Compatible Transition from Commercial Development to Less Intensive Uses).
- e. Encourage the development of mixed-use developments (office, hotel, business park, and public and semipublic uses) adjacent to the regional commercial center to provide mutual attraction to employees and retailers, while breaking up the visual monotony of large areas of commercial development.
- f. Low-density residential development should be discouraged from intersections where community level commercial centers are shown because of the intensity of uses concentrated at these intersections. Exceptions to this criterion may be appropriate where only one or two of the corners are committed to high intensity nonresidential uses, such as, commercial, office, or business park. In these circumstances, extensive on-site screening would be needed.

Issue: A need is recognized that commercial developments should comply with other pertinent City land use policy guidelines.

Goal 4: Compliance with Other City Land Use Policy Documents

Ensure that commercial developments comply with the guidelines of other pertinent City land use policy documents including the Commercial Design Guidelines and Standards, Overland Park Architectural Design Standards, Overland Park Site Design Standards, City Council and Planning Commission Resolutions, and special area plans such as the 151st Street Corridor Design Concept Plan.

Issue: Several older commercial areas in the City evolved in fragments by the random development of small tracts. These areas lack a clear identity and have suffered from inconsistent maintenance and weakening attractiveness to consumers. By encouraging collective efforts for establishing and promoting an identity through a variety of measures, business owners may choose to reinvest through increased maintenance or expansion while consumer spending may increase.

Goal 5: Cooperative Promotional Efforts

Encourage the cooperation of commercial area business owners, business associations, and neighborhood groups to help define and promote the identity and character of commercial areas through various measures including, but not restricted to, area business associations, improvement districts, special regulatory controls, cross-access agreements, and physical improvements.

Issue: Traffic concerns continue to be of major importance with much of the concern focused on ensuring safe and effective access and circulation at an acceptable level of service within and adjacent to commercial developments.

Goal 6: Transportation Considerations

Promote a transportation system which provides or improves access and circulation within and adjacent to commercial areas.

Policy 6.1: Avoid Exceeding Street Capacity -

Discourage the expansion of existing or the inclusion of new commercial development in areas where, even with street and traffic signal improvements, the additional traffic generated by such development would exceed the handling capacity of the street system.

- Policy 6.2: Avoid Reliance on Speculative Traffic Improvements -**
An evaluation of the traffic impacts of a project on the surrounding area should consider existing and projected traffic conditions and be based on anticipated traffic system improvements, not on speculative traffic system improvements.
- Policy 6.3: Use Traffic Demand Management (TDM) Strategies -**
Encourage traffic demand management strategies and institutional arrangements to anticipate and mitigate traffic congestion.
- Policy 6.4: Ensure Site Design and Land Use Compatibility with TDM Strategies -**
Promote site design that is responsive to traffic demand management (TDM) strategies and, along with compatible land use patterns, maximize balance between workers' needs in the work place and public services that support them.
- Policy 6.5: Encourage Convenient Parking within Commercial Areas -**
Encourage convenient customer parking within commercial areas by limiting the distance between parking fields and building entrances. Large, unbroken expanses of parking and parking in adjacent residential neighborhoods are discouraged.
- Policy 6.6: Provide Continuous Pedestrian Networks -**
Provide for safe, continuous pedestrian networks to promote direct pedestrian access to neighboring residential, non-residential, and public uses.
- Policy 6.7: Avoid Pedestrian and Vehicular Conflicts -**
Strive to avoid pedestrian and vehicular conflicts within commercial areas.
- Policy 6.8: Avoid Diversion of Commercial Traffic -**
Discourage the diversion of commercial traffic into residential neighborhoods.

Policy 6.9: Ensure Adequate Ingress and Egress -
Ensure adequate ingress to and egress from commercial developments.

Policy 6.10: Limit Access -
Limit the number of driveways onto thoroughfares and commercial streets, and coordinate these driveway locations with adjacent development to allow for shared access.

Policy 6.11: Provide Vehicular Circulation -
Ensure adequate vehicular circulation within commercial developments that allows access to adjacent commercial buildings and commercial developments without the need to drive to the public streets.