

Chapter 6 Plan Concepts and Land Use Definitions



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6. PLAN CONCEPTS AND LAND USE DEFINITIONS

This chapter explains and defines each of the land use designations, or categories, used on the Land Use Plan Map. The chapter sets out the concepts behind the function and mixing of uses. It also provides general criteria for locating and siting these land use elements.

The Town recognizes that some of the criteria given in this chapter may not be applicable or practicable in all cases. In addition, the Town welcomes creative development that differs from the criteria, if the general spirit and intent of the criteria are met.

In order to meet the land use vision, developments should conform to the Town's adopted design vision as set out in its Design Guidelines Manual.

The plan's land uses fall into six major categories:

- ***Activity Centers:*** Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Activity Centers
- ***Office Parks and Office & Industrial Parks***
- ***Nonresidential Uses not in Activity Centers or Office/Industrial Parks:*** Commercial, Office/Institutional, and Office/Industrial
- ***Residential Elements:*** Very Low-, Low-, Medium-, and High-Density Residential, and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)
- ***Parks, Greenways, Conservation Corridors, and Open Spaces***
- ***Special Opportunity Sites (SOS)***

6.1 The Urban Model: Neighborhoods, Communities, and Regions

The Land Use Plan for Cary is aimed at managing environmental resources, protecting scarce resources, using land efficiently and creating a distinct community.

The plan's strategy is based on an urban model in which small pieces, or ***neighborhoods***, fit together to form medium-sized pieces, or ***communities***, and adjoining communities are fitted together to form ***regions***. These pieces of the Plan – neighborhoods, communities, and regions – are defined below:

The Neighborhood:

Neighborhoods are contiguous areas, usually containing approximately 600 to 1,500 dwellings, or about 1,500 to 3,500 people. Neighborhoods consist not only of homes, but also the parks, streets, shops, schools, and other land uses that occur within their boundaries and that provide support and services essential to the daily activity of the neighborhood. The size is based on the observation that a population of this size is needed to support these so-called “first tier” facilities. Generally, major thoroughfares or topographical features define neighborhood boundaries.

The Community:

A community is a collection of approximately 3-5 adjacent neighborhoods, with a total population of about 10,000 to 20,000 people, or about 2,000 to 7,000 dwellings. This population range for a *community* is based on analysis that demonstrates that a population of approximately 10,000 to 20,000 is needed to support “second tier” public and private facilities – facilities that are required less often than on a daily basis, such as “big box” retailers, specialty dining, and theaters.

The Region:

A region is made up of a collection of adjacent communities, providing a total population of approximately 80,000 to 150,000 people. The population range for a *region* is based on analysis that demonstrates that a population of approximately 80,000 to 120,000 is needed to support regional public and private facilities, such as regional shopping malls, community colleges, major employment centers, and so forth.

6.2 Activity Centers

6.2.1 Definition, Purpose and Intent

Activity centers are one of the key “building blocks” of the town’s long-range land use vision. The concept and definition of activity centers is based on the urban model concept of neighborhoods, communities, and regions, as described in the preceding subsection. Activity centers contain the shopping, services, recreation, and office and institutional facilities needed to support their neighborhood, community, or region, respectively. Most of the town’s higher-density housing should be conveniently concentrated within or adjacent to activity centers. Commercial, office, and medium and/or high density residential uses should all be represented in a center.

Definition: *Activity centers are physically and aesthetically unified, concentrated mixed-use areas containing commercial, office, institutional, and high- and medium-density residential uses, arranged in a walkable, compact, pedestrian- and transit-friendly manner. All elements and land uses are designed to function as an integrated whole (rather than as a series of unconnected, unrelated developments). They are focal points for the surrounding neighborhood and community, and should have a strong sense of identity.*

Activity Centers are intended to:

- 1) Reduce sprawl by concentrating a mix of uses in convenient locations;
- 2) Prevent commercial strip development along boulevards by concentrating shopping centers within activity centers that are spaced apart from one another;
- 3) Promote an efficient pattern of land uses, and provide most of the goods and services needed by citizens in a coordinated, concentrated manner;
- 4) Reduce the number and length of auto trips by placing higher-density housing within activity centers, adjacent to shopping and employment;

- 5) Improve the quality of life for those living in high- and medium-density housing, by placing daily conveniences, shops, and employment within walking distance;
- 6) Facilitate auto, pedestrian, bicycle and transit travel, both within the center, and to surrounding neighborhoods.

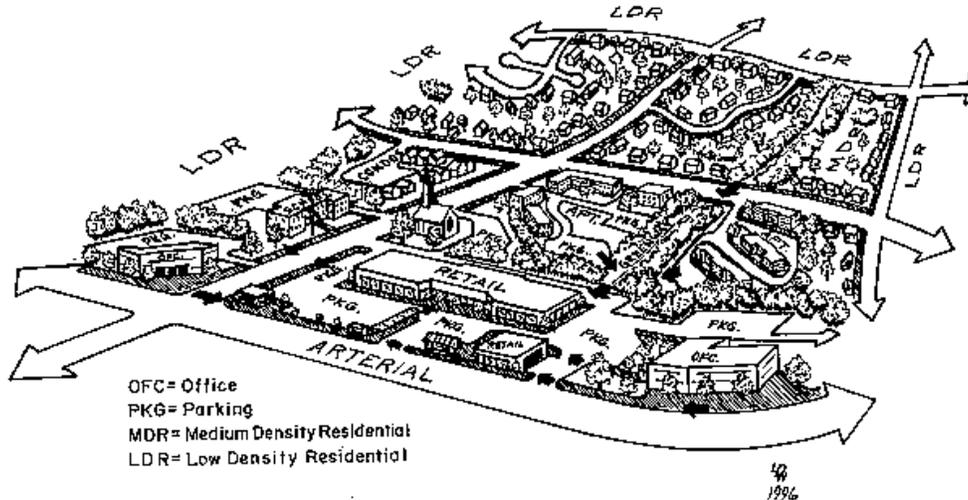


Figure 6.1 In this illustration of an activity center, commercial, office and institutional uses are concentrated and transition outwards to high-density, medium- density then low-density housing. Black arrows indicate the need for pedestrian pathways and bicycle connectivity.

Activity centers are often located around arterial intersections, and are thus generally divided into quadrants by the intersection. They might also be located mid-block along an arterial.

6.2.2 Types of Activity Centers

There are three different types of activity centers, **neighborhood**, **community**, and **regional**. They vary in terms of their function, scale, and intensity, with the neighborhood center being the smallest and least intense of the three, and the regional center being the largest and most intense. There will be fewer of the larger community and regional activity centers within the Town, since they require larger service populations than the neighborhood activity center. The three types of activity centers can be generally described as follows:

- **A neighborhood activity center (NAC)** should provide the commercial and institutional uses necessary to support the common day-to-day demands of the surrounding neighborhood for goods, services, and facilities. The activity center should also supply limited local office space demanded by neighborhood businesses, and provide medium and/or high-density housing for the neighborhood, conveniently located near the center’s shopping and employment. A grocery store or drug store will normally be the principal establishment.
- **A community activity center (CAC)** includes the typical mix of commercial, office, and institutional uses and facilities offered by a neighborhood activity center. Additionally it includes commercial and institutional uses

Grocery stores and supermarkets should be located within activity centers whenever possible; locations outside of activity centers should be avoided.

that provide goods, services, and facilities which are demanded less frequently than on a daily basis by the surrounding community (i.e., a collection of 3-5 neighborhoods), or which are possible only with the critical mass of population provided by an entire community. The activity center also supplies moderate amounts of office space demanded by community businesses. High- and medium-density residential uses should also be present in the center area, typically in amounts (and possibly densities) greater than found in NAC's. A community center may also include uses typical of a neighborhood center, since it may also serve those functions for the surrounding neighborhood.

The principal commercial establishments will likely be a very large supermarket together with another large community-sized retailer, such as a large discount store or movie theater. A grocery store is usually an essential feature of the center.

- **A regional activity center (RAC)** provides the nonresidential elements intended to provide goods, services, and facilities which are demanded less frequently than on a daily basis by the surrounding region (i.e., a collection of communities, having a total population around 80,000-150,000), or which are possible only with the critical mass of population provided by an entire region. The center supplies large amounts of regional office space, plus ample high-density (and possibly medium-density) residential uses typically in amounts greater than found in CAC's. As for a CAC, mixed-use development that integrates higher-density residential uses with nonresidential uses, such as developments that place dwellings over shops, is encouraged. A regional center may also include uses typical of both neighborhood and community centers, since it may also serve these functions for the surrounding neighborhood or community.

The principal commercial establishment will likely be a large regional shopping mall or traditional commercial district. A regional center has the potential for a more diverse and intense mixing of land uses than either a community or neighborhood activity center.

6.2.3 Activity Center Land Uses

All three types of activity centers are intended to include a substantial mix of commercial/retail, office/institutional, and moderate to higher density housing. There should be a reasonable balance amongst commercial, office, and residential uses, with roughly equal parts of each in ideal circumstances. (For commercial and office uses, a reasonable balance might also occur when the ratio between commercial and office floor space conforms roughly to the ratio between the maximum recommended amount of commercial space and maximum recommended amount of office space, as given in Section 6.2.5, Table 6.1.)

For activity centers having sufficient acreage, the activity center should ideally include a balance of both medium and high density housing – for example, both townhomes or patio homes (medium density) and multifamily housing (high density).

Restaurants, cafes, and other dining and entertainment uses are important within the center, to bring vibrancy and human interaction.

Area plans may specify a different balance and mix of commercial, office, and residential uses than the prototypical mix proposed by this section.

Uses that should not be acceptable in an activity center generally include:

- (a) Uses considered noxious when located next to a residential neighborhood, such as warehousing, manufacturing, and other industrial uses.
- (b) Low density residential uses at densities less than about 3 dwellings per acre, since the intent of activity centers is to place the town's moderate and higher density residential uses within immediate proximity and short walking distance of the commercial and office core of the center, in order to have the greatest impact in reducing the number of vehicular trips on thoroughfares, and in supporting transit usage at activity center stops.

To learn more about the actual permitted uses for a site within a particular activity center, consult the Town of Cary Zoning Map and Land Development Ordinance.

6.2.4 Activity Center Locations and Boundaries

The locations and recommended boundaries of the three types of activity centers are indicated on the Land Use Plan Map. As of February 2009, the Land Use Plan Map reflected the locations and boundaries of four regional centers, thirteen community centers, and eighteen neighborhood centers. The general locations for a further two neighborhood centers are indicated with symbols on the Land Use Plan Map, since the precise boundaries and locations of those two centers has not yet been determined. In the case of activity centers that are included within special Area Plans, the activity center boundaries have been relatively well-defined through a community planning process. For other activity centers, the boundaries shown on the Land Use Plan Map can be considered somewhat more conceptual. (Section 6.2.8 describes the process for making modifications to activity center classifications or boundaries.)

6.2.5 Activity Center Characteristics

This subsection describes the general characteristics, guidelines, and expectations for successful activity centers. Table 6.1 indicates these recommended characteristics for each of the three types of activity centers. The numeric metrics given in Table 6.1 are intended as approximate figures and general guidelines, and are not intended to be interpreted with the precision of an ordinance. In some cases, deviations from some of the table's guidelines may be warranted in order to accommodate or respond to unique design opportunities or proposals that offer exceptional benefits to the community and the Town.

Not all activity centers will be able to conform to all of the guidelines in this table, due to variations between activity centers in their total acreage, pre-existing zoning, compatibility with adjacent uses, and the particular geographic configuration and conditions for each center. For example, the neighborhood activity center focused around MacGregor Shopping Center, being located within an office park, may reasonably exceed the amount of office space typically recommended for a neighborhood center. Further, with its office park context, the MacGregor NAC is not a center that can reasonably be expected to provide ample conventional high- or medium-density housing, although it can be – and is – supported by hotel space.

Also, Area Plans often provide specific recommendations for the activity centers within their plan boundaries, and those recommendations may deviate (either explicitly or implicitly) from the general characteristics and guidelines given in Table 6.1. For characteristics where an Area Plan is silent, this subsection should generally still apply.

Table 6.1 Recommended General Characteristics of Activity Centers

(footnotes follow the table)

Attribute	Neighborhood Center	Community Center	Regional Center
Typical number of shopping centers ¹	1	1-2	2-4
Typical number of jr. anchors (“mid-boxes”) ²	0-1	0-2	2 or more
Typical number of major anchors (“big boxes”) ³	0	0-1	1-5
Typical floorspace for a major anchor (big box) – conventional single story	n/a	80,000-130,000 sq. ft.	80,000-150,000 sq. ft.
Typical floorspace for a major anchor (big box) – single story with limited parking acreage ⁴	n/a	80,000-160,000 sq. ft. (parking limit: ~ 4-5 acres)	80,000-180,000 sq. ft. (parking limit: ~ 5-6 acres)
Typical floorspace for a major anchor (big box) – with limited parking acreage and limited building footprint ⁵	n/a	80,000-190,000 sq. ft. (parking limit: ~ 4-5 acres ; Bldg. footprint limit: ~130,000 sq. ft.)	80,000-220,000 sq. ft. (parking limit: ~ 5-6 acres; Bldg. footprint limit: ~150,000 sq. ft.)
Typical range of commercial/retail floorspace	125,000 - 300,000 sq. ft.	250,000 - 600,000 sq. ft.	500,000 - 2,250,000 sq. ft.
Uses not counted against commercial/retail floorspace limits	hotel/motel lodging floorspace, theatres/cinemas		
Typical range of office/institutional floorspace ⁶	100,000 - 400,000 sq. ft.	250,000 - 650,000 sq. ft.	600,000 - 1,500,000 sq. ft.
Typical range and ideal minimum for the office share of total nonresidential floorspace ⁷	Typ. Range: 30 – 70% Ideal min.: 50%	Typ. Range: 30 – 70% Ideal min.: 40%	Typ. Range: 35 – 75% Ideal min.: 40%
Uses not counted against or towards office/Institutional floorspace limits	assembly, places of worship, schools, nursing homes/assisted living, day care		
Typical number of residential units per 1,000 sq. ft. of nonresidential space ⁸	½ to 2	½ to 3	½ to 4
Ideal min. number of residential units per 1,000 sq. ft. of nonresidential space ⁹	1	1 ¼	1 ¼

Attribute	Neighborhood Center	Community Center	Regional Center
Other uses that count toward minimum required number of residential units	Hotel and Motel rooms (one hotel/motel room considered equivalent to ½ a dwelling unit)		
Uses that do not count toward minimum required number of residential units	Nursing home and hospital rooms, assisted living units		
Geography within which there should be a mix of at least two or more uses	within the overall activity center	For at least half the quadrants, there should be a mix within each quadrant	For at least half the quadrants, there should be a mix within each quadrant
Recommended max. building height at street front, for single-use buildings and for vertically-mixed buildings¹⁰	Single-use: 3 stories (approx. 45 ft.) Vertically-mixed: 4 stories (approx. 65 ft.)	Single-use: 5 stories (approx. 75 ft.) Vertically-mixed: 6 stories (approx. 95 ft.)	Single-use: 10 stories (approx. 145 ft.) Vertically-mixed: 11 stories (approx. 165 ft.)
Required public spaces	1 plaza¹¹, square¹², green¹³, or park¹⁴ per 10 acres		
Spacing of required public spaces	Evenly distributed based on acreage per quadrant, but at least 1 on each quadrant		
Minimum distance from next closest NAC	0.75 to 1 miles	1 to 1.5 miles	1 to 1.5 miles
Minimum distance from next closest CAC	1 to 1.5 miles	2 to 3 miles	2 to 3 miles
Minimum distance from next closest RAC	1 to 1.5 miles	2 to 3 miles	5 to 6 miles

¹ For this table, qualifying shopping centers are characterized as having either (a) a grocery/supermarket or other retail tenant of more than about 30,000 sq. ft. as its principal tenant, or (b) approximately 50,000 sq. ft. or more of total commercial floor space, or (c) about 5 acres or more of total land area.

² Junior anchors/mid-boxes are defined as retail spaces of 30,000-70,000 sq. ft. (excluding supermarkets).

³ Major anchors/big boxes are defined as retail spaces over 70,000 sq. ft. (excluding supermarkets).

⁴ Parking acreage may be limited by using either structured parking or shared parking.

⁵ The footprint of a “big box” anchor may be limited by constructing a multistory building. Parking acreage may be limited by using either structured parking or shared parking.

⁶ The presence of an exceptional use such as a hospital may reasonably cause the cited limits to be exceeded, in order to account for the space dedicated to non-office uses, such as patient rooms.

⁷ Where total nonresidential space is exclusive of uses identified in the rows labeled “Uses not counted against commercial/retail floorspace limits” and “Uses not counted against or towards office/Institutional floorspace limits”.

⁸ Not including commercial/retail or office/institutional uses that are not subject to the floorspace limits.

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- ⁹ Not including commercial/retail or office/institutional uses that are not subject to the floorspace limits.
- ¹⁰ Building height is regulated by the Town of Cary Land Development Ordinance (LDO), which may allow taller buildings either by right or with increases in building setback. However, the recommended heights given in Table 6.1 are encouraged. Note that in some cases site topography or vegetated buffers may make taller buildings possible while limiting the perceived height and impact along key streets, or from major public viewpoints, to the heights suggested in the table. At the edges of an activity center, building heights should be compatible with neighboring uses outside the activity center. In this table row, “vertically-mixed” refers to buildings that have a mix of residential and nonresidential uses within the same building, typically with commercial or office uses on the lower floors, and residential on the upper floors.
- ¹¹ *Plaza*: A small to moderate publicly accessible but privately owned and maintained open space, generally at least 1,200 square feet but not more than about 1 acre. Typically located at the intersection of important streets, between buildings along a street or sidewalk, and/or at the junction of important commercial and civic buildings, and set aside for civic purpose and intense human activity. Typically circumscribed on all sides by building frontages, with landscape consisting of durable pavement, furniture, ornament (e.g., decorative fountain) and trees which are all formally disposed.
- ¹² *Square*: A publicly accessible but privately owned and maintained open space, generally at least 3,600 square feet but not more than about 2 acres. Typically located at the intersection of important streets and set aside for civic and public purpose; often associated with multiple neighborhoods/public use. Typically circumscribed on all sides by both building frontages and thoroughfares, with landscape consisting primarily of paved walks, lawn, trees, shrub massing, furniture and ornament such as fountain or sculpture and/or civic buildings which are all formally disposed.
- ¹³ *Green*: A small to moderate publicly accessible but privately owned and maintained tract of land, generally at least 2,400 square feet but not more than about 1 acre in size, and available for unstructured recreation, often circumscribed on all sides by both building frontages and roadways. Greens are most often associated with and uniquely identified/designed for a particular neighborhood use. The landscape consists primarily of trees and lawn areas, naturalistically or formally disposed. A Natural Green includes informal plantings and groupings of trees and plant materials, randomly placed sitting areas and walks and similar. A Formal Green includes a more formal arrangement of trees and plantings, deliberately aligned furniture and sitting areas, formal pathways and walks and similar. An Attached Green (either Natural or Formal) is circumscribed on all sides by building frontage and on at least two sides by roadways.
- ¹⁴ *Parks*: A large publicly accessible tract, generally ranging anywhere from 2-3 acres for pocket parks to as large as 10-20 acres or more for neighborhood parks, available for active and passive recreation. The landscape generally consists of lawn and trees, informally and naturalistically disposed. Parks often accommodate active recreation including tennis, multi-purpose courts, playgrounds and tot lots, picnic areas, and similar uses.

6.2.6 Activity Center Design Elements

Table 6.2 lists a range of design characteristics or elements that are expected for any type of activity center (neighborhood, community, or regional). Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they have addressed these elements where practical. Additional design criteria for activity centers are given in Chapter 7 of this plan, and in the Town of Cary’s *Design Guidelines Manual*.

Table 6.2 Expected Center Design Elements

Category	Expected Center Design Elements
Mixing	Land uses or activities may be mixed between adjacent sites (horizontal mixing), or on different floors of the same building, such as dwellings over shops (vertical mixing). Such mixing of land uses encourages a compact and pedestrian-oriented center.
	The design and layout of buildings, uses, and site elements on each quadrant should provide short, safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle links between buildings on one quadrant and those on the other quadrants. Where this proves unfeasible, a mix of commercial and/or office, and supportive higher-density residential uses should be provided on the same quadrant or same side of an arterial.
Residential Density Transitions	Unless otherwise indicated in an Area Plan or on the Land Use Plan Map, housing densities should generally be arranged to progressively decrease outward from the center boundary in order to transition with adjoining neighborhoods. (See Figure 6.1)
Parking	It is appropriate to provide shared parking for uses in centers. Shared parking should be sited and designed to minimize parking provision.
	Sensitive designs that tuck parking under or to the rear of multifamily units should make higher densities feasible.
Public Outdoor Space	Formal outdoor space for public use, such as a formal park, village green, or plaza, should be provided as focal points for public interaction. Larger activity centers should include more such space than smaller centers (see Table 6.1). Public spaces must be well-related to the center and create focal points, and not just be space left over after buildings have been sited. Spaces will normally provide shaded seating areas.
Site Design	The site design of an activity center (including the location of buildings and uses) should conform to the Town of Cary Design Guidelines Manual (DGM). Where there is a conflict between this table and the DGM, the DGM shall take precedence.
Transit Access	The center’s layout will normally include a location for a [future] local transit stop and internal circulation will normally facilitate transit service.

Category	Expected Center Design Elements
Vehicular Access	Direct access to the activity center will normally be provided from both arterial and secondary streets.
	Vehicle trips made from the surrounding residential neighborhood(s)/ future developments, into new centers, will normally be possible without requiring travel along a major thoroughfare or arterial. Direct local roadway connections between an activity center and any adjacent neighborhoods/ developments will normally exist. For example Shoppes at Kildaire and Crescent Commons.
Pedestrian and Bicycle Access	The proximity and connectivity of uses should encourage trips by foot and bicycle rather than automobile, both within the activity center and to/from the adjacent neighborhood(s).
	The design and layout of buildings, uses, and site elements on each quadrant should provide short, safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle links between buildings on one quadrant and those on the other quadrants.
	Direct pedestrian and bicycle connections will normally be provided between an activity center and any adjacent neighborhoods.
	All uses in a center will normally be connected by pedestrian walkways.
	Pedestrian facilities should be provided to get residents across roads safely.
	Where centers are split by arterial or through secondary streets, traffic signals will normally be provided with pedestrian phases.
	Where developments greater than 100,000 square feet or 100 dwelling units are located at quadrants diagonally opposite from each other that would require a pedestrian to cross two roads, grade-separated pedestrian crossings (underpasses, overpasses) may be needed in some cases to get residents across the road safely.

6.2.7 Development Plan Conformance and Evaluation Criteria

One of the functions of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a policy framework for the evaluation of development requests, including rezoning and special use requests, as well as development plans (such as site and subdivision plans). This subsection provides guidance for determining whether or not a particular development request should be deemed in conformance with the Land Use Plan. Evaluation criteria are provided below first for the *type(s)* of land use(s) proposed by a development, and then for the *intensities* of those uses. Next, additional evaluation guidelines are provided for redevelopment sites, and the subsection concludes with some general evaluation criteria.

Conformity of Land Use Types:

The guidelines for determining whether or not the *types* of land uses proposed for a site are in conformance with this Plan differ according to whether or not the site is [also] governed by an area plan. If the site is located within an area plan, then the types of land uses proposed should match the types indicated by the area plan in order for those uses to be considered in conformance with the Land Use Plan and its Area Plan. If the site is not located within an area

plan, then the types of land uses proposed can be considered to be in conformance if either of these two situations occur:

- A. The types of land uses proposed match the types indicated by the underlying thematic shading on the Land Use Plan Map, but only for sites where the underlying thematic shading on the Land Use Plan Map recommends a nonresidential use and/or a residential use more intense than Low Density Residential.
- B. The types of land uses proposed improve the overall mix and balance of commercial, office, and residential uses within the activity center. The proposed uses should help to further the goal of providing roughly equivalent proportional amounts of commercial and office floor space, and the goal of providing at least one dwelling for every 1,000 sq. ft. of nonresidential floor space. (See Table 6.1.) At the very least, the use or mix of uses proposed for the site should include a substantial proportion of the type(s) of use(s) most needed within the activity center to achieve an overall adequate mix of uses. For example, if an activity center provides ample amounts of commercial and office space, but little or no high- or medium-density residential, then those residential uses should be addressed with the site's development.

Any site can, of course, always be developed according to its existing base zoning, regardless of the land use recommendations of the Land Use Plan and/or its area plans.

Conformity of Land Use Intensity, Density:

The guidelines for determining whether or not the *intensity* or *density* of the land uses proposed for a site are in conformance with the Land Use Plan differ according to whether or not the site is [also] governed by an area plan. If the site is located within an area plan, then the proposal should conform with that plan's recommendations for the minimum and maximum amounts of commercial and office (and total nonresidential) floor space or acreage, and with the plan's recommended residential density ranges, acreage, and/or unit counts. If the site is not governed by an area plan, or if the area plan is silent on certain issues of intensity/density, then the site proposal should strive to conform with the land use vision expressed in Section 6.2.3, and with the land use criteria and characteristics given in Section 6.2.5.

In addition to the above considerations, the intensity and density of uses proposed for a site should also be compatible with adjacent uses, and should provide appropriate land use and density transitions to adjacent sites. The high end of the ranges recommended by this Land Use Plan or an Area Plan for nonresidential floor space, residential density, and/or building height and related, may not be appropriate for certain sites within an activity center. In some cases, development intensities at the middle or lower end of the recommended ranges may be more appropriate in certain locations, in order to form a more appropriate transition.

Additional Conformity Considerations for Redevelopment:

Appropriate reuse, redevelopment or refurbishment is encouraged for parts of existing centers, especially where activity and attractiveness have declined (for example, when an anchor vacates a center). In general, redevelopment proposals should conform with the considerations given above for land use types, intensity, and density. However, the recommendations and

guidelines of this Plan should not be used to justify or support redevelopment plans that simply replace existing or former office or residential uses on a site with commercial/retail uses, at the expense of a complete loss of the site's former residential and/or office space. Rather, if a redevelopment plan proposes commercial uses on an existing or former office or residential site, then – at a minimum – a reasonable and substantial proportion of the number of residential units or amount of office floor space lost from the site should be replaced on-site as part of the redevelopment plan. (An exception occurs if an Area Plan specifically recommends the replacement of existing office or residential uses.)

Redevelopment refers to development that replaces existing development on a site that is already developed at activity center densities, or that was so developed and has since been demolished.

It is recognized that in the case of certain small and geographically isolated parcels it may not be possible to achieve a mix of uses on-site in order to replace a reasonable and substantial portion of the former office or residential space.

Conformity, General:

To the extent practical, development should help provide missing design elements and facilities such as internal sidewalks, plazas and focal points, and pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjoining neighborhoods. (Activity center design criteria are given in Section 6.2.6 of this chapter, as well as in Chapter 7 of this plan, and in the Town of Cary's *Design Guidelines Manual*.)

The proposed development should conform where practical to the descriptions of – and guidelines for – activity centers as given throughout this Section 6.2, including the recommended activity center characteristics of Table 6.1 and the expected center design elements of Table 6.2.

It is not anticipated or expected that an entire activity center will be built as a single development, under a single owner or developer, or that all the components of an activity center will be built at the same time. However, it is expected that ultimately all of the diverse components will work and function as an integrated and complete activity center.

6.2.8 Modifications to Activity Centers on the Land Use Plan Map

It is not always possible to anticipate and plan for all conceivable activity center locations on the Land Use Plan Map, or to completely foresee the optimal or ultimate boundaries for specific centers. It is anticipated that from time to time it may be necessary to amend the Land Use Plan Map (or an area plan map) in order to (a) revise the proposed boundaries of an activity center, (b) relocate, move, or remove an activity center, (c) reclassify the type of an activity center, or even (d) add a new activity center to the Plan Map. Such map amendments constitute substantive changes to the Comprehensive Plan, and should be processed accordingly.

Such map changes should conform where practical to the descriptions of – and guidelines for – activity centers as given throughout this Section 6.2, including the recommended activity center characteristics of Table 6.1 and the expected center design elements of Table 6.2. In particular, new activity centers should be located and arranged in accordance with the spacing guidelines of Table 6.1.

6.3 Office Parks and Office/Industrial Parks

While neighborhood, community, and regional activity centers can accommodate substantial amounts of employment, they cannot and should not accommodate sites for all types of employment. The primary focus of neighborhood and community activity centers is to provide goods, services, and facilities in support of their surrounding neighborhood and community, respectively. Thus, the types of employment offered in these two types of activity centers are largely commercial and office, and the total amount of office space available in these two types of activity centers may not be sufficient for larger firms. Although regional activity centers are quite large, and may offer substantial amounts of office space, there often are not enough of them to accommodate all of a town's employment needs. For example, only one additional regional activity center is envisioned for Cary in the Land Use Plan, in addition to Cary's two existing regional focus areas – the Cary Towne Center Mall area and the Crossroads Plaza area. It is unlikely that the addition of one or even two regional activity centers will be sufficient to accommodate Cary's employment growth over the next twenty years.

Neighborhood, community, and regional activity centers are also not intended to provide industrial space. Industrial uses tend to require larger amounts of land, and tend to defeat the small-town, compact, pedestrian orientation envisioned for neighborhood, community, and regional activity centers. Industrial uses are also often incompatible with the residential, office, and commercial uses within a neighborhood, community, or regional activity center. Thus, this Plan includes the land use categories of *Office Parks* and *Office/Industrial Parks* to accommodate additional office and industrial growth, outside of activity centers.

Office Parks and Office/Industrial Parks are planned concentrations of office and industrial development, having interconnected internal road networks and shared open spaces. The individual buildings are sited so that they relate well to one another, and are of compatible design and materials. Office & Industrial Parks can contain either office or industrial uses, or both, while Office Parks are primarily for office uses. Aside from that distinction, Office & Industrial Parks and Office Parks are very similar in form and characteristics. Examples of Office & Industrial Parks include Kitty Hawk Executive Park near RDU and the Weston PUD, while examples of Office Parks include the SAS campus and Regency Park. Typical industrial uses for Office & Industrial Parks include warehousing, mini-storage, trans-shipment facilities, building trades offices and facilities, and light manufacturing and assembling. Typical office uses for both types of centers include large- and mid-sized corporate offices, as well as office space for smaller firms, office condominiums, and so forth.

Large office / office & industrial parks may also contain a limited amount of commercial space, concentrated into a central *focus area*. These commercial uses supply goods and services required by the firms located in the office / office & industrial park, such as office supplies, reproduction services, and dining establishments. If an office / office & industrial park is sited next to a neighborhood or community activity center, then that activity center may also serve as the focus area for the office / office & industrial park.

Institutional uses may also be provided in [the focus area of] an office / office & industrial park, but should be limited to those institutional uses that would not better serve the community by being located in either a neighborhood, community, or regional activity center.

6.3.1 Office & Industrial Park and Office Park Criteria

Note: The notation “*Office/Industrial Park*” in this subsection means “either an Office Park or an Office & Industrial Park.”

Type and Mix of Land Uses

- With the exception of a possible [commercial] focus area, *Office & Industrial Parks* should contain only office and/or industrial uses, and *Office Parks* should contain only office uses.
- A limited amount of commercial, institutional, and service space may be provided in a *focus area*, in order to provide those goods and services required on a regular basis by firms located in the office/industrial park, such as office supplies, reproduction services, eating establishments, and so forth.
- The focus area (if any) should incorporate some amount of formal outdoor space for public use, such as a formal park or plaza, as one of the focal points for public interaction.
- Different land uses or activities may be placed adjacent to one another, or on different floors of the same building. Such mixing of land uses encourages a compact and pedestrian-oriented office/industrial park.
- Examples of focus area land uses are listed below:

Commercial:	Institutional:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. quick-mart convenience store 2. small drug store 3. service station 4. copy and reproduction services 5. office supply/equipment retailer 6. business lodging (hotel/motel) 7. sandwich shops, fast food 8. health club for nearby workers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. satellite library branch 2. satellite college campus facility, remote classrooms

- There need not be an associated medium and/or high density residential component surrounding the focus area of an office/industrial park (effectively creating a small mixed-use node), although it may be provided.
- Uses which should be avoided throughout an office/industrial park include:
 - ◆ most institutional uses (see above comments)
 - ◆ heavy industry, smokestack industry
 - ◆ industries generating appreciable amounts of pollution, or any amounts that would be noxious to nearby residential areas
 - ◆ forestry and agriculture
- Uses which should be avoided *in the focus area* of an office/industrial park (in addition to the uses to be avoided for the park as a whole) include:

- ◆ supermarkets
- ◆ large discount stores and other large retailers
- ◆ establishments which don't directly serve the business and employee needs of the office/industrial park.

Site Area and Development Size

- The size of an office/industrial park should fall around these ranges:

	Average Area
Typical total acreage, office/industrial park	50 to 750 acres ¹⁵
Focus Area	less than 10 acres
Max. commercial floorspace in focus area	100,000 sq. ft.

Locational Criteria and Service Area

- If an office/industrial park has a commercial focus area, then the focus area should meet the same locational criteria as for a neighborhood activity center (see Table 6.1, in Subsection 6.2.5).

Other Siting Considerations:

- At least one access point to the office/industrial park should be from an arterial.
- Access to individual sites within the office/industrial park should generally be from secondary/local roads within the office/industrial park. Access points from arterials to individual internal sites should be kept to a minimum.

Transit Access:

- The office/industrial park should include a location for a [future] local transit stop, preferably in the park's commercial focus area, if one exists.

6.4 Nonresidential Uses Not in Activity Centers or Office/Industrial Parks: Commercial, Office/Institutional, and Office/Industrial

This Plan envisions that most nonresidential uses will be located in neighborhood, community, or regional activity centers, or office & industrial parks, or office parks. However, not all nonresidential uses are appropriate for activity centers or office/industrial parks. For example, a veterinary clinic, although a commercial use, may not be appropriate for an activity center, due to levels of animal noise and perhaps the outdoor space needed for kennel runs. Also, not all arterial intersections are designated to have activity centers, and residential uses may not be viable on all quadrants of such intersections.

This Plan addresses these problems in three ways. First, this subsection defines three nonresidential land use categories in order to designate additional nonresidential areas on the Land Use Plan Map, outside of activity centers. These categories are used to designate

¹⁵ Larger Office/Industrial Parks may be possible, but would need to include a mix of housing as well, in order to provide homes near to where people work.

appropriate uses for the sizable number of small undeveloped “infill areas” in Cary (pockets of undeveloped land surrounded by developed land) that are appropriate for nonresidential development, and for the undeveloped portions of some partially-built activity centers.

Second, this Plan acknowledges that it is nearly impossible to pre-select appropriate sites on the Land Use Plan Map for the full range of the mostly small-scale nonresidential uses (especially commercial ones) that don’t logically belong in activity centers. Rather than attempt to map sites for all such uses, this Plan recommends that such uses simply be sited in accord with the general spirit and intent of the Plan, subject to the design guidelines of Chapter 7.

Third, this subsection provides for limited nonresidential uses at arterial intersections that are not designated as activity centers. (The specific provisions are given below in 6.4.1.)

The three nonresidential use categories, outside of activity centers, are defined as follows:

- **Commercial [Outside of Activity Center]:**
This classification includes commercial, office, and institutional uses.
- **Office & Institutional [Outside of Activity Center]:**
This classification includes office and institutional uses.
- **Office & Industrial [Outside of Activity Center]:**
This classification includes office and light industrial uses.

6.4.1 Criteria for Nonresidential Uses Not in Activity Centers or Office/Industrial Parks

Type and Mix of Land Uses

- Uses that should be avoided include:
 - ◆ Any uses considered noxious when located next to the adjacent or nearby properties and land uses
 - ◆ Any uses generating appreciable amounts of pollution
 - ◆ “neighborhood” types of institutional uses such as neighborhood-sized libraries, parks, places of worship, and primary schools, which ideally should be located in activity centers
- Schools, churches and other places of worship are included in the office/institutional land use category. However, this Plan does not support the conversion of sites used for schools or places of worship to other office/institutional uses when they are outside of activity centers or office/industrial parks. The Plan supports the conversion of such sites to other land uses only when the proposed use is compatible with adjoining land uses, the spirit of the Plan, the criteria set forth in this chapter, and is supported by the existing zoning.

Other Locational Considerations

- At arterial intersections that are not designated for activity centers (as shown on the Land Use Plan Map), small amounts of non-residential uses may be allowed, subject to the following guidelines:
 - ◆ Residential uses are unviable on the quadrant(s) to be converted to nonresidential uses, due to traffic, noise, pollution, or other impacts from the intersection.
 - ◆ No more than a few acres should generally be used for nonresidential purposes on each of the intersection quadrants, unless otherwise indicated on the Land Use Plan Map.
 - ◆ Commercial uses are not recommended for more than one quadrant of the intersection.
 - ◆ The commercial uses should not be comparable in scale with an activity center of any size.

6.5 Residential Town-Planning Elements

Neighborhoods and activity centers contain the town’s housing. Residential areas come in many different densities and configurations, so it is necessary to have town plan-making “pieces” (land use categories) that represent different types of residential areas. Thus, this Plan uses five types of residential pieces, or categories, to construct neighborhoods and the residential portions of activity centers. These categories are: *very low density residential*, *low-density residential*, *medium-density residential*, *high-density residential*, and *Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)*.

This section first provides a basic overview of the definitions of these five types of residential categories. Criteria common to all these residential categories – and to neighborhoods in general – are then presented. Next, criteria which are specific to traditional neighborhoods are discussed. Finally, the definition and criteria for an optional type of residential development – “clustered low-density residential development” – are presented.

6.5.1 Overview of the Residential Categories

Very Low Density Residential:

Very low density residential refers to densities of less than 1 dwelling per acre, with uses typically restricted to single family detached units. Lot sizes typically range between 1 and 5 or more acres and the development typically relies on wells and private septic systems. Most areas designated as very low density are therefore beyond Cary’s ultimate urban services boundary.¹⁶ Very low density residential areas designated on the Land Use Plan Map that are within the Jordan Lake Water Supply Watershed’s 1-mile Critical Area have a minimum lot size of about 2 acres.

Low-Density Residential:

Low-density residential ranges from 1 to 3 dwelling units per acre, with uses restricted to single family detached units. Lot sizes typically range from approximately 12,000 sq. ft. to

¹⁶ The *urban services boundary* is defined in Chapter 8, Section 8.3.

1 acre. Smaller lot sizes are possible using clustered development, although the overall density should not exceed 3 dwellings per acre. (The cluster development option is explained in Subsection 6.5.4, below.)

Medium-Density Residential:

Medium-density residential development includes housing densities between 3 and 8 dwellings per acre. It can include a mixture of residential uses including single family detached uses, semi-detached units, single family attached units, duplexes and triplexes, townhouses, and low rise apartments.

High-Density Residential:

High-density residential contains housing at densities of 8 or more units per acre, depending on where the high-density dwellings are located (see Subsection 6.5.2). Typical uses include townhouses, condominiums, apartments, and possibly duplexes or triplexes. In some cases, higher housing densities may be necessary to support future regional rail transit stops, high-volume bus transit stops, or to support regional activity centers or major employment centers.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND):

(A) Definition:

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) refers to the traditional American neighborhood patterns that typified the pre-World War II era, which were characterized by a highly-connected street pattern, often based on a grid. *Traditional neighborhood development* refers principally to a particular development style and design, and is not necessarily indicative of a particular residential density – although in general traditional neighborhood developments have higher gross densities than do conventional low density residential developments. (Chapter 7 describes the design features of traditional neighborhood development in more detail.)

In a traditional neighborhood development, streets tend to be somewhat narrower and emphasize a pedestrian orientation and scale. Streets are lined with street trees and sidewalks on both sides of the street. Diverse housing types and lot sizes are intermixed throughout the neighborhood. Houses are located close to their fronting street, often with porches looking out at the street. Single-family lots tend to have narrow frontages, allowing housing densities to increase to medium-density levels, while still maintaining single-family character. More use is made of ancillary buildings such as “in-law apartments” over garages. There may also be some degree of nonresidential uses mixed in among the residential uses in the neighborhood, such as a home-based doctor’s or law offices.

Public spaces, such as formal neighborhood parks, squares, or village greens are essential features, serving as focal points for community interaction and compensating for smaller lot sizes. Some types of traditional neighborhoods emphasize the use of alleys to provide parking areas and access for household public services. Most traditional neighborhoods emphasize the use of on-street parallel parking throughout the neighborhood, which helps to reduce traffic speeds, buffer sidewalk pedestrians from traffic, and to supply daily, overflow, or guest parking.

In the ideal model, traditional neighborhoods have what is effectively a neighborhood activity center at the center of the neighborhood, where day-to-day grocery and convenience shopping, an elementary school, places of worship, a town green, and the higher-density housing are located. For purposes of differentiating this type of activity center, we call it a *traditional neighborhood activity center*. In some cases, the *traditional neighborhood activity center* may be located at the edge of the neighborhood, with direct access to an arterial or through secondary street.

(B) The Motivation for Using Traditional Neighborhood Development in Cary:

The residential development market trend over the past decade has been towards ever-decreasing single-family lot sizes. Cary has not escaped this trend. Unfortunately, small-lot single family developments are frequently built using the same design features that typify large-lot single family developments, often without success. Small-lot development has a significantly different feel and sense of place than large-lot development, and should not always be “shoe-horned” into the conventional large-lot design model.

Traditional neighborhood development offers a much improved model for creating small-lot neighborhoods, where small lots are turned to the advantage of the neighborhood, helping to create vibrant streets with a strong sense of place. Rather than ignore the market trend towards smaller lots, this Plan therefore encourages and recommends that small-lot residential development be built using traditional neighborhood development designs. (Small-lot residential development is defined here as lot sizes that fall below the guidelines for Low Density Residential; see Subsection 6.5.2)

(C) Recommendations for Use of Traditional Neighborhood Development:

Traditional neighborhood development is available as an option in all areas marked as *Low Density Residential* on the Land Use Plan Map. The fact that traditional neighborhood development can be used as an option in all areas marked as *Low Density Residential* does not imply a specific change in residential density, although in general TND densities are somewhat higher than conventional low density residential developments. The table in Subsection 6.5.2, below, shows the wide range of densities that may be possible in TND’s, depending on the specific location and context for the particular traditional neighborhood development. The specific maximum TND density that would be appropriate in a given area will depend on the transportation, environmental, and infrastructure impacts that would be expected.

There are distinct areas in the Land Use Plan Study Area that are more suitable for traditional neighborhood development than are others. Figure 6.2 shows the areas most suitable for TND uses, due to proximity to major arterials and the potential for establishing an arterial grid around those areas. These areas will most likely be able to support the widest range of TND densities.

In particular, for the area east of the *Very Low Density Residential* land near Jordan Lake (see Land Use Plan Map) and west of the area marked as “most suitable for TND” (see Figure 6.2), the overall TND densities should not exceed *Low Density Residential* densities.

6.5.2 Criteria and Characteristics Common to All Residential Categories

Dwelling Types, Densities, and Lot Sizes, by Category

Residential Category	Typical Housing Type	Lot Size Range¹⁷ (for single family attached & detached only)	Density Range (dwelling units/ gross acre)
Very Low Density	Single Family Detached	1 acre or larger	1 or fewer d.u./ac.
Low Density	Single Family Detached	12,000 sq. ft. to 1 acre ¹⁸	1 to 3 d.u./ac.
Medium Density	single family detached, townhouses, patio homes, duplexes, triplexes	<i>detached:</i> 6,000 to 12,000 sq. ft. <i>attached:</i> 3,000 to 6,000 sq. ft.	3 to 8 d.u./ac.
High Density	townhouses, patio homes, duplexes, triplexes, apartments, condominiums	<i>sgl. fam. attached:</i> 1,500 to 3,000 sq. ft./dwelling	Within activity centers: No limit; see instead bldg. height guidelines, Section 6.2.5, Table 6.1. Outside of activity centers: 8 to 12 units/ac.
Traditional Neighborhood Development ¹⁹	all types	Varies. Examples: <i>detached:</i> 4,000 - 15,000 sq. ft. <i>attached:</i> 2,000 to 6,000 sq. ft.	Varies. Examples²⁰: <i>detached:</i> 3-8 units/ac. <i>attached:</i> 6-12 units/ac. <i>multifamily:</i> 12-20 units/ac.

Locational Criteria

Unless otherwise indicated on the Land Use Plan Map, the locational guidelines for medium- and high-density residential areas are:

Residential Category	Distance from Nonresidential “Core” of an Activity Center
Medium Density	0 to 1/4 mile for a neighborhood or community activity center 0 to 1/2 mile for a regional activity center
High Density	0 to 1/8 mile for a neighborhood or community activity center 0 to 1/4 mile for a regional activity center

¹⁷ Subject to density range constraint.

¹⁸ Lot sizes may be lower if developed under cluster guidelines.

¹⁹ Section 6.5.1 discusses appropriate TND densities in various locations within the Plan’s Study Area.

²⁰ The specific maximum TND density that would be appropriate in a given area will depend on the transportation, environmental, and infrastructure impacts that would be expected.

Siting and Layout Criteria, and other Neighborhood Uses and Elements:

- High density and most medium-density residential uses should be located within neighborhood, community, and regional activity centers, unless otherwise indicated on the Land Use Plan Map. Residential densities should be highest near the core of an activity center, transitioning to lower densities with increasing distance from the core, towards the outer edges of the activity center.
- Residential densities should transition gradually between high, medium, and low density.
- Each neighborhood should have a neighborhood park, recreation area, or other public open space.
- Institutional uses, such as churches, schools, and daycare facilities should ideally be located in the neighborhood’s activity center. However, such uses may be intermixed with residential uses in a neighborhood, provided that they are sufficiently buffered from adjoining residential uses and do not impose undue negative impacts on the neighborhood.
- Neighborhoods should include a diverse housing stock, with housing available for a wide range of family income levels, age groups, and family needs, in order to meet the housing requirements of all Cary citizens.

6.5.3 Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Criteria

The criteria given in this subsection for traditional neighborhood development is in addition to the criteria specified in the previous subsection, “*Criteria and Characteristics Common to All Residential Categories.*” Design features which distinguish traditional neighborhood development from conventional development are given in Chapter 7; this subsection focuses only on unique aspects of the types and mix of land uses in a TND.

Since a *traditional neighborhood activity center* is essentially a neighborhood activity center (or a community activity center, if the commercial core serves a community-sized area), the criteria given in Section 6.2 for neighborhood and community activity centers generally apply to traditional neighborhood/community activity centers as well, and are not repeated in this subsection.

Types and Mix of Land Uses

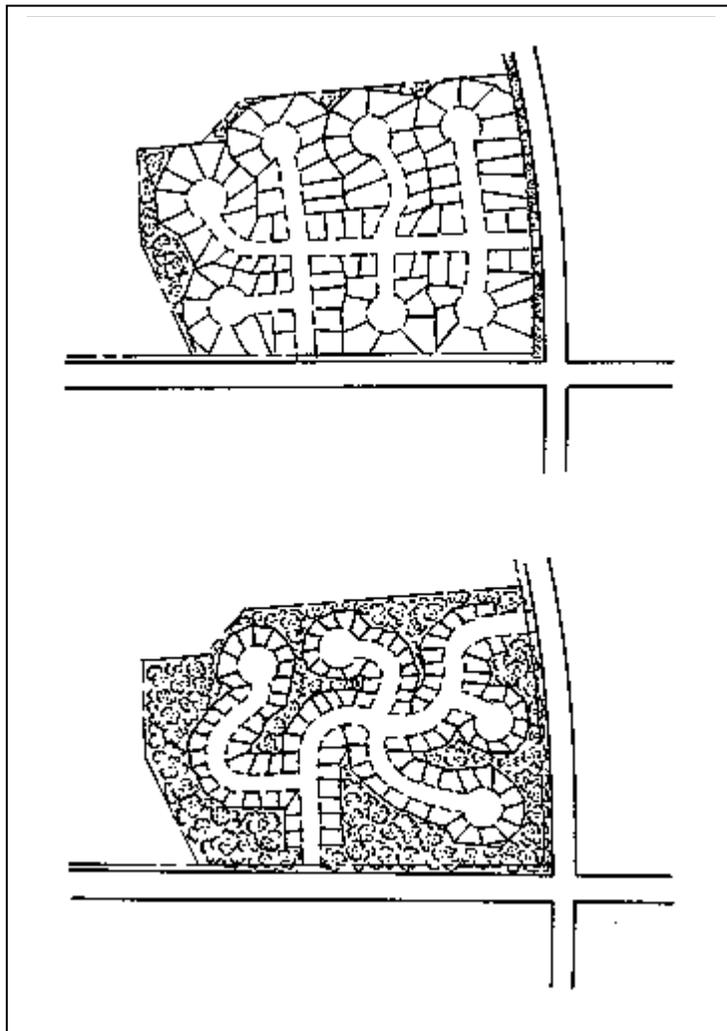
- Traditional neighborhood developments should contain a mix of housing types, such as: single-family detached houses, single-family attached dwellings (duplexes, townhouses, patio homes, etc.), and multifamily dwellings (apartments or condominiums). However, as with all residential development, the high density uses (esp. attached and multifamily) should be concentrated close to an activity center, as specified under the general residential criteria above.
- Multifamily, attached, and single-family detached residential uses can be intermixed with each other about the neighborhood, subject to reasonable density transitions and/or design and architectural compatibility.
- Throughout the neighborhood, formal public outdoor spaces, such as parks or village greens, are critical, and should be used as central design elements and focal points for the neighborhood.
- Ancillary residential uses, such as “granny flats” over outbuilding garages, may be provided.

- Some small home-based businesses or businesses in residential structures can be accommodated, intermixed among the neighborhood, provided that they are in residential[-type] structures comparable in design and bulk with the rest of the neighborhood, and that they do not have an undue noise, traffic, or activity impact on the neighborhood. (e.g., home dental offices, law offices, etc.)
- Neighborhood institutional uses, such as churches, an elementary school, and daycare facilities may be intermixed with residences in the neighborhood if they adhere to traditional neighborhood design guidelines. (However, whenever possible, these uses should be located in the neighborhood activity center.)

6.5.4 Low Density Cluster Development Criteria

Areas indicated on the Land Use Plan Map as *low-density residential* may be developed in a *clustered* manner, in order to preserve rural and forest land. In a cluster development, a significant portion of the development remains undeveloped, preserving natural areas and providing common open space, and development occurs only on the remainder of the site. However, the total number of dwellings that could have been built, had the entire site been used for residential development, are still permitted, and the overall development density remains the same. (See Figure 6.3.)

Figure 6.3 The illustration at top right shows a site developed as a conventional large-lot subdivision. The bottom right illustration shows the same site with clustered development designed to preserve environmentally sensitive land. The overall density of development is similar.



For example, suppose a 40-acre site would accommodate 120 lots of 12,000 sq. ft. each, if developed in a conventional manner. The site, however, contains 20 acres of forest and natural areas that the developer wishes to preserve. Using clustering, those 20 acres are maintained in their natural state, and the remaining 20 acres are used to accommodate the 120 homes, by using smaller lot sizes and/or different building types.

Cluster development in areas designated for low density residential development offers several benefits: It can be used to help preserve sensitive natural areas, it enables a developer to make use of a site having significant amounts of unbuildable areas (steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands), and it can reduce the infrastructure costs for the development.

Sites developed as cluster developments should not exceed the overall density allowed under the *low-density residential* definition, and should generally meet the applicable design criteria that apply to that definition. In addition, the following criteria should be met:

- A significant portion of the total site is dedicated to a permanent open space easement, the dedicated area being the undisturbed portion to be preserved.
- Most of the reserved open space is left in its undisturbed, natural state.
- A forested buffer, dedicated as open space and at least 100 feet in width, is preserved or established between the development and adjacent property lines and at least a 50 foot forested buffer is preserved or established between the development and the fronting roadway.
- Neighborhood building heights should not exceed the height of the forest canopy.
- The site design preserves, as far as practicable, large and healthy specimen trees.

6.6 Parks, Greenways, Conservation Corridors, and Open Space

This section defines and describes parks, greenways, conservation corridors, and open space, which are four critical elements of the Land Use Plan and Map. The parks and greenways definitions (given below) and the Land Use Plan Map locations for these three types of parks are taken from the draft Cary Parks and Greenways Plan, and may change as work on that plan progresses. The reader should refer to that Plan for more detailed and updated information.

6.6.1 Parks

The Land Use Plan Map shows locations for three distinct categories of parks – neighborhood, community, and metro (or regional) parks. In addition to these parks, this Land Use Plan envisions other smaller public spaces which are not mapped – such as greens, plazas, and small mini-parks – located in activity centers, office/industrial park focus areas, and scattered about neighborhoods. These small public spaces are described in other parts of this Chapter – principally in Sections 6.2, 6.3, and 6.5.

Neighborhood Parks

A neighborhood park is a small park intended to serve the casual recreational needs of a neighborhood . These parks serve an average of 5,000 people within a radius typically ranging from one-half to one mile. The size of these parks normally ranges between 10 and 20 acres. Facilities within these parks can be either active or passive and are normally small in size. Typical examples include playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, and picnic areas.

Community Parks

A community park is a medium-sized park intended to serve the more diverse recreational and sports needs of a community. This type of park serves approximately 20,000 people, typically within a two-mile radius. The size of the parks is usually between 25 and 100 acres. Facilities vary, but focus on large athletic fields. Larger parks may also include a community center and aquatic facilities.

Metro or Regional Parks

A metro or regional park serves the entire Town and would normally comprise an area over 100 acres. These parks should contain a wide range of facilities, with emphasis on resource-oriented activities, like boating, fishing, hiking, and picnicking.

Specialized Parks/Facilities

These facilities are normally devoted to a single use and vary in size. Examples include nature parks, golf courses, and arts centers.

6.6.2 Greenways

Greenways are linear, relatively undisturbed natural areas that meander in and around built areas within the town. Commonly, the only built improvement in a greenway is a pedestrian or bicycle path. By providing an ample amount of interconnected greenways, the town seeks to obtain a network of paths and trails throughout the town. Pedestrians and bicyclists could then use greenway paths to move between neighborhoods and commercial areas, and could also use them for hiking, biking, and jogging.

6.6.3 Conservation Corridors

Conservation corridors are also linear, undisturbed natural areas used to preserve environmentally sensitive or hazardous areas, such as floodplains, streams, and riverine natural areas. They differ from greenways in four significant ways: (1) They always correspond to natural vegetated buffers adjacent to perennial stream channels²¹; (2) They may be either publicly or privately owned; (3) They may include paths, trails, or bikeways; and (4) They may or may not necessarily be accessible to the public.

Outside of water supply watersheds, conservation corridors are recommended to occupy about 50 feet on either side of the stream channel. Within water supply watersheds, conservation corridors are recommended to occupy about 100 feet on either side of the stream channel.

²¹ Not all conservation corridors are necessarily shown on the Land Use Plan Map, since a complete mapping of perennial streams was not available at time of publication.

Conservation corridors serve several purposes: (1) They provide essential protection for our water resources, acting as natural filtration areas for runoff and pollutants; and (2) They provide “wildlife corridors” which preserve habitat for many species and allow for their migration.

6.6.4 Open Space

Preserved natural areas are referred to as open space. These differ from parks in that open space generally does not have any built recreational improvements, such as trails or play areas. Open spaces are often used as buffers between incompatible land uses.

6.7 Special Opportunity Sites (SOS)

Special Opportunity Sites (SOS) are areas that present unique opportunities for development, redevelopment, and/or preservation. Special Opportunity Sites are often located around areas having historic structures or unique settings. SOS sites are subject to the base land use designation for the site as given on the Plan Map, but may present opportunities for reasonable variations in that designation, including land uses not yet considered (but consistent with the Plan). See Figure 6.4.

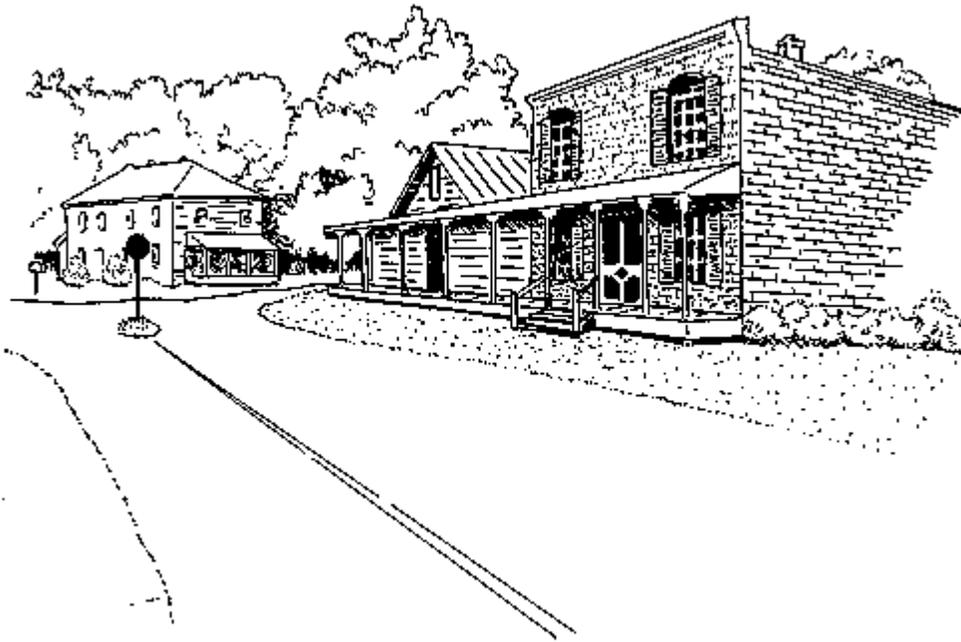


Figure 6.4 Special Opportunity Sites (SOS) are sites or areas with significant historic structures capable of serving as focal points for creative redevelopment.

The SOS designation does not imply the designation of an historic district, in which historic structures are preserved in their present uses. Rather, the SOS designation signifies that these locations possess special characteristics that present opportunities for redevelopment and reuse of historic structures.

6.8 Major Employment Centers

Major Employment Centers are combinations of several plan-making elements which, taken as a whole, identify areas of very large concentrations of employment and mixed land uses. These may include significant office, commercial, and industrial employment areas, as well as supporting high- and medium-density housing areas. A major employment center is made up of one or more adjacent office/industrial parks, one or more high- or medium-density residential areas, and one or more neighborhood or community activity centers (and/or possibly one regional activity center), all in close proximity to one another. Thus, a major employment center differs from an office/industrial park in that it:

- * offers a wider range of employment types – office, retail, service, institutional
- * offers a wider range of land uses – office, industrial, commercial, institutional, residential, and park.
- * accommodates a significantly greater amount of employment than a single office/industrial park
- * may occupy a larger physical area than a single office/industrial park

Major employment centers not only accommodate large-scale employment, but also provide ample higher-density housing in close proximity to these major employment sites. This reduces commute distances and traffic congestion, and provides opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle home-to-work trips. It also provides employers in the major employment center with a nearby labor force. Further, since the major employment center also contains one or more neighborhood or community activity centers (or possibly a regional activity center), both the workers and residents have convenient access to crucial commercial and institutional services. This helps to reduce home-to-shopping and work-to-shopping trip distances within the activity center.

Major Employment Centers serve as a concept internal to the Plan, but are not specifically denoted on the Plan Map. One identifies major employment centers on the Plan Map by examining it for the elements which comprise such a center.

Examples of major employment centers include the “Regency Park-MacGregor Park-Western Wake Hospital” area, and the “Weston PUD-SAS Campus” area. The first of these two major employment centers illustrates the concept: Regency Park contains a zoned but unbuilt neighborhood activity center and a sizable office/industrial area with significant residential support. MacGregor Park contains a neighborhood shopping center and an industrial/office area. Western Wake Hospital is an institutional land use. Also included in this Major Employment Center are the community activity centers of Waverly Place and Audubon Park and the Crescent Commons Shopping Center and its ring of related apartments called Crescent Arbors. Thus, this

major employment center contains two community activity centers, two neighborhood activity centers (one as yet unbuilt), several thousand acres of office/industrial area, a hospital, several large high density residential developments, and other sizable areas of office development (Keisler Drive area) and specialized retail (Asheville Avenue).