APA Brown Bag Series

Supporting Walkable Neighborhood Business Districts

- Types of business centers (districts)
- What it takes to support a center
- Strategies to achieve walkable centers in a variety of settings
- Benefits

Gregory Easton

John Owen

October 28, 2009

Types of centers and their characteristics

- Convenience Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Community Center
- Regional Center

Convenience Center

Convenience Shopping Center

Anchors	Convenience grocery, drug store
Number of Stores	3-20 stores
Total Retail Space	10,000-30,000 square feet
Site Area	1-3 acres
Market Area Population	under 20,000
Market Area Radius	under 2 miles

Neighborhood Center

Neighborhood Shopping Center

Anchors	Supermarket and Drug Store
Number of Stores	10-40 stores
Total Retail Space	30,000-100,000 square feet
Site Area	3-10 acres
Market Area Population	10,000-30,000 people
Market Area Radius	1-3 miles

Community Center

Community Shopping Center

Anchors	Junior department or discount
Number of Stores	25-80 stores
Total Retail Space	100,000-450,000 square feet
Site Area	10-30 acres
Market Area Population	30,000-75,000 people
Market Area Radius	3-8 miles

Regional Center

Regional Shopping Center	
Anchors	1 or 2 full-line department stores
Number of Stores	50-100 stores
Total Retail Space	300,000-750,000 square feet
Site Area	30-50 acres
Market Area Population	100,000-250,000 people
Market Area Radius	8-15 miles

Caveats

- Shopping center definitions reflect traditional retail development patterns.
- Some evolution in center types with newer urban forms (smaller prototype stores), value-oriented retail, and entertainment or lifestyle-related retail.
- But trade area requirements still reflect business requirements for spending power, sales efficiency and business mix.

Determinants of Commercial Support

- Households in Market Area
- Average Household Income
- Amount of Household Spending
- Location and Types of Stores Selected
- Sales Efficiencies of Stores

Supportable Square Feet per Household

Store Type	Supportable Sq. Ft. Per Household	Store Type	Supportable Sq. Ft Per Household
Building Material	2.6	Appliance	0.5
Hardware	0.5	Radio/TV/Computer/Music	2.3
Department/Variety	13.4	Eating Places	12.4
Food/Grocery	11.6	Drinking Places	1.5
Auto supply	2.6	Drug	3.1
Gas Stations	5.5	Sporting Goods	1.4
Apparel	4.5	Book	1.0
Shoe	1.3	Hobby/Toy	1.0
Furniture	3.5	Gift	1.0
Home furnishings	1.6	Flower	0.5
		Total	71.8

Supportable Development in Local Neighborhood

- 40 SF/household in store types typically found in neighborhood centers.
- 15 SF/household is realistic capture for neighborhood centers.
- Greatest support for grocery stores, eating/drinking, and drug stores.

Households Necessary to Support Neighborhood Business District

	Retail Square Feet	Required Households
Corner grocery scale	15,000	1,000
Small neighborhood business district	30,000	2,000
Large neighborhood business district	50,000	3,300

Goal: to produce a “walkable neighborhood center:

- 30,000 SF center with a grocery store

2,000 households

- 50,000 SF center with additional variety and attractions

3,000 households

What is "*Walkable*"

What is "*Walkable*"

- So let's think about accommodating a significant % of support population in ¼ mile:

- 1,000 du = ½ support for smallest center
- 1,500 du = ¾ support for smallest center or ½ needed for larger center

Application to different Contexts

NOTE: NUMBERS VARY WITH SPECIFIC NEIGHBORHOODS.

- This discussion is an example of the thinking needed to plan for a viable neighborhood district
- The numbers used are a starting point to be adapted to the situation

Older SF neighborhood context

Typical density = 7 du/gross acre

About 800 – 1,000 du in ¼ mi radius

Need about another 500 du to reach ¾ of population within walking distance

Many ways to add 500 du

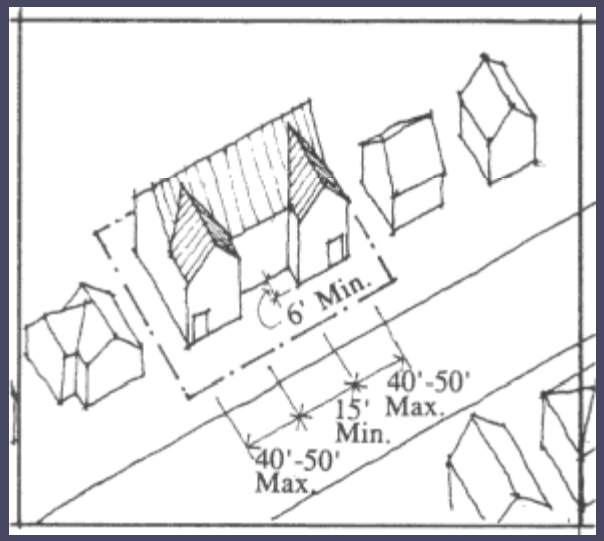
- 37 du = 109 du/ac

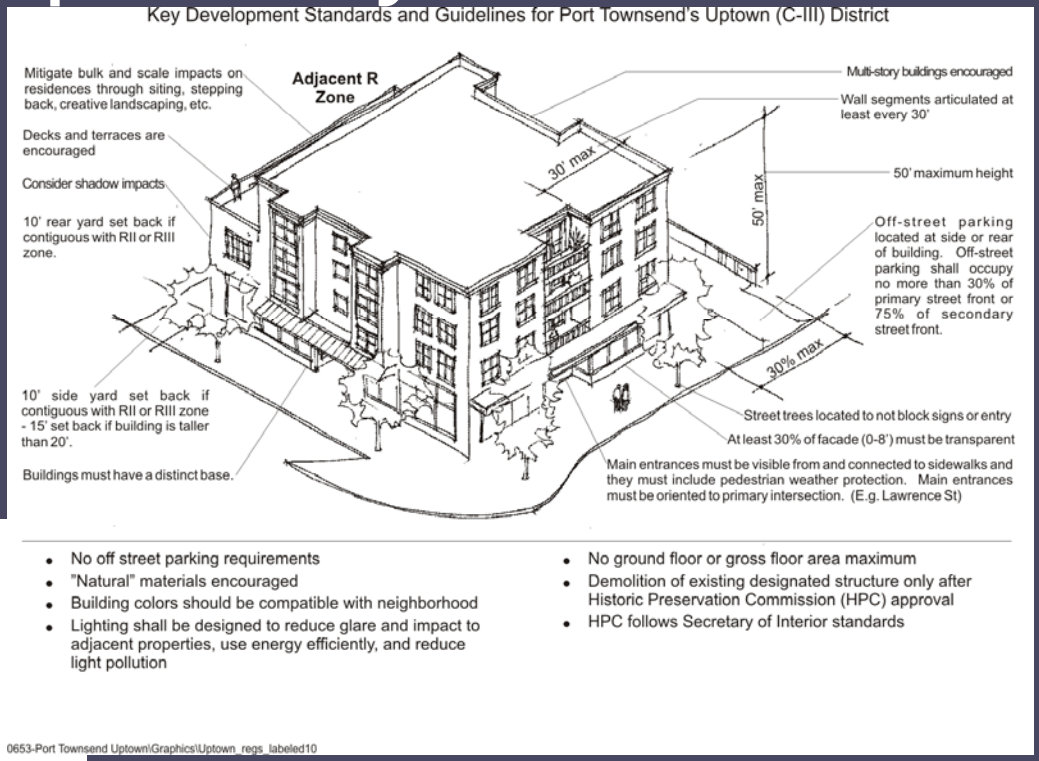
50 du = 161 du/ac

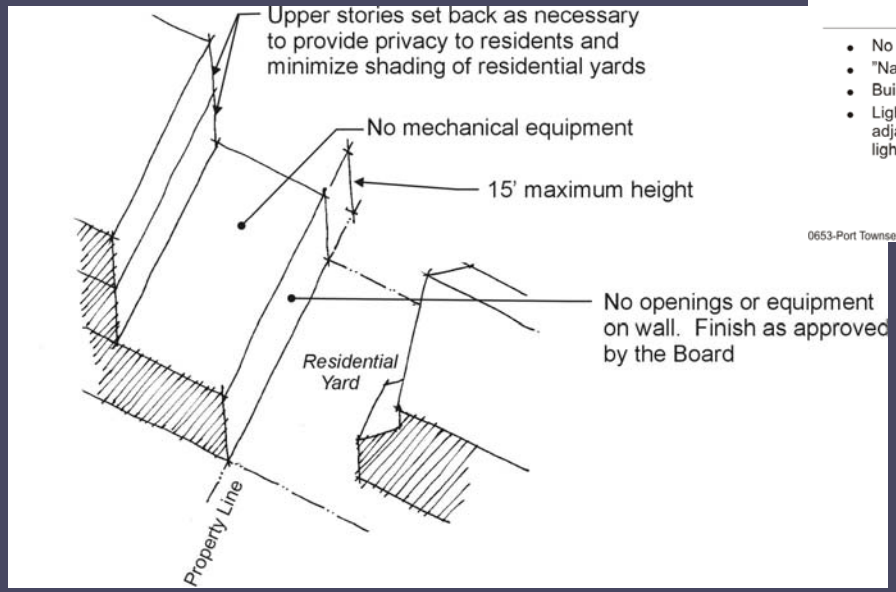
100 du = 151 du/ac

Unlimited!

Use design guidelines to achieve compatibility







How much land does it take?

Small neighborhood center
= 3.5 acres minimum

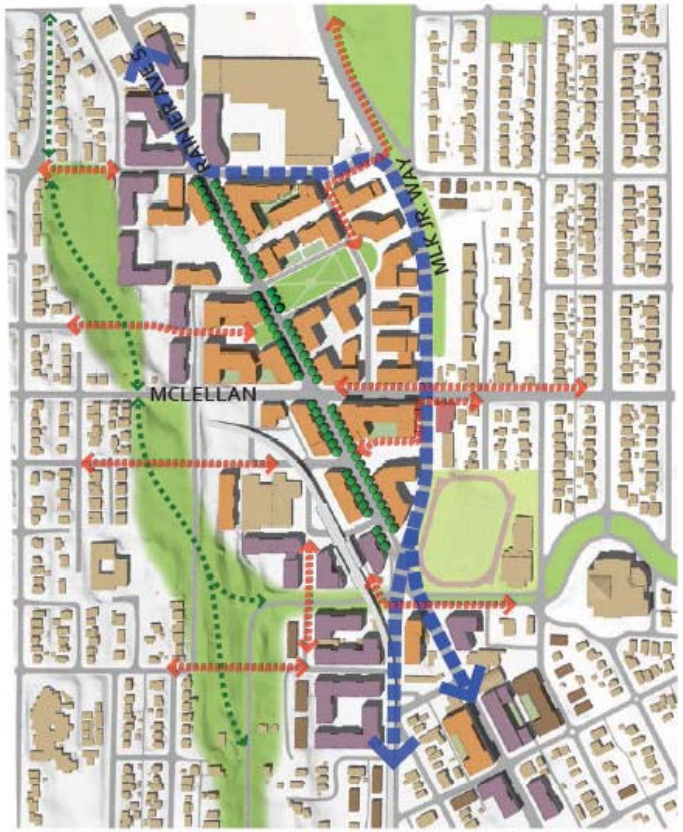
6 -12 acres+/- if you count services and institutions

How much land does it take?

Community center with
lots of attractions
= 20+ acres

Example: City of Seattle Neighborhood planning for TOD nodes

NORTH RAINIER



NORTH RAINIER STATION AREA PLAN DIAGRAM

NORTH RAINIER PLACES + CONNECTIONS

DRAFT

Benefits!

- Transit service – short headway bus or rapid transit compatible
- Parking – Commercial parking requirements may be substantially cut

The same densities and populations needed for walkable business districts will also support good transit and parking reductions

Strategies

- Minimum density requirements
- Zoning incentives
- Multi-family tax incentives
- Design guidelines to achieve compatibility
- Public improvements
- Lower parking requirements
- Direct public sector involvement

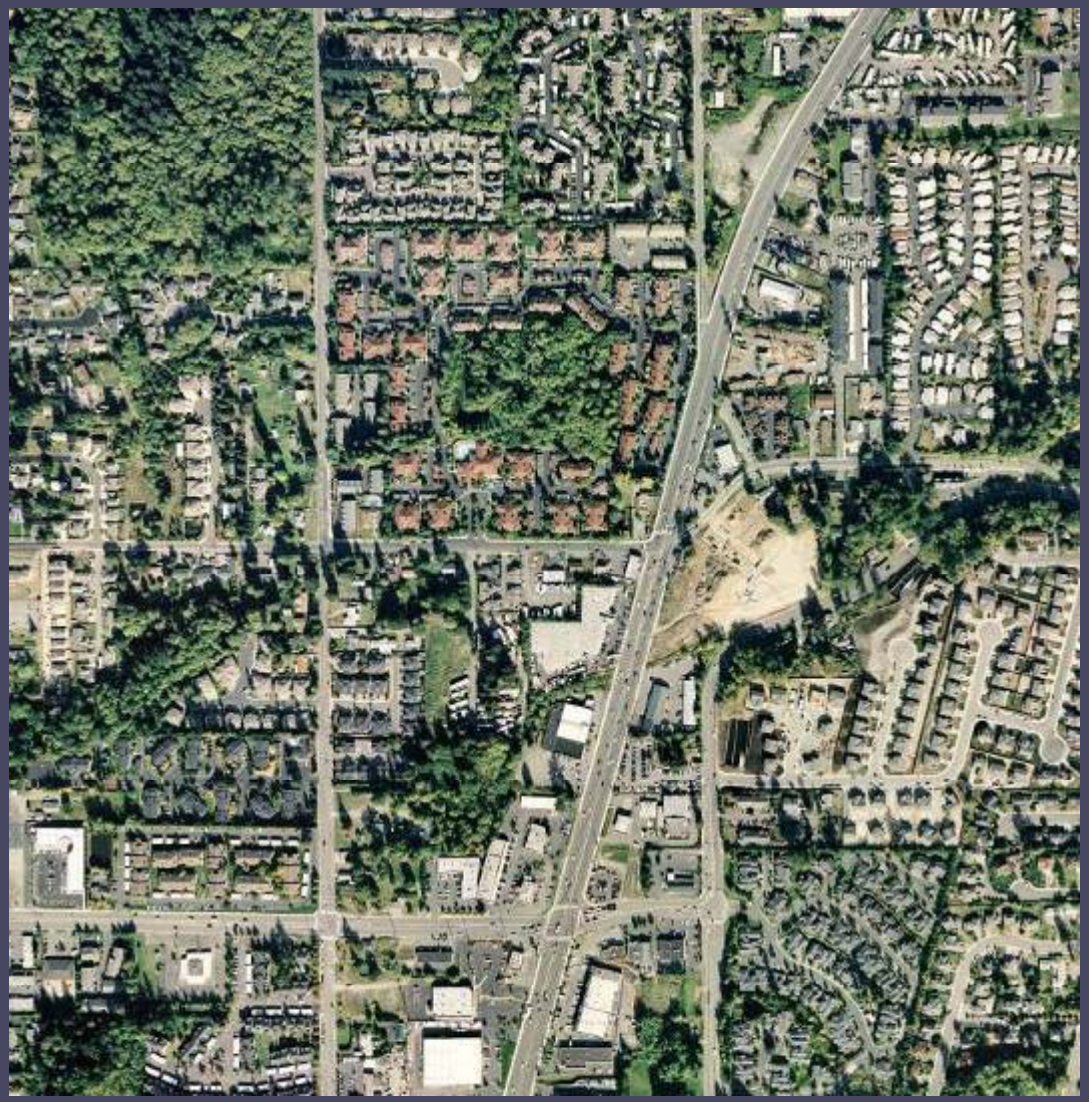
Transportation/Commercial Corridor

Transportation/Commercial Corridor

- Typical density = 3 du/gross acre
- About 2 miles between corridors so there are about 3,900 du in catchment area
- But, not enough foot traffic to sustain a walkable center

Transportation/Commercial Corridor

So the key is to provide enough walking traffic - say about 1000 du within ¼ mile



Transportation/Commercial Corridor

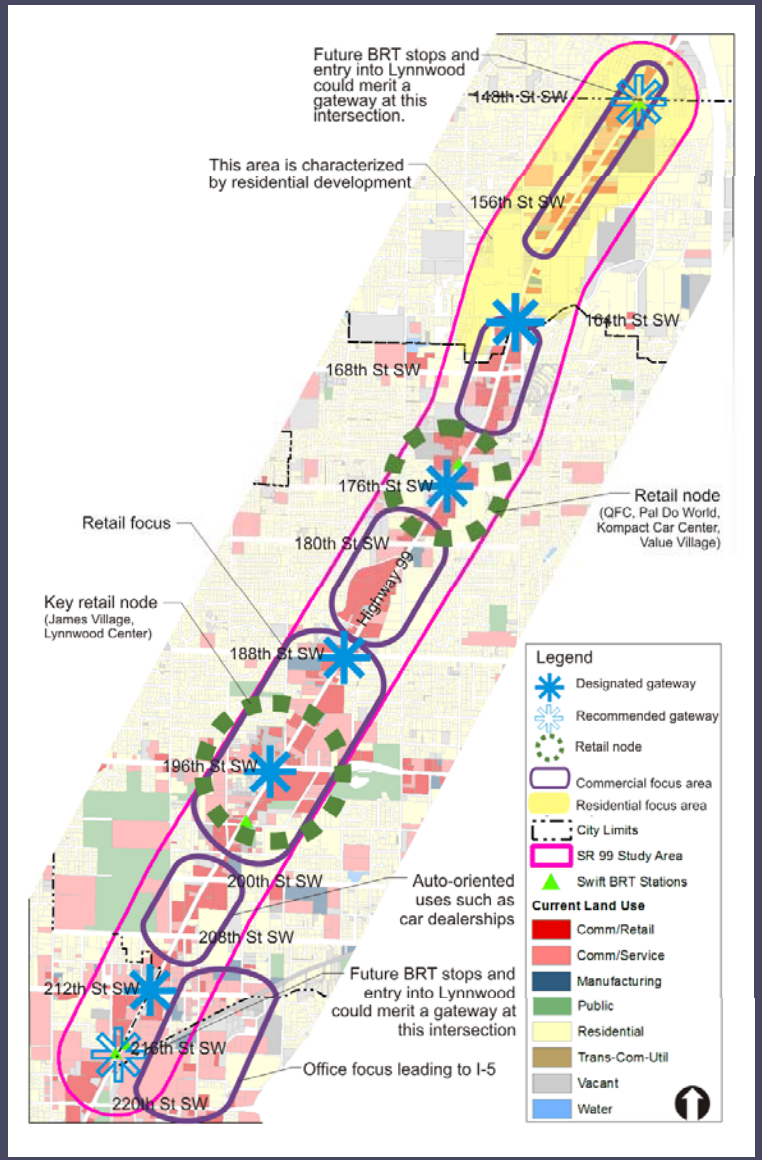
First, ensure that there are good sidewalks to the corridor on the side streets

Transportation/Commercial Corridor

Second, add good quality housing to the corridor and nearby areas.

Transportation/Commercial Corridor

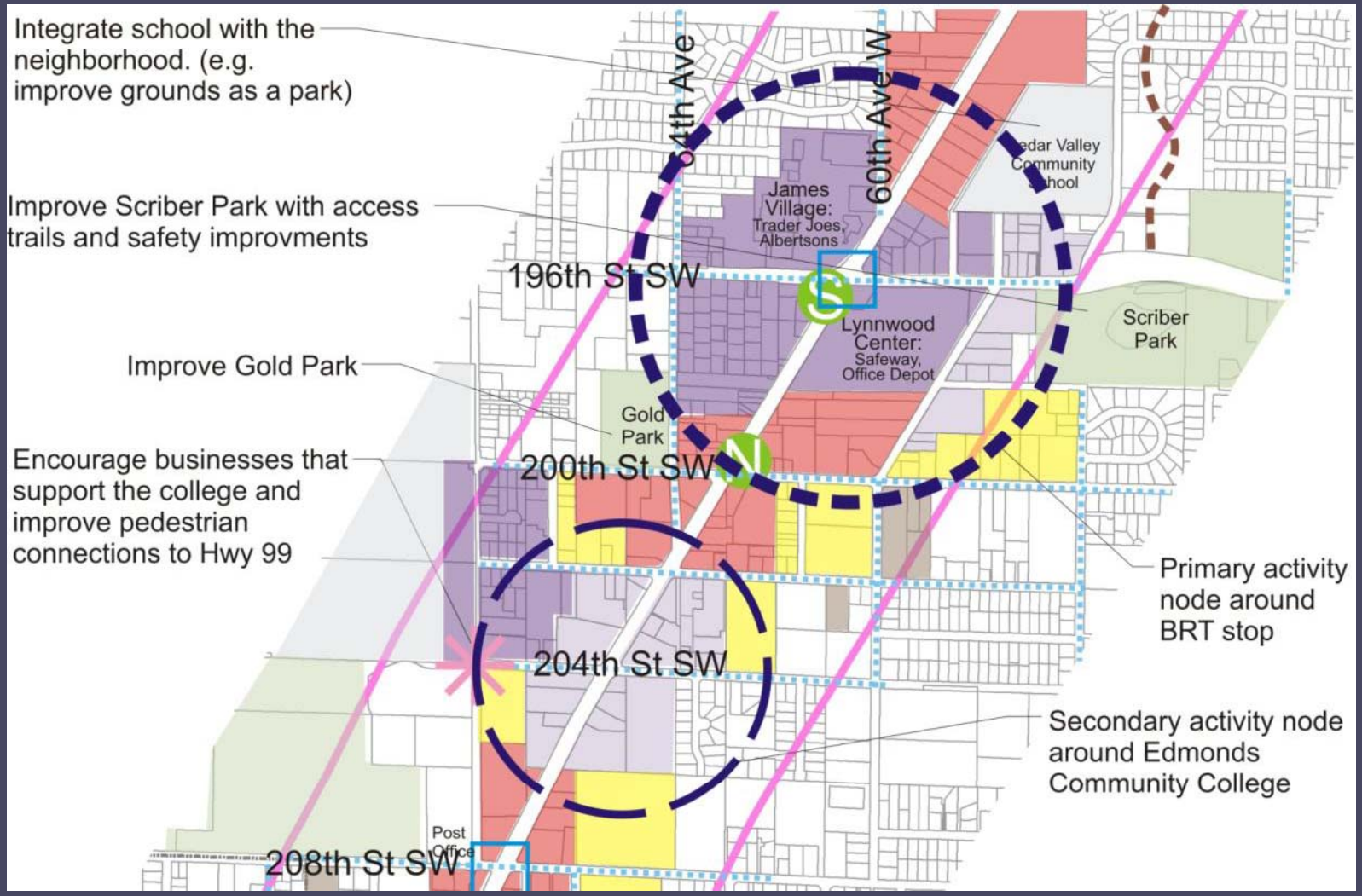
Third, build on transit.



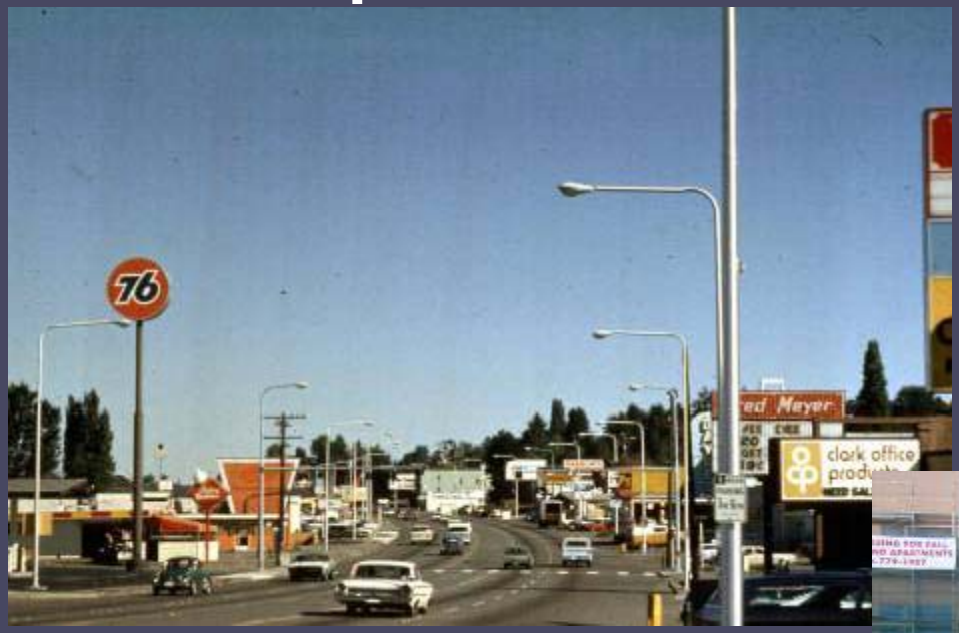
Transportation/ Commercial Corridor

Fourth, provide amenities and links

Example: SR 99 corridor redevelopment in Lynnwood



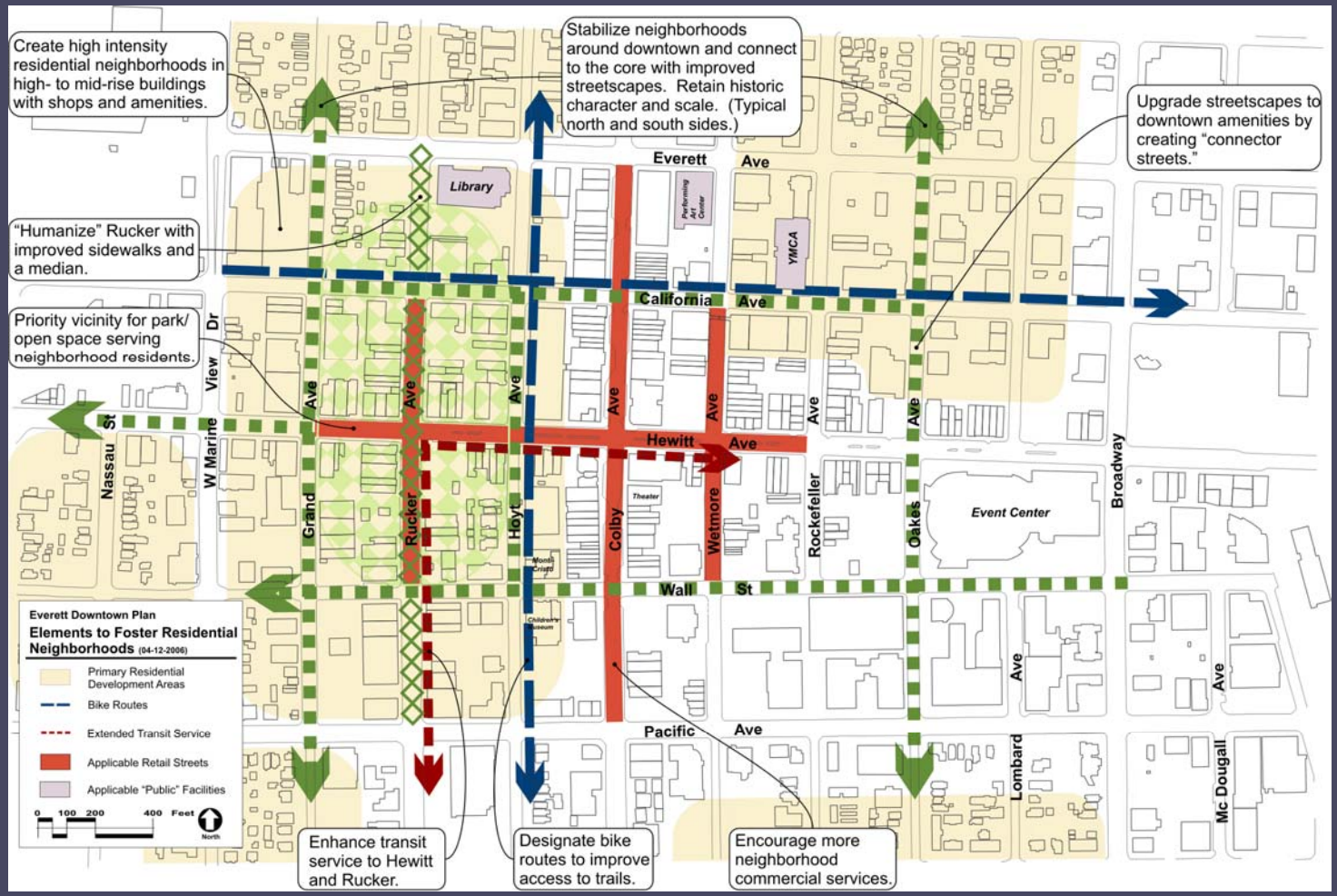
Transportation/Commercial Corridor



It can work

Metropolitan Downtowns

Assume that the goal is to provide 2,000 du to support a grocery.



Metropolitan Downtowns

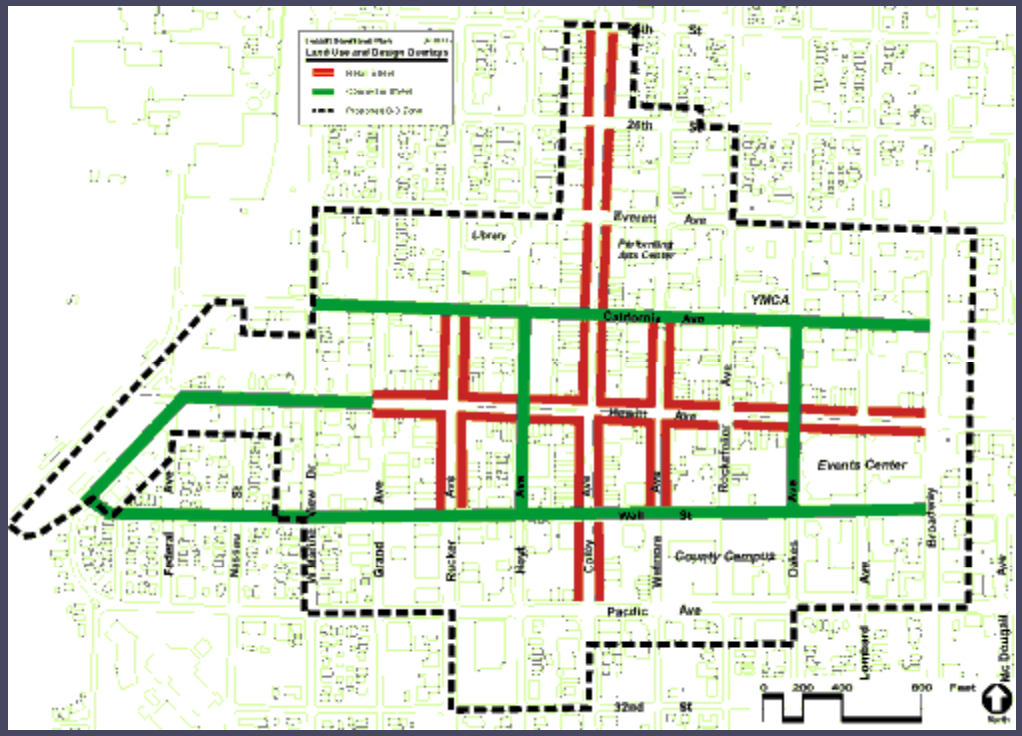
Even with high density building types 2,000 du takes 3 to 8 full blocks of new development .

176 du on .4 acre site

245 du on 1.3 acre block

Metropolitan Downtowns

So another strategy is to make downtown accessible to near-by neighborhoods….



Metropolitan Downtowns

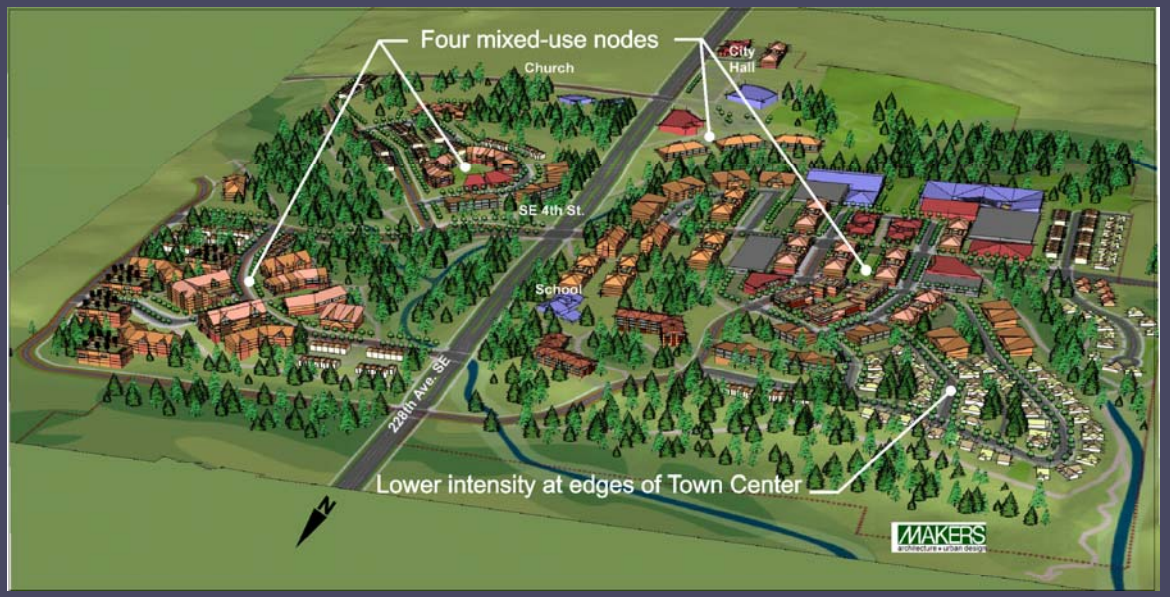
…And strengthen core neighborhoods with infill development.

LEGEND:
✓ Desirable in most or all locations in area
✓ Desirable in some locations in area

Housing Types	Broadway	West Slope	Downtown/CBD	North Downtown	Neighborhood Infill	East Central	Rucker/Grand
Tower: Mixed-Use		✓	✓				
Tower: All Residential		✓	✓				
5 over 1: Mixed-Use	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5 over 1: All Residential	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
3 over 1: Mixed-Use	✓	✓		✓	✓		
3 over 1: All Residential	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Townhouse				✓	✓		✓
Cottage Housing					✓		✓
Small Lot Single-Family Detached/ Accessory Dwelling Units (Attached or Detached)					✓		✓

Emerging Town Center

The goal is to provide a pedestrian based neighborhood feel so that there is a local identity and the development is not just another auto dependent development.



Emerging Town Center

As a starting point, 500 to 1,000 du within easy walking distance will provide local pedestrian activity and a neighborhood feel

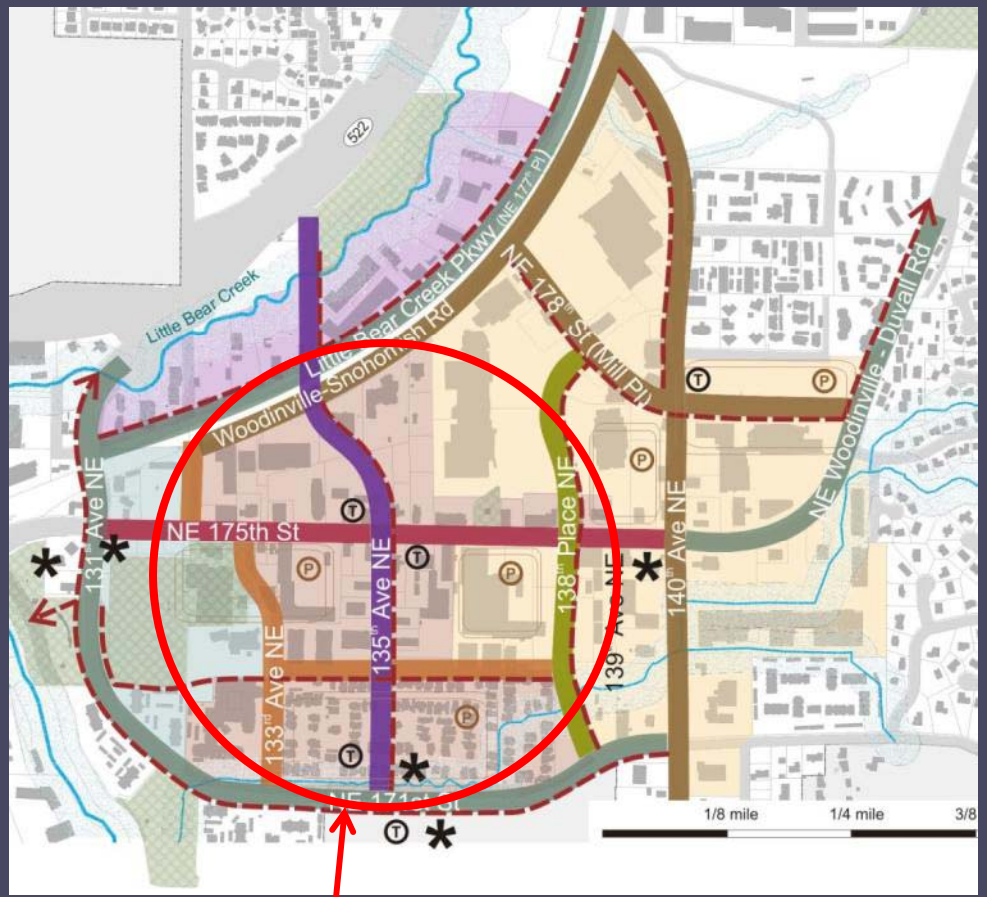
Juanita – 580 du in the development

Mill Creek – 1,150 du near by

Emerging Town Center

But the key is good planning and good design to create a real place, not just a retail center.

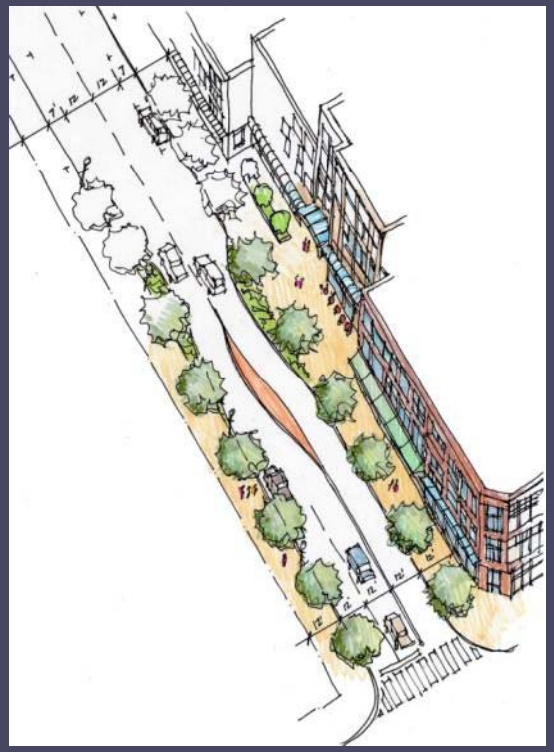
Example: City Center Planning in Woodinville



About 30 du/acre (average) needed (assuming 50% of area is redeveloped.)

Goal: At least 1,000 du in the core (rose colored) area.

To attain that goal the City should allow development with about 60 du/acre = 4-5 story mixed use buildings.



The reason: To create better neighborhoods

If you can create livable, inclusive and equitable neighborhoods, then other goals, such as sustainability, transit access, and growth management will fall in place – or at least can be addressed more successfully