

High Density in Norman Session 5

“Design”

August 13, 2012

WHY ARE WE HERE?

- New development applications received requesting multi-family development above 100 dwelling units per acre (du/ac)
- More similar applications are anticipated
- Current high density developed in Norman is 26 du/ac
- No specific density limitation in the zoning code except in the Mixed Use Development (MUD) District which has a density cap of 30 du/ac
- *Norman 2025 Plan* provides no specific guidance
- The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee established a schedule of public meetings and identified specific topics for discussion at each one

Council Planning and Transportation Committee directed staff to:

- Engage citizens in a detailed discussion process about community comfort with the idea of higher density—not defined—just density that is higher than the 1954 Zoning Ordinance currently allows
- Chose topics for discussion in four public sessions

What we are doing throughout this discussion series is:

- Testing the boundaries of the community's comfort with the idea of higher density
- Giving you tools to make your own informed decision about what's right for the community.

SUMMARY OF SESSION #1, June 11, 2012

- Summary of the opening presentation:
 - Defined density (net and gross)
 - Explained Current Zoning Regulations
 - Provided information on pros and cons of high density development
 - Defined terms such as infill and redevelopment
 - Introduced Floor Area Ratio

SUMMARY OF SESSION #2, June 28, 2012

Compatibility

- Definitions and Synonyms
- Question: What are the elements of compatibility from your point of view? What needs to be considered?

Location

- What criteria should be used to consider location of high density?
- Question: Given the prioritized list of compatible elements just discussed, and thinking about the assumptions presented for likely, logical locations for high density, what general areas in Norman do you think are appropriate for higher density development?

SUMMARY OF SESSION #3, JULY 9, 2012

Height of Buildings

- Regulations of height
- Question 1
 - What makes the height of a building, higher than two stories, attractive or unattractive to you?
- Question 2
 - Do taller buildings add interest to a community?

SUMMARY OF SESSION #3, JULY 9, 2012

Mixed Use Buildings

- Description of Mixed Use Buildings
- Question 1
 - What makes Norman distinctive?
- Question 2
 - How can mixed-use development support that distinctiveness?

SUMMARY OF SESSION #4, JULY 26, 2012

- Infrastructure - The basic facilities, services, and installations needed for the functioning of a community, such as:
 - Transportation system
 - Communications systems
 - Water and sewer systems
 - power lines
 - public institutions

SUMMARY OF SESSION #4, JULY 26, 2012

- Utilities
 - Water
 - Wastewater
 - Solid Waste

SUMMARY OF SESSION #4, JULY 26, 2012

- Traffic and Parking
 - Classification of Roadways
 - Freeways, Arterials, Collectors, Locals
 - Access Management
 - Full Access Control
 - Limited Access
 - Uncontrolled Access
 - Capacity
 - Level of Service
 - Traffic Impact Analysis



Why Does Good Design Matter?

- Well-designed projects—at a variety of scales—can become assets for entire communities.
- Good design contributes to the sense of place that makes a district or community distinctive.
- Good design attracts merchants, tenants residents, shoppers and other investors.
- Well-designed projects generate and hold economic value for investors.
- These projects generate sales and property tax.

Concepts from Previous Discussions

- Compatibility
- Location
- Building Height
- Mixed Uses
- Parking and Circulation

What Does “Compatible” Mean?

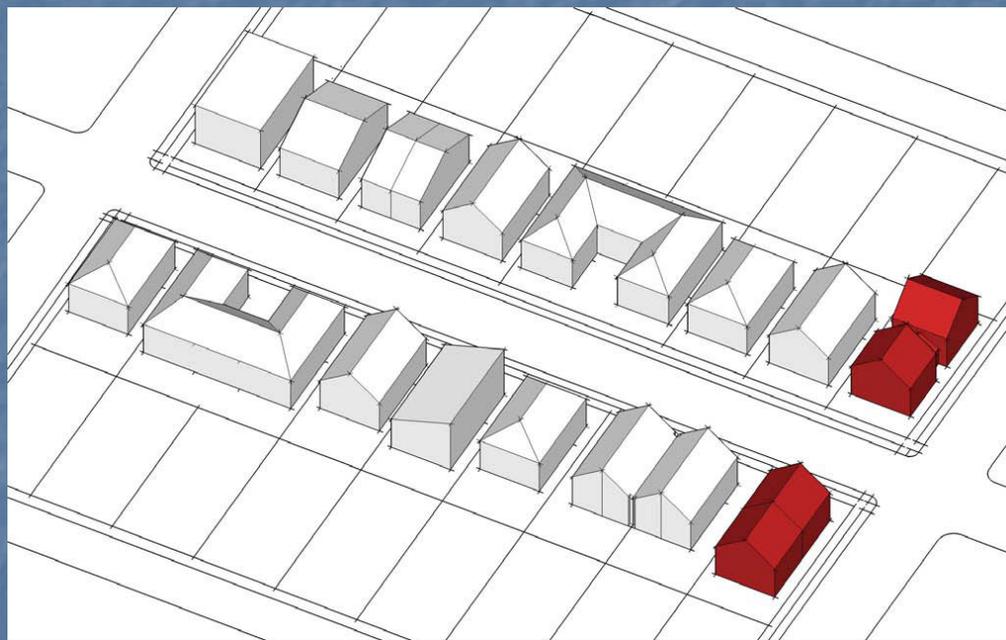
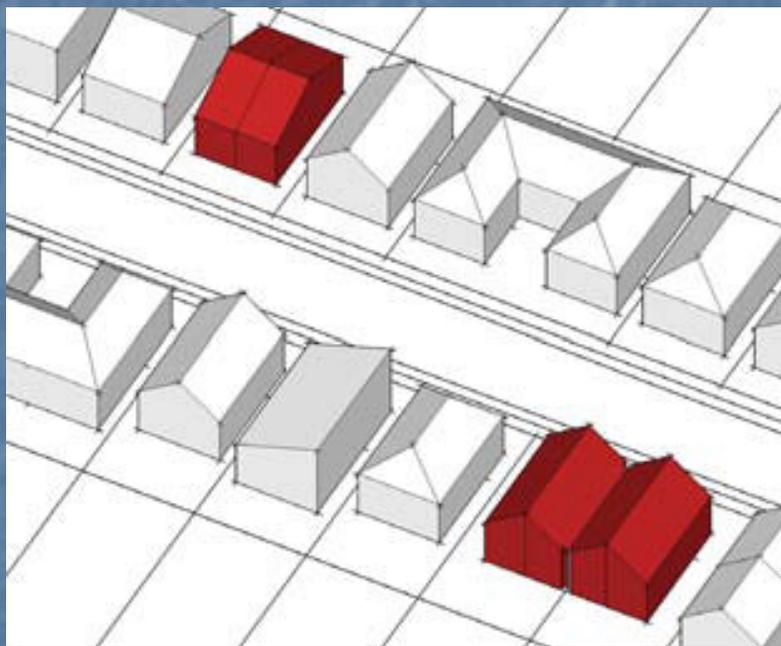
- In planning terms...
Capable of existing or in harmonious, agreeable, or congenial combination with other land uses.
- In building terms...
That the density, form, bulk, height, setbacks, and/or materials of buildings are able to co-exist with their surroundings.

Compatibility: What Ideas Matter Most to You?

Top Five (or Six) Responses to June 28 Dot Survey

1. Preserve Core Area neighborhoods (39)
2. Not intrusive on surrounding neighborhoods (36)
3. Allow height and density based on location (25)
4. Improve walkability (17)
5. Appropriate size and scale (9)
5. Infill existing commercial districts (9)

Add Density that Preserves Character



Density can be added in many forms

Examples of Compatible Infill Development



What About Location?

What criteria should be considered for locating higher density housing compatibly in an urban context?

1. Located on arterial street
2. Presence of underutilized land, e.g.
 - Surface parking lots
 - Deteriorated buildings or obsolete building types
 - Economically underperforming (often linked to above)
3. Can be designed to be compatible with neighborhood context
4. Close to community amenities/destinations or in areas where amenities can be developed
5. Accessible by various modes of travel

What Are the Benchmarks of Good Design in Higher Density Projects?

- Respond and contribute to neighborhood context
- Have a relationship to surrounding buildings
- Respond to sites and settings in terms of height, mass, scale, orientation, proportion, design elements and relationship to the street
- Have appropriate density for their sites and settings which is in keeping with community character
- Optimize safety and security for internal and public spaces
- Designed to make efficient use of natural resources, energy and water throughout the full life cycle of the development

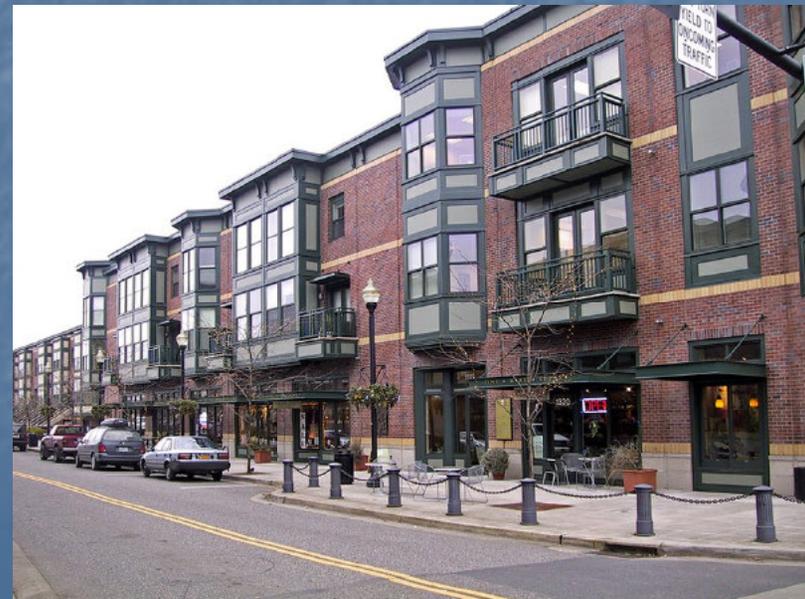
Start With Good Architecture

- Authentic and high quality design details are expected to be part of every project.
- Variation and consistency is encouraged between buildings to avoid repetition and to create an interesting streetscape environment.
- Taller buildings should have a clear hierarchy of base, middle and top elements.
- Typically, residential buildings will have a secondary expression at the higher level with a clear expression of the base and the entry.



- High quality architectural details
- Clear statements of base, middle and top parts of buildings
- Secondary expression of residential above through material changes, color and windows
- Variety and consistency of design
- Scale works in context

© IRES



High Quality Architecture: Interpreting Cherokee Gothic



1920s



This 2009 interpretation of Cherokee Gothic uses repetition of material, window rhythm and massing to reference original style without copying it

High Quality Architecture



Clear statements of base, middle and top parts of buildings

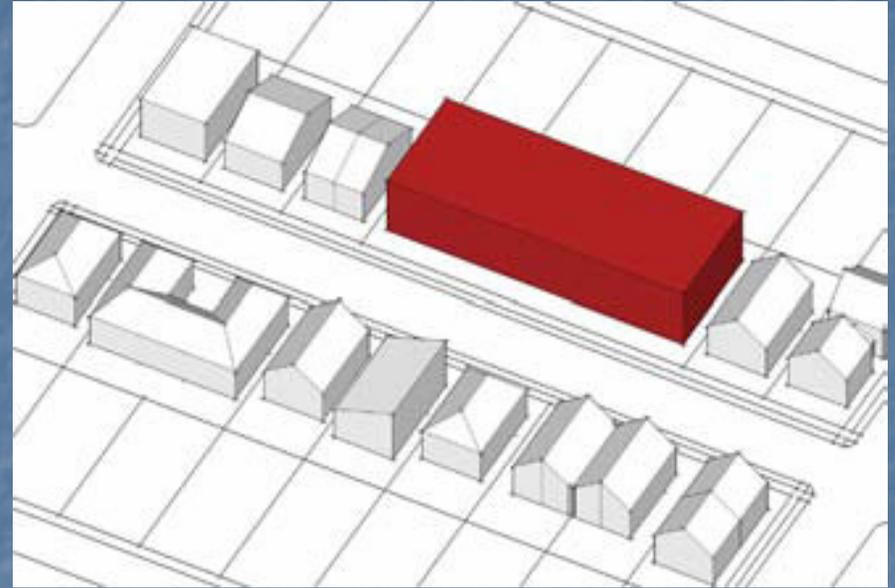
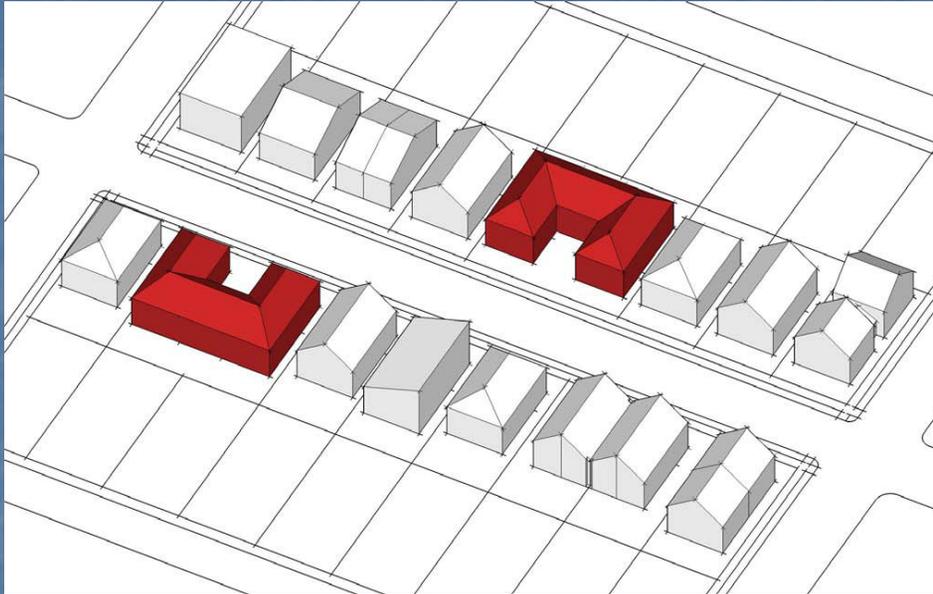
Secondary expression of residential above through material changes, color and windows

Variety of design

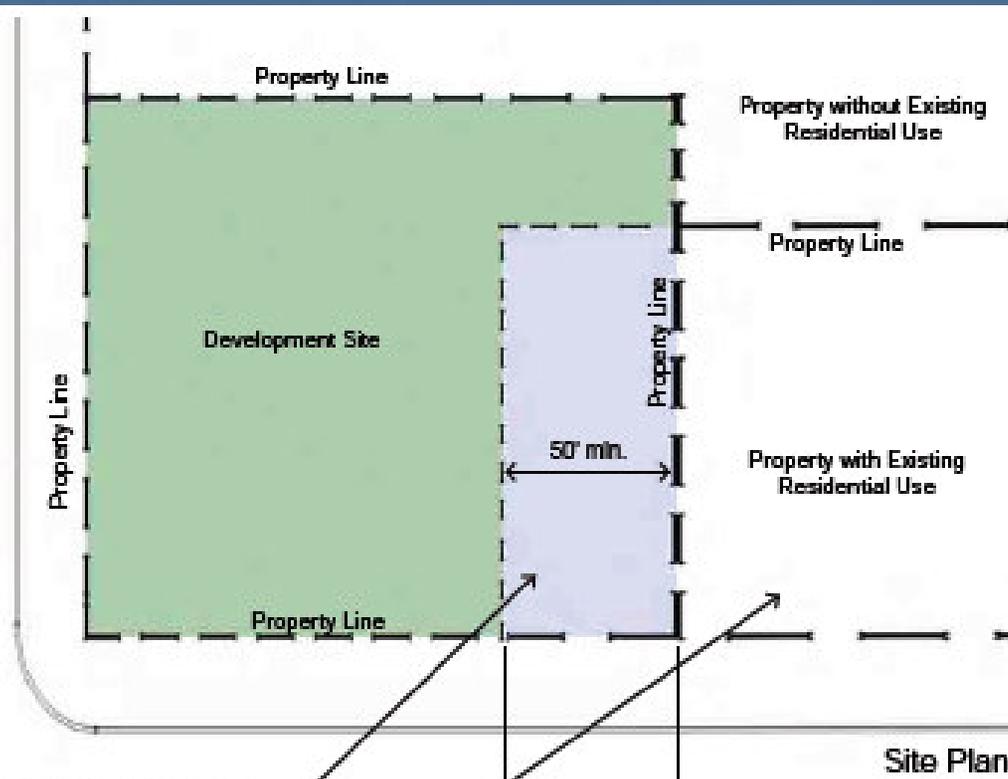
Notes on Building Height, Mass and Scale

1. Height refers to how tall a structure is. Height can be described in feet or in stories. One story is generally around 12 feet high (from floor to ?)
2. Mass describes the size and shape of a building in relationship to it's site and context.
3. Scale refers to the size and proportion of a building in relationship to surrounding structures and to the human form.

Comparisons of Mass/Bulk

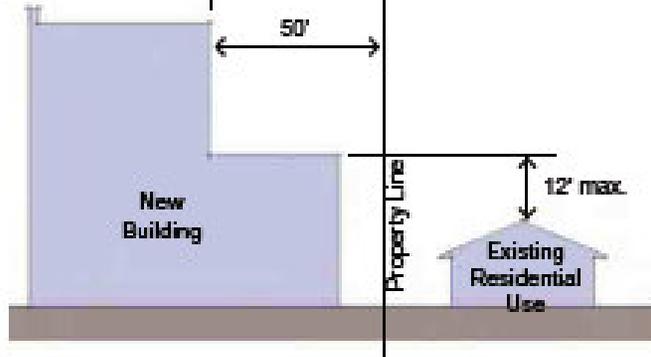


New buildings can add density while preserving scale and rhythm of existing neighborhood.



Buildings or portions of a building within this zone of the development site...

...shall be no higher than 12' above the closest existing residential structure on this property



“Responds to site and setting in terms of height, mass and scale....”

Keep Street Wall Four Stories or Less



Density added with three stories stepped back from street wall

Street wall well-framed by four stories; plenty of windows and balconies on the street

Articulate a Building's Façade with Variety



Top

Middle

Base

Break Up Bulky Facades With High Quality Design



- Both variation and consistency in this facade
- Step Backs
- Windows
 - Size
 - Shape
 - Form
 - Rhythm
- Pilasters/Columns
- Material Changes
- Color Changes

Clearly Identify Building's Entrance



Primary building entrance on a corner makes the structure legible—and establishes a hierarchy

Fort Collins, CO

Avoid Blank Walls on the Street



Windows are the "eyes" of a building façade.

Blank walls are a missed opportunity to enliven the street and allow people to see life inside the building

Create a High Quality Street Edge

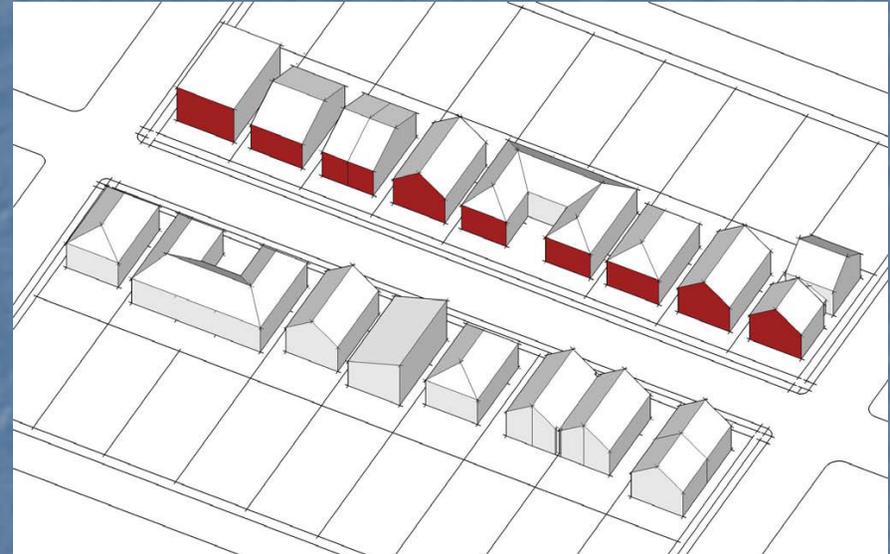
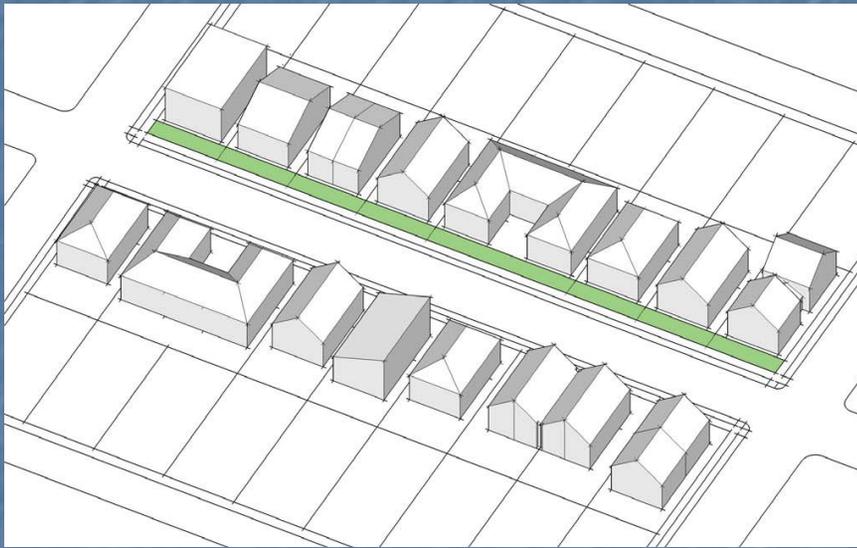
- Because of their size, form and width, higher density residential buildings play a significant part in defining the comfort and usable qualities of the streets they edge.
- A building's street frontage creates a transition between public and private space. The careful design of this street edge zone contributes to the liveliness, interest, comfort and safety of the street for all who use it.

Preserve/Create a Strong Street Edge and Rhythm



- High percentage of glazing (windows)
- Windows are positioned at regular intervals at consistent heights
- Awnings are consistent
- Building widths are predictable and not too wide
- Buildings create a street wall-but not too tall
- Offset placement varies rhythm for variety and visual interest

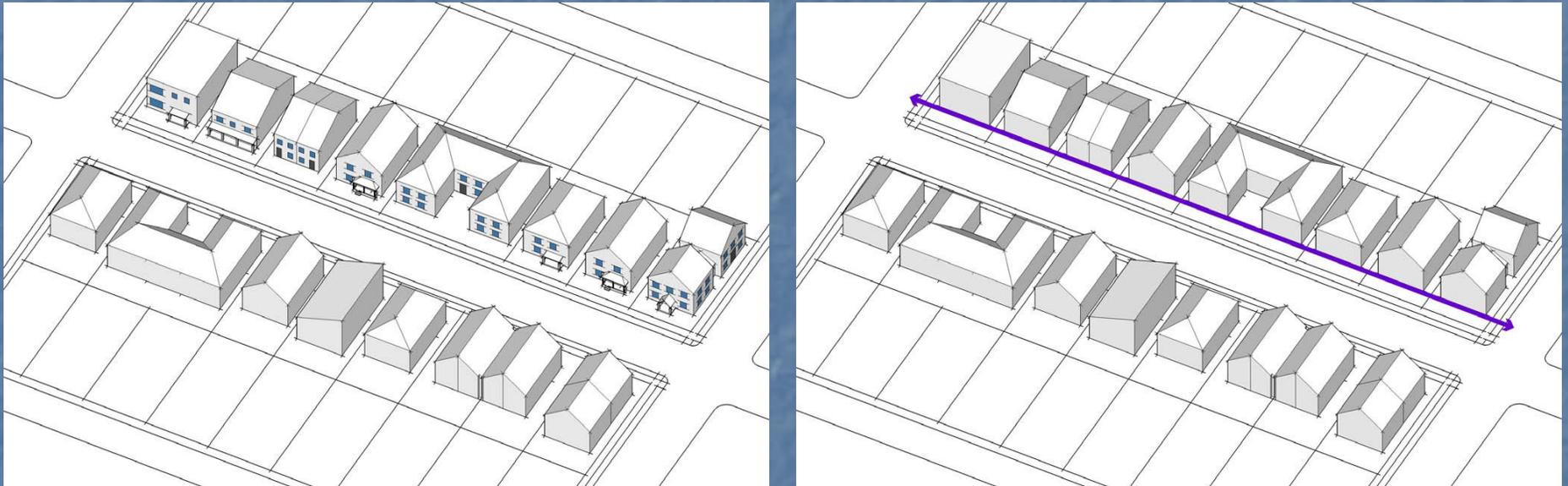
Preserve Street Rhythm



(L) A consistent edge provides streets with a clearly identifiable character

(R) A recurring rhythm of building size and placement

Consistent Orientation and Setbacks Preserve Street Rhythm



- Windows, entrances, and porches all oriented toward the street.
- Continuous, visually-rich street edge contributes to pedestrian-friendly street environment and safety by promoting “eyes-on-the-street.”
- Street rhythm reinforced consistent building setback

Strong Street **Edges** Frame Public Space



What is Mixed Use Development?

- Mixed Use is a land use term referring to the combining of more than one type of activity on a single parcel.
- Uses can be mixed vertically as in ground floor retail and housing above (urban)
- Uses can also be mixed horizontally which is more common in a suburban setting

Mixed Use Districts....What's In it For Us?



- Can create attractive, lively public spaces
- Can promote design of visually interesting buildings
- Provides variety of small-to-medium retail spaces
- Variety of uses extend business hours
- Can extend traditional district "feel" and function
- Provides mix of reasons to visit
- Can provide a smooth transition to lower density uses beyond

Mixed Use Design...What Works?



Architectural consistency and variety is legible

Interesting signage creates art and great visual texture

Design creates pedestrian space for walkability as well as gathering

Mixed Use Design: What Works?



Windows on the street create visual interest—seeing into building and seeing out to street

Buildings have relationships to each other and the street

Narrow street width promotes walkability

Private Open Space Adds Interest and Vitality to the Street



Parking and Circulation

The need to park cars is a fact of urban life but...

- Make parking design work *for* the community character instead of *becoming* the community character
- Don't give away your best visual density to parking! Reserve those areas for high visual pay-off uses such as retail and restaurants and public gathering spaces
- Create mixed use structures that wrap parking with other uses which provides more visual and economic "bang for the buck"
- Adding density makes modes of circulation other than cars much more attractive

Examples of Parking Structures Integrated into Urban Environments

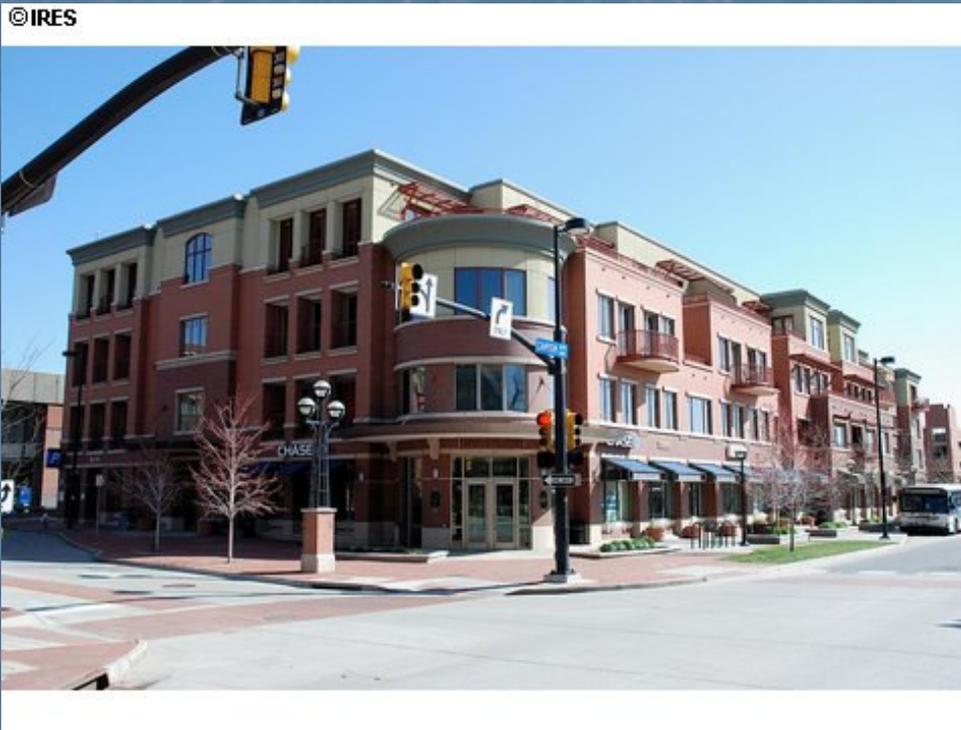


Lawrence, KS



Staunton, VA

Examples of Parking Structures Integrated into Urban Environments



Boulder, CO



Require Public Open Space



- This public space is created in space intentionally framed by two tall buildings
- Space can be jointly maintained by merchants or building owners
- Creates value for frontage shops and vendors
- Note projecting signs as both art and information
- Allows people to mingle and interact in public space

Why is Public Space Important?

- Access to adequate and safe public open spaces is essential for the well-being of the whole community.
- It not only increases the attractiveness of a place but is key to placemaking, which in turn helps attract prospective tenants, customers and investors.
- In areas of higher density residential development, residents and visitors will rely in part on public open space for relaxation, recreation and meeting places.

Sidewalks Are Public Space



Four Key Qualities of Successful Public Space

1. It is accessible.
2. People are engaged in activities there.
3. The space is comfortable and has a good image.
4. It is a sociable place—one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit.

Public Space Can Be Small or Large



Public Space is a Scene of Activity and Social Connectivity



Provides Community Gathering Space



Creates Places for Activity



What is the Community Character of Campus Corner?

- Four-block district, 13 acres +/-
- Intimate scale—1-2 story brick and stucco buildings
- Traditional storefront massing with windows on the street
- Spanish Mission Revival/Mediterranean and 20th Century Commercial architecture
- Narrow street widths—26-32 feet
- Walkable—sidewalks 6-12 foot widths
- Parcels based on 25-foot lot widths
- On-street + surface parking



Spanish Mission/Mediterranean Style buildings

20th Century Commercial Style

Storefronts based on 25' parcels



What is the Community Character of Downtown Norman?

- 16 blocks
- Dominant form is 2-story brick (1895-1910s) and 1-story (1910-1950s) brick structures, 6-story 1970s building
- Predominant architectural style is 20th Century Commercial (1895-1960)
- Building size based on 25-foot wide parcels
- Wide streets (40-60 feet)
- On-street parking and surface parking lots
- Walkable

Downtown: 20th Century Commercial Style

Storefronts based on 25' wide parcels





Downtown: 20th Century
Commercial Style

What is Community Character of University North Park?

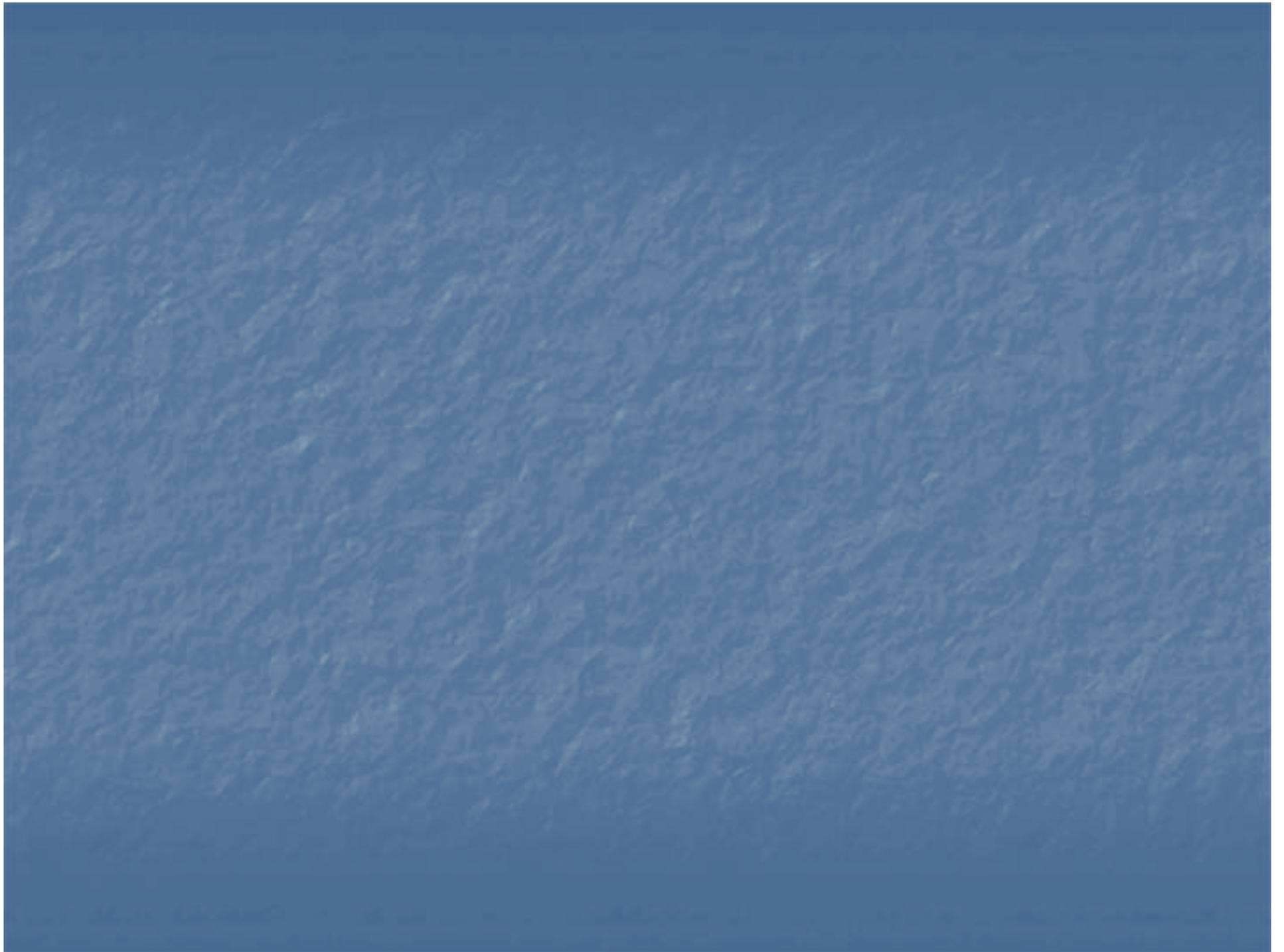
- Predominantly red brick, EIFS, and cast concrete building materials
- Storefronts 450' from edge of arterial road
- 36' travel lane separates parking lots and storefronts
- Storefronts widths 75'-250'
- 30' wide sidewalks along storefronts
- Store square footage between 2,000-175,000
- Four-sided architecture
- Bounded on all sides by arterials roads including interstate

University North Park



University North Park





Final Thoughts

- An attractive built environment does not happen by accident.
- Good development must accommodate market realities as well as public needs and desires.
- The actions of citizens and consumers influence what is built, when it is built, and where it is built.

QUESTIONS

1. What places in Norman do you like and why?
2. What makes you feel comfortable when you are in, what you consider, a special place?

FUTURE MEETING DATES

August 30th meeting will be held at the Norman
High School Conference Center

Thursday, August 30, 2012

“Wrap-Up Session”

<http://www.ci.norman.ok.us/cm/high-density-development-community-discussion>