

5. Place Types

Introduction

In the County’s Development Areas, the Neighborhood is the fundamental unit of community planning. A Neighborhood is a place where people can live, work, shop, and play. Its buildings, streets, and public and private areas relate well to one another by plan, not by happenstance. The Neighborhood is sized so that an average person can walk from its center to its fringe in five minutes. Development is expected to follow the 12 principles of the Neighborhood Model.

The Places29 Master Plan applies the Neighborhood Model to the four Northern Development Areas. In this area, US 29 has a profound impact on development patterns, building scale, transportation, and community character, creating a specific set of challenges and opportunities for implementation of the Neighborhood Model.

This chapter describes how the term “Neighborhood” is applied in the Places29 area through the use of a variety of place types. Several kinds of Centers are recommended and the areas around these Centers form Neighborhoods. Employing these place types will help to ensure that the area’s growth is accommodated as envisioned by the County’s Comprehensive Plan, this Master Plan, and the citizens of Albemarle County. Existing suburban neighborhoods like Forest Lakes, Raintree, Dunlora, and Woodbrook, will retain their current land use pattern and not include new mixed-use Centers.

This chapter begins with an overview of the structure of neighborhoods and continues with a description of Centers and the areas around Centers. Additional information about the land use designations, including Center designations, is found in Chapter 4. Design guidelines for Centers and Neighborhoods are presented in Chapter 7, and in an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan, General Design Guidelines for Development Areas.

The Structure of Neighborhoods

The basic structure of a Neighborhood is simple: the Neighborhood is a combination of two Place Types, a Center and a walkable area around the Center. The concept behind this structure is that, if homes or workplaces in the area around the Center are located within a 5- to 10-minute walk of the Center, then more people will be able to walk or bicycle to the Center. This closer association with the Center helps to create an identifiable character for the Neighborhood. The Center and Neighborhood types are described below and shown in Figure 5.1.

A key requirement for a workable Neighborhood is that both the Center and the area around it need to be walkable and to accommodate pedestrian needs. Walkable means three things: 1) the presence of sidewalks or multi-use paths that allow safe pedestrian travel to the Center, 2) a high level of connectivity, and 3) a relationship between adjacent uses and the sidewalk or path that creates a comfortable and interesting pedestrian environment. Connectivity is high when there are multiple routes between a Center and the surrounding areas, and when these routes are convenient rather than circuitous. Street networks—and their sidewalks—need to be interconnected and provide the shortest feasible walking routes.

A well-designed Neighborhood should be pedestrian-friendly, but also accommodate bicyclists, transit riders, cars, and appropriate delivery and larger vehicles. Open space and buildings at a

human scale are an integral part of overall Neighborhood design. Density and land use generally, but not always, vary from the Center to the edge of a Neighborhood's walkable area.

The overall character of the Neighborhood is largely determined by the dominant land use (i.e., residential, employment, or mixed use). Because a Neighborhood tends to include different residential types at varying densities, it should provide housing and employment choices that address the needs of a broad range of the County's population.

This Master Plan identifies three types of Neighborhoods and one type of District:

- **Residential Neighborhood**
- **Employment Neighborhood**
- **Mixed Use Neighborhood**
- **Airport District**

Residential Neighborhood

Residential Neighborhoods are residential areas organized around and well-connected to a public open space or a Center. The residences have convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Center (see Figures 5.2 through 5.4). They are generally located within a 1/4- to 1/2-mile walking distance from the Center. The residences may be single-family detached homes, townhomes, condominiums, or apartments in any of a broad variety of densities and configurations. A mix of residential types is ideal. Other uses, such as schools, places of worship, and civic uses may also be located within a Residential Neighborhood. Some mixed-use development is also allowed, such as live/work units.



Figure 5.2. Concept Diagram of a Residential Neighborhood Shown with a Neighborhood Service Center



Figure 5.3. Example of a Residential Neighborhood Shown with an urban open space



Figure 5.4. Example of a Residential Neighborhood Shown with onstreet parking & shallow front setbacks

Employment Neighborhood

The Employment Neighborhood reflects the importance of the Places29 area as a major employment hub for the County and the larger region. In an Employment Neighborhood, employment uses are organized around a Neighborhood Service Center (see Figures 5.5 and 5.6), which provides service and retail opportunities to workers employed by businesses located in the Center and in the area around it. A public open space in the Center provides opportunities for active and passive recreation for employees. Employment Neighborhoods may also be located around one of the larger Centers.

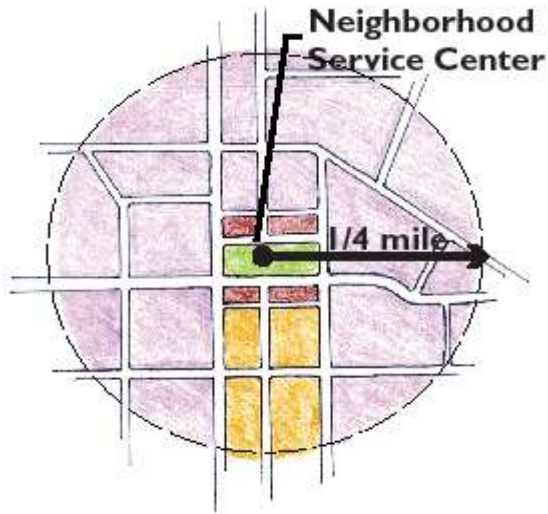


Figure 5.5. Concept Diagram of an Employment Neighborhood Shown with a Neighborhood Service Center



Figure 5.6. Example of a building in an Employment Neighborhood with groundfloor retail and offices on upper floors

Organizing employment uses into walkable areas around Centers gives employees the opportunity to be less car-dependent. Employees have the opportunity to walk to restaurants during their lunch break or after work, and they can shop for goods and services in the Center without having to make a separate trip. This pattern also encourages carpooling, riding a bicycle, or taking transit to work.

Clusters of businesses that support or serve one another are encouraged to locate in the same Employment Neighborhood. Other uses, such as recreational, retail, and public facilities may also be located in these Neighborhoods to provide services to employees. Residential uses may also be located in the Center of an Employment Neighborhood to provide additional activity during nonworking hours and to create transitions to adjacent Residential Neighborhoods.

Mixed Use Neighborhood

The distinguishing feature of a Mixed Use Neighborhood is that the area around the Center includes the full range of residential and nonresidential uses (see Figures 5.7 and 5.8). In Mixed Use Neighborhoods, residential uses are found primarily on the upper floors of mixed use buildings (with offices or retail on the ground floor), but residential uses may also be located in blocks of apartments, rowhouses, and single family homes on small lots. Mixed Use Neighborhoods are also well-suited for live-work units located on the first floor of buildings. The close integration of residential uses with offices, retail, commercial, employment, civic uses, and parks creates vibrant places that are active throughout the day and into the evening hours. Mixed Use Neighborhoods provide a unique setting for homes and businesses that satisfies a market niche for those who value an active, dynamic urban experience. Because the entire Neighborhood is mixed use, the Center is more fully integrated into the Neighborhood than other Centers in Residential or Employment Neighborhoods.



Figure 5.7. Concept Diagram of a Mixed Use Neighborhood Shown with a central public open space



Figure 5.8. Example of buildings in a Mixed Use Neighborhood with ground floor retail and residential on upper floors

Airport District

As defined in the Neighborhood Model, Districts are single-use areas. Only one District is designated in the Places29 area: the Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport. The Airport, which will develop according to the Airport Master Plan, plays a vital role in the future development of the Uptown and the County. The airport also serves as a catalyst for surrounding industrial uses that provide services to the airport and benefit from proximity to the airport.

Buffering and accessibility are particularly important considerations for incorporating the Airport District into the Places29 area. Due to aircraft operations, it is necessary to create a physical buffer between parts of the airport and surrounding residential uses. At the same time, it is important for the airport to be fully integrated into the transportation systems in the Places29 area, the City of Charlottesville, and the larger region so the needs of air travelers and freight shippers are met.

Center Types

A **Center** is the focal point of the Neighborhood and usually includes a mix of residential and nonresidential uses. These uses may be mixed either vertically or horizontally:

1. **Vertically Mixed**—where uses are mixed in the same building. For example, the first floor may be retail or office, while the upper floor(s) are residential or office.
2. **Horizontally Mixed**—where uses are mixed in adjacent buildings. For example, a restaurant may be located in a building next door to an office building, or next door to a building with retail on the first floor and offices on the upper floors.

Centers usually have a higher density than the surrounding area, include a concentration of amenities, and serve the entire Neighborhood. Community and Destination Centers also serve a larger “market area” beyond their immediate neighborhood. The appearance and character of the Center is designed to have a positive effect on the rest of the Neighborhood. Some of the larger Centers may be high-intensity areas, with a mixture of retail, services, public facilities (including parks), and employment. This mix of uses and the activities generated by them attract residents from the surrounding area and visitors from beyond the neighborhood. Most importantly, a Center functions as a public space and a destination within the Neighborhood and the larger community. Centers are dynamic, active places that help establish a community identity within the Places29 area. They also encourage transportation choice: walking, bicycling, riding transit, and parking once within the Center while completing multiple errands. The Future Land Use Map in Chapter 4 shows the distribution of Neighborhood Service, Community, and Destination Centers in the Places29 area. This Master Plan defines four types of Centers, ranging from the smallest to the largest:

- **Neighborhood Service Center** (shown with an “NS” on the Future Land Use Map)
- **Community Center** (shown with a “C” on the Future Land Use Map)
- **Destination Center** (shown with a “D” on the Future Land Use Map)
- **The Uptown** (shown with an “Up” on the Future Land Use Map)

Neighborhood Service Center

Neighborhood Service Centers, the smallest mixed-use Centers, provide local-serving retail/service uses, such as a drycleaner, florist, convenience store, or coffee shop in a horizontal or vertical mixed use configuration to support the residences, businesses, and other uses around them. Neighborhood Service Centers typically range in size between 1 and 10 acres (see Figure 5.9). Larger Neighborhood Service Centers may consist of multiple buildings or entire street frontages that stretch for one or two blocks. The upper floors of mixed-use buildings can accommodate residential or office uses. The mix of uses in the Neighborhood Service Center will be selected to serve the surrounding area. If the surrounding area is primarily residential, then the Center should include supporting uses such as a drycleaner, mini-mart, newsstand, coffee shop, and similar uses. If, on the other hand, employment uses are the major component of the area surrounding the Center, then the uses in the Center will include those that employers and employees would patronize.

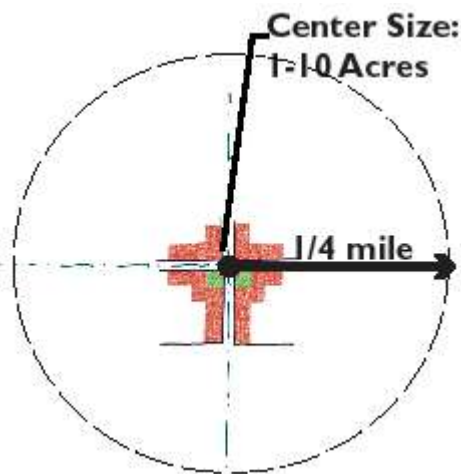


Figure 5.9. Concept diagram of a Neighborhood Service Center

Each Neighborhood Service Center should include a publicly accessible urban open space. In larger Neighborhood Service Centers this may be a park, while smaller Centers may include a plaza (Figure 5.10) or a pocket park (Figure 5.11). Neighborhood Service Centers may also serve as the core of an Employment Neighborhood (Figure 5.12).



Figure 5.10. An Example of a Neighborhood Service Center with a Plaza



Figure 5.11. An Example of a Neighborhood Service Center with a Pocket Park



Figure 5.12. A Photosimulation of a Neighborhood Service Center serving an Employment Neighborhood.

(Photosimulation by Urban Advantage commissioned by Joint Venture Silicon Valley Network)

Neighborhood Service Centers in the Places29 Area

There are 20 Neighborhood Service Centers designated on the Future Land Use Map (see Chapter 4). Based on their current level of development, some of these areas may develop or redevelop into Centers sooner than others. Some may even redevelop on a parcel-by-parcel basis over a period of years. Centers fall into one of four groups:

1. Centers that are greenfield sites (no development) or are underdeveloped:
 - a. On Rio Road East across the Meadow Creek Parkway from CATEC
 - b. In the northeast quadrant of US 29 and Polo Grounds Road
 - c. Across US 29 from Hollymead Drive North
 - d. On the east side of Dickerson Road on both sides of August Lane
 - e. In Piney Mountain on the east side of US 29 on Boulders Road

2. Developed Centers that are likely candidates for redevelopment:
 - a. East side of Hydraulic Road adjacent to Webland Drive
 - b. Southeast corner of US 29 and Greenbrier Drive

3. Centers that will be developed according to a plan approved by the County or that will be included in a Small Area Plan:
 - a. Rio Road West adjacent to the Oakleigh development
 - b. On the north side of Berkmar Drive between US 29 and Rio Road West (Small Area Plan)
 - c. On Belvedere Blvd, part of the Belvedere development
 - d. Southwest quadrant of the intersection of US 29 and Airport Road, will be part of the Airport Road Corridor Small Area Plan
 - e. Northwest quadrant of the intersection of US 29 and Airport Road, will be part of the Airport Road Corridor Small Area Plan

4. Centers that are currently developed and not expected to redevelop within the first 10 years of the Plan:
 - a. Northeast quadrant of Hydraulic Road and Commonwealth Drive
 - b. On the east side of Hydraulic Road on both sides of Whitewood Road
 - c. On Rio Road West on the south side of Four Seasons Drive
 - d. On the west side of US 29 on both sides of Westfield Road
 - e. On Rio Road East between Putt Putt Place and Rio East Court
 - f. On Rio Road East northwest of the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks
 - g. On the east side of US 29 south of Woodbrook Drive
 - h. On the east side of Dickerson Road on both sides of Quail Run

Community Center

Community Centers (Figures 5.13 and 5.14) provide retail and service uses for the surrounding area and the community beyond. They are typically anchored by a grocery store with additional retail, service, or commercial uses, as well as residences and office uses on upper floors of mixed-use buildings. Single-use residential or office buildings may also be part of the mix of uses. The residential and office uses give the Community Center the desired mixed-use character and provide an opportunity to broaden the range of residential unit types and jobs available in the Places29 area. Where there are no nearby Neighborhood Service Centers, Community Centers are encouraged to include neighborhood-serving uses as well as those with a larger market area. Generally, Community Centers range in size from 10 to 35 acres.

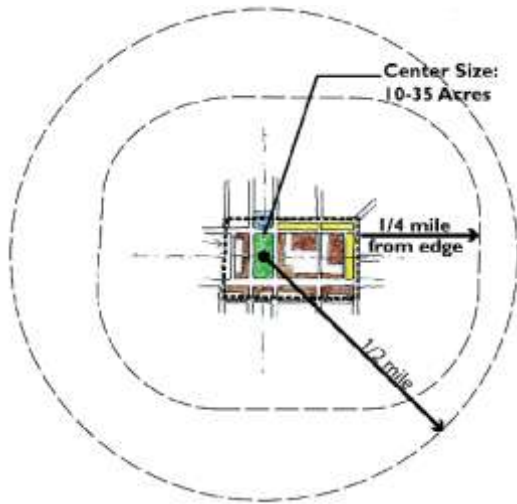


Figure 5.13. A Concept Diagram of a Community Center.



Figure 5.14. A Photosimulation of a Community Center, showing retail uses on the ground floors and office/residential above.

A Community Center includes multiple connections to the surrounding area. These Centers also need a strong relationship to major roads, but not necessarily US 29, in order to provide access and visibility for patrons and workers from beyond the immediate area.

Community Centers should include a public open space that is a minimum of ¼ acre in size. Additional open spaces may be recommended, based on individual Center design and mix of uses. These open spaces should be associated with public or institutional uses (i.e., a library, school, or community center) or facilities either adjacent to or integrated into the public open space.

Community Centers in the Places29 Area

There are seven Community Centers designated on the Future Land Use Map. All seven are either currently developed as commercial/retail areas or are part of an approved concept plan for a development in the Places29 area. Any of the currently developed Centers may redevelop as the market changes.

1. Centers that are currently developed:
 - a. Shopper's World
 - b. Albemarle Square
 - c. Rio Hill Shopping Center
 - d. Branchlands (Fairfield Inn, Food Lion, Applebees)
 - e. Area between Timberwood Blvd and Airport Road on the east side of US 29 (Food Lion)

2. Centers that are part of an approved plan of development:
 - a. Hollymead Town Center
 - b. North Pointe

Destination Center

Destination Centers (Figures 5.15 through 5.17) provide regional-scale destinations for retail, entertainment, service, and employment uses that draw patrons and workers from the entire Places29 area and beyond. At the same time, the residential and employment areas that surround Destination Centers can take advantage of them; nearby residents and workers add to the dynamic activity of the Center by increasing pedestrian activity on the streets. As in Neighborhood Service and Community Centers, Destination Centers should include residential or employment uses on upper floors and be designed with multiple connections to surrounding areas and nearby Centers. A Destination Center is the appropriate location for a hotel, a multiplex cinema, or other retail and entertainment use that requires a bigger building footprint. The multiple attractions of this Center type and its mix of residences, employment, retail, civic, and entertainment uses offer good opportunities for trip chaining—combining several errands to different businesses into a single trip—and make the Center an excellent transit target. Destination Centers also need visibility and access from major roads, although access from US 29 may be limited.

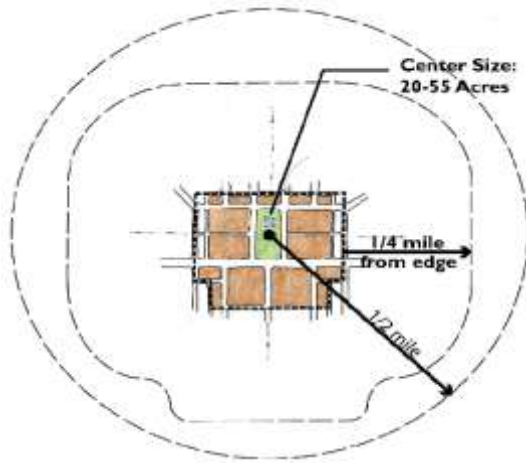


Figure 5.15. A Concept Diagram of a Destination Center



Figure 5.16. An Example of a Destination Center with Mixed Use Buildings of various scales—street view.



Figure 5.17. An Aerial View of a Destination Center with mixed use buildings of varying scales.

Destination Centers should include at least one public open space with a minimum size of 1/4 acre. Additional open spaces may be recommended, based on individual Center design and mix of uses. It is encouraged that these open spaces be associated with public or institutional uses (i.e., a library or community center) or facilities either adjacent to or integrated into the open space.

Destination Centers in the Places29 Area

There are five Destination Centers designated on the Future Land Use Map. All five are either currently developed as commercial/retail areas or are subject to an approved plan for development.

1. Destination Centers that are currently developed:
 - a. Fashion Square Mall

2. Destination Centers that are part of an approved plan:
 - a. Albemarle Place
 - b. A portion of the Hollymead Town Center (under development)
 - c. North Pointe (two Destination Centers planned)

Uptown

The Uptown is planned to be the most urban place in the Places29 area, with multiple focal points, an intense mix of uses, and an environment that caters to a broad range of interests and activities. It will offer a wide variety of uses and activities in one location, which may include

residential and employment, as well as entertainment and institutional uses. Due to its density, these uses will be located predominantly in mixed-use buildings (see Figure 5.18 and Figure 5.19). With a total of approximately 40 acres, it has characteristics of both a Center and a Neighborhood. In addition to at least one public open space (minimum size 1/4 acre), the Uptown should include plazas, pocket parks, and/or institutional uses associated with publicly accessible outdoor spaces. These focal points will also complement one another to create a unique place that attracts people from throughout the Places29 area and beyond.

Development of the full Uptown as envisioned will take many years. It will likely evolve over time, beginning as a smaller Center and intensifying as the market supports additional uses and larger buildings. Only one Uptown is recommended in the Northern Development Areas.

The Uptown will provide an urban experience that is similar to Downtown Charlottesville; an environment that is more compact, pedestrian-friendly, and features active public spaces. The Uptown will complement the economic and employment opportunities generated by the nearby Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport and the University of Virginia Research Park. Care has been taken in locating the Uptown and in defining its allowed uses and physical characteristics, so that it can thrive and become the urban heart of the Northern Development Areas.

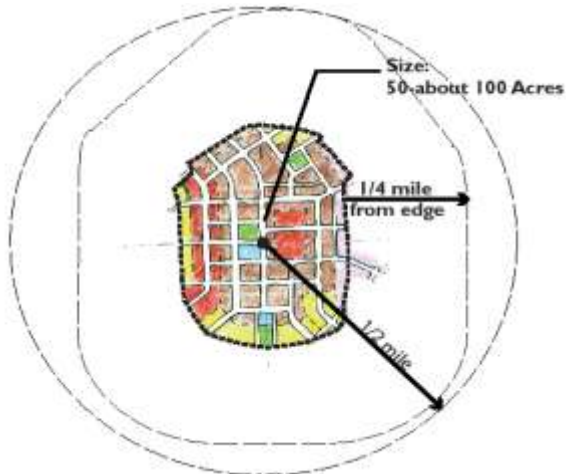


Figure 5.18. A Concept Diagram of the Uptown showing a mix of uses, as well as a central public open space and additional open spaces.



Figure 5.19. An example of the type of development envisioned for the Uptown. This view is of a pedestrian-only street with mixed-use buildings on both sides and landscaping in the center.

The Areas Around Centers

People live, work, or do both in the walkable area surrounding a Center. The distance from the smaller Neighborhood Service Centers to the outer edge of the walkable area around them is about 1/4 mile, which an adult can walk in about 5 minutes. The distance from the major Centers (Community and Destination) to the outer edge of their walkable area is closer to 1/2 mile, which an adult can walk in about 10 minutes. These larger Centers may encourage people to walk longer distances because they have a more diverse mix of uses that constitute a bigger “draw” and because these Centers provide a pleasant walking environment. An appendix to the Comprehensive Plan, General Design Guidelines for Development Areas gives further direction for the relationship of Neighborhoods to their Centers and flexibility in terms of walking distance to allow for topography, physical barriers, parcel size, and other potential constraints.

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