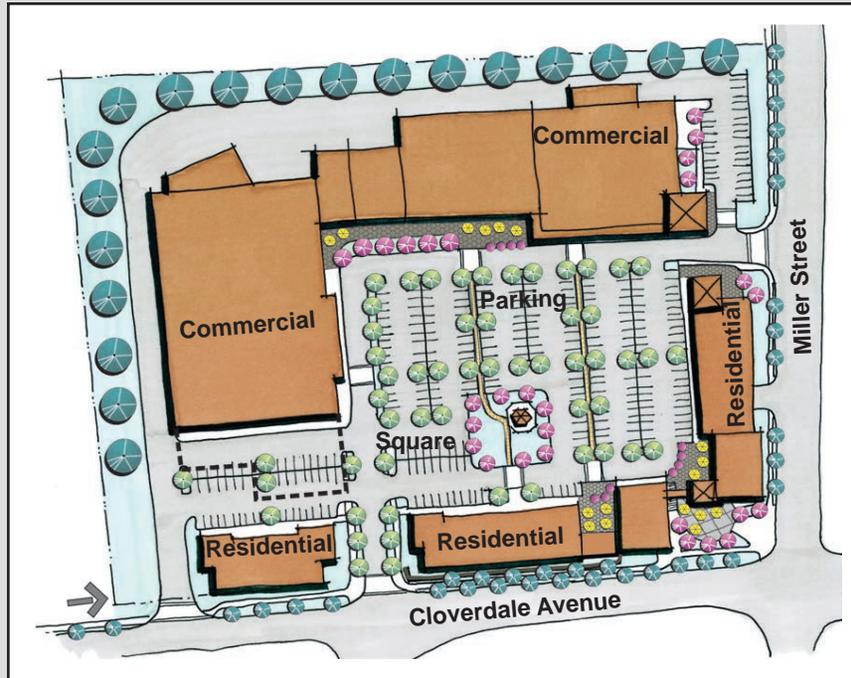


COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT DESIGN TECHNIQUES



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT DESIGN TECHNIQUES

Demographic changes are having an impact on the retail environment nationally and locally. As our population ages, there will be more households without children and more baby boomers with significant buying power. However, the most noteworthy change will be the growing impact of millennials. More young adults are seeking out the convenience and opportunity of urban areas to live in close proximity to jobs. They are attracted by aspects of city life including walkability, diversity, increased options for nightlife, restaurants, and other amenities. Consequently, demand will continue to grow for authentic, walkable urban environments to meet the living, working, and shopping desires of many young adults and retirees.

Legacy 2030 encourages the creation of complete neighborhoods that have a mix of different housing types and land uses. Complete communities are walkable and bikeable places that include homes, shops, and schools in close proximity to each other and provide sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes for pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Unfortunately, some older urban commercial areas which are vital to the health of surrounding residential neighborhoods may be unsightly or have problems due to age and decline. Suburban commercial areas, on the other hand, often lack connectivity, walkability, and variety of land uses. Retrofitting, redeveloping, and developing new infill projects in urban and suburban areas is needed to create the pedestrian-friendly commercial areas people seek.

The design techniques presented in this document can assist developers in improving the relationship commercial areas have with nearby residential areas and help them better relate to the street they are located on. Basic design principles are presented here that can promote more livable communities, create better relationships between commercial areas and their surroundings, and ensure walkability, connectivity, and accessibility. To show development/redevelopment possibilities, this document applies design techniques to real examples in the community of different commercial development types: neighborhood scale retail; stand-alone commercial buildings; strip development; and shopping centers in urban and suburban settings. These examples are simply provided as illustrative concepts and are not intended to limit possible redevelopment options for these sites.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT DESIGN PRINCIPLES

There are general principles that can be applied to all commercial areas in order to make them more pedestrian-friendly. The following are seven of the most important design principles that can ensure a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment in commercial areas.



Orient buildings to the street: In walkable urban environments, buildings are placed at the edges of sidewalks and public spaces, rather than being set back behind parking lots and expanses of landscaping. How a building looks, its placement on the site, and its relationship to adjacent structures and the immediate surroundings are some of the most significant influences on the character of the pedestrian environment. Buildings built close to the street contribute to a positive streetscape character.



Create inviting corners for pedestrians: Great streets start with well-designed corners. Many celebrated pedestrian environments have streets and buildings that create “outdoor rooms”. These spaces have definite streetwalls, created by buildings with contributing elements or streetscapes. Most successful streets that promote pedestrian activity have buildings built to the sidewalk designed with inviting features for users, particularly at their corners. Well executed outdoor spaces can become the central focus of an area for pedestrian activity.

Add community spaces and special features:

Community and public spaces offer opportunities for people to gather. Community and public spaces that include features such as patio/seating areas, pedestrian plazas with benches, window shopping walkways, kiosk areas, or other focal features are important pedestrian components that should be included in the design of a project.



Place parking behind or beside buildings: A successful development achieves a balance between the functionality of the vehicular circulation system and the comfort and safety of the pedestrian environment, including minimizing conflict points. Surface parking lots lining the streets, continuous curb cuts, and wide driveways types are detrimental to the vitality of pedestrian life. Some design techniques to deal with this issue include: providing cross-access easements between adjacent sites in order to facilitate the flow of traffic; having shared driveways to minimize curb cuts; and looking for opportunities to share parking between different uses.

Provide pedestrian connections: Pedestrian circulation needs to be considered within the overall design of a project. Pedestrian walkways provide connections between buildings, land use areas, and adjacent developments. Sidewalks should be thought of as public spaces that have a transportation function, rather than simply a way to get from one building to another. A continuous pedestrian walkway is needed to connect the public sidewalk to the principal customer entrances of a building.

A buffer should be provided to separate pedestrians from motor vehicle traffic. Sidewalks, landscaped planting strips, bicycle lanes, and when possible, on-street parking, add a comfortable separation between the street and pedestrians.



Address the human scale with building and landscape details: People experience the built environment at the scale of their own bodies in space. Buildings should meet and engage people at the human scale, with awnings, façade elements, lighting, signage, and other features along sidewalks.

Incorporate mixed uses: Whether it's in a city core, at the urban fringe, or in a more suburban location, residents are embracing urban living and mixed-use properties. Both younger and older generations want to live in interactive and walkable communities, close to neighborhood amenities, restaurants, entertainment, shopping, and cultural events. Estimates show 33% of the population wanting to live in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods because they offer a sense of community to their residents.

Incremental redevelopment of suburban-style strip centers located in urban and suburban areas can have a significant impact over time. Creating horizontally oriented mixed uses next to each other is one alternative for these centers. The other is creating vertical mixed uses stacked on top of each other in areas with limited space. Including outdoor spaces, plazas, or open space in redeveloped areas provides opportunities for residents to gather together and a way to draw customers to these developments.



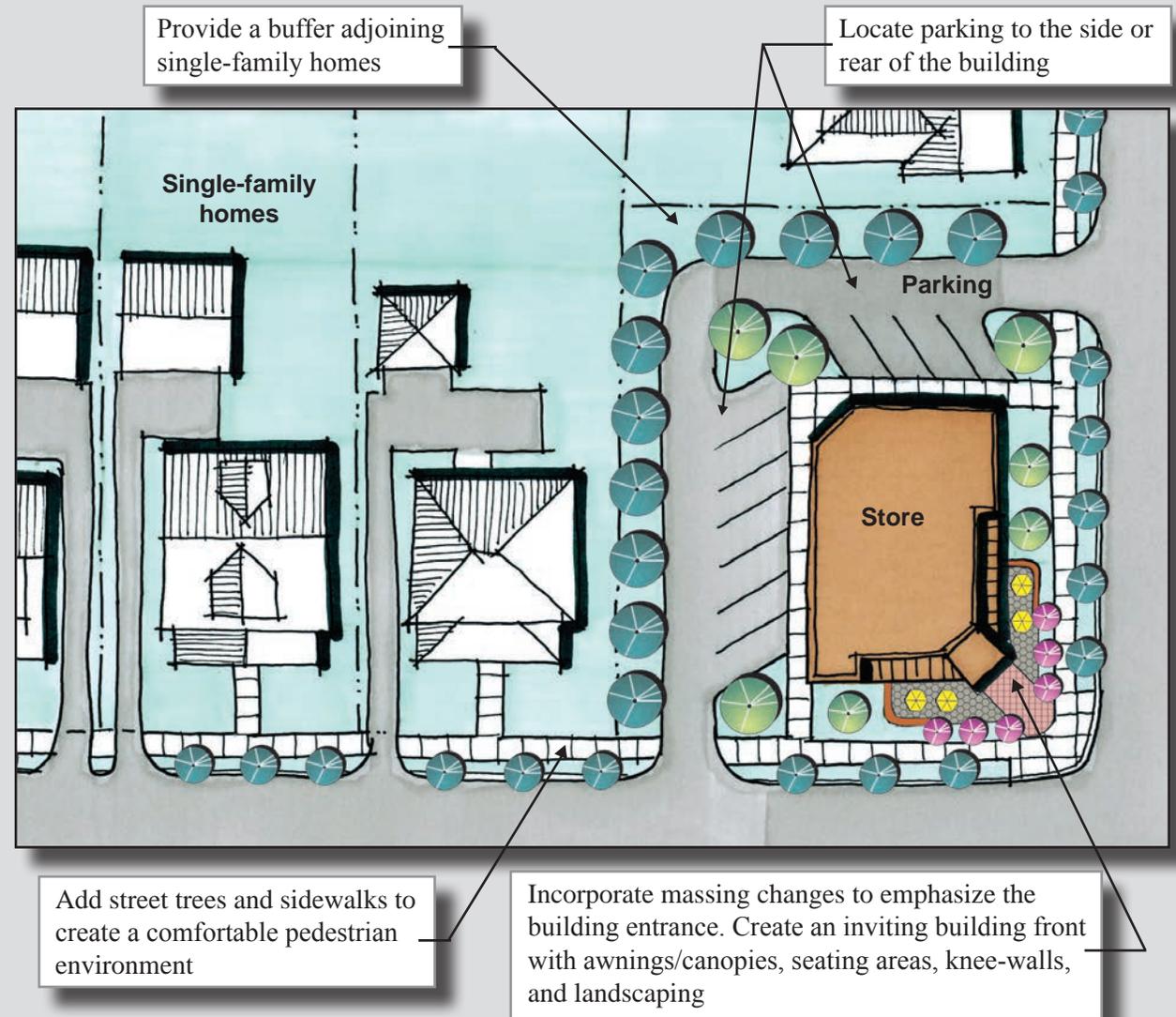
NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE COMMERCIAL – DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT



Large storefront windows and seating areas in front of buildings help to provide an active streetscape.

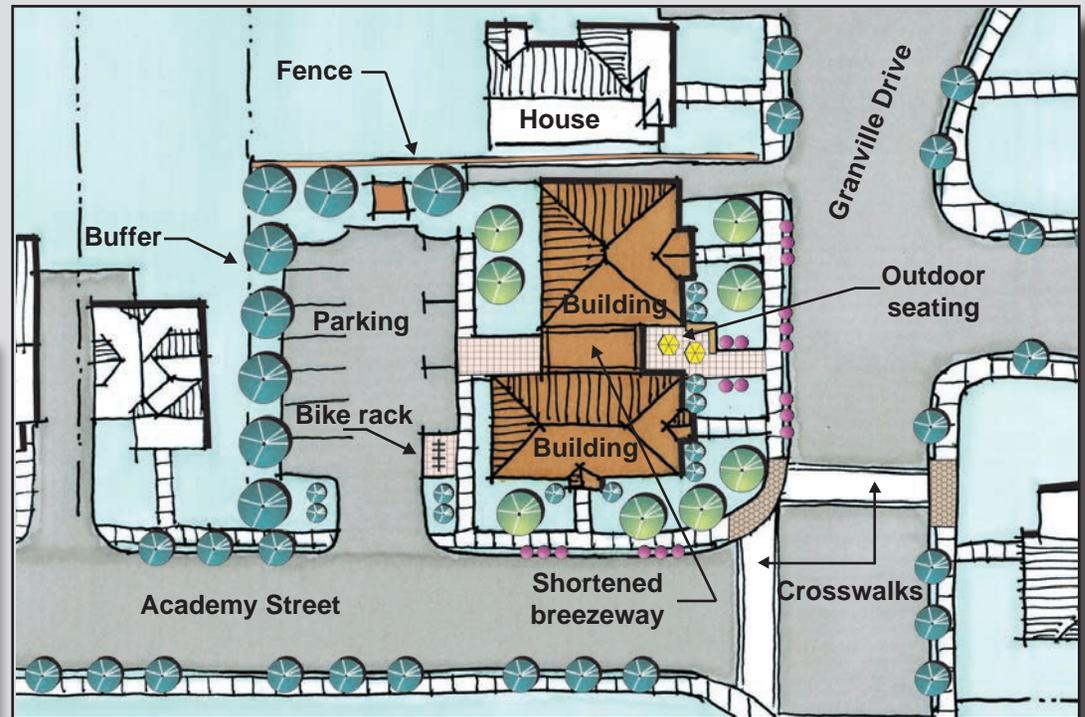


One of the characteristics of the urban neighborhoods in Winston-Salem is the mixture of different land uses featuring smaller lots, sidewalks, and a grid street pattern. New neighborhood-scale commercial sites need to follow those existing patterns by locating buildings near and oriented towards streets and sidewalks. Buildings should incorporate visual and architectural elements in their design to enhance the pedestrian environment.

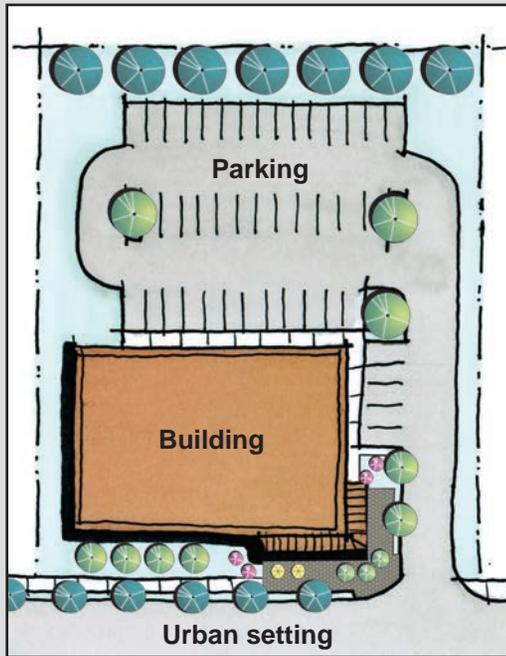


NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE COMMERCIAL – URBAN REDEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE

This corner lot is located at the intersection of Academy Street and Granville Drive in the West Salem National Register District. The site is currently zoned Neighborhood Business (NB). This redevelopment example shows the retention of two historic structures and a shortened breezeway to provide for an outdoor seating area. Parking is located to the rear of the site and includes a bike rack. A landscaped buffer is provided on one side and a fence is shown where there is not enough room for plantings.



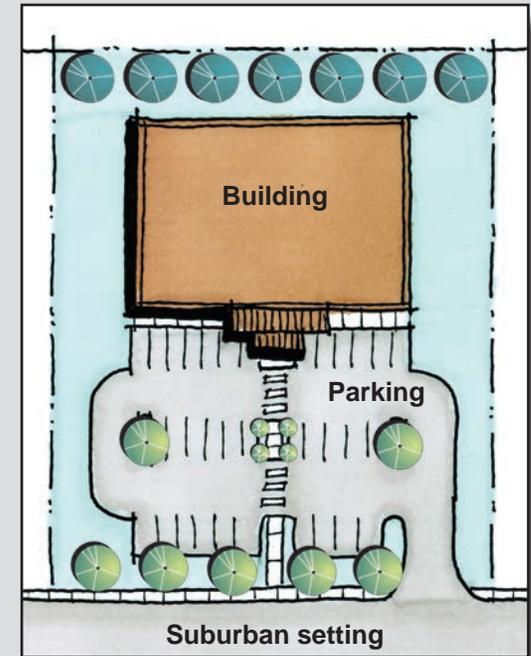
SMALL, FREE STANDING COMMERCIAL – DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT



Building placement is important in creating a viable and active pedestrian environment. In an urban setting, buildings built close to the street achieve the following:

- Scale the environment for pedestrians
- Provide easy building access for pedestrians
- Provide activity and interest along the street. This can be achieved through design features such as large display windows, highlighted entrances with architectural elements, and landscape and hardscape features
- Increase visibility of businesses from the street for both pedestrians and drivers

In a suburban setting where buildings are set back and parking is located to the front, it is important to create a pedestrian connection through the parking lot from the sidewalk to the main entrance and to incorporate massing changes to emphasize the building entrance.



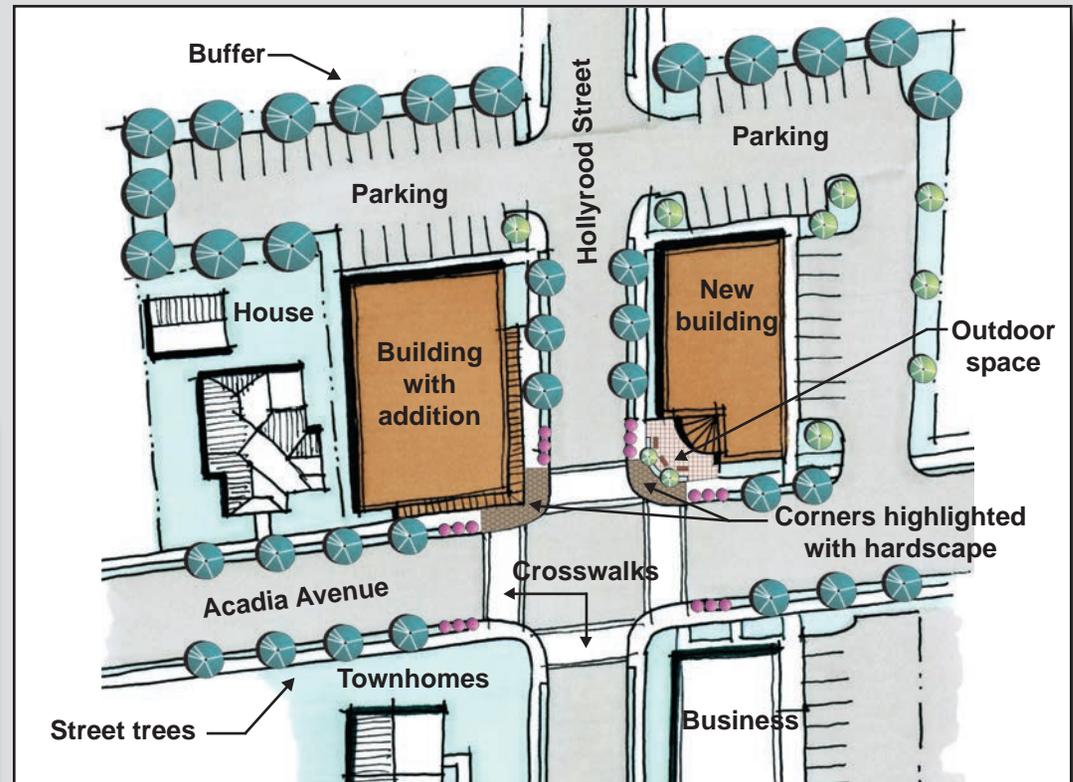
Attractive building and amenities enliven the streetscape



Pedestrian connection through the parking lot

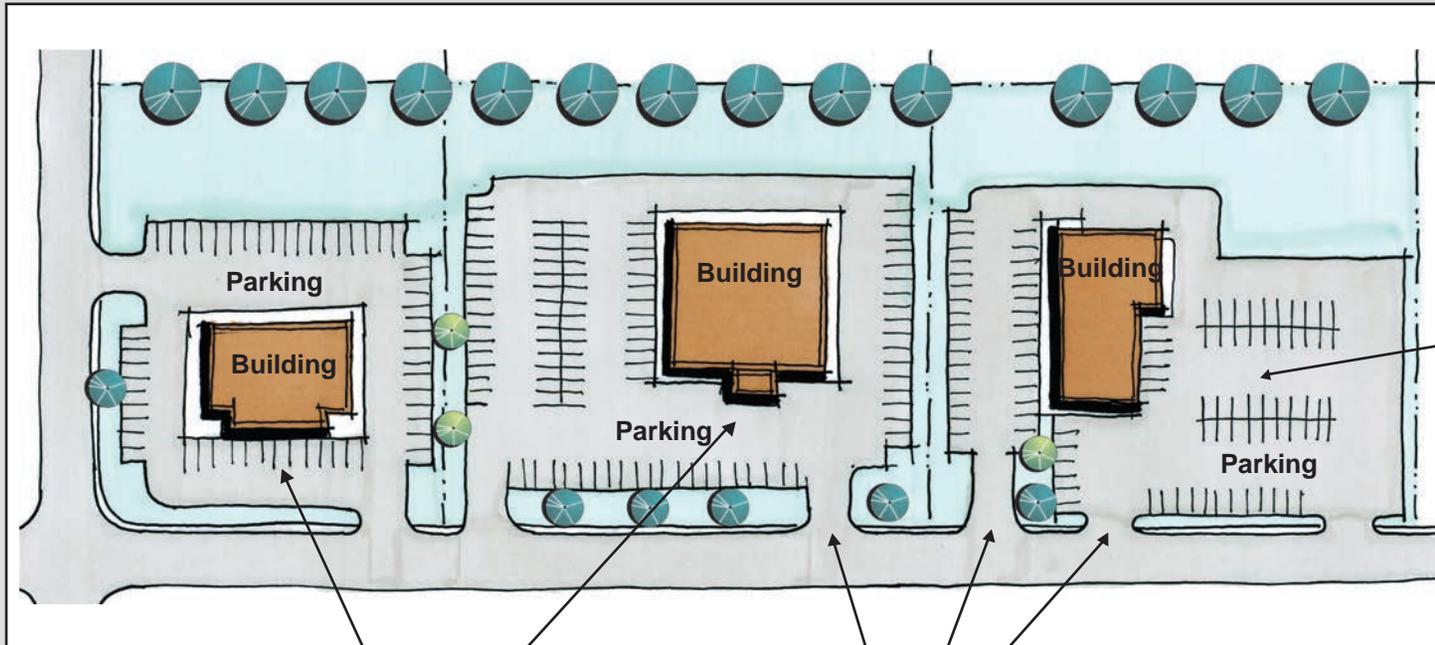
SMALL, FREE STANDING COMMERCIAL - URBAN REDEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE

This site is located at the intersection of Acadia Avenue and Hollyrood Street in the Washington Park National Register District. The general area is currently zoned Pedestrian Business (PB) and includes a number of neighborhood serving uses. This redevelopment example shows a one story addition to an existing building and a new building with an outdoor space. Parking is located to the side and rear of these two buildings and a buffer is shown next to residentially zoned land. The house to the west of the building with an addition is also zoned for Pedestrian Business, so no buffer is required. Additional crosswalks and street trees are also shown.



STRIP COMMERCIAL – TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The commercial strip is a linear pattern of retail businesses along a major roadway, characterized by box-like buildings with prominent parking lots visible from the roadway, multiple driveways, large signs, and a dependence on the automobile for access and circulation. The drawing below shows an example of an older strip commercial development with a couple of restaurants on both ends and a store in the middle.



Large surface parking areas with limited tree coverage create “heat islands”

No designated pedestrian connections from the street to building entrances

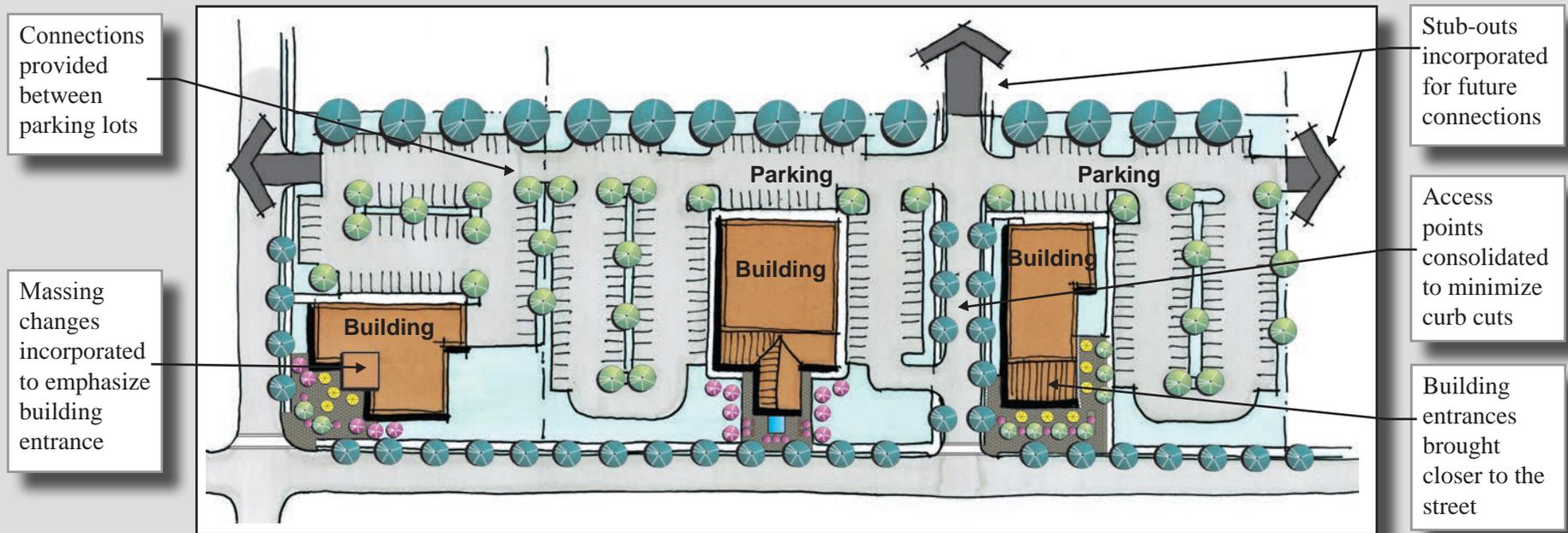
Multiple entry points along roadway with no cross-parcel access or shared parking

A typical older strip commercial development with numerous curb cuts, unmarked parking, recessed buildings, and lack of sidewalk and landscaping.



STRIP COMMERCIAL – REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

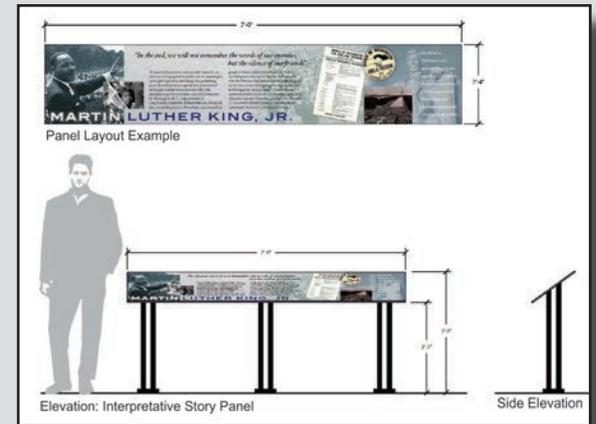
As redevelopment occurs along strip corridors over time, it is important to promote a high quality development. The goal is to develop commercial corridors that are attractive, environmentally sound, and compatible with good traffic flow and safe pedestrian access. Redevelopment strategies could include: developing basic corridor guidelines for building design; implementing access management standards to minimize curb cuts; requiring shared driveways/linking of driveways to provide cross-access and parking lot connections; and providing a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists by requiring sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths. The drawing below shows a redevelopment of the properties on the previous page with the application of some of the strategies described as a possible first step in improving the livability of the corridor. Redevelopment could occur incrementally or comprehensively.



STRIP COMMERCIAL - URBAN REDEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE



Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (MLK) is a major thoroughfare on the east side of Winston-Salem connecting surrounding neighborhoods and Downtown. To encourage more retail, sit-down restaurants, and entertainment venues here, existing plans call for redeveloping the west side of the MLK Corridor between 4th Street and 1st Street. The highlighted area includes a city-owned vacant site and three houses all zoned Highway Business (HB). The MLK Overlay District sets basic standards for redevelopment of this site. In addition, a plan for streetscape improvements along the corridor is in the process of being implemented. The streetscape improvements will greatly enhance the image of East Winston.



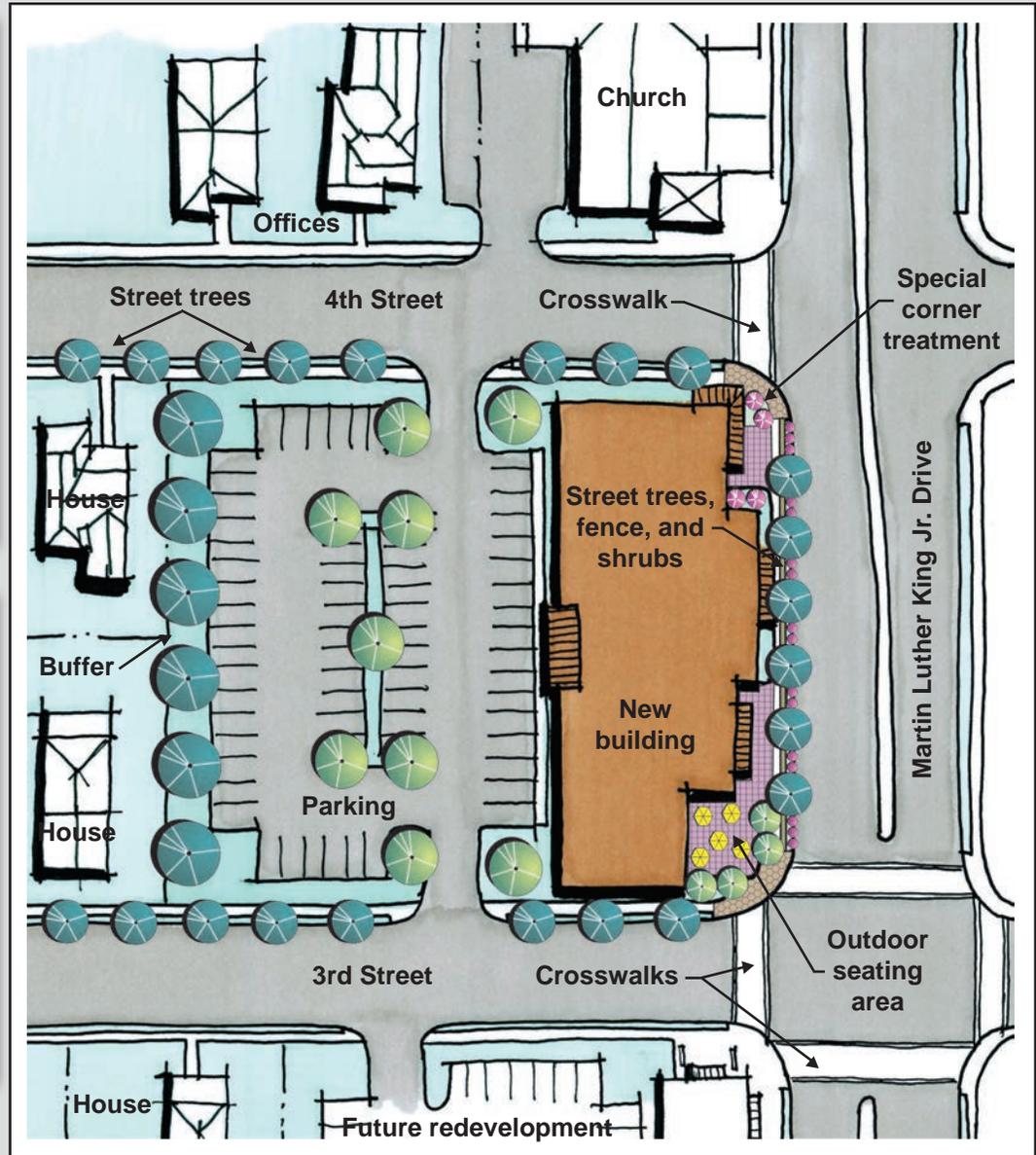
Proposed streetscape improvements include: bold crosswalks, decorative fencing to discourage mid-block crossing, street trees and plantings, story panels, street median monuments, and public art.

STRIP COMMERCIAL – URBAN REDEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE

This redevelopment illustration shows a building located closer to the street and parking to the rear, as required by the MLK Overlay District standards. At the corners of the site, the building is set back to allow for some outdoor seating. A buffer is located along the rear property line adjacent to single-family homes.

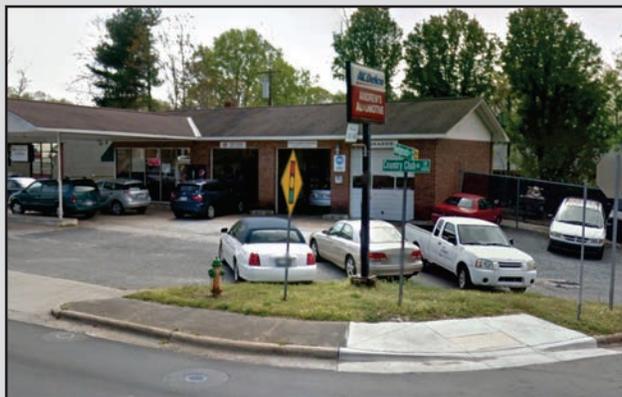


Proposed story panel at key intersections



STRIP COMMERCIAL – TYPICAL SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE

This section of Country Club Road in the Gordon Manor area is currently zoned Limited Business (LB) and includes an auto repair shop, service businesses, an office, and a gas station. This typical strip commercial development has parking areas located to the front of buildings with numerous curb cuts and large expanses of asphalt with no landscaping. Since the Gordon Manor commercial area is surrounded by residential neighborhoods, redeveloping the commercial section of the Country Club Road corridor with an emphasis on pedestrian comfort and safety will increase its vitality.



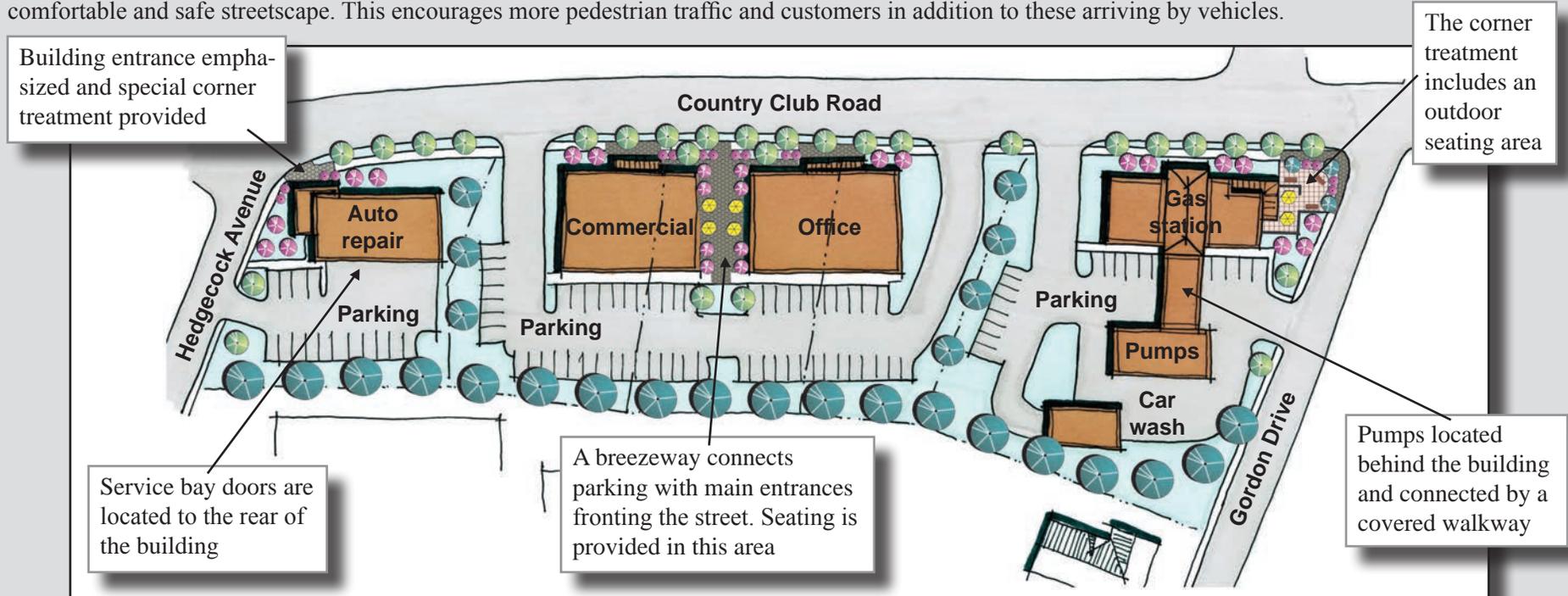
Older auto repair shops tend to have inadequate storage for vehicles being serviced, resulting in parking dominating the site frontage. In addition, service bay doors are oriented parallel to the street resulting in an unfriendly streetscape.



Older corner gas stations have a large expanses of paving. In addition, “flat top” pump canopies are typically located in front of the building resulting in an unfriendly streetscape.

STRIP COMMERCIAL – SUBURBAN REDEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE

This redevelopment illustration shows buildings closer to the street with parking to the rear. Two parcels have been combined (commercial and office) resulting in shared driveways and parking. A new auto repair shop with service bay doors and parking located to the rear relates better to the pedestrian environment. The gas station also has pumps and parking to the rear, a covered connection between pumps and the building, and a corner treatment that includes outdoor seating. With this arrangement, the number of curb cuts has been reduced from nine to three allowing for street trees, and a more comfortable and safe streetscape. This encourages more pedestrian traffic and customers in addition to those arriving by vehicles.



Auto repair shop with bay doors oriented perpendicular to the street



A breezeway connects rear parking with main building entrances



Buildings sit closer to the street and pumps and parking are located to the rear

URBAN SHOPPING CENTER – TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Cloverdale Plaza is a shopping center located at the intersection of Cloverdale Avenue and Miller Street in the Ardmore neighborhood. This L-shaped shopping center was built in the late 1960s and currently has a supermarket as an anchor and a wide selection of stores and restaurants. Like older shopping centers, this center has stores accessible only by automobile, but since it is located close to residential neighborhoods, it has potential as a mixed-use center with residential units. This redevelopment can provide a better connection to the adjacent neighborhood.



Cloverdale Plaza is characterized by larger buildings located along the periphery of the site and large expanses of unscreened parking lots. A restaurant located at the intersection of Cloverdale Avenue and Miller Street sits lower than the parking lot. A step bank faces Cloverdale Avenue.

REDEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES

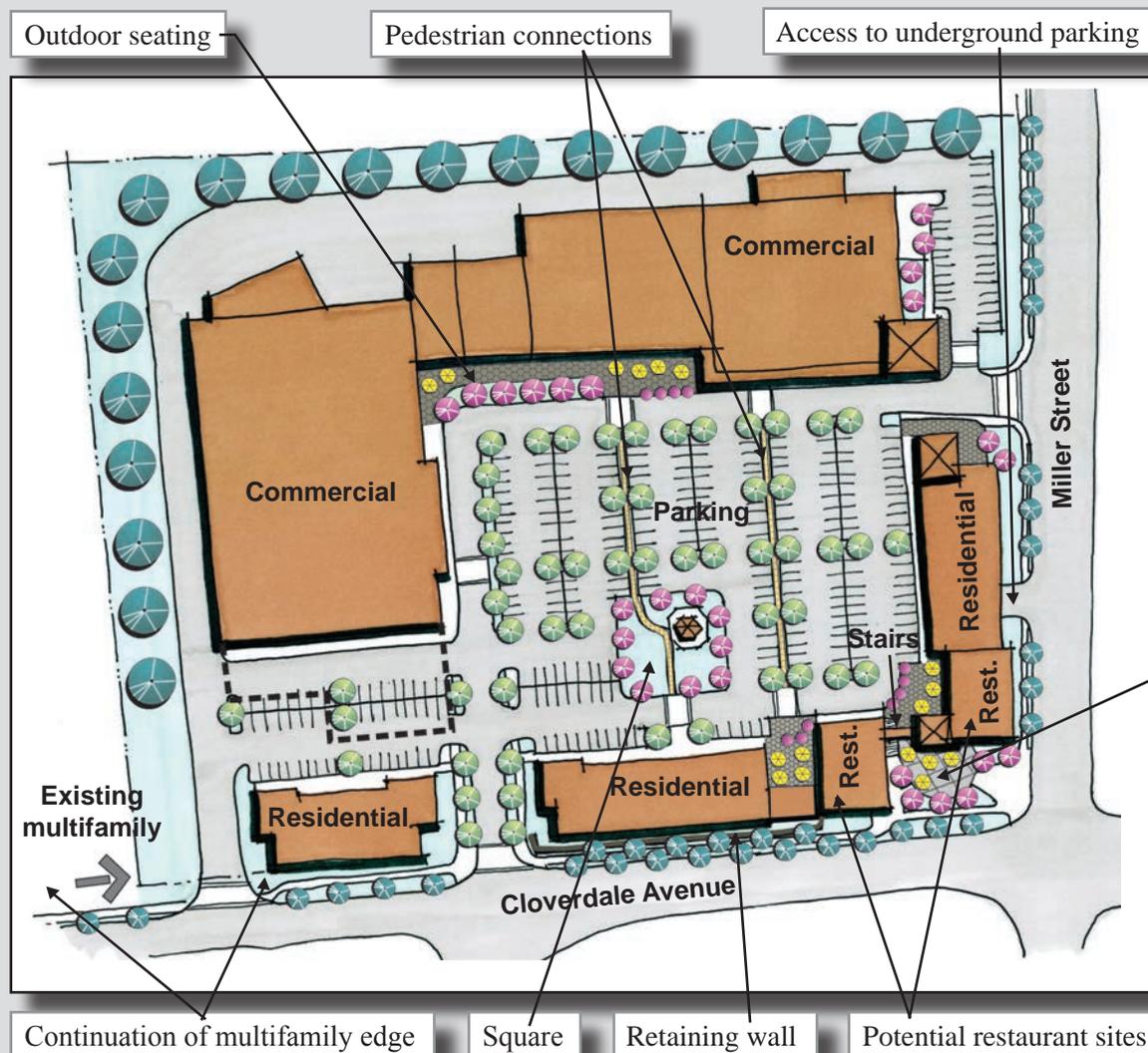
The topographic changes on the site can be incorporated into a redevelopment design by creating an inviting outdoor space at the main intersection, with land uses to support it, and a pedestrian connection to the remainder of the site. A context sensitive retaining wall will be required along a portion of Cloverdale Avenue to keep the surface parking in the middle of the site at the existing level. Horizontal mixed-use redevelopment could be accommodated on this site and is shown on the redevelopment illustration.



A retaining wall would be required because of topographic changes along Cloverdale Avenue. However, setting the retaining wall back from the sidewalk and adding landscaping will ensure its visual impact is diminished.

URBAN SHOPPING CENTER – URBAN REDEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE

This redevelopment illustration shows a design technique where new buildings are located at the street edge along Cloverdale Avenue and Miller Street to visually screen parking lots and improve pedestrian activity along the edge of the site. Retail uses are kept at their current locations on the site. To establish a better connection with the adjacent neighborhood, the southern portion of the existing shopping center building is taken out and new multifamily is constructed along Cloverdale Avenue. Ground level parking for residential units facing Miller Street is provided. This redevelopment concept makes this shopping center pedestrian friendly with a number of outdoor gathering spaces, an open space area with a gazebo closer to the residential units, and pedestrian connections through the parking lot.



The importance of this corner is highlighted with a special design treatment:

- A pedestrian plaza is located at the corner for sitting/dining
- Buildings are located along the street edge to frame the plaza
- A pedestrian connection from the street to parking and other uses is provided

The existing topography allows the plaza and some retail to be at the street level. Stairs connect these elements to the upper level where parking and the rest of the shopping center are located.

SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTER – TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Reynolda Manor Shopping Center is located at the intersection of Fairlawn Drive and Reynolda Road in a more suburban environment than Cloverdale Plaza. While the two shopping centers have similar characteristics and are about the same size (12 acres), the design technique applied here is different for the purpose of showing an alternate design solution.



Reynolda Manor Shopping Center is characterized by larger buildings located along the periphery of the site, large expanses of underutilized parking lots, and a cluster of small buildings close to the intersection of Fairlawn Drive and Reynolda Road. A building adjacent to Reynolda Road sits lower than the road and a retaining wall extends from this building to the main entrance of the center.

REDEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES

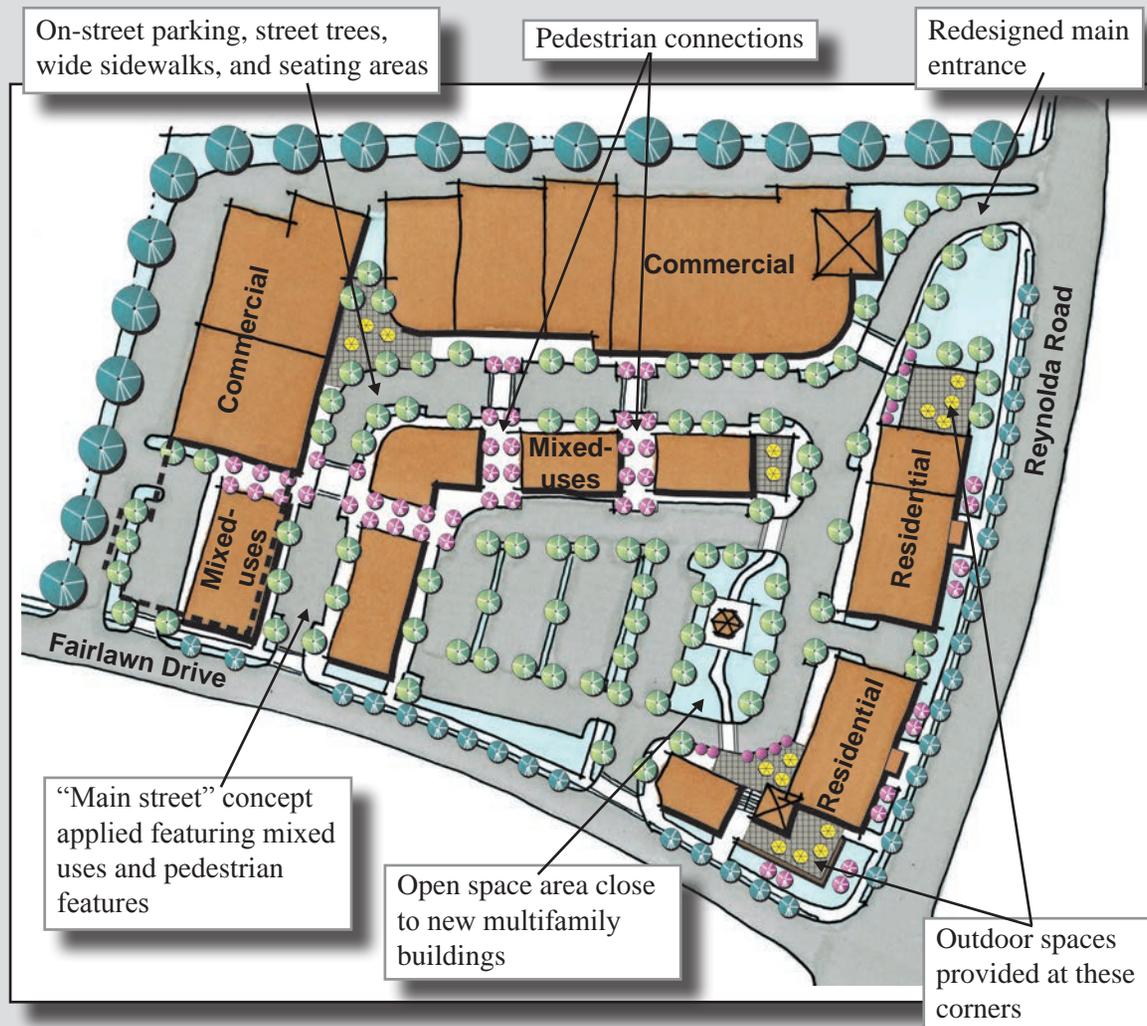
The change in topography can be used to accommodate multistory buildings facing Reynolda Road with parking located at the lower level. Vertical mixed-use redevelopment could be accommodated on this site and is shown on the redevelopment illustration.



An example of a mixed-use development.

SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTER – SUBURBAN REDEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE

This redevelopment illustration shows a design technique where a “main street” is created by adding new mixed-use buildings parallel to existing buildings, street trees, on-street parking, and an environment that allows pedestrians to walk in the area. A number of pedestrian connections with crosswalks connect the two sides of the street and parking. A portion of the existing building perpendicular to Fairlawn Drive is redeveloped to enable the creation of the “main street” effect. Residential buildings with very limited retail at both ends are located parallel to Reynolda Road to improve pedestrian activity along this edge of the site. Parking for these buildings is accommodated on the lower level. Open space is provided close to residential buildings. This redevelopment concept makes this shopping center pedestrian friendly through a number of outdoor gathering spaces, pedestrian-scale design, open space, and pedestrian features.



In a mixed-use development, residents enjoy the convenience of having dining, shopping, and parks close to home, and retail establishments can benefit from a built-in customer base



Multifamily development facing Reynolda Road has the potential to add street level activity and vitality to the area

City-County
Planning
BOARD

FORSYTH COUNTY
& WINSTON-SALEM
NORTH CAROLINA



Winston-Salem / Forsyth County
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Telephone: 336-727-8000
Email: planning@cityofws.org
Web site: www.cityofws.org/planning