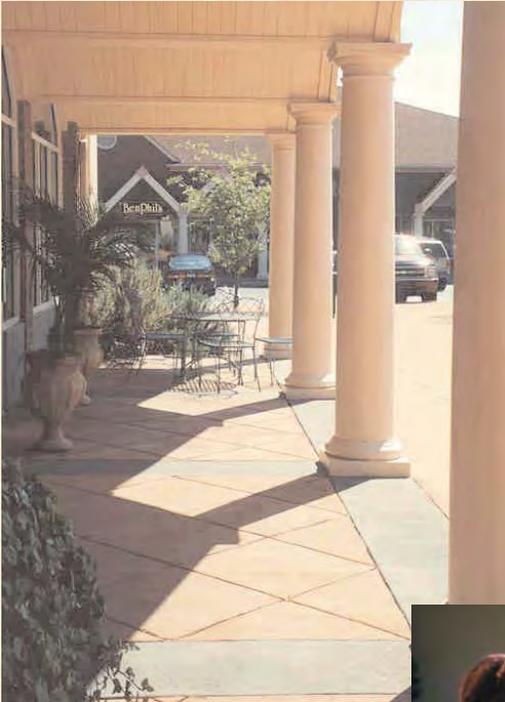


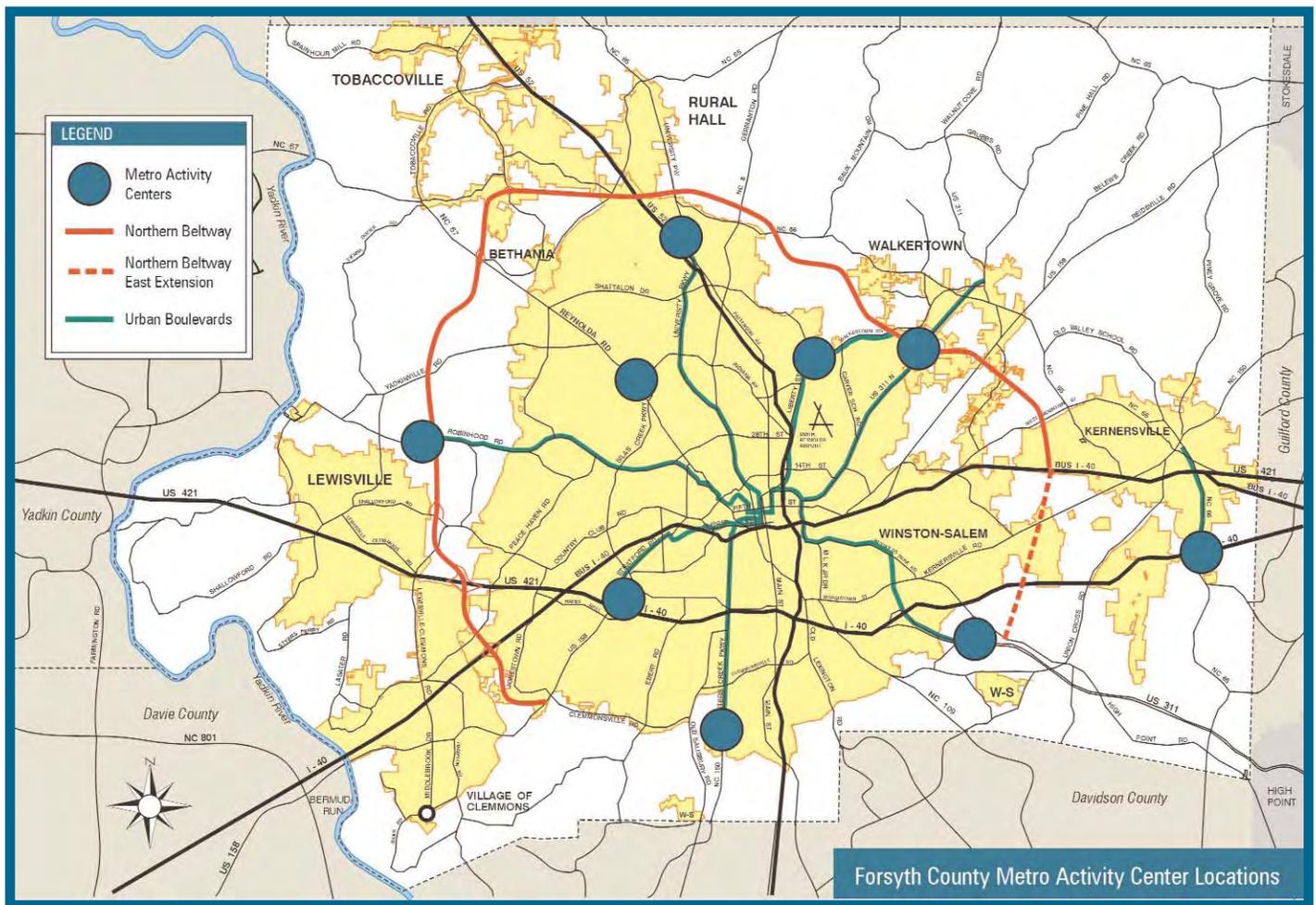
Legacy

# Metro Activity Center Design Guidelines



Recommendations  
For Developing  
Focused, Mixed-Use  
Commercial/Residential  
Centers





# Metro Activity Centers

## *What is a MAC?*

*Legacy*, the adopted guide for the future growth of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, recommends the development of compact, mixed-use centers for retail, office, civic and residential activity. These areas, called Metro Activity Centers (MAC), will be a focal point for a diverse mix of community activities that include living, working, shopping, education, recreation, civic, cultural, and spiritual activities. These centers, with their more intense concentrations of employment, housing and commerce at the center of the development, are intended to be the hub of daily activity for those who live in surrounding neighborhoods. A goal for each MAC is to have residential density high enough to support efficient transit service. For this reason, all of the MACs are planned for areas that are within a quarter-mile of the intersection of major roads.

The ideal MAC has a densely developed Core Area surrounded by a less densely developed “support” area. The Core Area will be the focus for commercial, institutional, office and high-density residential uses, while the surrounding support area would be made up of high-and medium-density residential uses that would support the activities of the core area. The support area also acts as a buffer between the more intense uses of the core area and the lower-density residential uses beyond the boundaries of the MAC.

Not just a center for commerce, a MAC will also be a busy neighborhood center that is well designed for a safe and comfortable pedestrian experience. A unique sense of place should be created by the attention given to the appropriate scale and placement of buildings, the creation of green and public spaces, and attractive architectural detailing.

# Criteria For Metro Activity Centers:

- ◆ Located at the intersection of a freeway and a major arterial road
- ◆ Draws from a regional market of at least 60,000 people within a six-mile radius or a fifteen-minute drive
- ◆ May be currently vacant land or already partially developed
- ◆ Spacing of potential MAC sites should help balance development patterns in the city and county

# Metro Activity Center Characteristics:

- ◆ A discrete area with a well-designed, integrated and recognizable development pattern that integrates intense retail and office uses with a variety of residential types and densities
- ◆ The Core Area, a quarter-mile radius, contains a high-density mix of uses, including commercial and office
- ◆ The Support Area, a half-mile radius consists of mostly high- to medium-high density residential uses
- ◆ Mass transit facilities are integrated into the urban design
- ◆ The traditional urban character of the development is created by buildings located close to the street with rear or side parking areas
- ◆ Sidewalks and paths encourage pedestrian movement
- ◆ Plazas, squares, greens and natural areas offer gathering places and recreation for the public

## Metro Activity Center - Core Area Land Uses

### Commercial (40% - 75% of total)

- retail complex
- retail superstores
- large hotel/motel
- upscale restaurants, specialty dining
- movie theater multiplexes
- large entertainment facilities

### Office (25% - 50% of total)

- large- and mid-sized office buildings
- offices located over retail space

### Light Manufacturing (0% - 10% of total)

- high-tech research, fabrication

### Institutional (2% - 5% of total)

- middle or high school
- community college
- regional library
- regional recreation center
- hospital

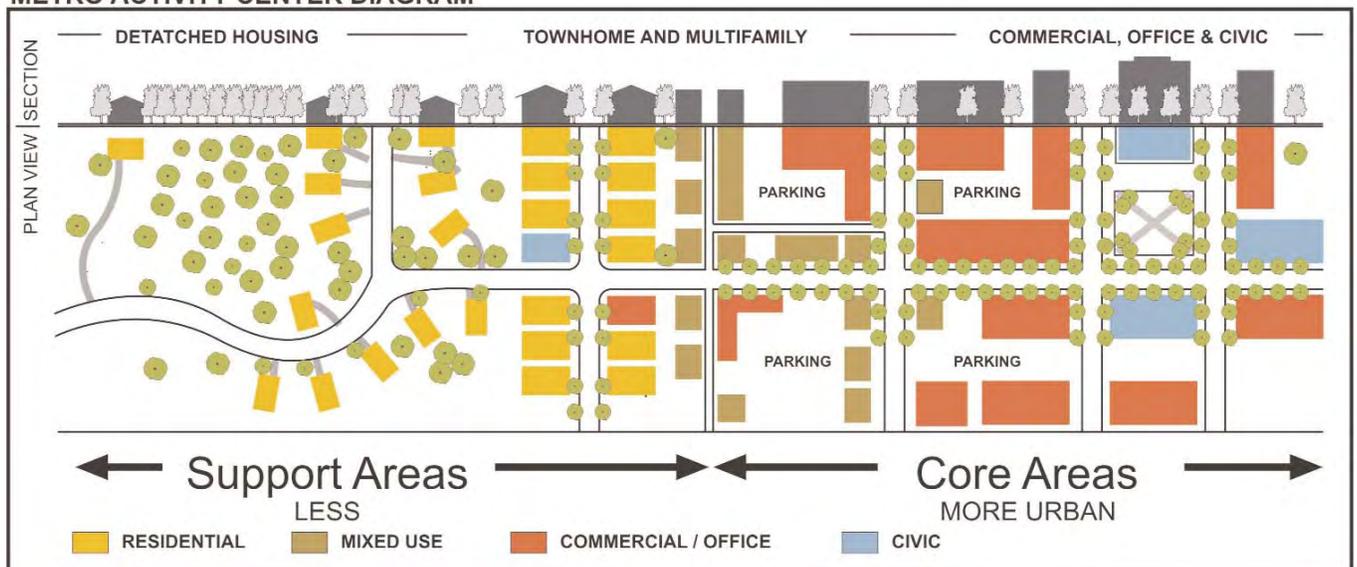
### Residential (25% - 50% of total)

- high-density residential
- apartments/dwellings located over retail space

### Public Spaces (2% - 5% of total)

- mini-parks, plazas
- transit stops

METRO ACTIVITY CENTER DIAGRAM

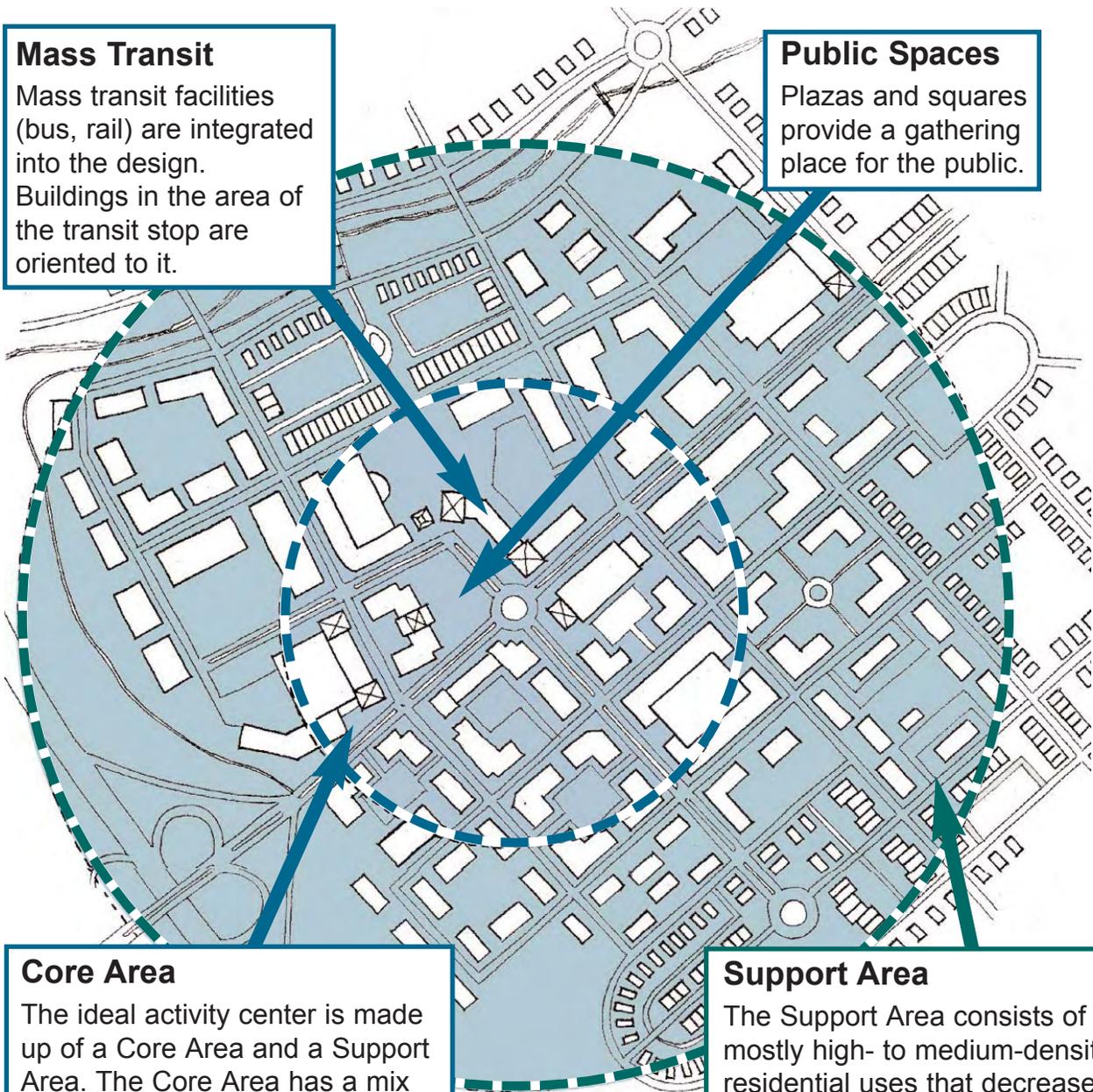


### Mass Transit

Mass transit facilities (bus, rail) are integrated into the design. Buildings in the area of the transit stop are oriented to it.

### Public Spaces

Plazas and squares provide a gathering place for the public.



### Core Area

The ideal activity center is made up of a Core Area and a Support Area. The Core Area has a mix of uses including commercial, office, manufacturing, institutional, residential and public.

### Support Area

The Support Area consists of mostly high- to medium-density residential uses that decrease in density at the edges of the MAC.

# The Core Area

Commercial, Office, Civic  
And Residential Uses

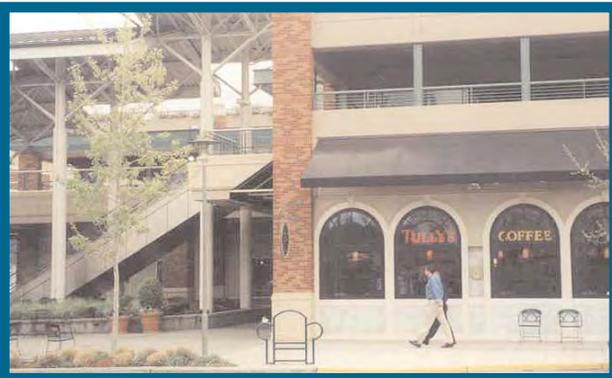


## Core Area Overview:

- Develop a compact, high-density area of commercial, office, civic and residential uses
- Build an interconnected road network with clearly delineated entrances into the Core Area
- Provide distinctive and consistent signage to draw visitors into the interior of the MAC site
- Incorporate areas for current or future transit stops within the core area and at multifamily residential complexes

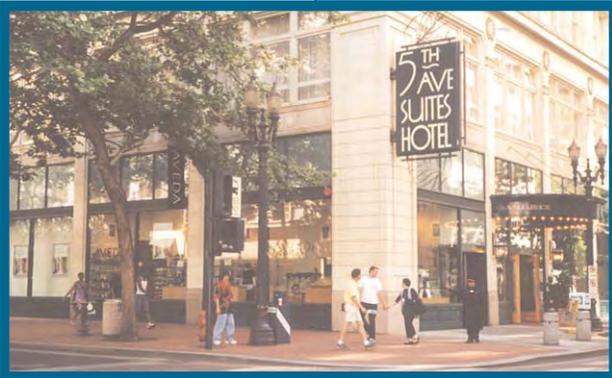
# The Core Area

## Commercial, Office, Civic And Residential Uses



### Circulation, Parking and Pedestrian Access:

- Provide street connections to existing roads at multiple ingress/egress points to prevent congestion at major intersections
- Limit private curb cuts and driveways in favor of streets and alleyways
- Design street widths to follow NCDOT standards for Traditional Neighborhood Developments
- Locate parking lots, in most circumstances, within interior courtyards or to the rear and the side of primary structures
- Construct well-designed parking structures that integrate retail uses on the ground floor
- Design parking lots along well-defined pathways that allow pedestrians to move safely from their vehicles
- Give priority to sidewalks, pathways and pedestrian crossings, rather than automobile traffic
- Define comfortable pedestrian spaces and enhance roadway and building entrances with landscaping



# The Core Area

## Commercial, Office, Civic And Residential Uses



### Site Plan Elements, Open Space and Building Design:

- Locate buildings close to the street to create an interesting and inviting public/private streetscape
- Encourage the construction of buildings up to four stories in height to prevent sprawling development
- Plan for mixed-use development in the Core Area, such as retail/office on lower floors with residential uses on upper floors
- Provide integrated public gathering places in central locations, such as pedestrian plazas or civic spaces
- Create a pedestrian-comfortable atmosphere with street details such as street trees, furniture, pavings, attractively-scaled lighting fixtures and flowering and evergreen planters
- Include building awnings, display windows, recessed doors, and distinctive architectural elements and other design details



# The Support Area

## Residential And Civic Uses



### Support Area Overview:

- Include a variety of housing types and a range of affordability levels that promote diversity
- Locate higher-density housing closer to the Core Area, with a transition toward less dense housing at the MAC's edge
- Incorporate detached houses, townhomes, apartments, and live/work units into the development of the Support Area
- Encourage small, neighborhood-scale, nonresidential buildings in the Support Area, although the majority of commercial buildings are located in the Core Area
- Provide for a minimum density of ten units per acre to encourage pedestrian activity and to support future or existing transit

# The Support Area

## Residential And Civic Uses



### Circulation, Parking and Pedestrian Access:

- Build an interconnected street system that meshes with the streets in the Core Area
- Employ design measures to reduce traffic speeds, such as traffic circles or "bulb outs" at intersections and narrow streets. Internal streets should be designed to feel safe driving at a speed no more than 25 miles per hour
- Create distinct separation between pedestrians and automobiles by providing sidewalks, street trees, and substantial on-street parking
- Construct an alley system for the benefits of rear garage access and convenient municipal services
- Minimize impact of garages by locating them to the rear of the house or turning their fronts away from the street
- Avoid placing parking lots directly on the street
- Locate additional parking behind buildings



# The Support Area

## Residential And Civic Uses



### Building Design and Open Space:

- Create a sense of enclosure along the street by maintaining an appropriate ratio between the height of buildings and the distance between buildings on opposite sides of the street
- Emphasize compatibility of buildings through appropriate scale, spacing, setback, and materials
- Provide public open spaces such as parks and playgrounds to increase the interaction and recreation of residents
- Include less formal recreational amenities in the Support Area, such as walking/biking trails and natural areas





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## Metro Activity Center

Prepared for the Citizens of Forsyth County  
by the City-County Planning Board

### *Want more information?*

Read the full *Legacy Development Guide*, on our Web site at:

**[www.co.forsyth.nc.us/ccpb/legacy.htm](http://www.co.forsyth.nc.us/ccpb/legacy.htm)**

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