



PLANO, TEXAS

# COMMUNITY DESIGN ASSESSMENT

*For Mixed-Use Developments*

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PLANO'S LEGACY TOWN CENTER





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# DRAFT COMMUNITY DESIGN ASSESSMENT

## *For Mixed-Use Developments*

### INTENT

The purpose of the Community Design Assessment is to ensure a level of development quality for mixed-use developments. This assessment is intended to foster a built environment of aesthetic and sustainable value, enhance economic development efforts, promote Plano's distinctiveness and natural environment, and ensure an efficient development review process. The Community Design Assessment is intended to guide developers and decision makers when considering the location, design, and context of mixed-use developments.

### APPLICABILITY

The Community Design Assessment should be applied to all new mixed-use developments. This assessment should be supplementary to the development standards stated in the Zoning Ordinance.

### HISTORY OF LAND USE AND MIXED-USE

Interaction of land uses became a focus during the 1800's after public health concerns arose regarding the proximity to certain industries. This led to more separation of development types, particularly industrial and housing, and eventually to the development of zones (zoning). Zoning has played and continues to play an important role for municipal governments in addressing the issue of compatibility of uses. In recent years, however, there has been an increased understanding that a community and its public health, resource conservation, liveliness, and aesthetics can be served by reconsidering some of the traditional approaches to integrating development types. Advances in technology, building practices, and environmental regulations have made the possibility of mixing some land uses not only acceptable, but desirable. Such development can result in benefits to fitness and public health, public safety, municipal services, and resource conservation.





## CHARACTERISTICS OF MIXED-USE

Mixed-use is a development type that blends a combination of residential, commercial, cultural, and institutional uses, where those functions are physically integrated, and that provide pedestrian connections. Mixed-use development can contribute to a variety of community objectives and needs ranging from housing to community design to civic pride and identity. The benefits of mixed-use include:

- **Creating a local sense of place.** Although difficult to quantify, mixed-use areas can create a vibrant sense of place and community. This can be on a city-wide scale or a smaller neighborhood scale. These areas support pedestrian movement and provide increased opportunities for neighbors to interact. Markets, festivals, and other neighborhood celebrations will help foster social interaction in the mixed-use community.
- **Creating areas that are active throughout the day.** A mix of uses eliminates the problems of residential areas that are largely unpopulated during the day, and commercial areas that are desolate after business hours. Mixed-use areas have populations and activities that take place throughout the day, making them more vibrant and safe.
- **Increasing housing options for household types.** Mixed-use areas often have a variety of housing types (single-family, multifamily, retirement housing), which is important to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population.
- **Reducing auto dependence.** Mixed-use areas provide a variety of services and activities within walking distance of housing, allowing residents to conduct more of their daily activities without depending on their automobiles. Reduced auto dependence can provide benefits such as reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality, and encouraging a greater independence for seniors and children.
- **Increasing travel options.** Mixed-use areas, if properly designed, can comfortably support pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and automobile traffic.
- **More efficient infrastructure use.** Mixed-use areas are typically compact and use infrastructure (roads, water and sewer lines) more efficiently, which results in lower costs per capita to the city.
- **Increased support for area businesses and retail.** A study conducted by Gibbs Planning Group in October of 2013 found that Plano has 16 million square feet (sf) of retail for its 265,000 population, or 65 sf per capita, which is three times the national average. This, along with new retail constructed in neighboring cities, has led to the abandonment of retail along Plano's thoroughfares. However, new compact retail can be supported by residents in a mixed-use area.
- **More efficient delivery of services.** Costs for trash collection, mail delivery, and other services are reduced due to the close proximity of uses.



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## NATIONAL TRENDS

Below are studies from three organizations that indicate the growing desire for mixed-use walkable neighborhoods.

- The 2013 National Association of Realtors Community Preference Survey results found 60% of respondents favor a neighborhood with a mix of houses, stores, and other businesses that are within walking distance. This was preferred over neighborhoods that require driving between home, work, and recreation. Respondents indicated that while the size of a home or yard does matter, most are willing to compromise size for a preferred neighborhood and less commuting.
- The 2014 Investing in Place: Two Generations' View on the Future of Communities study published by the American Planning Association found 56% of millennials and 46% of active baby boomers would prefer to live someday in a walkable community, whether an urban, suburban or small town location. In addition, only 10% of both baby boomer and millennials prefer living in a suburb that requires driving to most places.
- The America in 2015 study published by the Urban Land Institute found 52% of Americans would like to live in a place where they do not need to use a car very often and 50% state walkability is a top or high priority when considering where to live.



## IMPACTS OF MIXED-USE

As Plano begins to incorporate mixed-use into a suburban land use pattern, it is important to define how and where this type of development is appropriate within the city. The development and redevelopment of mixed-use centers does not constitute the abandonment of the suburban form, as these developments are not appropriate for all of Plano. Section 1.0 of the Community Design Assessment will identify potential locations for mixed-use centers.

A number of concerns have been identified by the community and should be evaluated during review of future mixed-use developments.

- **Impact on Schools** - Mixed-use developments that include residential uses should be reviewed by the public school district to ensure adequate school capacity.
- **Impact on Traffic** - Mixed-use developments that generate 8,000 or more trips per day will be required to complete a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) to will be reviewed by the Engineering Department.
- **Impact on City Services** - Mixed-use developments will be reviewed by the city to ensure adequate infrastructure and facility capacity such as water, sewer, public safety, libraries, and parks.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In many locations, mixed-use development will be a departure from the existing development form. It is strongly advised that early in the project development, proposals are discussed with neighborhood groups and other stakeholders. Where appropriate, the Planning Department can assist in organizing these meetings.

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following assessment is intended to assist with the evaluation of proposals for mixed-use developments. These standards cannot address all of the issues relating to a particular site and therefore are not the sole determinants of development approval. The assessment criteria provides a framework for evaluating mixed-use developments to encourage a high quality living environment that will be desirable to future residents and hold its value over time.

Each standard will have a corresponding letter that indicates Requirement (R) or Supplement (S). Requirements (R) are standards that must be met and designed into the development. Supplements (S) are desired features which enhance the site, but are not required. A separate Community Design Assessment matrix is provided for completion by the developer to ensure conformance with these criteria.

### 1.0 LOCATION AND CONTEXT SENSITIVITY

Mixed-use developments could be appropriate in a variety of settings throughout the city. However, these developments must be sensitive to surrounding uses with regard to intensity (height, density, scale) and character. The mixed use development should complement surrounding uses and should have sufficient access to adjacent roadways and/or transit centers. If the proposed mixed-use development is located adjacent to residential neighborhoods, there should be a careful transition of uses, building heights, and setbacks to the core of the development.

The following areas of Plano as defined in the Future Land Use Map of the Plano Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan are the most likely locations for mixed-use development. Considerations specific to these areas are noted below, followed by more general citywide-guidelines.

#### Compact Complete Centers (CCC)

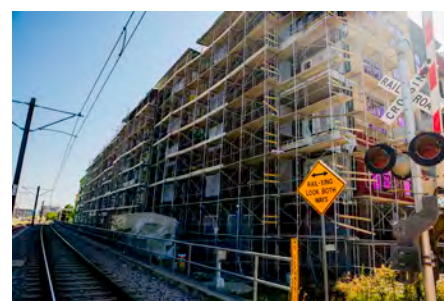
- There are five compact complete centers identified on the Future Land Use Map, comprising 4.1% of the city's total land. These centers are identified in northwest Plano at Legacy Town Center/Legacy West; southwest Plano at the Shops at Willow Bend; northeast Plano at the future Spring Creek rail station; southeast Plano at Collin Creek Mall, and east Plano at the future Shiloh Road rail station. These are primarily large centers (200 acres to 400 acres) that serve both a local and regional population. These areas are large enough to form a distinct district and the intensity of uses should digress from the core of the center to the outer boundaries. A transition zone illustration is provided in Figure 1 on page 5 for a potential compact complete center.

#### Transit Corridor (TC)

- The Transit Corridor applies to the Downtown Plano core and the adjoining rail corridor linking the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) red/orange line and the future Cotton Belt line. The Transit Corridor comprises 3.8% of the city's total land. Intensity of uses should digress from the transit stations (one-quarter to one-half mile walking distance) to the district's outer boundaries.



Compact Complete Center-Type Development  
Legacy Town Center



Transit Corridor-Type Development  
Downtown Plano



Regional Center-Type Development  
Preston Center, Dallas



# COMMUNITY DESIGN ASSESSMENT *for mixed-use developments*



Neighborhood Center-Type Development  
Paseo District, Oklahoma City

**Figure 1. Transition Zone Example**  
Spring Creek Compact Complete Center



## Regional Centers (RC)

- There are five regional centers identified on the Future Land Use Map, comprising 2.7% of the city's total land. These centers are identified at the following intersections: Preston Road and State Highway 121; Preston Road and Spring Creek Parkway; Preston Road and Park Boulevard; Coit Road and President George Bush Turnpike; and Renner Road and President George Bush Turnpike. These are moderately sized centers (100 acres to 200 acres) that serve both a local and regional population. Intensity of uses should digress from major thoroughfare or expressway intersections to the outer boundaries. (*Regional Center-type development photo shown on page 4*)

## Neighborhood Centers (NC)

- Neighborhood centers are adjacent to the residential neighborhoods that they are intended to serve and comprises 3.3% of the city's total land. These centers are typically located at major thoroughfare intersections and contain roughly 10 to 15 acres on each corner. When residential is introduced into neighborhood centers, single-family uses are desired for compatibility with existing neighborhoods. Intensity of uses should digress from major thoroughfare intersections to the outer boundaries.

## LOCATION AND CONTEXT SENSITIVITY GUIDELINES

- 1.1.** Each use (residential, office, retail, civic) should be appropriate and beneficial in this location. (R)
- 1.2.** The development should be a natural fit with the larger surrounding area and designed in such a way that it is well-integrated with adjacent land uses. (R)
- 1.3.** The development should positively impact surrounding uses. (R)
- 1.4.** The juxtaposition of uses should be complementary so that lower density residential areas are buffered from more intense uses. For example, townhouses could serve as a buffer between single-family detached homes and retail centers. (R)
- 1.5.** Transitions in building heights (setbacks) and densities should be gradual in order to avoid abrupt changes in scale, especially when adjacent to residential development. Standards within the Regional Employment and Regional Commercial zoning district provide a reference for desired setbacks when adjacent to residential zoning districts. (R)
- 1.6.** The mixed-use development should comply with requirements for adequate public facilities and services. (R)

## 2.0 DEVELOPMENT SIZE

Mixed-use developments should be of sufficient size to establish a complete new development, or expand an existing mixed-use development.

## DEVELOPMENT SIZE GUIDELINES

- 2.1.** New developments within Urban Mixed-Use districts should be a minimum 50 acres in size. (R)



## 3.0 STREET AND BLOCK LAYOUT

Mixed-use developments should be generally laid out in a grid system with shorter blocks than traditional neighborhoods to reduce travel lengths and encourage walking. In general, a comfortable block length for the pedestrian is 400 feet and should not exceed 600 feet. The grid provides multiple routes for local traffic flow and helps prevent unnecessary congestion. A hierarchy of street types and sizes may be utilized.

Major and minor streets should be constructed in a narrow form with on-street parking. Wide thoroughfares, particularly those with medians, are generally inappropriate for mixed-use developments as they create a greater separation between buildings and diminish the compact nature of development.

### STREET AND BLOCK LAYOUT GUIDELINES

- **3.1.** The development should be organized into blocks created by a grid of streets. A variety of street types and block sizes (not to exceed 3 acres or 600 feet in length) may be incorporated into the street grid. Exceptions are allowed for parks, schools, and hospitals. (R)
- **3.2.** Where possible, provide bikeways within the street network. (S)
- **3.3.** All streets within mixed-use developments should be constructed in accordance with the Urban Mixed-Use zoning district located in Article 10.700.10 of the Zoning Ordinance. (R)

## 4.0 INTEGRATION OF USES

The integration of land uses promotes easy access among service businesses, retail stores, and other amenities especially by pedestrians. The types of uses provided can impact the amount, function, and location of open space areas, the level of activity within the core of the development, parking needs, and affect the types of services provided by the developer and the city. It is important for mixed-use centers to have a minimum of three use classes (or categories) to provide a successful development.

### INTEGRATION OF USES GUIDELINES

- **4.1.** If the development is phased, the first phase should be sufficient to stand on its own as a mixed-use development. Please see the Urban Mixed-Use zoning district (Article 10.700.8 and Article 10.700.9 of the Zoning Ordinance) for additional use regulations regarding the first phase of development. (R)
- **4.2.** Residential uses should be integrated within the development and not isolated, so that shops, restaurants and public spaces are available and easily accessible to residents. (R)
- **4.3.** Developments should meet all mixed-use requirements in the Urban Mixed-Use zoning district located in Article 10.700.8 and Article 10.700.9 of the Zoning Ordinance. (R)



Bikeways provided within the street network



Narrow street design with on-street parking



Vertical integration of uses with retail uses on the bottom floor and residential uses on the upper floors



Architecturally prominent entrance with a variety of building materials



Interrupted roofline with an architectural element.



Continuous windows and doors on the first floor of buildings for pedestrians



Building facades broken up into smaller areas with window head and sill details

## 5.0 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

How buildings relate to each other, streets, and public spaces can determine the effectiveness and intrinsic value of a mixed-use development. The building design standards are intended to raise the quality of building design, create a unique and distinctive character that is architecturally interesting, and ensure buildings contribute to the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment.

### BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **5.1.** Building facades should include a variety of complementary building materials such as glass, native stone, clay-fired brick or tile, metal, wood, or a combination of these materials. A minimum of three building materials are encouraged. (R)
- **5.2.** The first floors of buildings should create a comfort level for pedestrians and potential customers. Doors and windows should be nearly continuous along street fronts to create a seamless relationship between the interior and exterior of buildings and enliven the facade. Windows along streets should be spaced with a specific rhythm and not create long areas of flat, solid spaces along streets. Please see the Urban Mixed-Use zoning district (Article 10.700.13 of the Zoning Ordinance) for exceptions and additional building placement standards regarding permeability of first floor. (R)
- **5.3.** The primary entrance should be architecturally prominent and clearly visible from the abutting street and may include architectural details such as arches, canopies, awnings, friezes, tile work, murals, or moldings. Entrances should be oriented toward streets and may include planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaping or seating and/or prominent three-dimensional features such as chimneys and clock towers. (R)
- **5.4.** Buildings with facades longer than fifty feet (50') should have their continuous facades broken up into smaller areas through the use of varying façade setbacks, arcades, awnings, canopies, and architectural features such as plazas, towers elements, bay windows, balconies, columns, or other means. (R)
- **5.5.** Where visible to the public, the rear of buildings and/or service areas should be the same material and finish as the rest of the building. (R)
- **5.6.** Rooflines should be interrupted with gables or other architectural elements to break up the building profile. If sloping roofs are incorporated, two or more sloping planes are encouraged. Roof decks may be incorporated to encourage social engagement. (R)
- **5.7.** Parapets should have detailing such as cornices, moldings, or variations in brick coursing. (R)
- **5.8.** Buildings should have window head and sill details, which utilize either projecting elements or materials of a contrasting color and texture and highlight the window treatment. (R)
- **5.9.** Developments should meet all building placement and design requirements within the Urban Mixed-Use zoning district located in Article 10.700.13 of the Zoning Ordinance. (R)



## 6.0 PARKING

Mixed-use developments should be designed with common parking areas to serve a large number of businesses and residences. The primary exception may be single-family residences specifically designed with private attached garages. Structured parking facilities and on-street parking are the preferred parking methods for a mixed-use development.

### PARKING GUIDELINES

- **6.1.** Off-street parking should be placed at the rear of buildings and accessed via mid-block entrances or mews streets. (R)
- **6.2.** Stand-alone parking lots and garages should be avoided and incorporated into the development of a larger project where they can be shielded from view of most streets. (R)
- **6.3.** Surface lots are discouraged. All surface lots with 50 or more spaces must be designed as future development sites, placed on the exterior of the overall development, and located away from the view of major thoroughfares. No surface parking lot may contain more than 300 spaces. (R)
- **6.4.** Exposed parking structures should have decorative screening to provide visual interest for pedestrians. (R)
- **6.5.** To encourage everyday use of stairs and promote healthy living, use aesthetic treatments such as vivid colors, artwork, and music within stairwells. Treat stairwells with the same finishes as other structure features. Use windows and skylights to make enclosed stairs more appealing. (S)
- **6.6.** On-street parking should be available on the majority of internal streets. (R)
- **6.7.** Parking and vehicle drives should be located away from building entrances and should not divide the building entrance and the street. (R)
- **6.8.** Extended curbs and other techniques should be incorporated to create planting areas and break up long rows of on-street parking. Extended curbs may also be used to define pedestrian crossings. (R)
- **6.9.** Developments should meet all parking requirements within the Urban Mixed-Use zoning district located in Article 10.700.12 of the Zoning Ordinance. (R)



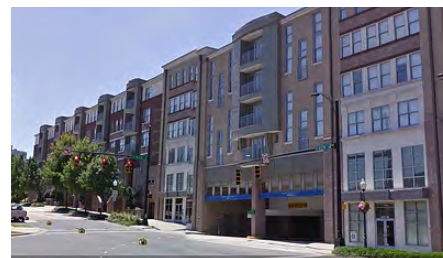
Decorative screening for parking structures



Extended curbs for on-street parking, planting areas, and pedestrian crossings



Parking structures incorporated into the development with retail and residential to shield the view from streets and pedestrians.





Pedestrian connectivity and amenities through development



Pedestrian amenities along the streetscape



Shaded pedestrian pathways

## 7.0 PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

An interconnected street, bike, and trail system provides linkages to local shopping, services, housing, and amenities, as well as linkages between adjacent developments. Disconnected developments isolate land uses and force all trips, whether by car, foot or bicycle, onto the arterial street system. Though developments should be designed for all modes of transportation, special attention should be made for pedestrian amenities.

### PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY GUIDELINES

- **7.1.** Developments should be sufficiently compact to allow people to comfortably walk between major uses without moving their car. (R)
- **7.2.** The physical design of the project and pedestrian amenities should create an attractive, inviting, and safe pedestrian environment. (R)
- **7.3.** Developments should incorporate a variety of pedestrian amenities such as street trees, landscaping, outdoor patio seating, benches, bus shelters, trash receptacles, sidewalk displays, bicycle racks, bicycle repair stations, and pedestrian lighting. Larger projects should provide maps and signage oriented to pedestrians with mileage and key destination points in the area. (R)
- **7.4.** In general, a minimum of eight feet (8') is desired for street trees and furniture; a minimum of seven feet (7') is desired for the clear pedestrian path along minor streets and a minimum twelve feet (12') along major streets; and a minimum twenty feet (20') is desired for a supplemental zone which may include outdoor dining, balconies, porches, terraces, landscape and water features, plazas, and incidental display and sales. (R)
- **7.5.** Pedestrian walkways should be incorporated through sites, connecting entrances, buildings, and the sidewalks. (R)
- **7.6.** Where public parkland, trail system, or residential development is adjacent to the site, developments should provide a pedestrian/bicycle connection from the development. The planting of trees along the connection is encouraged to provide shade for pedestrians. (R)
- **7.7.** Shade and shelter amenities should be incorporated to provide refuge for pedestrians during the summer months. Shaded sidewalks should be provided alongside building frontages adjacent to or facing streets or parking. Buildings with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramps connecting its entrance to the public sidewalk the should also be shaded. (R)
- **7.8.** Traffic calming measures such curb extensions/neck downs and raised pedestrian crossings are encouraged to provide a sense of safety for pedestrians. (R)
- **7.9.** Developments should meet all street tree and sidewalk requirements within the Urban Mixed-Use zoning district located in Article 10.700.10 of the Zoning Ordinance. (R)



## 8.0 SUSTAINABLE SITE FEATURES

An important health component of Plano's environment is the relationship between buildings or site improvements and their natural setting. Developments should respect Plano's natural setting and incorporate sustainable features that will extend the life expectancy of a building or site and benefit future generations.

### SUSTAINABLE SITE FEATURES GUIDELINES

- **8.1.** The development should be designed to maximize the use of captured stormwater for landscape elements. Stormwater management techniques such as permeable pavement, grassy swales/buffer strips, stormwater ponds, bioretention areas, and other structural controls are encouraged be incorporated into the site to provide infiltration, filtration, and pollutant removal of stormwater runoff. Functional stormwater features may be designed as water features and other amenities. (S)
- **8.2.** Water conservation techniques such as drop irrigation systems, rainwater collection and harvesting, and drought tolerant landscaping should be incorporated into the development. Water-retention capacity of soil should be improved by increasing organic matter (e.g., adding compost). Irrigation systems should be designed in such a way that trees, shrubs, and ground cover are irrigated in separate hydrozones so watering can be discontinued by zone as plants become established. (R)
- **8.3.** Renewable micro-power generation, such as solar, should be incorporated on rooftops, parking lot shade structures, or parking garages. Other renewable energy sources may be incorporated into the site such as geothermal or wind. (S)
- **8.4.** Roof materials should comply with Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Energy Star™ Cool Roof Program specifications. (S)
- **8.5.** Businesses should seek Plano's Green Business Certification. (S)
- **8.6.** Builders should participate in Plano's Construction & Demolition Recycling Program. (S)
- **8.7.** Developments should incorporate recycling facilities into the design of the site. (R)
- **8.8.** Certifications in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), Enterprise Green Communities Certification, International Living Future Institute's Living Building Challenge, One Planet Community, WELL Building Institute's WELL Building Standard, or Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) is encouraged. (S)



Solar panels integrated into a development



Solar panels incorporated into parking shade structures



Stormwater feature - grassy swales



Stormwater feature - permeable pavement



Cool roof feature - live (green) roof

## 9.0 ACTIVE OPEN SPACE

The pedestrian orientation and compact organization of mixed-use developments make the design of the public realm critical. Creating public spaces where people have the opportunity to organize, such as a public outdoor market or festival, or informally gather, such as to pursue leisure or social activity, are both necessary and desirable in mixed-use centers. This type of activity is dependent on the presence of people in the same physical environment, whether it is a sidewalk or a public plaza. Despite limited land areas, mixed-use developments can offer special gathering places, focal points, and vistas through proper design.

### ACTIVE OPEN SPACE GUIDELINES

- **9.1.** The site design, including the arrangement of buildings, streets, and open spaces, should enhance and support public space. Where possible, buildings should be arranged to provide views and access to open spaces. (R)
- **9.2.** Active uses such as retail, cafes, restaurants, residential, and office uses that provide pedestrian traffic should be considered as appropriate uses to line public parks, trails, and open spaces. (R)
- **9.3.** During the site assessment process, identify areas that could accommodate moderate and large groups. To find areas that may encourage social connection, look for shade trees, scenic views, or natural water features. Preserve or create natural terrain to support play such as planting trees and grasses or building berms and hills. (R)
- **9.4.** Flexible multi-use spaces such as public plazas should be incorporated into the development for placemaking features and activities. These may be incorporated through smaller social spaces designed throughout a development. (R) These include, but are not limited to:
  - Food based placemaking (food trucks, cafes, farmers markets)
  - Health based placemaking (exercise equipment, trails, yoga)
  - Event based placemaking (venue and space for concerts, markets, festivals)
  - Arts/culture based placemaking (performance venues, arts, movie nights)
  - Specialty parks (dog parks, community gardens, skate parks)
- **9.5.** Plazas, fountains, gazebos, playgrounds, and ponds should be incorporated to enhance the usable open space. Shade structures and drinking fountains should be provided to respond to Plano's climate, encourage healthy habits, and support longer play. (R)
- **9.6.** Outdoor recreational areas, pathways, and trails should be illuminated to promote safety for all pedestrians. (R)
- **9.7.** Bike racks should be sited in all commercial areas and all cycling destinations as near to the immediate destination as possible. The bike racks should be in full public view and easily accessible from the cycle path, sidewalk and/or road. The siting of bicycle racks should not impede wheelchair or pedestrian access. (R)
- **9.8.** Developments should meet all usable open space requirements within the Urban Mixed-Use zoning district located in Article 10.700.11 of the Zoning Ordinance. (R)



Designing active uses around open space



Designing space for placemaking events



Health-based placemaking



Creating active multi-use destinations



# COMMUNITY DESIGN ASSESSMENT *for mixed-use developments*

## 10.0 DISTINCTIVENESS

Buildings and streetscapes within mixed-use developments should be physically distinctive from other developments. The design process should enhance Plano's quality of life by creating a positive emotional attachment between individuals and their surroundings. This emotional attachment to one's physical surroundings, in turn, reinforces a "sense of place" and desirability with the surroundings.

### DISTINCTIVENESS GUIDELINES

- **10.1.** Public art should be incorporated into streetscapes and public spaces to create interesting features, but should not obstruct pedestrian paths. (R)
- **10.2.** The effective use of different textures, patterns, colors, and materials should be utilized for paved surfaces within privately maintained areas to enhance the design impact of the development. (R)
- **10.3.** A unified theme for pedestrian amenities (light poles, benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, bus stops) and sign design is encouraged to provide a visual, cohesive connection. (R)
- **10.4.** Landmarks and focal points should be incorporated into the site design to give visual and symbolic interest to the development. (R)
- **10.5.** Entryways into the development should incorporate identifiable characteristics or features that establish a sense of arrival into the development. (R)
- **10.6.** Exterior illumination of building walls, landscaping, walkways, public art, and parking areas should be incorporated into the development to provide an opportunity to highlight unique architectural characteristics. Suspended cable lights may be used for animating and down-lighting pedestrian passages, open structures, mews, and other exterior locations. Light glare and/or light trespass should be avoided to manage ambient light levels. (R)
- **10.7.** The primary entrance design should include enhanced exterior light fixtures such as wall sconces, light coves with concealed light sources, ground-mounted accent lights, or decorative pedestal lights. (R)



Public art and pedestrian focal point



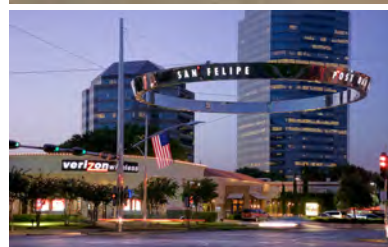
Public art and exterior illumination



Utilizing a variety of materials and designs for paved surfaces



Exterior illumination of walkways



Incorporating distinctive features for pedestrian and vehicle travel









CITY OF PLANO, TEXAS  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
1520 K AVENUE, SUITE 250  
PLANO, TEXAS 75074

[WWW.PLANOPLANNING.ORG](http://WWW.PLANOPLANNING.ORG)

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## Community Design Assessment for Mixed-Use Developments - Assessment Matrix

1.0 Location and Context Sensitivity							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
1.1	Each use (residential, office, retail, civic) should be appropriate in this location.	Required		Concept Plan or Preliminary Site Plan	Is each use appropriate in the proposed location?		
1.2	The development should be a natural fit with the larger surrounding area and designed in such a way that it is well-integrated with adjacent land uses.	Required		Concept Plan or Preliminary Site Plan	Is the development well-integrated with adjacent land uses? For example, are there pedestrian and vehicle connections to existing uses? Does the development discourage roadways or surface parking lots that divide activities?		
1.3	The development should consider impact on surrounding uses.	Required		Concept Plan or Preliminary Site Plan	Has the developer met with adjacent neighborhoods? Is the development providing screening for existing single-family neighborhoods?		
1.4	The juxtaposition of uses should be complementary so that lower density residential areas are buffered from more intense uses. For example, townhouses could serve as a buffer between single-family detached homes and retail centers.	Required		Concept Plan or Preliminary Site Plan	Do uses transition in intensity from the core to the outer edge? Are transition uses such as townhomes designed in the development to buffer single-family uses from commercial uses?		
1.5	Transitions in building heights (setbacks) and densities should be gradual in order to avoid abrupt changes in scale, especially when adjacent to residential development. Standards within the Regional Employment zoning district provide a reference for desired setbacks when adjacent to residential zoning districts.	Required		Concept Plan or Preliminary Site Plan	If development is adjacent to single-family uses, does it meet the setback and height standards of the Regional Employment zoning district? Do building heights and densities avoid abrupt changes?		
1.6	The mixed-use development should comply with requirements for adequate public facilities and services.	Required		Concept Plan or Preliminary Site Plan	Has the project been reviewed by Public Works and Engineering to ensure adequate infrastructure is available? Has the project completed a Traffic Impact Analysis (if needed)?		






2.0 Development Size							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
2.1	New developments should be a minimum 50 acres in size or should be adjacent and integrated with an existing mixed-use development or separated from a thoroughfare of Type “C” or smaller.	Required		Development Plan	Is the development a minimum 50 acres or adjacent and integrated with an existing mixed-use development?		
3.0 Street and Block Layout							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
3.1	The development should be organized into blocks created by a grid of streets. A variety of street types and block sizes (not to exceed 3 acres or 600 feet in length) may be incorporated into the street grid. Exceptions are allowed for parks, schools, and hospitals.	Required		Development Plan	What are the block sizes for the development?		
3.2	Where possible, provide bikeways within the street network.	Supplementary		Preliminary Site Plan	Are bikeways, lanes, or signed routes within the street network?		
3.3	All streets within mixed-use developments should be constructed in accordance with the Urban Mixed-Use (UMU) zoning district.	Required		Development Plan	Does the development meet all street requirements of UMU district?		
4.0 Integration of Uses							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
4.1	If the development is phased, the first phase should be sufficient to stand on its own as a mixed-use development. Please see the Urban Mixed-Use (UMU) zoning district for additional use regulations regarding the first phase of development.	Required		Development Plan	Does the first phase of the development stand on its own as a mixed-use development? Does the first phase meet UMU nonresidential space requirements?		
4.2	Residential uses should be integrated within the development and not isolated, so that the range of amenities such as shops, restaurants and public spaces are available and easily accessible to residents. Uses should be both horizontally and vertically integrated.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Are residential uses integrated within the development? Are uses both horizontally and vertically integrated?		
4.3	Developments should meet all mixed-use requirements in the Urban Mixed-Use (UMU) zoning district.	Required		Development Plan	Does the development contain three or more uses? Does the development meet all mixed-use percentage requirements of UMU district?		





5.0 Architectural Character							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
5.1	Development design should utilize a variety of complementary building materials such as glass, native stone, clay-fired brick or tile, metal, wood, or a combination of these materials. A minimum of three building materials are encouraged.	Required		Façade Plan - Site Plan	Does the development utilize a variety of building materials? Are a minimum three building materials incorporated?		
5.2	The first floors of buildings should clearly create a comfort level for pedestrian and potential customers. Doors and windows should be nearly continuous along street fronts to create a seamless relationship between the interior and exterior of buildings and enliven the facade. Windows along streets should be spaced with a specific rhythm and not create long areas of flat, solid spaces along streets. Please see the Urban Mixed-Use zoning district for exceptions and additional building placement standards regarding permeability of first floor.	Required		Façade Plan - Site Plan	What is the permeability of the first floor? Are doors and windows continuous along street fronts?		
5.3	The primary entrance should be architecturally prominent and clearly visible from the abutting street and may include architectural details such as arches, friezes, tile work, murals, or moldings. Entrances may also include planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaping or seating and/or prominent three-dimensional features such as chimneys and clock towers.	Required		Façade Plan - Site Plan	Are the primary entrances architecturally prominent with architectural details? Are planters, wing walls, or three dimensional features utilized in the entrance design?		
5.4	Buildings with facades longer than fifty feet (50') should have their facades broken up into smaller areas through the use of varying façade setbacks, arcades, awnings, canopies, and architectural features such as plazas, towers elements, bay windows, balconies, restaurant patios, columns, or other means.	Required		Façade Plan - Site Plan	Are building facades longer than 50' broken up into smaller areas? What architectural features are utilized to break up the facades?		







5.0 Architectural Character (Continued)							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
5.5	If a building sides or backs to a street, public open space, or adjacent developments, the side or rear facade should be treated in the same architectural style and material as the front facade. This includes but is not limited to the same roof treatment, building material, and window treatment. All buildings should carry the roof treatment and facade articulation around the entire building, including the rear side.	Required		Façade Plan - Site Plan	Are the side and rear facades treated in the same architectural style and material as the front facade?		
5.6	Rooflines should be interrupted with gables or other architectural elements to break up the building profile. If sloping roofs are incorporated, two or more sloping planes are encouraged. Roof decks may be incorporated to encourage social engagement.	Required		Façade Plan - Site Plan	Are the rooflines interrupted to break up the building profile? If sloping roofs are incorporated, are two or more sloping planes utilized?		
5.7	Parapets should have detailing such as cornices, moldings, trip, or variations in brick coursing.	Required		Façade Plan - Site Plan	Do parapets have detailing? What type of parapet detailing is included?		
5.8	Buildings should have window head and sill details, which utilize either projecting elements or materials of a contrasting color and texture and highlight the window treatment.	Required		Façade Plan - Site Plan	Are window head and sill details utilized with either projecting elements or materials of a contrasting color or texture?		
5.9	Developments should meet all Building Placement and Design requirements within the Urban Mixed-Use zoning district.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Does the development meet all Building Placement and Design requirements of UMU district?		



6.0 Parking Guidelines							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
6.1	Off-street parking should be placed at the rear of buildings and accessed via mid-block entrances or mews streets.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Are parking garages within the development placed at the rear of the building and accessed via mid-block or mews streets?		
6.2	Stand-alone parking lots and garages should be avoided and incorporated into the development of a larger project where they can be shielded from view of most streets.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Are stand alone parking garages avoided in the development? Are parking garages incorporated or wrapped with retail and residential uses?		
6.3	Surface lots are discouraged and should be placed on the exterior of the overall development or on land that can be used as future developments sites.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	If surface parking lots are proposed, are they designated for future development sites?		
6.4	Exposed parking structures should have decorative screening to provide visual interest for pedestrians.	Required		Façade Plan - Site Plan	Do all exposed parking structures have decorative screening?		
6.5	To encourage everyday use of stairs and promote healthy living, use aesthetic treatments such as vivid colors, artwork, and music within stairwells. Treat stairwells with the same finishes as other structure features. Use windows and skylights to make enclosed stairs more appealing.	Supplementary		Building Permit	Does the parking structure utilize aesthetic treatments for the stairs that would encourage everyday use of stairs?		
6.6	On-street parking should be available on the majority of internal streets.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Is on-street parking available on the majority of internal streets within the development?		
6.7	Parking and vehicle drives should be located away from building entrances and should not divide the building entrance and the street.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Are parking and vehicle drives located away from building entrances?		





6.0 Parking Guidelines (Continued)							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
6.8	Extended curbs and other techniques should be incorporated to create planting areas and break up long rows of on-street parking. Extended curbs may also be used to define pedestrian crossings.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Are long rows of on-street parking broken up with extended curbs or planting areas?		
6.9	Developments should meet all Parking requirements within the Urban Mixed-Use (UMU) zoning district.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Does the development meet all Parking requirements of UMU district?		








7.0 Pedestrian Connectivity							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
7.1	Developments should be sufficiently compact to allow people to comfortably walk between major uses without moving their car.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Are parking structures located conveniently in the development where pedestrians can access multiple destinations? Do sidewalks provide pedestrian shelter from weather? Are uses seamlessly situated to avoid large blank spaces such as surface parking lots?		
7.2	The physical design of the project and pedestrian amenities should create an attractive, inviting, and safe pedestrian environment.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Does the development provide pedestrian amenities? Are the outside spaces illuminated? Are there public places designed for people to socialize?		
7.3	Developments should incorporate a variety of pedestrian amenities such as street trees, landscaping, outdoor patio seating, benches, bus shelters, trash receptacles, sidewalk displays, bicycle racks, bicycle repair stations, and pedestrian lighting. Larger projects should provide maps and signage oriented to pedestrians with mileage and key destination points in the area.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	What type of pedestrian amenities are provided? Are there a variety of amenities? Do larger projects provide maps and signage oriented to pedestrians?		
7.4	In general, a minimum of eight feet (8') is desired for street trees and furniture; a minimum of seven feet (7') is desired for the clear pedestrian path along minor streets and a minimum twelve feet (12') along major streets; and a minimum twenty feet (20') is desired for a supplemental zone which may include outdoor dining, balconies, porches, terraces, landscape and water features, plazas, and incidental display and sales.	Required		Site Plan	Does the development meet the size requirements for street trees and furniture; pedestrian paths; and the supplemental zone? Not all streets will have a supplemental zone.		
7.5	Pedestrian walkways should be incorporated through sites, connecting entrances, buildings, and the sidewalks.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Are pedestrian walkways incorporated through the site? If blocks are longer than 600', are public pedestrian walkways incorporated through uses?		
7.6	Where public parkland, trail system, or residential development is adjacent to the site, developments should provide a pedestrian/bicycle connection from the development. The planting of trees along the connection is encouraged to provide shade for pedestrians.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Do developments provide shaded pedestrian/bicycle connections to adjacent parkland, trail system, or residential development?		





7.0 Pedestrian Connectivity (Continued)							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
7.7	Shade and shelter amenities should be incorporated to provide refuge for pedestrians during the summer months. Shaded sidewalks should be provided alongside building frontages adjacent to or facing streets or parking. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramps alongside the buildings should also be shaded.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Are shade and shelter amenities incorporated into the development alongside of building frontages adjacent to or facing streets or parking? Are ADA ramps shaded?		
7.8	Building entrances should be located under a shade device such as an awning or portico.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan or Façade Plan - Site Plan	Do building entrances have shade devices?		
7.9	Traffic calming measures such as curb extensions/neck downs and raised pedestrian crossings are encouraged to provide a sense of safety for pedestrians.	Required		Site Plan or Civil Plan	Are traffic calming measures incorporated into the development? What type of measures are included? Do crosswalks include curb extensions or raised crossings?		
7.10	Developments should meet all Street Tree and Sidewalk requirements within the Urban Mixed-Use (UMU) zoning district.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Does the development meet all Street Tree and Sidewalk requirements of UMU district?		










8.0 Sustainable Site Features							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
8.1	The development should be designed to maximize the use of captured stormwater for landscape elements. Stormwater management techniques such as permeable pavement, grassy swales/buffer strips, stormwater ponds, bioretention areas, and other structural controls are encouraged be incorporated into the site to provide infiltration, filtration, and pollutant removal of stormwater runoff. Functional stormwater features may be designed as water features and other amenities.	Supplementary		Site Plan	Does the development include stormwater management techniques? What type of stormwater techniques are incorporated?		
8.2	Water conservation techniques such as drop irrigation systems, rainwater collection and harvesting, and drought tolerant landscaping should be incorporated into the development. Water-retention capacity of soil should be improved by increasing organic matter (e.g., adding compost). Irrigation systems should be designed in such a way that trees, shrubs, and ground cover are irrigated in separate hydrozones so watering can be discontinued by zone as plants become established.	Required		Site Plan	Does the development include water conservation techniques? What type of water conservation techniques are incorporated?		
8.3	Renewable micro-power generation, such as solar, should be incorporated on rooftops, parking lot shade structures, or parking garages. Other renewable energy sources may be incorporated into the site such as geothermal or wind.	Supplementary		Site Plan	Does the development include renewable energy sources? What type of renewable energy sources are provided?		
8.4	Roof materials should comply with Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Energy Star™ Cool Roof Program specifications.	Supplementary		Building Permit	Does 100% of all roof areas comply with EPA's Energy Star Cool Roof Program, as it exists or be amended? Have equivalent alternatives been approved by the Building Official?		
8.5	Developers and businesses should seek Plano's Green Business Certification.	Required		Post Construction	Does the developer intend to participate in Plano's Green Business Certification Program?		
8.6	Developers and builders should participate in Plano's Construction & Demolition Recycling Program.	Required		Project Construction	Does the builder intend to participate in Plano's Construction & Demolition Recycling Program?		
8.7	Certifications in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), Enterprise Green Communities Certification, International Living Future Institute's Living Building Challenge, One Planet Community, WELL Building Institute's WELL Building Standard, or Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) is encouraged.	Supplementary		Post Construction	Will any building or development certifications be pursued? Which certification(s)?		

9.0 Active Open Space							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
9.1	The site design, including the arrangement of buildings, streets, and open spaces, should enhance and support public space. Where possible, buildings should be arranged to provide views and access to open spaces.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Is open space incorporated into the development and not situated on the edge? Do uses provide views of the open space?		
9.2	Active uses such as retail, cafes, restaurants, residential, and office uses that provide pedestrian traffic should be considered as appropriate uses to line public parks, trails, and open spaces.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Are uses integrated with the open spaces? Do restaurants, retail, residential, and office uses line parks, trails, and open space?		
9.3	During the site assessment process, identify areas that could accommodate moderate and large groups. To find areas that may encourage social connection, look for shade trees, scenic views, or natural water features. Preserve or create natural terrain to support play such as planting trees and grasses or building berms and hills.	Required		Concept Plan or Preliminary Site Plan	Have open space areas been identified to accommodate moderate and large groups? Has the development preserved or created natural terrain?		
9.4	Building fronts and entries should be articulated and be oriented toward streets, and should be arranged to create courtyards and other human scale spaces.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan or Façade Plan - Site Plan	Do buildings create courtyards or other human scale spaces? Are building fronts articulated and oriented towards the streets?		
9.5	Flexible multi-use spaces such as public plazas should be incorporated into the development for placemaking features and activities. These may be incorporated through smaller social spaces designed throughout a development. These include, but are not limited to: - Food based placemaking (food trucks, cafes, farmers markets) - Health based placemaking (exercise equipment, trails, yoga) - Event based placemaking (venue and space for concerts, markets, festivals) - Arts/culture based placemaking (performance venues, arts, movie nights) - Specialty parks (dog parks, community gardens, skate parks)	Required		Site Plan	Has an area been identified for multi-use placemaking activities? What type of placemaking activities are proposed for the development? Does the development include at least one placemaking activity from food based, health based, event based, arts/cultural based, and specialty based?		



9.0 Active Open Space (Continued)							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
9.6	Plazas, fountains, gazebos, playgrounds, and ponds should be incorporated to enhance the usable open space. Shade structures and drinking fountains should be provided to respond to Plano's climate, encourage water consumption, and support longer play.	Required		Site Plan	Does the development include plazas, fountains, gazebos, playgrounds (splash parks), or ponds? Are shade structures and drinking fountains provided within these areas?		
9.7	Outdoor recreational areas, pathways, and trails should be illuminated to promote safety for all pedestrians.	Required		Building Permit	Are outdoor recreational areas, pathways, and trails illuminated?		
9.8	Bike racks should be sited in all commercial areas and all cycling destinations as near to the immediate destination as possible. The bike racks should be in full public view and easily accessible from the cycle path, sidewalk and/or road. The siting of bicycle racks should not impede wheelchair or pedestrian access.	Required		Site Plan	Are bike racks sited in all commercial areas and all cycling destinations? Are bike racks in the full public view?		
9.9	Developments should meet all Useable Open Space requirements within the Urban Mixed-Use (UMU) zoning district.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Does the development meet all Useable Open Space requirements of UMU district?		

10.0 Distinctiveness							
Item	Assessment	Requirement	Photo Example	Review Process	Criteria to Review	Developer Assessment Explanation	Staff Assessment
10.1	Public art should be incorporated into streetscapes and public spaces to create interesting features, but should not obstruct pedestrian paths.	Required		Site Plan	Is public art incorporated into streetscapes and public spaces? What type of art is incorporated?		
10.2	The effective use of different textures, patterns, colors, and materials should be utilized for paved surfaces to enhance the design impact of the development.	Required		Building Permit	Are a variety of textures, patterns, colors, and materials utilized for paved surfaces?		
10.3	A unified theme for pedestrian amenities (light poles, benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, bus stops) and sign design is encouraged to provide a visual, cohesive connection.	Required		Building Permit	Do pedestrian amenities and business signs (attached and detached) have a unified theme?		
10.4	Landmarks and focal points should be incorporated into the site design to give visual and symbolic interest to the development.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Do any distinctive features within the development provide landmarks or focal points? What features give the visual and symbolic interest?		
10.5	Entryways should incorporate identifiable characteristics or features that establish a sense of arrival into the development.	Required		Preliminary Site Plan	Do the site entryways establish a sense of arrival into the development? What are the physical characteristics of the entryways? Is there a unified design at all entryways?		
10.6	Exterior illumination of building walls, landscaping, walkways, public art, and parking areas should be incorporated into the development to provide an opportunity to highlight unique architectural characteristics. Suspended cable lights may be used for animating and down-lighting pedestrian passages, open structures, mews, and other exterior locations.	Required		Building Permit	What type of exterior illumination will be incorporated into the development? Will buildings, landscaping, walkways, public art, and parking areas be illuminated?		
10.7	The primary entrance design should include enhanced exterior light fixtures such as wall sconces, light coves with concealed light sources, ground-mounted accent lights, or decorative pedestal lights.	Required		Building Permit	What design and lighting characteristics will the primary entrances include? Will all uses have exterior lighting fixtures incorporated into the entrances?		