

Georgia Department of Community Affairs State Planning Recommendations

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Community development patterns are the way that the location and bulk of buildings, intensity of use, streets, parking, open space and public facilities look and work together. These suggested development patterns can create safe, walkable, economically-sustainable communities. Apply these development patterns to your community's character areas to create or maintain the character of your community.

Additional resources to assist you in establishing development patterns include: the [State Planning Recommendations Bibliography](#); DCA's guidebooks, [Discovering and Planning for Community Character](#), and [Character Areas: Techniques and Guidance](#).

Activity Centers	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	APPLICABLE CHARACTER AREAS
Addition of neighborhood commercial centers on appropriate infill sites to serve surrounding neighborhood.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Light Industrial
Homes, shops, small businesses, and institutions grouped together in villages or attractive mixed use centers that serve adjacent neighborhoods. Centers are very pedestrian friendly, and include pleasant community gathering spaces. Residences bring round-the-clock activity to the area.	Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center
Buildings in centers architecturally integrated with the site and one another, and developed at a scale sufficient in size, bulk and height to provide image identification for the center and the surrounding community.	Rural Village Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial Activity
Location of higher-density attached housing near commercial centers or along arterial roads, and single-family detached housing elsewhere in the neighborhood.	Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial
Nodal or village developments with buildings clustered at center, clearly defined edge surrounded by open space.	Rural Village
Traditional downtown areas maintained as the focal point of the community. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.	Downtown
Use of village centers in new developments that	Rural Village

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accommodate residents' commercial and service needs.	Suburban Developing, Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Light Industrial
Commercial Development	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	APPLICABLE CHARACTER AREAS
Accommodation of "big box" retail in a way that complements surrounding uses, such as breaking up the facade to look like a collection of smaller stores.	Town Center Downtown In-town Corridor Gateway Commercial Redevelopment Regional Activity Center Light Industrial Employment Center
Addition of neighborhood commercial centers on appropriate infill sites to serve surrounding neighborhood.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center
Commercial structures (shopping, warehouses, offices, etc.) located near street front, with parking in rear of buildings, making community more attractive and more pedestrian-friendly.	Rural Village Neighborhood Center Town Center Downtown In-town Corridor Gateway Commercial Redevelopment Regional Activity Center Light Industrial Employment Center
Improvement of sidewalk and street appearance and amenities of commercial centers.	Rural Village Neighborhood Center Town Center Downtown In-town Corridor Gateway Commercial Redevelopment Regional Activity Center Light Industrial Employment Center
Redevelopment of older strip commercial centers in lieu of new construction further down the strip.	Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial
Compact Development	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	APPLICABLE CHARACTER AREAS
New development matching typical densities of older center of community.	Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment

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	Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial
New industry or other major employers located close in to town, making jobs accessible to all residents by way of transit, walking, or bicycling.	Regional Activity Center Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Infill development on vacant sites closer in to the center of the community. These sites, with existing infrastructure in place, are used for new development, matching character of surrounding neighborhood in lieu of more development on greenfield sites.	Rural Village Suburban Built Out Suburban Developing Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Downtown Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Urban growth or service boundary that discourage/prohibits development outside border.	Conservation/Greenspace Linear Greenspace Rural Village Stable Neighborhood, Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Downtown Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial Employment Center
Well-designed development that blends into existing neighborhoods by disguising its density (e.g., small scale apartment buildings, multi-family that looks like a single residence from the street, etc.).	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Declining Neighborhood, Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center In-town Corridor
Transportation & Corridors	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	APPLICABLE CHARACTER AREAS
Street layouts that match those in older parts of community and connect to the existing street network at many points.	Suburban Developing Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center

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	<p>Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial</p>
<p>Facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.</p>	<p>Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Scenic Corridor Major Highway Corridor Employment Center Light Industrial</p>
<p>Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways.</p>	<p>Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Scenic Corridor Employment Center Light Industrial</p>
<p>Clustering high-density development at nodes along major corridors, separated by areas of open space or attractive residential development.</p>	<p>In-town Corridor Gateway Scenic Corridor Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial</p>
<p>Driveway consolidation and inter-parcel connections between parking lots.</p>	<p>Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Scenic Corridor Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial</p>
<p>Developments that have easy access to nearby transit, shopping, schools and other areas where residents travel daily.</p>	<p>Suburban Built Out Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial</p>
<p>Developments with mid-block alleys.</p>	<p>Suburban Developing Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor</p>

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	Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial
Landscaped raised medians separating traffic lanes.	Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Scenic Corridor Major Highway Corridor
Restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.	Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Scenic Corridor Major Highway Corridor
Structures (shopping, warehouses, offices, etc.) located near street front, with parking in rear of buildings, making the corridor more attractive and more pedestrian-friendly.	Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial
Traffic calming measures, such as narrower street widths, raised pedestrian crossings, or rough pavement materials.	Suburban Built Out Suburban Developing Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment In-town Corridor Scenic Corridor
Housing	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	APPLICABLE CHARACTER AREAS
Accessory housing units that provide rental opportunities for small households and income generation for homeowners to increase affordability.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment
Distribution of affordably-priced homes throughout locality/region.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial
Garages located to the rear of each property, or on-street parking is used for residents' automobiles.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment
Houses located near the street, with large front porches that encourage interaction with neighbors.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood

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	Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment
New housing opportunities that are created out of former, underused commercial, warehouse, or industrial spaces.	Town Center Regional Activity Center In Town Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial
New residential development that matches the mix of housing types and styles of older, closer-in neighborhoods of the community.	Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment In-town Corridor
New development that reflects traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles, such as smaller lots, orientation to street, mix of housing types, pedestrian access to neighborhood commercial center.	Suburban Developing Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment
Residential development that offers a mix of housing types (single family homes, town homes, live/work units, lofts, over-the-shop, and apartments), densities and prices in the same neighborhood.	Rural Village Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Light Industrial
Residential development with healthy mix of uses (corner groceries, barber shops, drugstores) within easy walking distance of residences.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment
Mix of Uses	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	APPLICABLE CHARACTER AREAS
Addition of new uses to single-use sites (e.g. restaurants and shopping added to office parks).	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Light Industrial Employment Center
New developments that contain a mix of residential, commercial uses and community facilities at small enough scale and proximity to encourage walking between destinations.	Suburban Developing Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Downtown In-town Corridor Gateway Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial Regional Activity Center
Residential developments that incorporate "corner commercial" sites, such as dry cleaning or convenience grocery, or similar retail services.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment

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	Neighborhood Center
Parking	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	APPLICABLE CHARACTER AREAS
Landscaping of parking areas to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses.	Rural Village Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Location of parking at rear or side of buildings to minimize visibility from the street.	Rural Village Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
On-street parking.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Reduced parking requirements for commercial and residential developments, particularly when nearby parking alternatives or public transit is available.	Suburban Developing Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Shared parking arrangements that reduce overall parking needs.	Suburban Developing Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment

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	Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Parking lots that incorporate on-site stormwater mitigation or retention features, such as pervious pavements.	Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Use of landscaped tree islands and medians to break up large expanses of paved parking.	Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Protection of Natural and Cultural Resources	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	APPLICABLE CHARACTER AREAS
Clustering development to preserve open space within the development site.	Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial
Enlisting significant site features (view corridors, water features, farmland, wetlands, etc.) as amenity that shapes identity and character of the development.	Rural Village Rural Residential Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Very large minimum lot size requirements (25+ acres) to limit development density and protect farmland and rural character.	Conservation/Greenspace Linear Greenspace Rural Residential
Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas by	Conservation/Greenspace

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setting them aside as public parks, trails, or greenbelts.	Linear Greenspace
Site plans, building design and landscaping that are sensitive to natural features of the site, including topography and views.	Rural Village Rural Residential Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Using infrastructure availability to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources.	Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Major Highway Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Redevelopment	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	APPLICABLE CHARACTER AREAS
Retrofitting existing residential communities to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity with nearby commercial areas.	Suburban Built Out Suburban Developing Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment
Brownfield redevelopment that converts formerly industrial/ commercial sites to mixed-use developments.	Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Light Industrial
Greyfield redevelopment that converts vacant or under-utilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.	Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Major Highway Corridor Light Industrial
Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center

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	Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Gateway Scenic Corridor Major Highway Corridor Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial
Revitalization of existing neighborhood commercial centers to capture more market activity and serve as community focal points.	Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial
Facilities and Services	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	APPLICABLE CHARACTER AREAS
Community schools developed at smaller scale and located in neighborhoods where students can walk to class.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Light Industrial
Integrating appropriate mixed-use and/or housing development with new school construction to increase walkability and reduce trip generation.	Suburban Developing Suburban Built Out Stable Neighborhood Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Light Industrial
Reuse of existing vacant or underutilized structures (e.g. commercial centers, office spaces, warehouses) to accommodate new community facilities.	Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Light Industrial
Use of common area drain fields and/or neighborhood-scale sewerage treatment systems to reduce parcel size in areas that must be served by septic tanks.	Suburban Developing Declining Neighborhood Neighborhood Redevelopment Neighborhood Center Town Center Regional Activity Center In-town Corridor Commercial Redevelopment Employment Center Light Industrial Industrial