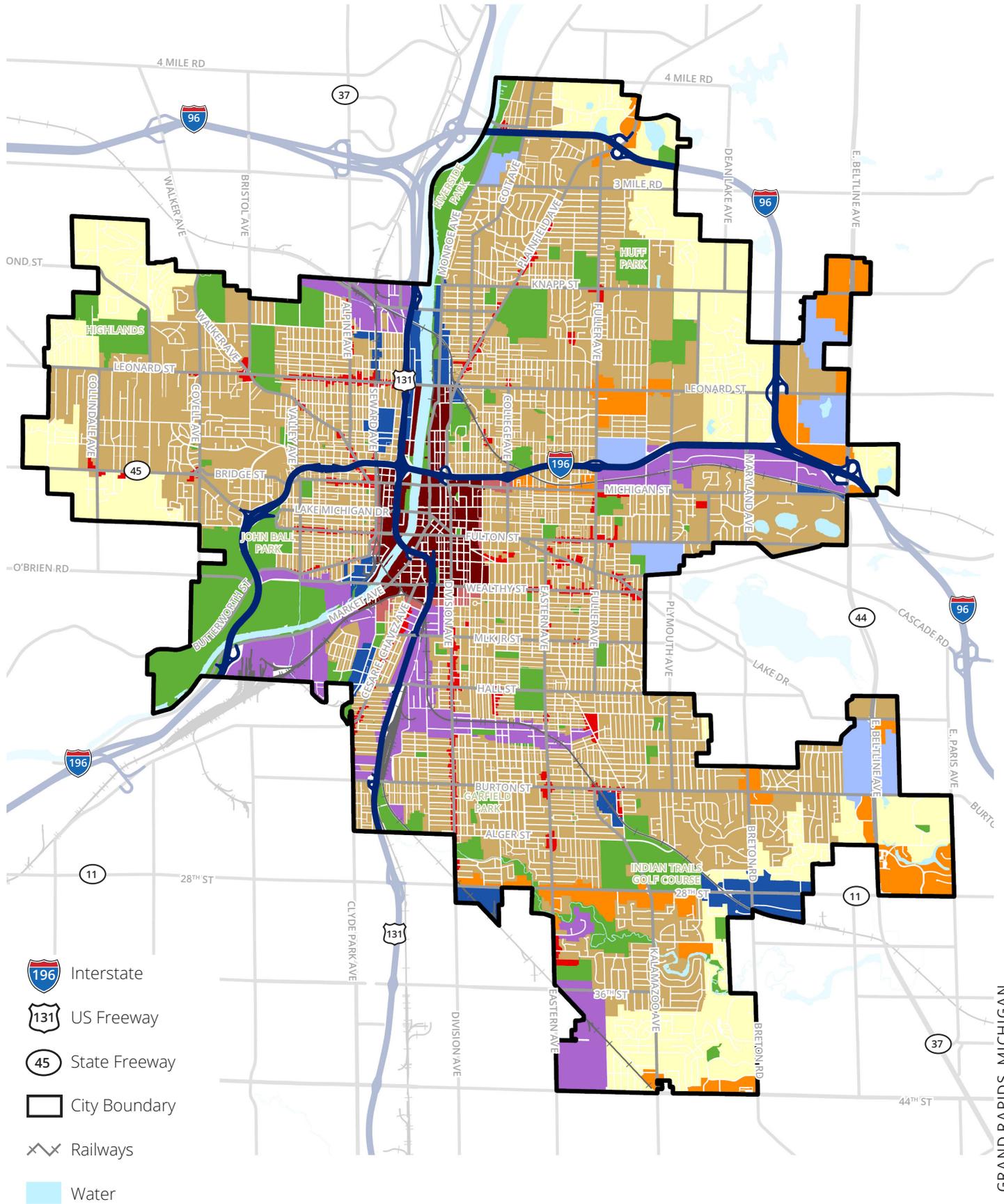

FUTURE CHARACTER AND LAND USE MAP

The Future Character and Land Use Map expresses the City's intent for where and how Grand Rapids should use its land in the future with a particular focus on the character and qualities of development. Each character type describes the intent, land uses, building form, open space, and mobility options intended for the area. They encompass a range of conditions that can apply to places citywide. In this way, the Future Character and Land Use Map depicts appropriate future development patterns throughout the city. It reinforces existing patterns in some areas and supports changes to land use or development patterns in other areas.

The map is a tool for the City to guide decisions about future land use and development over time. It is not a mandate for development or redevelopment but describes the City's expectations regarding the use and character of future development. It will serve as the basis for the City's future zoning ordinance updates and will be implemented through the administration of the zoning ordinance and various public and private development decisions.

-  **DOWNTOWN**
-  **TRANSITIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER**
-  **COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER**
-  **NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**
-  **COMPACT NEIGHBORHOOD**
-  **SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD**
-  **MANUFACTURING & LOGISTICS**
-  **CAMPUS**
-  **INNOVATION CENTER**
-  **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

FUTURE CHARACTER AND LAND USE MAP



GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN



IMPLEMENTING FUTURE CHARACTER

The Future Character and Land Use Map is implemented through the city's Zoning Ordinance. Grand Rapids will evolve with new development as Zoning Ordinance revisions responding to the goals of the CMP are adopted. Zoning is a legal tool that regulates land use, including types of structures that may be built, how they are to be built, where they are to be built, and how they may be used. Each property in the City is assigned to a zoning district. There may be more than one appropriate zoning category for a particular future land use category. The following pages indicate the existing zoning districts that may be appropriate to implement that character type.

Beyond zoning, the character types and design guidelines in this chapter provide additional flexibility and adaptability by encouraging buildings that are responsive to their physical context, supportive of pedestrian-friendly streets, and are designed with materials that will last. Staff and the Planning Commission will consider these elements when evaluating land use decisions with respect to how they conform to the direction in the Community Master Plan.

Describing neighborhood character requires a qualitative assessment. The character types in this chapter identify some of the defining features of the desired future state for different areas of the city that will influence new development design. It is not an exhaustive list of features to consider. Public input, Area Specific Plans, and context-specific implementation of the CMP can help ensure the city evolves in line with the development principles.

The table below distinguishes between the role of the Community Master Plan's Future Character and Land Use Map and the Zoning Ordinance.

COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	ZONING ORDINANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes intended future land use and development characteristics • Defines land uses and development characteristics generally (a policy guide) • Not legally binding, but zoning changes should be “in accordance with” the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines land uses and development characteristics allowed on a piece of land today • More specific and detailed than the Plan • Legal document: departure from zoning requires either an Administrative Departure or a Special Land Use

DEFINED DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

Attributes of urban form and function, including the size and type of buildings and their relationship to the street, the surrounding street and block pattern, parking and access, and land uses.

DOWNTOWN

INTENT

Promote a dense development pattern focused on the close proximity of services, a diversity of uses, and dynamic building styles.

LAND USE

- Many buildings contain multiple uses with restaurants or retail on the ground floor and office space or residential units above.

BUILDING FORM

- Predominantly mid- or high-rise with commercial, institutional, multi-family, or a mix of uses.
- Buildings are located close to the street frontage with streetscape elements and designed with active ground floor uses to support a vibrant pedestrian environment.

OPEN SPACE

- Built open spaces such as parks, plazas, courtyards, and outdoor recreational facilities.
- The visual impact of utilities on the public realm and open space is minimized, particularly within the "no pole" areas defined by City Ordinance.

MOBILITY

- The transportation network supports a "park once" environment defined by a grid street pattern composed of short, walkable blocks.
- Mobility hubs with transit stations, pick-up and drop-off areas, bike parking, and micro-mobility options are provided.

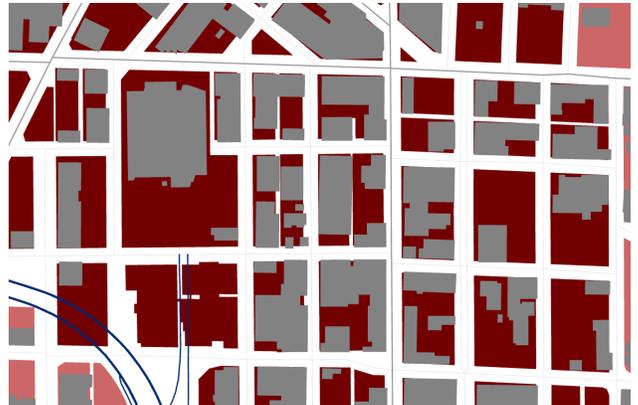
APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICT

- City Center
- Open Space

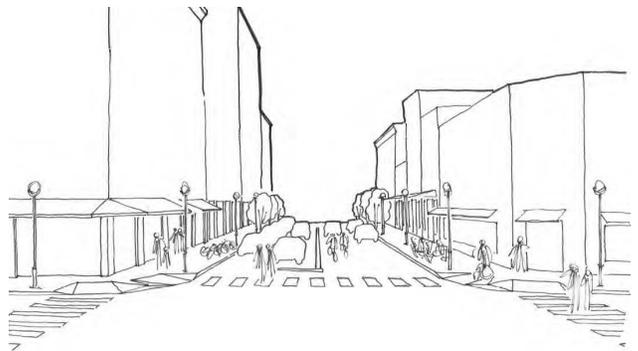
EXAMPLE CHARACTER



EXAMPLE PATTERN



CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: URBAN CENTER



TRANSITIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER

INTENT

Provide a connection between downtown and the surrounding residential or commercial areas and transition the intensity of the downtown development pattern to adjacent areas.

LAND USE

- Many buildings contain a mix of uses such as retail, office, and residential while others may be single-use office or housing.

BUILDING FORM

- Predominantly mid-rise buildings.
- Buildings are typically located close to the street frontage. Some may have setbacks large enough to accommodate active street-level uses, such as outdoor dining.

OPEN SPACE

- Built open spaces such as parks, plazas, courtyards, and outdoor recreational facilities.

MOBILITY

- Defined by a grid street pattern composed of blocks that are similar or slightly larger than those in the center.
- Transit stations, pick-up and drop-off areas, bicycle parking and bicycle share, and micro-mobility options are provided.

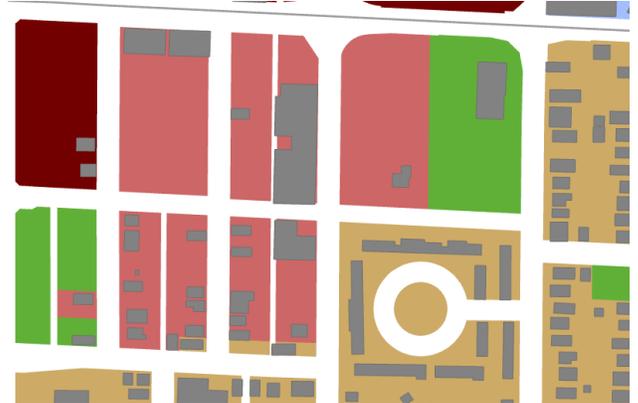
APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Transitional City Center
- Transit Oriented Development
- Open Space

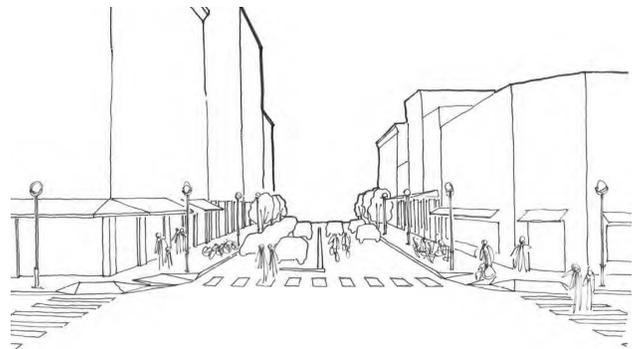
EXAMPLE CHARACTER



EXAMPLE PATTERN



CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: URBAN CENTER



COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER

INTENT

Provide places to live, work, and shop around key intersections and along corridors, to evolve areas into well-connected, walkable places within a 15-minute walk, bike, or transit trip of surrounding neighborhoods.

LAND USE

- Many buildings contain a mix of uses such as retail, office, and residential with a few that may be single-use office or housing.
- These may currently include shopping centers or “big-box” stores along major corridors that are intended to redevelop with more density.

BUILDING FORM

- Predominantly low- to mid-rise with commercial, institutional, multi-family, some light industrial or a mix of uses.
- New buildings are designed with active ground floor uses to support a more vibrant pedestrian environment along corridors.
- Lots are typically larger than in the Neighborhood Center but should evolve over time to create smaller lots with new connections.

OPEN SPACE

- Built open spaces such as parks, plazas, courtyards, and outdoor recreational facilities.

MOBILITY

- Typically located at or near key intersections or on major corridors with transit service.
- These areas have the potential to become less auto-oriented through incremental development and improved multi-modal infrastructure.
- The street network is or will redevelop to be well-connected, with walkable connections along streets and between destinations.

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Commercial
- Neighborhood Office Service
- Planned Redevelopment
- Open Space

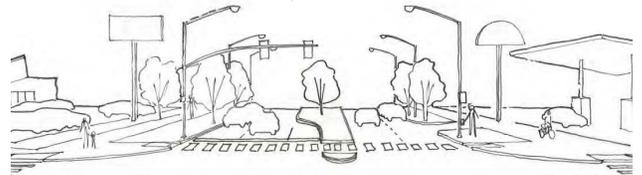
EXAMPLE CHARACTER



EXAMPLE PATTERN



CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: CROSTOWN CONNECTORS



NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

INTENT

Reinforce a pedestrian and transit-friendly environment in a compact area and promote a mix of small-scale retail, service, entertainment, civic, office and residential uses to enhance the vitality of surrounding neighborhoods.

LAND USE

- A variety of retail buildings, restaurants, and personal services at a local, neighborhood scale are provided.
- Commercial uses are concentrated at key intersections to promote walkability in line with the neighborhood nodes.
- Nodes are connected by a variety of housing options and some commercial uses along corridors.

BUILDING FORM

- Typically low-rise buildings. Taller mid-rise buildings are appropriate at corners.
- Buildings are designed with active ground floor uses to support a vibrant pedestrian environment.

OPEN SPACE

- Built open spaces may include plazas, patios, courtyards, small parks, and greenways.

MOBILITY

- Directly accessible from nearby neighborhoods to encourage walking and cycling, and to support the concept of a complete neighborhood.
- The street network is well-connected, designed to slow traffic, and includes complete pedestrian facilities.

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Traditional Business Area
- Neighborhood Office Service
- Transit Oriented Development
- Open Space

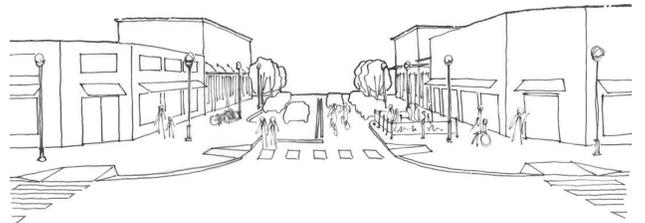
EXAMPLE CHARACTER



EXAMPLE PATTERN



CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS



COMPACT NEIGHBORHOOD

INTENT

Create, maintain, and promote a variety of housing opportunities while enhancing the desired physical characteristics of the City's existing neighborhoods. These areas support small-scale commercial uses and contribute to the vibrancy of Neighborhood Centers. These areas align with the Traditional Neighborhood and Mid-Century Neighborhood classifications.

LAND USE

- Predominantly a mix of housing.
- Small office, commercial, religious, K-12 schools, and other civic uses are integrated at intersections or along major streets.

BUILDING FORM

- Characterized by a mix of housing such as small-lot single-family, ADUs, townhomes or duplexes, and multi-family buildings.

OPEN SPACE

- Privately-owned yards and recreation spaces, plazas, courtyards, rooftop decks, small parks, portions of school properties, and natural open spaces.

MOBILITY

- Well-connected and dense street network with short blocks that accommodate walking, cycling, and transit use.

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Low-Density Residential
- Mixed-Density Residential
- Neighborhood Office Service
- Planned Redevelopment
- Open Space

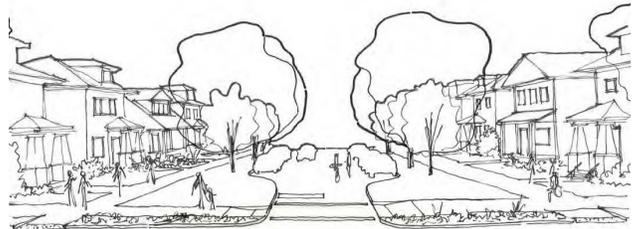
EXAMPLE CHARACTER



EXAMPLE PATTERN



CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL



SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

INTENT

Build on the established development pattern, consisting predominantly of low-density residential development, to evolve these areas into more walkable neighborhoods with new housing types. These areas align with the Modern Era Neighborhood classification.

LAND USE

- Primarily low-density housing.
- Compared to Compact Neighborhoods, these areas have a more uniform housing pattern with larger average lots and longer blocks.
- Religious, K-12 schools, and other civic uses are integrated at intersections or along major streets.

BUILDING FORM

- Characterized by a range of housing sizes and styles, including duplexes and ADUs.
- Setbacks vary but are generally consistent within the block.
- Larger apartment complexes with shared open spaces are also common.

OPEN SPACE

- Private yards and built common areas are typical.
- Public open spaces such as small parks, portions of school properties, and natural open spaces are also common.

MOBILITY

- New development should support a well-connected local street network that provides safe and direct access to neighborhood destinations and helps disperse vehicle traffic.
- Culs-de-sac or curvilinear streets are common. Additional connections for vehicles, as well as people walking and bicycling, should be provided as redevelopment occurs.

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Mixed-Density Residential
- Low-Density Residential
- Neighborhood Office Service
- Planned Redevelopment
- Open Space

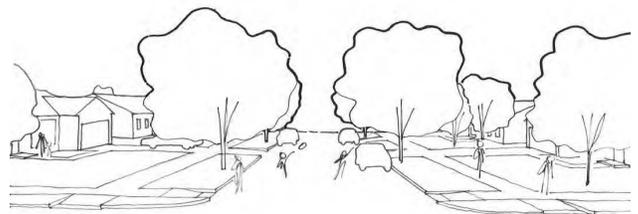
EXAMPLE CHARACTER



EXAMPLE PATTERN



CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL



INNOVATION CENTER

INTENT

Create areas of mixed-use and employment, typically in established areas, that capitalize on the city's history and industry. Accommodate a broad range of flexible employment opportunities, with a focus on active ground floor uses abutting public streets to promote compact, walkable areas.

LAND USE

- Academic, government, religious, or unique community-focused uses located across the city.
- These may also include office, research and development, studios, light manufacturing, hotels, multi-family residential, retail, restaurants, and services.

BUILDING FORM

- Building form varies depending on the needs of the primary user, resulting in a range of building types and sizes.
- These areas may include older industrial structures that have been adaptively reused or retrofitted to include small retail, commercial, or maker spaces.
- New buildings are designed with active ground floor uses.

OPEN SPACE

- Open spaces such as plazas, patios, and courtyards may include landscaping. Additional tree canopy should be prioritized in these spaces.
- Public spaces such as small parks and natural open spaces are also common.

MOBILITY

- Streets serve all travel modes with frequent pedestrian crossings, medians, and refuges.
- Transit stations, pick-up and drop-off areas, bike parking, and micro-mobility options should be provided.

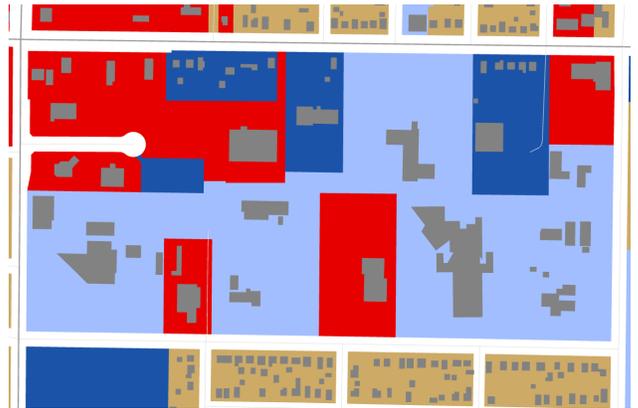
APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Transitional City Center
- Commercial
- Transit Oriented Development
- Mixed-Density Residential
- Planned Redevelopment
- Open Space

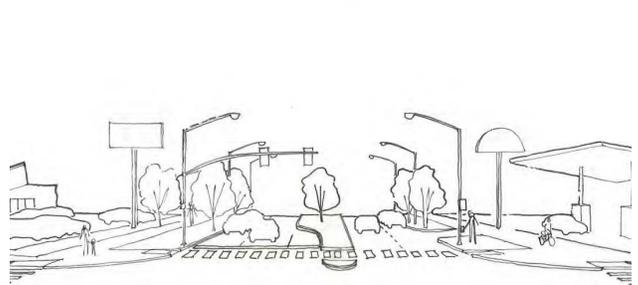
EXAMPLE CHARACTER



EXAMPLE PATTERN



CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: CROSSTOWN CONNECTORS



MANUFACTURING & LOGISTICS

INTENT

Reserve land for industrial activities. Allow for a wide range of types, services, and wage levels in sectors such as production, manufacturing, research, distribution, and logistics while minimizing impacts on adjacent land uses.

LAND USE

- Primary uses include manufacturing, research and development, warehousing, distribution, and other similar uses.

BUILDING FORM

- Characterized by large, often single-story buildings on large parcels set back from the street.

OPEN SPACE

- Recreational facilities, picnic areas, walking trails, patios, and courtyards provided on individual sites for use by employees.
- Landscaping should be incorporated as a buffer between different land uses.

MOBILITY

- Typically located along rail corridors or interstates. Streets and sites prioritize access for motor vehicle and truck traffic.
- Where possible, transit stations, bike parking and bike share, and micro-mobility options should be provided.

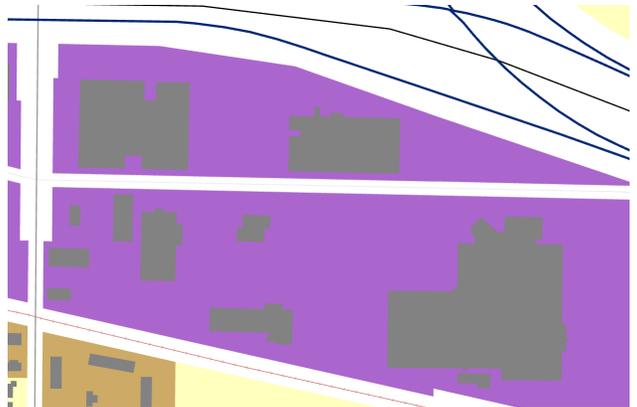
APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Industrial Transportation
- Commercial
- Planned Redevelopment
- Open Space

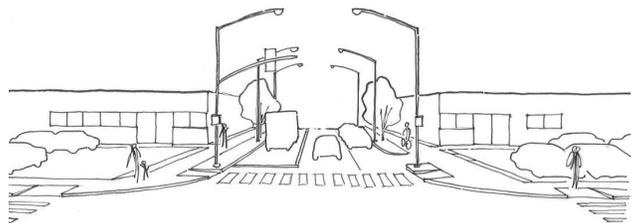
EXAMPLE CHARACTER



EXAMPLE PATTERN



CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: MAKER/INDUSTRIAL



CAMPUS

INTENT

Campus areas are often master planned and include a variety of administrative, professional, educational, civic, religious, athletic or recreational, and medical office uses.

LAND USE

- Defined by larger, campus-like settings with multiple buildings and defined edges.
- Uses are flexible and may change in response to changing development dynamics.

BUILDING FORM

- Characterized by a wide range of development characteristics to match the operational needs of the organization.
- Typically larger footprint buildings with multiple stories offering flexible space for organizations.
- Sites are developed with large, shared parking areas adjacent to buildings with large setbacks from the street.

OPEN SPACE

- Lawns, passive landscaped areas, park space, and natural open spaces are common.
- Improved open spaces such as plazas, courtyards, and outdoor recreational facilities may also be appropriate.
- Private plazas and pocket parks may serve as amenities for employees.

MOBILITY

- Typically located along at least one major street with an internal street network that encourages walking and biking, particularly where sites are located near transit routes and stops.
- Streets may be publicly or privately maintained.

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Institutional Campus
- Transit Oriented Development
- Planned Redevelopment
- Open Space

EXAMPLE CHARACTER



EXAMPLE PATTERN



PARKS & OPEN SPACE

INTENT

Accommodate natural parks or park-like settings and preserve identified open space land and uses from development pressures, including the Grand River and other environmental areas.

LAND USE

- Support a variety of the city's parks and recreation programming.
- Open Space may range in scale from small community gardens or natural areas integrated into neighborhoods to large, regional parks.
- Includes private golf courses that function as open space.

BUILDING FORM

- Building sizes vary depending on the purpose of the building and the setting, but are typically small and low-rise.
- Buildings may be necessary to support or service recreational and educational facilities.

OPEN SPACE

- Open space is the primary element in this character type and is integrated throughout the city and includes both passive open spaces and active park facilities.

MOBILITY

- Internal transportation networks typically consist of pedestrian and bicycle paths, but may include driveways and low-speed streets to provide access to internal facilities.

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Open Space

EXAMPLE CHARACTER



EXAMPLE PATTERN

