

Amendment 58 to Council Bill No. 28 -2023

BY: Deb Jung

Legislative Day 11

Date: 10/02/2023

Amendment No. 58

*(This Amendment makes the following changes to HoCo by Design Technical appendix B:
Character Areas:*

- *Moves Village Activity Centers from Areas to Transform to Areas to Strengthen;*
- *Amends the narrative of how Village Activity Centers should transition between uses and how public spaces should be included between buildings;*
- *Removes the section titled "Lot Size and Building Placement" in its entirety; and*
- *Removes a reference to buildings being up to five stories tall.*

1 In the *HoCo By Design* General Plan, attached to this Act as Exhibit A, amend the following
2 pages as indicated in this Amendment:

- 3 • Technical Appendix B: Character Areas: 1, 2, 42, 43, and 44.
4

5 Correct all page numbers, numbering, and formatting within this Act to accommodate this
6 amendment.
7

Introduction

HoCo By Design uses the term “character areas” to describe unique and discernible areas of the community depicted on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) in the Growth and Conservation Framework chapter. The categories describe important elements that work together to instill a sense of place (or visitor experience) for residents, customers, or employees in the character area. A character-based planning approach prioritizes site design, public realm, building form and massing, and architecture over general land use and density.

Included in this appendix are detailed descriptions of the character areas and their typical street and block patterns, open space and natural resources, lot size and building placement, building types and massing, and transportation considerations. While the densities and building heights described for each character area represent intentions for contiguous properties in an area, there may be individual buildings that are larger or smaller than these ranges for a specific parcel. The County’s Zoning Regulations and Subdivision and Land Development

Regulations will provide more specific rules and standards. These will include provisions for permitted land uses, densities, block sizes, setbacks, parking, and landscaping using HoCo By Design’s general character area guidance and recommendations.

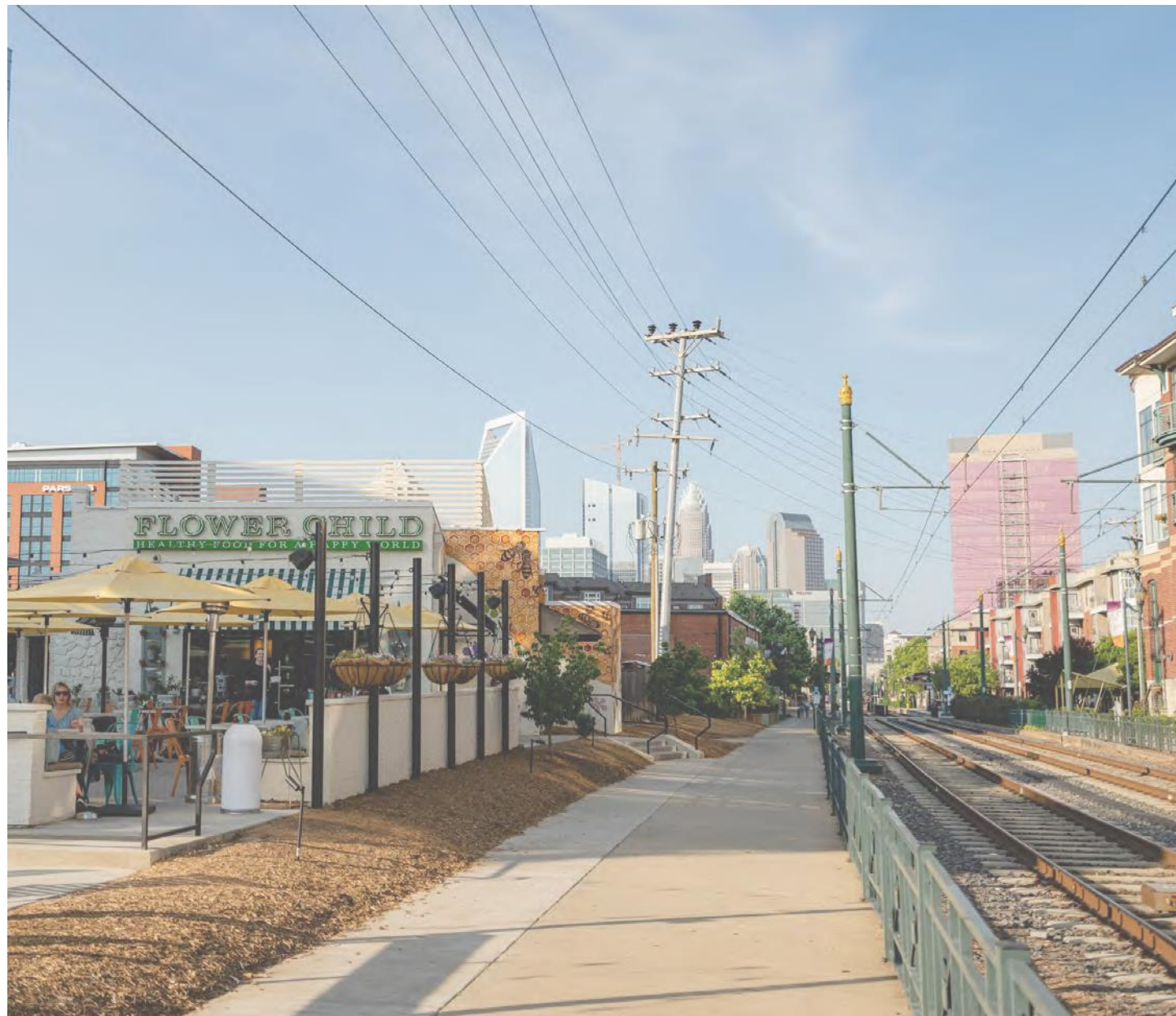
Some character areas share commonalities and have cross-cutting land uses. Environmental and agricultural land preservation easements can be found across multiple character areas to preserve farmland and natural resources throughout the County. Areas under a preservation easement are depicted on the FLUM in the Growth and Conservation Framework chapter of HoCo By Design.

Areas to Preserve	Areas to Strengthen	Areas to Enhance	Areas to Transform
			
SPECIAL USE	SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD	INDUSTRIAL	DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA
OPEN SPACE	MULTI-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD	CAMPUS	REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER
RURAL CONSERVATION	MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD	SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL	TRANSIT ACTIVITY CENTER
RURAL LIVING	RURAL CROSSROADS		VILLAGE ACTIVITY CENTER
HISTORIC COMMUNITY	VILLAGE ACTIVITY CENTER		INDUSTRIAL MIXED-USE CENTER
			MIXED-USE ACTIVITY CENTER
			MULTI-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD

businesses and start-ups to share facilities and amenities with more established businesses. Energy efficient technologies, such as solar panels or green roofs, are encouraged on new or improved buildings.

Transportation Considerations

Transit Activity Centers are designed to promote automobile alternatives, including transit, walking, and bicycling. All streets should be multi-modal in design, allowing safe and efficient pedestrian or bicycle movements throughout the center using a park-once, bus-once, or train-once approach. Key destinations should be directly linked to the Transit Activity Center via easily navigated pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Streets should have seating areas, bike racks, and other facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Landscaped sidewalks with protective curbs and dedicated pathways with seating are encouraged.



Character Area: Village Activity Center

Land in Columbia that provides goods and services to surrounding neighborhoods. Redeveloped Village Activity Centers offer the opportunity to serve broader economic, civic, community, entertainment, and housing needs in the community.

The design of Village Activity Centers should transition ~~transitions~~ effectively between residential and nonresidential uses. Active public spaces should be included ~~are encouraged~~ between buildings. Residential units or office space may be found above storefronts. Homes in and surrounding the center of development may offer several choices to live and experience the Village Activity Center—including, but not limited to, missing middle home choices. Parking is satisfied using on-street parking, structured parking, and shared rear-lot parking strategies. Sites should effectively minimize the impact of cut-through traffic on nearby neighborhood streets by orienting vehicle access and circulation away from adjacent neighborhoods.

Village Activity Centers should maximize their connections to the Columbia open space network, including safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to the centers from nearby neighborhoods.

Transformation of these areas to support mixed-use development will require deliberate planning and phasing to keep the areas viable during their period of change. Redevelopment of Village Activity Centers should instill the principles from the original vision for Columbia, and the focus on Village Activity Centers to serve the needs of residents within, and surrounding, the centers.



Street and Block Pattern

Redeveloped Village Activity Centers should incorporate a pattern of small blocks and a hierarchy of walkable streets. Vehicle access and circulation should be oriented away from adjacent neighborhoods. Parking should be satisfied using on-street parking, structured parking, and shared rear-lot parking strategies located toward the interior of blocks. Formal and informal on-street parking should be provided throughout the activity center.

Open Spaces and Natural Resources

Grading of topography and clearing of vegetation may be necessary to achieve the mix of uses desired. However, redeveloped Village Activity Centers must protect steep slopes, floodplains, streams, and wetlands, and meet forest conservation requirements. Redeveloped centers should promote opportunities to increase native tree canopy and replace lawns with native landscaping, including pollinator gardens and other wildlife habitats. Redevelopment also provides an opportunity to improve stormwater management.

Open space elements in a redeveloped Village Activity Center may include small parks, multiple gathering spaces, and community gardens, along with trails or greenways that connect them. Large, mature trees should be preserved to reinforce the overall vision and character of Columbia. Excess surface parking lots and other impervious surfaces are encouraged to be redeveloped as open space to the maximum extent possible.

Lot Size and Building Placement

~~Redevelopment should be in more compact lot and building patterns, with parking relocated to the rear of buildings that are oriented to the street. Front setbacks are variable, with smaller setbacks in the core and larger ones at the edges. Side and rear setbacks are variable. Setbacks may be exaggerated to preserve large, mature tree stands next to the public right-of-way.~~



Building Types and Massing

Building types should mix uses horizontally and vertically, and should include residential, office, and commercial uses to support the needs of those who live and work in and around the Village Activity Center. Buildings ~~may stand up to five stories tall, but those nearest to existing residential neighborhoods~~ should be of a scale and design compatible with nearby development. Residential units or office space may be found above storefronts in the core of the development. Apartments or condominiums should be stacked over ground floor commercial. Village Activity Centers should provide a wide variety of housing choices including missing middle housing types. Energy efficient technologies, such as solar panels or green roofs, are encouraged on new or improved buildings.

Transportation Considerations

Development should support all modes of transportation. The Village Activity Center should accommodate safe and efficient pedestrian or bicycle movements internally and connect to adjacent neighborhoods. Streets should have seating areas, bike racks, and other facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Landscaped sidewalks with protective curbs and dedicated pathways with seating are encouraged.

