The Neighborhood Model: Building Block for the Development Areas

County of Albemarle
Department of Planning and Community Development
Development Area Initiatives Steering Committee (DISC)

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Planning for Growth in Albemarle County
Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

- Facilitate infill development within the Development Areas.
- Maximize the use of the Development Areas - minimize expansion into Rural areas.
- Flexible residential land use densities in Development Areas.
- Promote a mix of uses in the Development Areas to support residential needs.
- Plan and provide necessary infrastructure to accomplish the above.
The Neighborhood Model:

Changing the Form of Development
• Market Appeal
• Functional
• Sustainable
• High Quality of Life
Conventional Sprawl:

- Segregates Land use
- Segregates housing by price and by type
- Not pedestrian friendly
- Open space is treated as leftover - not integral with design
- Excessive distances between daily needs
- Rural road standard makes stormwater management difficult
- Excessive land used for development
- Traffic snarls
- Requires larger and roads
The Neighborhood Model:

- Accommodates walkers, bikers and public transportation
- Open space integral to overall design
- Buildings and spaces are human scaled
- Incorporates varying densities
- Contains a mix of uses
- Streets are interconnected
- Large parking lots are out of site
- Emphasizes the re-use of sites
- Adapts to terrain
- Maintains a clear edge between Development Areas and Rural Areas
- Focuses greatest density in neighborhood centers
The Neighborhood Model Applied - Pantops

Existing Conditions
The Neighborhood Model Applied - Pantops

Conventional Development
The Neighborhood Model Applied - Pantops

Neighborhood Model
Density by Design

Urban Density can:
• Provide capacity for new residents
• Facilitate pedestrian orientation
• Serve a broad population
• Allow for efficient delivery of County Services
• Help preserve Rural Areas
• Provide amenities
• Facilitate vital community life
• Provide convenience and choice

Photo courtesy of Daggett and Grigg Architects.

Design Matters more than Density
Density by Design

Popular Myths
- Higher density always results in more traffic
- Higher density will result in higher County expenditures and increased taxes
- Higher density infill development is more destructive to the environment than conventional development
- Higher density will result in more crime
- Higher density results in a lower quality of development and a lower quality of life
Principles of the Neighborhood Model

1. Pedestrian Orientation
2. Neighborhood Friendly Streets and Paths
3. Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks
4. Parks and Open Space
5. Neighborhood Centers
6. Buildings and Spaces of Human Scale
7. Relegated Parking
8. Mix of Uses
9. Mix of Housing Types and Affordability with Dignity
10. Redevelopment rather than Abandonment
11. Site Planning that Respects Terrain
12. Clear Edges
1. Pedestrian Orientation

What Pedestrians Need:

- Convenience and Safety
- Destinations
- Comfort
2. Neighborhood Friendly Streets and Paths
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The following are myths:

- Narrow streets are not adequate for fire safety.
- Narrow streets result in more vehicular accidents.
- Narrow streets allow inadequate access for service vehicles.
3. Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks

The following are myths:

- Cul-de-sacs are the only preferred development pattern.
- Interconnected streets are more expensive to build.
- Cul-de-sacs are more family-friendly.
4. Parks and Open Space

- Often no useable public open space.
4. Parks and Open Space

- Integral to community design
- Residents have access to parks, public gathering spaces and natural views at home, work or play
- Can help with stormwater recharge

*Neighborhood Model*
5. Neighborhood Centers
6. Buildings and Spaces of Human Scale

**Conventional Development**
- Building as Object

**Neighborhood Model**
- Space as Object
6. Buildings and Spaces of Human Scale
7. Relegated Parking

**Conventional Development**

- Parking in front of buildings

**Neighborhood Model**

- Most parking behind buildings*
  - *parallel parking on-street is encouraged*
7. Relegated Parking

**Conventional Development**

Parking in front of houses

**Neighborhood Model**

Parking behind buildings*

*parallel parking on-street is encouraged
8. Mix of Uses

**Conventional Development**
- Retail separate from residential

**Neighborhood Model**
- Retail is integral with residential
8. Mix of Uses
9. Mix of Housing Types and Affordability with Dignity
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26 UNITS ON 6.2 ACRES

WYNDCREST

MONTGOMERY CO., MD
9. Mix of Housing Types and Affordability with Dignity
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11. Site Planning that Respects Terrain
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- Use building foundations as retaining walls
- Site building into existing grade
- Tuck-under parking absorbs grade
12. Clear Edges

- Discrete edge between “town” and “country”
- No “transitional” zoning
The Neighborhood Model Applied -
Towers Land Trust

Existing Conditions
The Neighborhood Model Applied -
Towers Land Trust

Conventional Development
Conventional Plan of Suburban Development under the Comprehensive Plan Designation
Alternate Plan Showing Traditional Neighborhood Development under the Comprehensive Plan Designation
ANOTATED SITE PLAN  (Based upon the Neighborhood Model)

**Stream Valley Buffers:** Along Rivanna River, a Neighborhood Green fronts the Rivanna River valley allowing public access and views to this natural amenity. Houses front and sit on uphill side of green or parkway at edge of the neighborhood.

**Interconnected Streets:** The neighborhood utilizes a hybrid of a rectilinear grid and a curvilinear grid modified according to the terrain. Residential pockets are placed along developable ridges.

**Development Area Edge:** A “hard edge” is provided along frontage road beyond a 100-feet “buffer” and parallel to Pritchett Lane (the Development Area edge). Houses front onto this frontage road edge.

**Neighborhood Size:** Each Neighborhood is limited in size to the distance that is walkable (from center to edge) in five-minutes described by this circle. Playgrounds or open spaces should be located within a two and one-half minute walk of every home.

**Civic space:** A Neighborhood Green is provided at the center. This space as used as the locus of the thoroughfare network.

**Uses:** A mix of uses including neighborhood retail, office and residential uses is provided around the central civic space at the neighborhood Center. Housing types are mixed throughout the neighborhood. Consider the difference between a mixed-use neighborhood such as this one and a conventional shopping center cut off from surrounding neighborhoods.

**Open Space:** An existing meadow preserves public views and provides a site for a new elementary school as well as enhances the setting for new homes. Each house in the neighborhood is within a five minute walk of an extensive open space system.

**Additional open space** is preserved on steeply slope terrain, adjacent to stream valleys and in peripheral areas too far from a Center to allow a walkable connection.

**Site Planning:** The neighborhood is designed beyond existing land holdings in order to integrate the existing subdivision within the neighborhood and to fully utilize the flatter terrain to provide for interconnectivity.
Undeveloped Rural Areas.