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Our Parker community will have land uses that complement each other aesthetically, socially and economically, and will be designed to enhance quality of life and ensure long-term prosperity. The Town is a community with a traditional form, with higher density uses located near downtown, along major highway corridors and at major intersections with lower densities near the fringes.



## Land Use

# 6

### INTRODUCTION

Parker has evolved and grown since its founding in 1862 and its incorporation in 1981. Starting as a small residential community sprinkled with dairy and cattle farms, through growth cycles that affected the entire Front Range, annexations of large areas of unincorporated lands and preservation of natural environments.

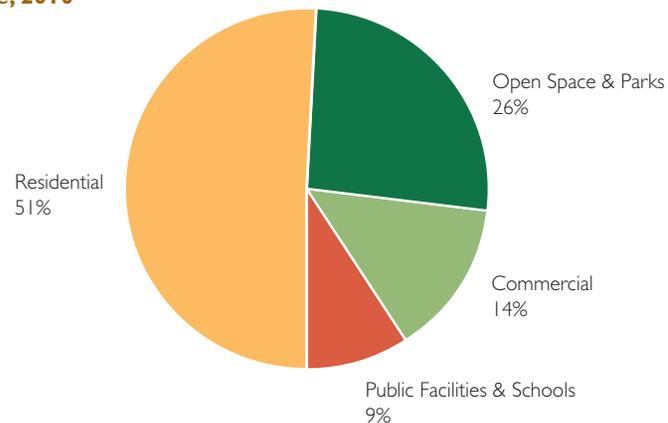
Parker has become a community that has maintained its' hometown feel as we've grown, balancing residential and commercial development with open space and parks. Today, Parker boasts a healthy mix of land uses, as illustrated below (see Figure 6A).

Continuing to perpetuate this balance is essential as we grow. As of 2010, there were 5,179 acres of vacant or underdeveloped land in the Town and future Urban Growth Area boundary. The General Land Use Plan (see Figure 6B) sets forth the basic framework for how this land should grow and evolve through 2035.



**Figure 6A: Parker Land Use, 2010**

Source: Town of Parker



We listened...

## Growing Smart

When asked about growth during the public participation process, citizens consistently supported a 'managed/planned/controlled' scenario over 'unlimited' or 'no' growth. Tied to that was the importance of establishing the appropriate balance between housing, commerce and open space, limiting the negative impacts on the community and directing development to appropriate locations. The Plan embraces a controlled growth scenario and implements strategies that reflect citizen priorities.



## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

### **1. Growth shall be appropriately directed and site-planned to sustain our community's needs as we grow.**

**1.A.** Strengthen the identity of Parker by encouraging a balance of land uses that supports a high quality of life and contributes to the hometown character of our community.

**1.B.** Ensure that growth occurs in a manner that balances the pace of development with the ability of the Town and special districts to provide quality services and capital improvements, such as utilities, transportation, parks and open space and police protection.

**1.C.** Ensure adequate opportunities for future expansion of our economic base in appropriate locations in the community.

**1.D.** Increase the amount of open space using the criteria set forth in the Open Space, Trails and Greenways Master Plan which emphasizes supporting a regional greenway network that provides a community separation buffer from development in neighboring jurisdictions while maintaining the viability and connectivity of the natural ecosystem.

**1.E.** Encourage transitions between different land uses and intensities.

**1.F.** Develop land use patterns that are compatible with and support a variety of transportation opportunities and/or choices.

**1.G.** Sensitively integrate the built environment with the natural environment in order to protect the native landscape and topographical features naturally occurring throughout our community.

**1.H.** Encourage land uses that create a sense of community among those who work, live and play within appropriate neighborhoods.

**1.I.** Ensure that open space and parks are dedicated and made available to meet the needs of the community today and into the future.

**1.J.** Continue to review our Land Development Ordinance to assure that it is fair, consistent and understandable.

**1.K.** In order to preserve the inventory of commercial and light industrial properties within the Town, amend the Land Development Ordinance to not permit self storage, mini-warehouses, outdoor storage and related storage uses within the Town including in existing Planned Development zone districts.



## GENERAL LAND USE PLAN

The General Land Use Plan (*see Figure 6B*) is an important element of the Master Plan, intended to clarify how we move toward a clear plan for the Town's future. The General Land Use Plan is focused primarily on the physical form and development pattern of the Town and sets forth a basic framework, showing how Parker should grow and evolve through 2035.

### Urban Growth Area

The General Land Use Plan includes an 'Urban Growth Area' (UGA) as one means of managing our community's growth. The Master Plan assumes that the UGA boundary will generally remain as presently configured. However, the UGA boundary needs to be flexible in order to provide for minor amendments to accommodate changing conditions. The UGA was established in coordination with Douglas County and adopted through an Intergovernmental Agreement and Comprehensive Development Plan. The UGA can help preserve a physical separation between our community and neighboring jurisdictions. Modifications to the UGA must be reviewed by a jointly appointed board and approved by both the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners and the Parker Town Council.

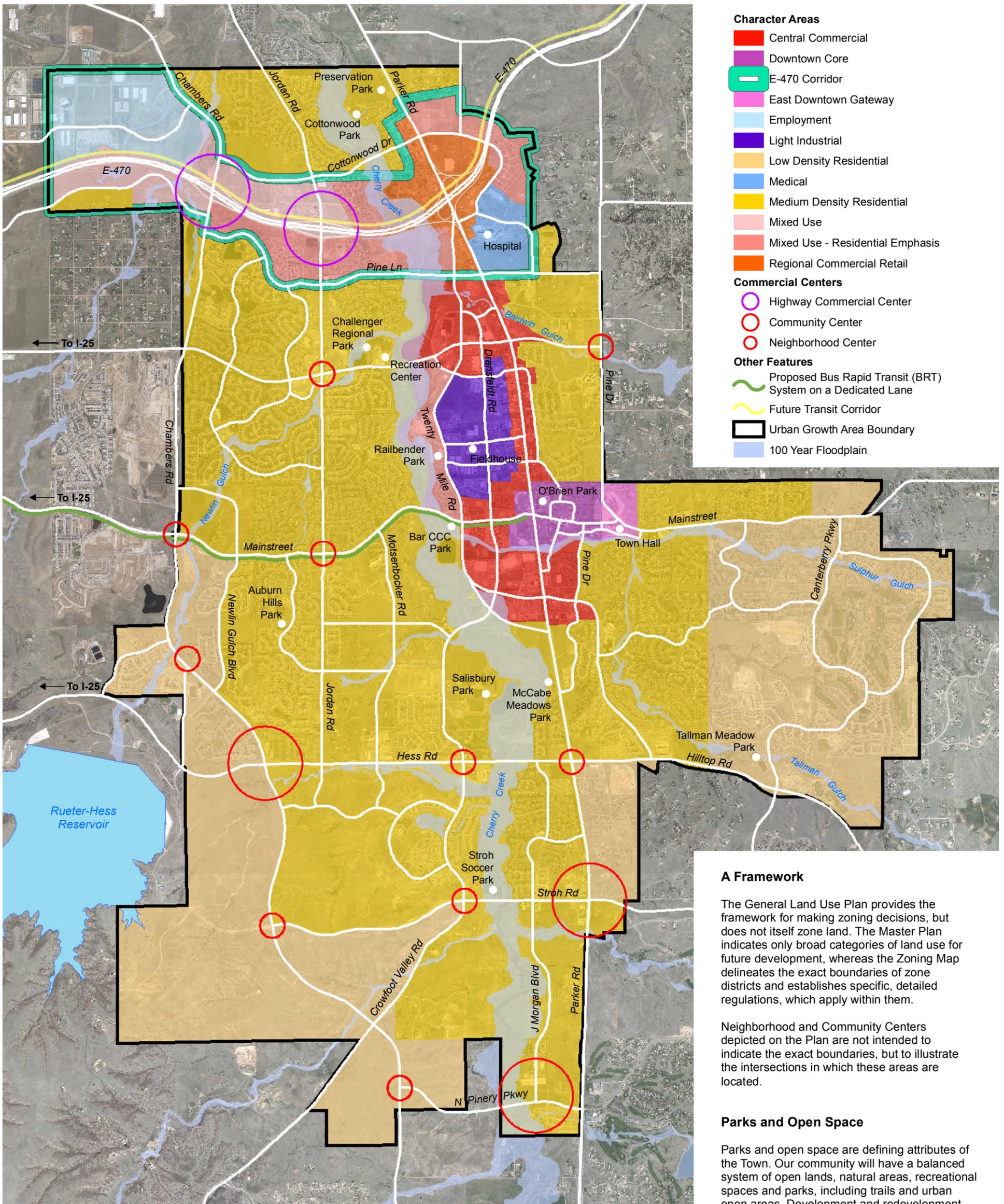
### Open Space, Parks and Sensitive Natural Areas

The Town values our open space, parks and sensitive areas. Direction for determining the appropriate location, type and amount of land that is required to be dedicated as open space and public parks in association with development is embodied in the 'Open Space, Trails and Greenways Master Plan' and the 'From Values to Visions: A Strategic Action Plan for Parker's Parks and Recreation'. Specific provisions for protecting, preserving and enhancing open space, parks and sensitive natural areas are found in the regulatory requirements of the Town's 'Land Use Code'.



Figure 6B: GENERAL LAND USE PLAN

Source: Parker 2035 General Land Use Plan, March 2016



**PARKER 2035  
GENERAL LAND USE PLAN**

**Character Areas**

- Central Commercial
- Downtown Core
- E-470 Corridor
- East Downtown Gateway
- Employment
- Light Industrial
- Low Density Residential
- Medical
- Medium Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Mixed Use - Residential Emphasis
- Regional Commercial Retail

**Commercial Centers**

- Highway Commercial Center
- Community Center
- Neighborhood Center

**Other Features**

- Proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System on a Dedicated Lane
- Future Transit Corridor
- Urban Growth Area Boundary
- 100 Year Floodplain

**A Framework**

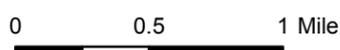
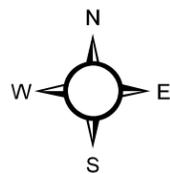
The General Land Use Plan provides the framework for making zoning decisions, but does not itself zone land. The Master Plan indicates only broad categories of land use for future development, whereas the Zoning Map delineates the exact boundaries of zone districts and establishes specific, detailed regulations, which apply within them.

Neighborhood and Community Centers depicted on the Plan are not intended to indicate the exact boundaries, but to illustrate the intersections in which these areas are located.

**Parks and Open Space**

Parks and open space are defining attributes of the Town. Our community will have a balanced system of open lands, natural areas, recreational spaces and parks, including trails and urban open areas. Development and redevelopment will be required to preserve lands for parks and open space. Guidance for preservation of parks and open space is provided in the 'Open Space, Trails and Greenways Master Plan' and 'From Values to Visions: A strategic Action Plan for Parker's Parks and Recreation.'

Disclaimer: The property boundaries, titles, legends, scale, reference to individual parcels and any and all other data shown or depicted on this map is for visual representation only and may not be accurate. Further studies and surveys, on a site specific basis, are required to verify this data.



## General Land Use Plan Designations

Two major types of designations are illustrated in the General Land Use Plan; ‘Character Areas’ and ‘Centers’.

### Character Areas

The areas contained on the General Land Use Plan are grouped into twelve kinds of places, or ‘Character Areas’ that make up our Town; E-470 Corridor, Central Commercial District, Light Industrial District, Downtown Core, East Downtown Gateway, Mixed Use- Residential Emphasis, Mixed Use, Medical District, Regional Retail District, Employment District, Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential. These Character Areas are described below.

### E-470 Corridor

E-470 is a toll highway that acts as an eastern beltway for the Denver Metropolitan Region. This beltway, which bisects Parker near its northern boundary, connects the Town to the regional transportation network and provides easy access to the Denver International Airport. The location of this highway through Town allows for higher intensity uses without significantly impacting our transportation system or the character of our community.

Each of the Character Areas within the E-470 corridor has distinct characteristics and therefore development in this corridor should be contemplated in a cohesive and thoughtful way to ensure the long term land use compatibility and viability of the corridor. This corridor will develop as a series of interconnected places that serve regional retail, medical, employment and higher density residential needs.

Character Areas within the E-470 Character Area are listed and described below:

#### Mixed Use

This Character Area will allow residents to walk and bicycle to their daily needs including retail, employment and recreation through a blend of compatible land uses, public amenities and an integrated multimodal transportation system. Land uses appropriate within this Character Area include a variety of higher intensity uses including multifamily, senior housing, assisted-living facilities, office, retail and restaurants. No one land use will dominate the overall development pattern within this Character Area. Single family detached residential uses and residential at less than 10 dwelling units per acre are not appropriate in this area. Densities may be reduced as a transition to adjacent residential development.



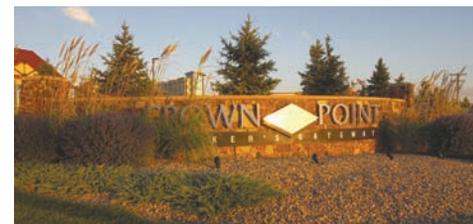
### Medical District

Located at the eastern most end of the emerging E-470 medical corridor, the Parker Adventist Hospital and the supporting uses serve as an anchor and catalyst for this Character Area. The Character Area will focus on state of the art medical care, preventative health care and wellness to create an industry synergy that ensures a successful business environment. Appropriate uses include hospitals, medical offices, health care clinics and facilities, rehabilitation centers and hotels. Retail uses are appropriate where they provide an ancillary service in size, scale and purpose to the medical uses.



### Regional Retail District

The Parker Road and E-470 intersection is a significant gateway into the community and the only opportunity for E-470 traffic to enter and exit the tollway for free from both directions. This Character Area will provide more intense retail including large format retail (big box) and restaurant uses focused on serving both local and regional needs. Other commercial uses such as office and entertainment may be appropriate on a limited basis.





The E-470 Corridor will develop as a series of interconnected places that serve regional retail, medical, employment and higher density residential needs.

### Employment District

Primary jobs and higher educational opportunities are essential for the success of our community. The E-470 corridor's easy access to regional employment centers and regional transportation facilities including DIA and Centennial airport along with its location near hospitals and other medical industries make it an attractive location in Parker for businesses to locate. Primary uses appropriate in this Character Area include professional, medical and corporate offices, light industrial uses, flex office, research and development facilities and a higher educational campus. Light industrial uses will be focused on light manufacturing with ancillary warehousing and distribution. Light industrial uses in this Character Area are not intended to include primary use warehousing, outdoor storage or ministorage uses.

The primary uses in this district attract a variety of complementary uses, such as business and personal services, convenience retail, child care and restaurants. These complementary uses may be located near the intersection of Chambers and Compark Blvd. but should be clearly ancillary in scale and purpose of the character area.

### Mixed Use – Residential Emphasis

This Character Area is located adjacent to regional and locally significant commercial areas. These multifamily residential areas will be interconnected and provide easy and direct pedestrian and bicycle access to nearby commercial and employment areas. Uses appropriate in this Character Area include higher density residential housing, senior housing, assisted-living facilities and mixed use developments that include a commercial component. Commercial uses are encouraged when they are part of a mixed use development, are of a scale that serve the needs of the area residents or provide support to adjoining uses. Single family detached residential uses and residential developments at less than 10 dwelling units per acre are not appropriate in this area.

### Central Commercial District

The Central Commercial District encompasses the commercial core of the Town. Due to its central location, with access to Parker Road, Dransfeldt Road and Twenty Mile Road and current land uses, growth in this Character Area should focus on core retail, services, offices, lodging, restaurants, entertainment and, to a lesser extent, higher density residential uses as part of a development with a mix of uses and a design that focuses on vehicular and pedestrian connectivity between uses. Vertical mixed use is highly encouraged where appropriate.

### Light Industrial District

The Light Industrial District is centrally located with spaces that generally serve smaller local light industrial businesses that supply local, regional and sometimes national markets. This character area is intended to provide a location for a variety of work processes such as manufacturing, machine shops, production facilities, distribution facilities, flex office, commercial services and other uses of similar research and development, high tech and medical device manufacturing firms that have a synergistic relationship. Processes and land uses within this character area will be low impact in nature and not create or cause fumes, odor noise, vibration or other impacts which are detrimental to abutting properties or land uses. Special care should be taken to ensure that uses not compatible with the light industrial uses proposed within the character area are located in other more appropriate areas of Town. Public Facilities are appropriate within the character area.



### Mixed Use- Residential Emphasis, Outside of the E-470 Character Area

This Character Area is located between the Light Industrial area and Cherry Creek. This multi-family residential area will be interconnected and provide easy and direct pedestrian and bicycle access to nearby commercial and employment areas. Uses appropriate in this Character Area include higher density residential housing, senior housing, assisted-living facilities and mixed-use developments that include a commercial component. Commercial uses are appropriate when they are part of a mixed-use development, are of a scale that serve the needs of the area residents or provide support to adjoining uses. Single family detached residential uses and residential developments at less than 10 dwelling units per acre are not appropriate in this area.

### Downtown Core

The Downtown Core is the essence of our hometown feel, with a wide range of things to do and see, drawing people beyond the traditional work day. Maintaining and enhancing the historical character of Parker, while providing a unique and creative local flavor, are important elements to maintaining Downtown as the focal point of the community. The objective of this Character Area is to embrace the fullest possible range of human interactions, from the simple buying and selling of goods and services to providing people with the widest spectrum of cultural, educational and entertainment experiences.

The Downtown Core acts as a ‘mixed-use neighborhood’ that includes uses such as higher density residential, office, government, arts and cultural

venues, restaurants, retail, personal services, as well as parks and other gathering places for community events. Provisions for these uses are promoted within vertically mixed-use developments that include housing and/or offices located above ground-floor retail and services.

The Downtown should be compact and walkable. In order to maintain Downtown as a vibrant and attractive ‘destination’, attention needs to be directed to development intensity, diverse land uses, building height and architectural design. These are critical elements in creating a sustainable downtown core for our growing population.

The Denver Regional Council of Governments classifies this character area as an Urban Center through their Metro Vision 2035 Plan.



Example of a mixed-use development



### East Downtown Gateway

East Downtown Gateway serves as a transition from the unique mixed use Downtown Core to the suburban residential uses to the east. Development in this area should focus on framing the gateway to the Downtown Core at the intersection of Pine Drive and Mainstreet and then west along Mainstreet to PACE Center Drive. Framing will be through similar massing and building placement to the Downtown Core but with the option for more current architecture. Uses to the east, adjacent to residential neighborhoods, shall be compatible with the scale and massing of adjoining land uses.



East Downtown Gateway will be a ‘mixed-use neighborhood’ that includes uses such as higher density residential, office, government, arts and cultural venues, restaurants, retail, personal services, as well as parks, open space and other public gathering places. Retail uses within East Downtown Gateway should be a mix of uses that focus on serving the needs of the surrounding residents as well as compliment the unique arts, culture, character and experience of the Downtown Core. The total Gross Leasable Area (GLA) for the commercial/office components within the entire East Downtown Gateway should range from 100,000 to 300,000 square feet combined.

East Downtown Gateway should be compact and walkable with a focus on connecting to the Downtown Core and the Sulphur Gulch Trail. Pine Drive, an arterial road, bisects this district. Any auto oriented uses should respect pedestrian safety and movement. The visible impact of drive-throughs, garage doors and gas canopies should be mitigated from Pine Drive, Mainstreet, pedestrian areas and residential areas.

The Denver Regional Council of Governments classifies this character area as an Urban Center through their Metro Vision 2035 Plan.



## Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods serve as the primary building blocks of our community and focus on a range of mostly residential classifications, with an emphasis on single-family detached homes. Other community assets such as places of worship, schools and parks, are allowed within our neighborhoods. Pedestrian oriented small (less than 10,000 s.f. of building area per neighborhood) commercial uses may be appropriate where uses are focused on serving the immediate area. Such uses should not include gas, storage or drive through uses or repurposing of a residential home. Typical uses within neighborhoods include small retail, restaurants and personal service businesses. Uses and architecture should focus on compatibility with the surrounding residential area. These small commercial uses will be contemplated during the development review process as a part of a master-planned community.



In Parker, neighborhood developments are primarily master-planned. Within these master-planned developments, a variety of residential densities and/or dwelling types may be developed; however, the overall density, on a gross acreage basis, must reflect the densities shown on the General Land Use Plan. Individual lot sizes may vary in master-planned developments due to clustering of dwellings and the preservation of sensitive environmental features and open space. Special care should be taken to provide adequate transitions between uses that have different intensities of development.

For calculation purposes, the gross density excludes the 100-year floodplain as mapped by FEMA and slopes of 20% or greater.

The General Land Use Plan describes two neighborhood Character Areas: Medium and Low Density Residential.

#### Medium Density Residential

The Medium Density Residential Character Area will consist of an overall gross density of 3.5 dwelling units per acre. Higher densities for housing for older adults may be considered as long as impacts are comparable to other uses permitted within this Character Area.

#### Low Density Residential

The Low Density Residential Character Area will consist of an overall gross density of 2.2 dwelling units per acre. Higher densities for housing for older adults may be considered as long as impacts are comparable to other uses permitted within this Character Area.

Neighborhoods  
serve as the primary  
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### **Community, Neighborhood and Highway Commercial Centers**

Neighborhood Centers and Community Centers are located within Medium Density and Low Density Residential Character Areas and are generally situated at major intersections. These Centers must be carefully planned and coordinated to avoid negative impacts to traffic capacity and adjacent land uses. Development within these Centers should transition into the surrounding neighborhood, both in terms of land use and design features. These Centers, created to protect and serve residential neighborhoods, are defined below.



### Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood Centers should be planned to serve the basic needs of the surrounding residents. Typical uses within Neighborhood Centers include convenient retail and personal/business services, generally anchored by a grocery store.

#### **Other**

compatible uses such as small offices, recreational uses and restaurants are also permitted.

Generally, the total Gross Leasable Area (GLA) for the commercial/office components within an entire Neighborhood Center should range from 50,000 to 250,000 square feet combined.

Higher density residential is appropriate in these Centers as a transition between less intense residential areas and non-residential areas when developed as part of a mixed-use development and when the design encourages residents to walk or bicycle to obtain goods and services. Massing and scale of higher density residential development shall respect the scale and massing of adjoining land uses and shall reflect an integrated neighborhood feel. Typical garden style apartment designs are not appropriate.



### Community Centers

Community Centers are areas that are larger than Neighborhood Centers and have a larger market area, serving multiple neighborhoods. Typical uses within Community Centers include retail and personal/business services. Other compatible uses such as small offices, recreational and restaurants are also permitted. Generally, the total Gross Leasable Area (GLA) for the commercial/office components within an entire Community Center should range from 250,000 to 500,000 square feet combined.



### Highway Commercial Center

Located at major intersections along E-470 these Centers overlay other Character Areas and the land uses may also focus on the demands of the traveling public and the needs of residents returning to or leaving Parker. Appropriate uses in these areas include those of the underlying Character Areas, but also contemplate uses such as convenience retail with gas stations and hotels.