CODE REVIEW SUMMARIES

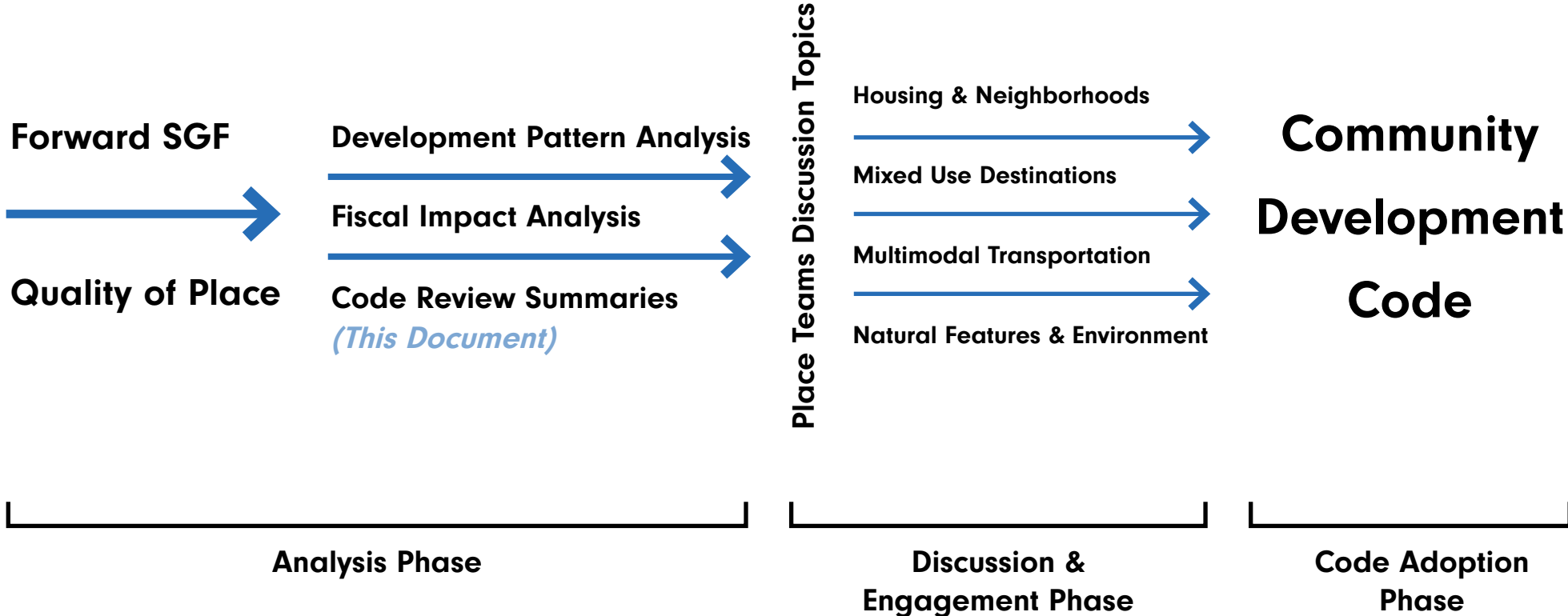NOVEMBER 2023

CITY OF
Springfield

How does this document fit into Springfield's Community Development Code update?

Springfield's Community Development Code update is driven by *Forward SGF's* overarching theme of **Quality of Place**. This document, with Urban3's Fiscal Impact Analysis and the *Development Pattern Analysis*, will help to inform the Place Teams' discussions about the community's development code priorities. The Code Review Summary is structured around four main topics: Housing & Neighborhoods; Mixed Use Destinations; Multimodal Transportation; and Environment & Natural Features. All of these topics will be framed through the lens of **Quality of Place** to help shape priorities for the Community Development Code for the City of Springfield.

The *Code Review Summaries* (this document) provides the **Place Teams** with a common starting point for their conversations, including a brief introduction of each topic, how the topic ties in with *Forward SGF's* goals and Placetypes, an overview of how Springfield's current code addresses the topic, and suggested discussion questions and summaries of relevant discussion topics.

Throughout this document, you will see references to Springfield's **Placetypes**. This concept originates in Springfield's Comprehensive Plan, *Forward SGF*, and defines ten different unique types of places or contexts (Placetypes) within Springfield: Center City Neighborhood, Traditional Neighborhood, Mixed Residential, Mixed Use, Downtown, City Corridor, Institutional & Employment Center, Business Flex, Industry & Logistics, and Urban Green Space & Recreation (for detailed descriptions of each Placetype, see page 32 of *Forward SGF*). The **Placetypes** provide an important basis for discussions regarding priorities in the development code update, as each **Placetype** may require different regulatory strategies. Some topics may be important to all **Placetypes** (though perhaps addressed differently in each) while other topics may be relevant to only specific **Placetypes**.

Forward SGF

Quality of Place

→

Development Pattern Analysis

Fiscal Impact Analysis

Code Review Summaries *(This Document)*

Analysis Phase

Place Teams Discussion Topics

Housing & Neighborhoods →

Mixed Use Destinations →

Multimodal Transportation →

Natural Features & Environment →

Discussion & Engagement Phase

# Community Development Code

Code Adoption Phase

Multimodal Transportation Summary

Introduction

Development codes impact multimodal transportation policies in a variety of ways and at multiple scales. Subdivision regulations impact big picture, long-range issues such as the pattern of streets and trails, and the specific designs of streets and streetscapes. The zoning districts and standards affect the relationship and scale of land uses, specifically impacting the proximity of complementary uses and how they coordinate with transportation systems to determine how people move throughout the community. Site design and development standards define how development supports these larger-scale patterns, accommodates transportation options, and supports the access and mobility of people through the design of public and private frontages, internal circulation (for all transportation modes), and parking (for bicycles and vehicles).

In the past, development codes have focused on mitigating the impacts of cars and traffic as development occurs, but in the process cities have elevate automobile-oriented designs over all other options as well as the needs of people. An effective development code will better coordinate new development and infill and redevelopment with quality multimodal transportation investments and urban design. Over time and across multiple projects and areas, these decisions cumulatively impact which transportation options become reasonable choices for the people of Springfield.
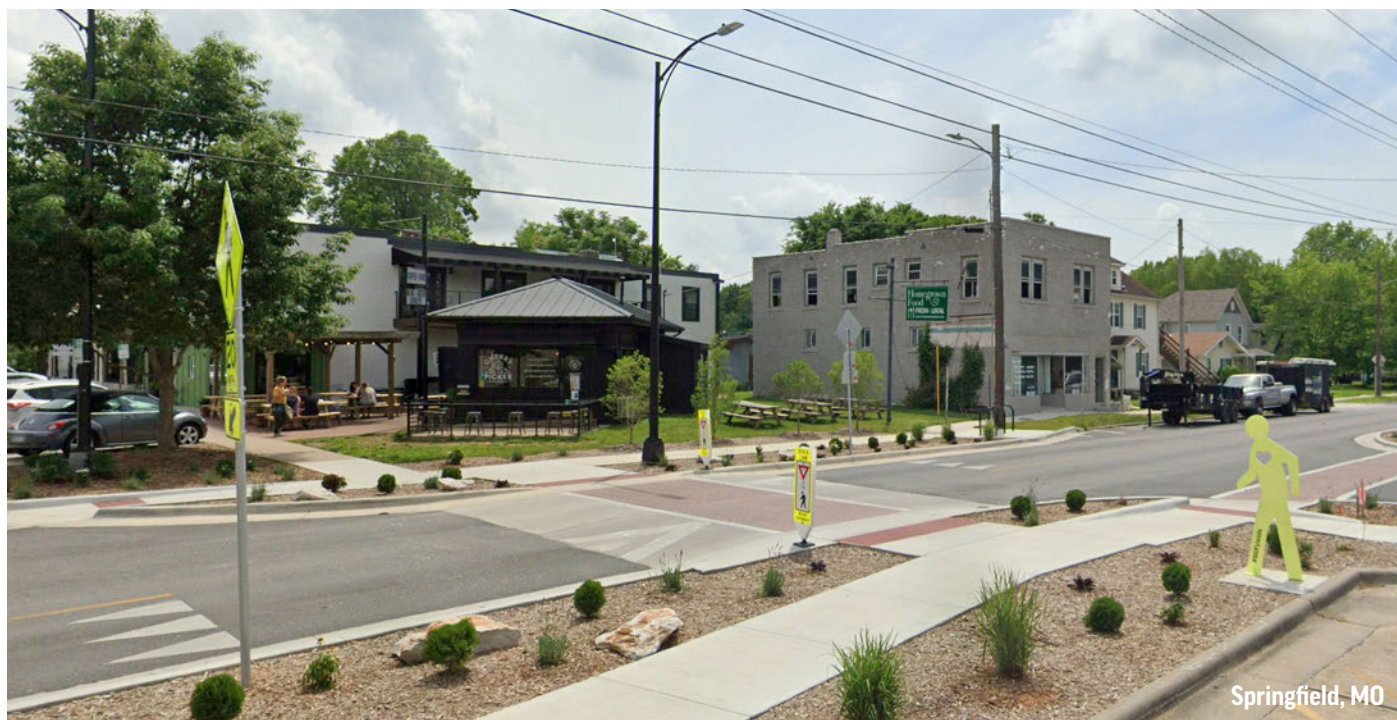
Springfield, MO

What does Forward SGF say about Multimodal Transportation?

Quality of Place

Quality of Place means our ability to provide amenity-rich neighborhoods and commercial districts. Three themes further define Quality of Place in Springfield:

- **Community Physical Image:** Strengthening Springfield's authentic urban and natural assets.
- **Arts, Culture, & Historic Preservation:** Celebrating the arts, culture, and history that defines Springfield's diverse communities.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Integrating health and wellbeing into all aspects of community design.

Multimodal Transportation Goals

Forward SGF defines key goals to enhance Multimodal Transportation in Springfield:

- **Improve Walkability:** Increase connections city-wide, and design balanced, human-scale streets that promote active transportation.
- **Transit- and Trail-Oriented Development:** Strategically locate higher density or mixed-density housing in areas with the greatest variety of transportation options.
- **Beautification:** Use streetscapes to "green" the city, define gateways to distinct places, and establish neighborhood character.
- **Corridor Reinvestment:** Promote infill and redevelopment through multimodal improvements to corridors.
- **Street Typology:** Use street "design types" to align streetscape design with Placetypes.
- **Trails & "Un-gapping the Map":** Strengthen connections of regional, district, and local trails, and integrate trails with the street network.

Forward SGF Placetypes

This topic is relevant to all Placetypes:

- Neighborhood (Center City)
- Neighborhood (Traditional)
- Mixed Residential
- Mixed Use (Corridors, Hubs, and Districts)
- Downtown
- City Corridor
- Institutional & Employment Center
- Business Flex
- Industry & Logistics
- Urban Green Space & Recreation

What does Springfield's development code currently require?

- Development standards (subdivision regulations) lack streetscape design elements. Street planning and design standards are not closely coordinated with the zoning districts. These standards generally only include street widths and very little else regarding the design of rights-of-way for non-vehicular users. *(Articles II and III, Design Standards, Section 8.1)*

- Street standards are based solely on "functional classification" (i.e. vehicular traffic considerations only), and do not incorporate best practices for safe walkability and bicycle transportation. No provisions are in place for different street types within functional classifications.

- There are no standards for landscape and streetscape elements in the public right-of-way.

- Street connectivity standards are weak and primarily deal with maximum intersection spacing, rather than planning for street networks and block structure. *(Section 36-246)*

- Street network and streetscape design standards do not provide integration with other open space and community design assets that define development patterns such as trail systems, gateway districts, civic and institutional destinations, neighborhood amenities, and other public open spaces.

Community Discussion Starters

- **Street Typologies:** What are the range of different "street typologies" necessary to support the Placetypes in *Forward SGF*? How can this approach be applied and how does it differ in different parts of the city?

- **Connectivity:** How does block size, street network, and open space connection impact the quality, design, and function of different places?

- **Complete & Green Streets:** How do streets and streetscape designs affect the image of our city? How can these spaces be used to improve access and mobility in different contexts and Placetypes? What streetscape design standards are needed to beautify the city, integrate sustainable landscape practices, and improve safety throughout our street network?

- **Precedents:** What locations and which streets in Springfield exhibit our aspirations? Which streets do not? What examples from other cities should we aspire to or avoid?

- **Social Streets:** How can our street standards provide integration with social spaces to improve walkability and multimodal mobility?

Springfield, MO
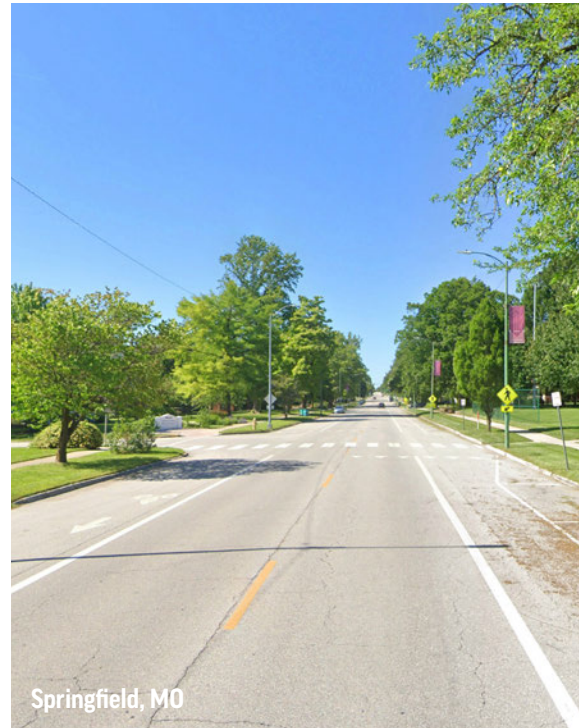
Multimodal Transportation Topics

Functional Classification vs. Street Typology

Functional classification is a common way to consider street design (Arterial, Collector and Local streets are examples of common functional classes). However, it typically is based exclusively on traffic issues, dealing with speeds and volumes of streets at a system-wide scale. In contrast, street typologies deal with streetscape designs that impact how a street best supports a particular context, block, or adjoining land uses. *Forward SGF* recommends prioritizing street typologies, but the current regulations only consider the functional classification of streets. These two concepts can be applied in combination, where street typologies are used as way to adjust street designs for a particular context, but in ways that still maintain the functional classification of the street within the entire system.

Connectivity

Connectivity determines how well compatible parts of the community can relate and how people move through and experience a community. The connection between streets (represented by frequency of intersections or block sizes) and open spaces (where open spaces interface with streets) establishes a framework (or development pattern) that has lasting implications for future development – even as a community changes and places transition over time. The differences in connectivity and development patterns is a key differentiator among different types of places. *Forward SGF* includes a wide range of distinct places and anticipates different patterns and connectivity, but the current development code only has a one generic connectivity standard and it does not provide enough connectivity for many of the Placetypes.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is a design concept that emphasizes that streets are not just for moving vehicular traffic. Instead, streets should allow for multiple modes of transportation to use the street's right-of-way concurrently (multimodal transportation), and that streets are social and civic spaces that impact a city's public image. Springfield adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2014, and *Forward SGF* reinforces the policy with several goals related to Complete Streets. Implementing a Complete Streets policy does not mean that all streets must accommodate all transportation modes. Instead, the street typology approach in

the plan can be used to establish different priorities for different streets, depending on the community or neighborhood's transportation and public space needs. Expanding on the connectivity issue, the city will be designing a complete, multimodal network of streets, where different street types can serve different roles.

Streetscape Standards

Streetscape standards can maximize the value of streets as civic spaces. Street rights-of-way typically make up between 30% and 40% of the entire land area of a city. Considering these spaces from a design perspective (and including how to best support adjacent land uses) means that successful streetscape design strengthens the urban design quality of a significant portion of the city. Streetscape design also has a significant impact on how development responds to a context, elevating the importance of this topic for the development code update. The current regulations only contain standards for right-of-way width and street width; the city's design specifications add sidewalk widths, but they are minimal and are not considered in relation to other spaces in the right-of-way or private development. Streetscape elements like the width and number of lanes, on-street parking, bicycle facilities (on- or off-street), landscaped areas, streetscape amenity and landscape zones, and sidewalk locations and width significantly affect the design, function, and value of these important spaces for the people that use them.

Transit- and Trail-Oriented Development

Transit- or trail-oriented development addresses the coordination between private development and transportation systems. Areas with the most transportation options, the highest caliber of civic design, and the greatest connectivity also support the greatest potential for private investment. The integration of Placetypes, development patterns, transportation networks, streetscape and trail designs with private development standards can coordinate and leverage corresponding private and public investments. A common benchmark for these patterns is to allow people to meet most of their daily needs within a 15-minute walk or a 5-minute bike ride, and then supplement the need for other trips with transit access. This requires a greater range of housing types, greater density of housing, and a mix of uses near transportation hubs.

Multimodal Transportation Topics (Continued)

Sidewalk Standards & Walkability

Sidewalks are a crucial part of transportation infrastructure, and many considerations go into appropriate sidewalk design. The location, width, continuity, and directness of sidewalk connections all impact whether walking is a reasonable transportation choice. Separation from moving traffic, shade provided by street trees, lighting, and visual interest from streetscape or frontage design all impact the comfort and safety of walking. *Forward SGF* prioritizes walkability in many contexts (multimodal corridors, walkable neighborhoods, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use districts) all of which demand a different response to sidewalk design. However, the current development code does not include sidewalks in streetscape standards, and the city's design specifications only establish minimum sidewalk widths with no standards for how they are integrated into more complete streetscapes. Greater attention to sidewalk standards, tailored for a variety of contexts and for all street design types, is necessary to make walking a reasonable transportation choice and to ensure that streets function as civic spaces in addition to transportation facilities.

Street Trees

Street trees are one of the fundamental elements of streetscape design, and are critical urban infrastructure. Street trees shape public spaces and can significantly impact the image of a block, corridor, district, or the city, while mitigating stormwater runoff, increasing water quality, and reducing urban heat. *Forward SGF* calls for strengthening the urban forest and "greening" the city, and public streetscapes provide a broad and interconnected platform to initiate that. However, the current development code does not have any standards for street trees and in many instances implies that they would be prohibited. A sustainable tree canopy in the streetscape has many social, ecological, health, safety, and design benefits that return value for a city far beyond the investment.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming uses street design techniques and interventions to slow or direct traffic in relation to other users or functions of the street, neighborhood, or district. These techniques are usually implemented in response to safety issues that were not addressed at the network level (connectivity) or streetscape level (street typology) of design to appropriately balance the needs of all users of a street (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and personal vehicles). *Forward SGF* identifies several traffic calming techniques to be considered in specific applications to improve the safety of streets for all users. The current development code is silent on many of these issues and therefore will be interpreted as only prioritizing vehicular traffic in places where non-vehicular users may need priority.

Flexibility

Street design is never a one-size-fits-all endeavor, and many priorities, constraints, and relationships go into the appropriate design for different contexts. In response to this, development codes often leave out standards for specific things acknowledging that no one standard is "right." However, this results in important street users or streetscape elements being overlooked. *Forward SGF* expresses the need for design flexibility in the street typology approach, but the development code leaves many important street design issues unaddressed. A flexible system of "Complete Street best practices" can be used to ensure that appropriate tradeoffs and priorities are used to maximize the value of the city's limited right-of-way space, and to design streets that are supportive of their specific contexts and neighborhoods.

Green Streets

Green streets envisions streets as not only a place for multimodal transportation, but for bringing the benefits of Green Infrastructure (GI) into the streetscape. Streets are a large portion of a community's impervious surfaces, and GI mitigates many harmful impacts to water quality that stormwater runoff from streets causes. Green streets utilizes a wholistic suite of green infrastructure elements utilized in the right-of-way: street trees, permeable pavers, rain gardens and bioswales, and other applicable GI techniques. Increasing greenery and trees in streetscapes creates safer environments for pedestrian, bicyclists, and drivers alike, while improving property values, cooling the streetscape, and managing stormwater. *Forward SGF* calls for utilizing GI in all contexts, and including green street strategies in streetscape design standards will enhance the role of streetscapes as multi-functional public spaces.
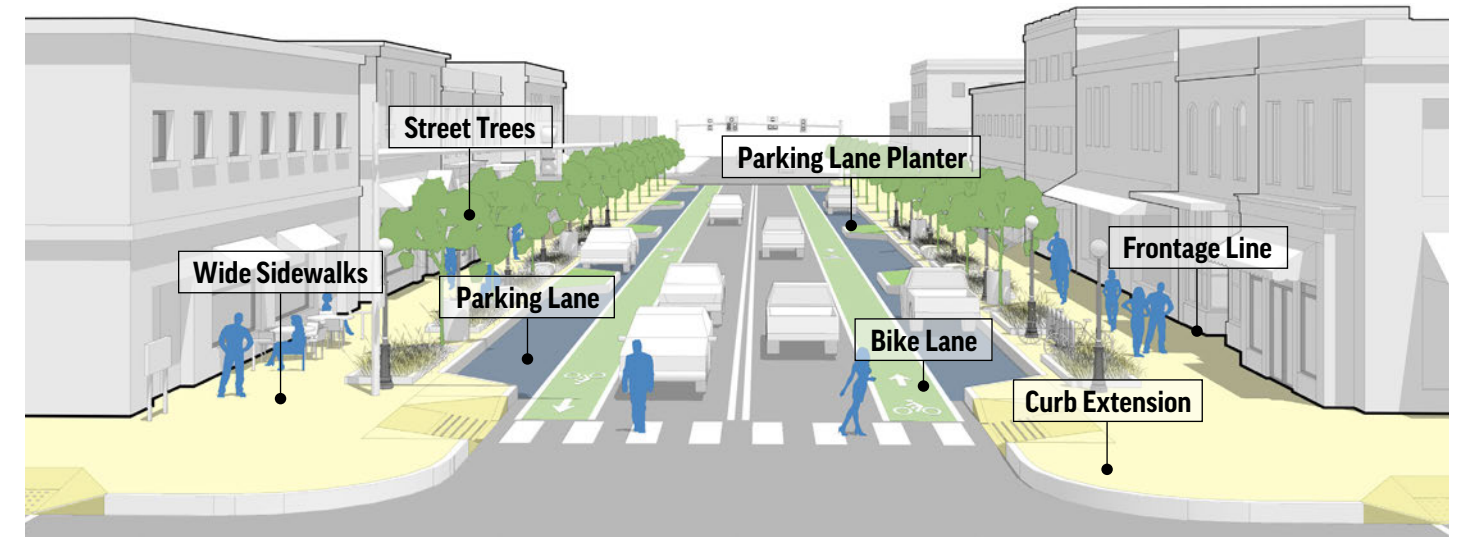
Conceptual example of a Complete Street utilizing the Mixed Use street typology *(for more on street typologies, see page 110 of Forward SGF).*

Walkable, highly-interconnected street network integrated with trail network and open space. Street network connects neighborhoods, employment centers, and commercial and mixed-use centers.

Housing and Neighborhoods Summary

Introduction

Housing and neighborhood development is an important topic for all development codes. A significant portion of all cities is dedicated to residential land uses and the services that support neighborhood living. Housing needs are constantly changing with shifting demographics and the condition and supply of housing. Housing and neighborhod conditions shift to reflect a dynamic ecosystem of influences: new or growing populations, aging populations, shifting lifestyle preferences, economic flucuations, and changing demand for different types of homes.

In the past, development codes have tended to be static and limited: addressing these issues through a binary lens as either single-family or multi-family projects and promoting subdivisions and discrete projects over flexible and complete neighborhoods. An effective development code prepares a community for all of the potential shifts that may occur in the market over time, while designing a structure and pattern for the types of neighborhoods that people desire and that will continue to build value over time.

Springfield, MO

Quality of Place

Quality of Place means our ability to provide amenity-rich neighborhoods and commercial districts. Three themes further define Quality of Place in Springfield:

- **Community Physical Image:** Strengthening Springfield's authentic urban and natural assets.
- **Arts, Culture, & Historic Preservation:** Celebrating the arts, culture, and history that defines Springfield's diverse communities.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Integrating health and wellbeing into all aspects of community design.

Housing and Neighborhood Goals

Forward SGF defines key goals to enhance quality Housing and Neighborhoods in Springfield:

- **Complete Neighborhoods:** Create walkable patterns with neighborhood-scale commercial to provide access to daily necessities and amenities within a 15-minute walk of most homes.
- **Housing Choices:** Promote a wide range of lot sizes, building formats, and housing types in appropriate contexts and Placetypes.
- **Design & Beautification:** Focus on design over use and promote well-designed neighborhoods.
- **Revitalization:** Promote infill, support adaptive reuse, and reinvest in mixed-use multimodal corridors.
- **Neighborhood Identity:** Emphasizes unique neighborhood attributes and promote context-appropriate design strategies.

Forward SGF Placetypes

This topic is most relevant to the following Placetypes:

- Neighborhood (Center City)
- Neighborhood (Traditional)
- Mixed Residential
- Mixed Use (Corridors, Hubs, and Districts)

What does Springfield's development code currently require?

- Detached houses lack distinctions in scale (lot size) and format (neighborhood patterns).

- Townhomes are allowed in several districts, but the standards are complex and have nuanced (but inconsequential) distinctions in standards between districts.

- All housing standards are focused on "density" (dwelling units per acre), which is abstract and does not address the building scale, format, or design of housing.

- The multi-family districts (R-LD, R-MD, and R-HD) do not have meaningful distinctions between them, and result in similar types of residential projects instead of variety.

- There are few neighborhood design standards, and where included they are similar across all residential districts.

- There is not a consistent approach to residential uses in nonresidential districts. Some districts prohibit residential, some are unclear, and some enable residential but do not provide a clear path for executing mixed-use projects.

Existing Residential Zoning Districts:

- ▶ **R-SF** Single-Family
- ▶ **R-TH** Townhouse
- ▶ **R-LD** Low-Density Multi-Family
- ▶ **R-MD** Medium-Density Multi-Family
- ▶ **R-HD** High-Density Multi-Family
- ▶ **R-MHC** Manufactured Home Community

Community Discussion Starters

- **Accessory Apartments:** What design considerations are important for revisiting current standards for accessory apartments?

- **Small Lot Houses:** What design considerations are important and what contexts are appropriate for houses on lots smaller than 5,000 square feet?

- **"Missing Middle" Housing:** Where and how should the range of small-scale, multi-unit housing be expanded to provide more housing options for Springfield's communities?

- **Mixed-use Housing:** Where and how can residential uses be incorporated into non-residential districts to increase housing variety?

- **Adjacencies & Transitions:** What design and development considerations are most important in locations where a range of residential building types mix or transition?

- **Neighborhood Design:** What elements are essential to foster quality, connected neighborhoods with compatible design?

Springfield, MO

Housing & Neighborhoods Topics

Building Types vs. Density

Density (or dwelling units per acre) is a conventional way to measure the intensity of residential development. However, this measure is abstract and incomplete. Variables like the size of housing units, the format and footprint of the building, the lot pattern and configuration, and the scale, massing and design of buildings all have far more significant impacts on whether projects are compatible with their surroundings than how many units per acre of land they equate to. Additionally, density numbers are often set artificially low for fear that larger allowances equate to larger projects. This is not necessarily the case, and in fact the opposite can occur: as projects require a larger land area to reach a sufficient yield of units, projects actually become larger and more out-of-context when the density limits are too low. In contrast, standards for building types (the scale, format, and configuration of buildings) provide better expectations for the built outcome. These are often more important metrics for the community, and including a complete range of building types in a development code can establish more appropriate fits for zoning districts.

Mixed-Density Neighborhoods

Expanding on the building type approach, a mix of housing options can be more easily integrated into neighborhoods. This results from both a range of similar scale buildings allowing different unit configurations, and from more effective transitions between different building types on a block- or neighborhood-scale. These patterns often enable more strategic locations of smaller-scale, higher density projects (see Transit- or Trail-oriented Development, and "Missing Middle" Housing), all within a compatible neighborhood design and pattern (see Neighborhood Design and Neighborhood Density).

Accessory Dwelling Units

Springfield's current development code allows Accessory Apartments (more commonly called Accessory Dwelling Units, or ADUs) in all zoning districts with a detached house. However, Accessory Apartments face several restrictions that significantly limit their applicability. ADUs can meet critical housing needs for many communities, ranging from older adults or young professionals living with their families, to students looking for safe, lower-cost housing. This update to the Community Development Code is an opportunity to check-in with the city's "accessory apartment" policies and evaluate how well it is serving Springfield's communities. Topics to consider during this process may include which Placetypes ADUs are most appropriate within, whether to allow detached (free-standing) ADUs, whether to allow ADUs on rental properties, and what kind of design standards are needed to ensure appropriate neighborhood design considerations are considered for implementing accessory units.

Small Lot Houses

Small lot houses (detached single-family homes built on lots smaller than 5,000 square feet) are another traditional housing typology that can fill critical housing needs at a variety of budgets. Not all families or community members want or are able to maintain a home on a larger lot (older adults desiring a home for aging-in-place, for example), and small lot houses can provide independent living with greater flexibility through options like smaller homes arranged in a courtyard pattern, tiny homes, or homes located internally within a block, for example. *Forward SGF* sets goals for expanding the variety of housing available in Springfield while prioritizing residential infill, and small lot homes may be suited to help meet these goals in a variety of Placetypes. Residential zoning districts will not allow a lot to be less than 5,000 square feet, and anything smaller is enabled as a tiny home project. However, there is a range of small lot house types and configurations in-between a traditional detached house and a tiny home, making these typologies challenging to implement in Springfield.

"Missing Middle" Housing

"Missing middle" housing refers to the range of housing types that fall between detached single-family residential and higher-density multifamily residential: duplexes, multi-unit houses, row houses, small apartments, and mixed-use housing types. While these kinds of residences were once common, development codes often make building these typologies challenging to impossible (see Building Types vs. Density). Yet these types fill important housing needs for a range of budgets and age groups. *Forward SGF* calls for increasing the availability of "missing middle" housing.

Housing & Neighborhoods Topics (Continued)

Development codes can ease the process of developing "missing middle" housing types while setting design standards to ensure quality, sensitivity to context, and to refine appropriate scales and locations for these "middle" housing types. The current code has some references to missing middle types (duplexes and townhouses), however there are many types, formats, and configurations that are missing, or which will be undermined by the generic approach to density limits on all multi-family or multi-unit building types.

Mixed Use Housing

Mixed use housing integrates residential uses with non-residential uses. This typically happens in two ways, either through mixed use buildings (which stack residences on the upper floors of a building with commercial uses on the ground floor), or by locating residential buildings and non-residential buildings in one integrated area or district. A familiar example may be a historic or arts district that blends residences with galleries and artisanal spaces, offices, or small retail and restaurants -- such as the Walnut Street Historic District or the Commercial Street Historic District. Mixed use housing helps to create harmonious transitions between higher-intensity commercial areas and surrounding residential neighborhoods, and contributes to a more walkable city by providing a place to live within a walkable distance of employment, recreational destinations, and daily goods and services. Although Springfield already has diverse types of mixed use housing, there are very few design and development standards in place for this type of development. *Forward SGF* recommends utilizing mixed use housing for revitalization and infill, as well as adaptive reuse of existing buildings. As this housing typology grows in popularity, development codes can define design standards and promote mixed use housing that adds to Springfield's "Quality of Place" by considering which districts are appropriate for mixed use buildings, and how and where residential buildings could be incorporated into non-residential districts.

Neighborhood Design

Neighborhood design includes all of the urban design elements that contribute to the overall look and feel of a neighborhood, and that integrating the public realm and private development: streetscapes; landscapes; connections to public and civic spaces, trails, daily necessities and amenities, and commercial hubs; housing types and design; scale and massing of buildings; and frontage design. *Forward SGF's* guiding principle of "Quality of Place" can be implemented in Springfield's neighborhoods by focusing the development code on these design elements. In the public realm, streetscapes can be designed to create a comfortable environment for every user, landscape can bring nature into each neighborhood to beautify the city and contribute to community health, and connections to civic spaces can provide destinations for gatherings and recreation in each neighborhood. Design standards for private development can impact the variety of housing types, contribute to neighborhood character by requiring compatible sizes and scales of buildings, and ensure frontage design elements that activate a streetscape. The current development code has addressed neighborhood design either for specific issues (bulk standards) and in specific districts (overlay standards) but lacks a coordinated approach to all of the elements that impact the design qualities of different neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Identity

While neighborhood design includes the universal design elements found in every neighborhood (although how they are expressed varies by context), neighborhood identity includes specific elements unique to a given neighborhood. For example, a neighborhood's identity could be defined by a specific architectural style, boulevard-style streets, or any other design elements that make a neighborhood distinctive. Development codes will sometimes present challenges to a neighborhood expressing a unique identity, resulting in neighborhoods of cookie-cutter identical houses with no sense of place, but they can also be constructed to allow and encourage unique expressions of neighborhood identity. *Forward SGF* prioritizes neighborhood identity, clearly calling for residential infill that fits the existing character of neighborhoods, design standards that support neighborhood identity, and new development that enhances Springfield's range of neighborhood and community identities.
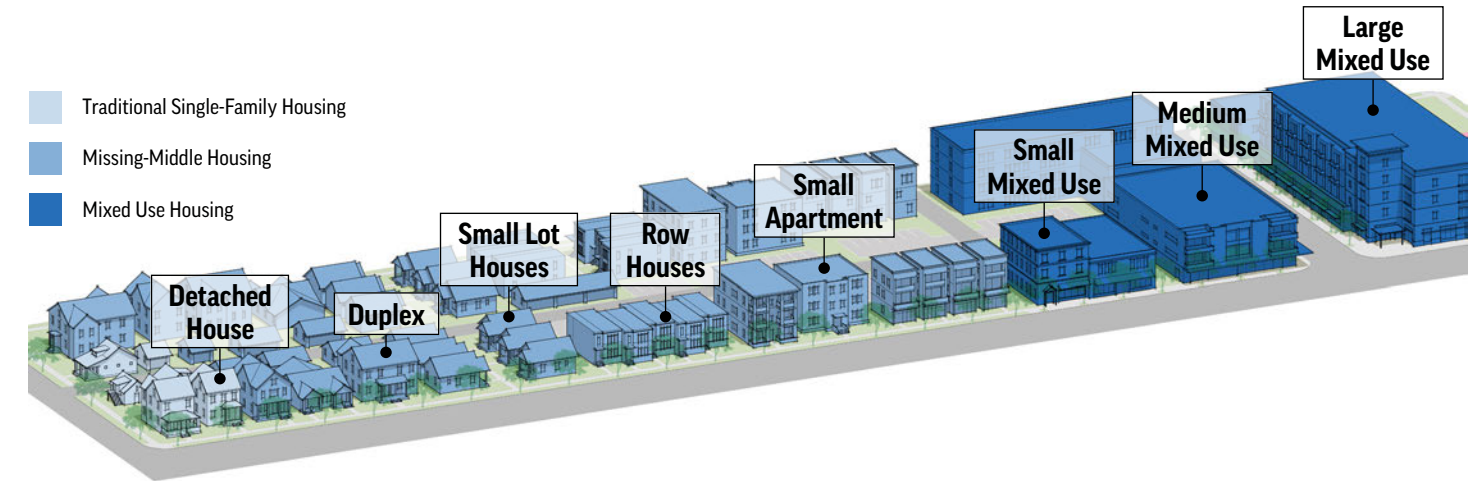
The wide range of housing typologies.
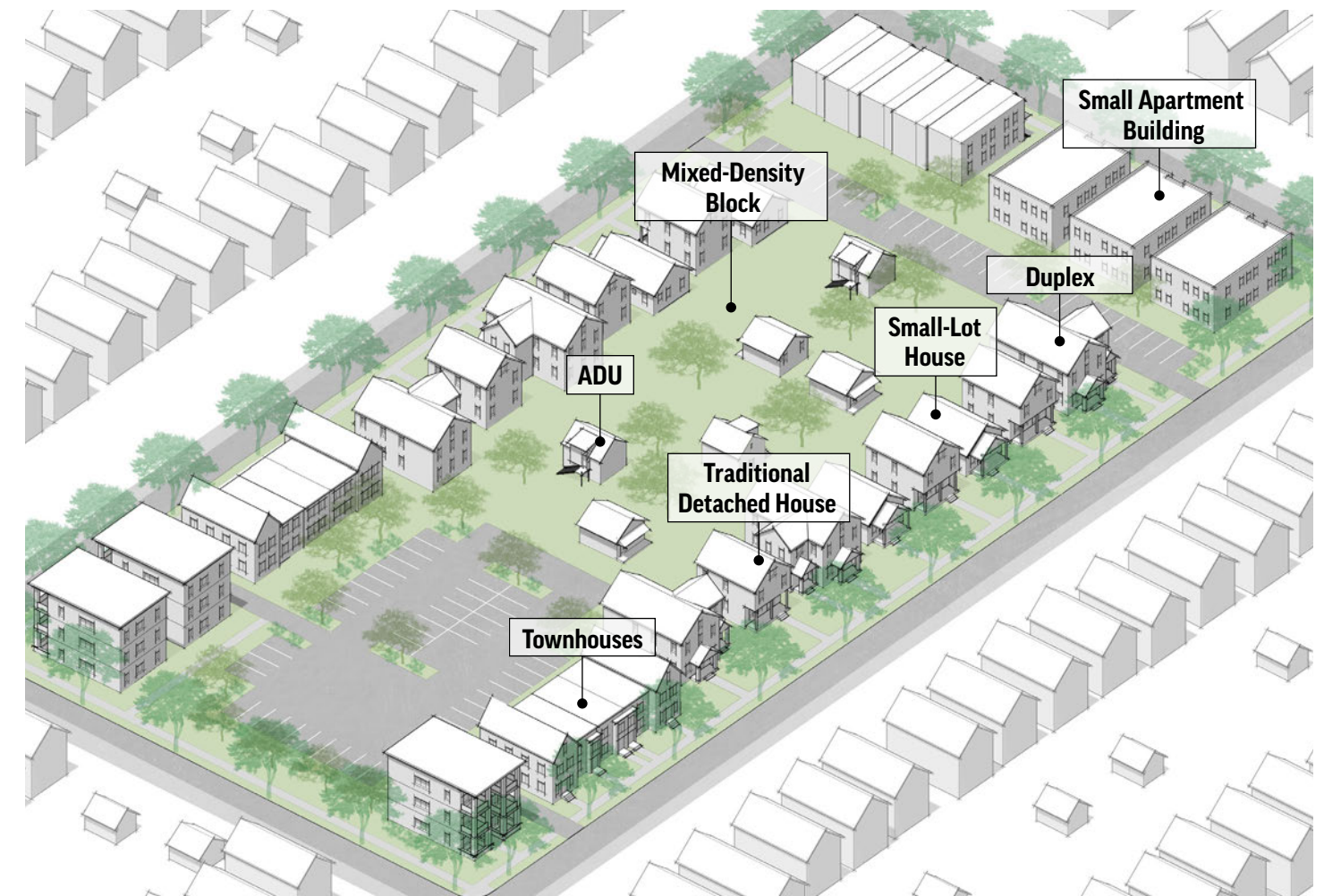
Conceptual illustration of a mixed-density block.

Mixed Use Corridors & Places Summary

Introduction

Development codes help to shape destinations throughout the community -- destinations such as employment hubs, entertainment and recreation venues, civic destinations, or the variety of scales and types of retail and service centers that support neighborhoods. A combination of transportation systems, land use relationships, and the design and pattern of development determines the Quality of Place reflected in each of these types of places and impacts the image of the city.

In the past, development codes have focused extensively on land uses to achieve "compatible development," with the assumption that similar uses belong in similar places. However, this ignores many of the nuances that impact how people experience these places. It has led to less vibrant and more segregated places, which tend not to be adaptable to shifts in the market and fail to build value over time. An effective development code will recognize a wide variety of places – in terms of scale, in terms of intensity and mix of uses, and in terms of character and design strategies – and then allow the flexibility to promote investment in these places and adapt to shifting markets over time.

Springfield, MO

What does *Forward SGF* say about Mixed Use Corridors & Places?

Quality of Place

Quality of Place means our ability to provide amenity-rich neighborhoods and commercial districts. Three themes further define Quality of Place in Springfield:

- **Community Physical Image:** Strengthening Springfield's authentic urban and natural assets.
- **Arts, Culture, & Historic Preservation:** Celebrating the arts, culture, and history that defines Springfield's diverse communities.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Integrating health and wellbeing into all aspects of community design.

Mixed Use Corridors & Places Goals

Forward SGF defines key goals to enhance quality Mixed Use Corridors & Places in Springfield:

- **Walkable Neighborhood Hubs:** Integrate low-scale and complimentary commercial uses as a focal point of or transition to residential neighborhoods.
- **Multimodal Mixed Use Corridors:** Reinvest in, diversify, and beautify our major corridors.
- **Vibrant Urban Destinations:** Strengthen our existing urban environments with a variety of residential, commercial, and entertainment uses.
- **Diverse Special Purpose Districts & Campuses:** Strengthen employment centers, civic and institutional campuses, and other special purpose districts with complementary support uses and strategic transitions to other place types.
- **Neighborhood Identity:** Emphasize unique attributes and promote context-appropriate design strategies.

Forward SGF Placetypes

This topic is most relevant to the following Placetypes:

- Neighborhood (Center City)
- Neighborhood (Traditional)
- Mixed Residential
- Mixed Use (Corridors, Hubs, and Districts)
- City Corridors
- Downtown
- Institutional & Employment Center
- Business Flex
- Industry & Logistics

What does Springfield's development code currently require?

- Development and design standards in non-residential districts have few distinctions. Standards for setbacks, height, open space, and impervious coverage are similar across most districts, and some districts have no distinctions at all.

- Design standards in most non-residential districts are generic performance standards for landscape, parking, screening, or outdoor storage which are similar across all districts. The Commercial Street district and West College Street districts are the exceptions, which strategically address key elements of urban design and placemaking.

- Permitted uses are the primary areas of distinction among the districts; however, there is no distinction between scale or format of uses (i.e. all retail uses are considered equivalent, and a corner store is not distinguished from a big box store).

- No consistent approach to mixed use development, and all districts have few design and development standards for mixed use development.

- Parking standards include some exceptions for context in the Downtown and Commercial Street districts, but shared parking is procedurally cumbersome and design standards do not address size, location, and design of parking. *(Section 36-483)*

- Landscape standards primarily address buffers and screening, and do not consider landscape design standards for different functional components of the site (i.e. streetscape, building frontage, parking, open and social spaces). *(Section 36-482)*

Community Discussion Starters

- **Context & Scale:** Consider how development standards for uses, lot size, building standards, design standards may differ based on different contexts and scales (multimodal vs. car-oriented, neighborhood-scale vs. regional-scale).

- **Connectivity & Internal Access:** How can we improve internal connections for large commercial sites and corridors that lack connectivity? How can development reorient towards pedestrians in areas that are transitioning into mixed-use environments?

- **Mixed Use Housing:** How can we promote residential uses in more non-residential districts, considering both "mixed use" buildings (i.e. residential above or behind non-residential) and residential-only (i.e. residential buildings integrated into mixed use contexts)?

- **Community Design:** What design and placemaking elements are important to steer investment in new or existing mixed-use areas?

- **Precedents:** What other design elements can we draw from existing exemplary places in Springfield (or neighboring communities) that exhibit "Quality of Place"? What design elements from places in Springfield and neighboring communities should we avoid?

Springfield, MO

Mixed Use Corridors & Places Topics

Use vs. Scale & Format

Development codes have historically relied on land uses to enable development and make distinctions between zoned districts. However, this is an insufficient approach and often ends up inadvertently excluding things that contribute to valuable places. This is especially true when communities plan for better design and more vibrant places as *Forward SGF* has done through the Quality of Place vision and the specific Placetypes. A mix of complementary uses becomes more instrumental to creating the vibrant corridors, centers, and nodes envisioned by the plan, and a pattern of compatibly-scaled buildings are more crucial to completing well-designed places. To implement this direction, codes need to be more flexible to the types of uses that may be implemented, but while also being more specific to the scale and format of the uses. Springfield's current code has very similar development standards among most of its non-residential zoning districts, so distinctions between the districts primarily results from which uses any one district allows. Each district then includes its own list of specific uses that make few distinctions between the scale or format of the use (for example, "retail sales" could be a small corner store or a big box store.)

Streetscapes & Frontages

One of the key parameters that impacts the scale and format of non-residential is the relationship of the streetscape and the private frontage, or how the lot and buildings interface with the street. In the most pedestrian-oriented areas, this relationship is close and has intricate design details: buildings often front directly on the street, frequent doors and entrances break buildings into smaller components and activate the street, high degrees of transparency on street-level and upper story facades create additional connections to the streetscape, and buildings reveal interesting details to people walking by at a slow pace. In contrast, on high-traffic corridors or other car-oriented patterns, the site has a lesser relationship to the street as buildings are removed from the street in favor of access and parking, signs and entrances compete for visibility from distant traffic moving at high speeds, and landscape and buffers become more important to improving the appearance and mitigating the

impacts on streetscapes and adjacent properties. Between these two extremes are a wide degree of streetscape and frontage relationships that impact the design qualities of different places within Springfield. The current regulations have some standards that address these topics (with the most comprehensive being the Commercial Street Design Standards, aimed at protecting pedestrian qualities and historic context); however, there is not a comprehensive place- or street-based approach to these design and development issues.

Optimize Parking & Limit Parking Impacts

Parking takes up a significant amount of land in most communities, and always requires trade-offs: people need a place to park their vehicles, but poorly designed parking reduces walkability and the social life of a streetscape, while contributing to undesirable environmental issues like heat islands and excessive stormwater runoff. A key role of development codes is to attempt to optimize the amount of parking required and mitigate unwanted impacts to the streetscape and nature from parking. Parking can be optimized by tailoring requirements to avoid creating too much parking, maximizing opportunities for on-street parking (which can contribute to safer streetscapes), encouraging shared parking strategies, and managing and planning for parking at the project, block, or district scale. Because not all neighborhoods or communities have the same parking needs, parking standards should be based on context, including location- or used-based parking exemptions, increasing credits for on-street parking, establishing parking maximums, and requiring pedestrian paths through parking lots to create safer environments for pedestrians. The current development code reflects some of these strategies (I.e. parking is exempt in downtown and Commercial Street), but lacks some of the strategies that can expand flexibility and improve options for other areas or emerging walkable places. Additional design standards that mitigate the negative impacts of parking whenever it is required (particularly the impacts to streetscapes, frontages, and environmental concerns) should be strengthened.

Corridors & Internal Access Streets

Corridors (and particularly corridors that have been designed

# Mixed Use Corridors & Places Topics (Continued)

to prioritize traffic and vehicle access) often suffer from multiple conditions that experience decline over time. They lack connectivity since access management strategies have prioritized traffic. They have poor relationships to the streetscape due to lack of quality streetscape designs, and frontages designed exclusively for parking and access. They promote single-use environments as a combination of larger sites and sprawling lots and buildings fail to relate to one another. However, all of these corridor contexts have the potential to reinstitute a block structure and pattern that can be ripe for either small-scale and strategic infill, or for larger-scale redevelopment. Whether it is reinforcing existing internal drive aisles more as streetscapes and multi-modal connections, or whether it is introducing new connections through the perimeter of buildings and parking blocks, corridors of different scales and conditions can begin to reinforce patterns that will encourage new investment. The current code does not address many of these patterns as it typically requires "maximums" rather than minimums: the maximum street length or block size before new streets are needed, the maximum parking area or lot sizes so that blocks and projects have multiple coordinated sites, and maximum scale of uses or buildings before transitions and diversity is required. The correspondence between public streetscape design and internal access streets along corridors begins to establish these patterns where they do not exist or strengthen and capitalize on them where they do exist.

Mixed Use Housing

See the Housing & Neighborhoods section for more on mixed use housing.

Site Design

See the Environment & Natural Features section for more on site design and landscaping.
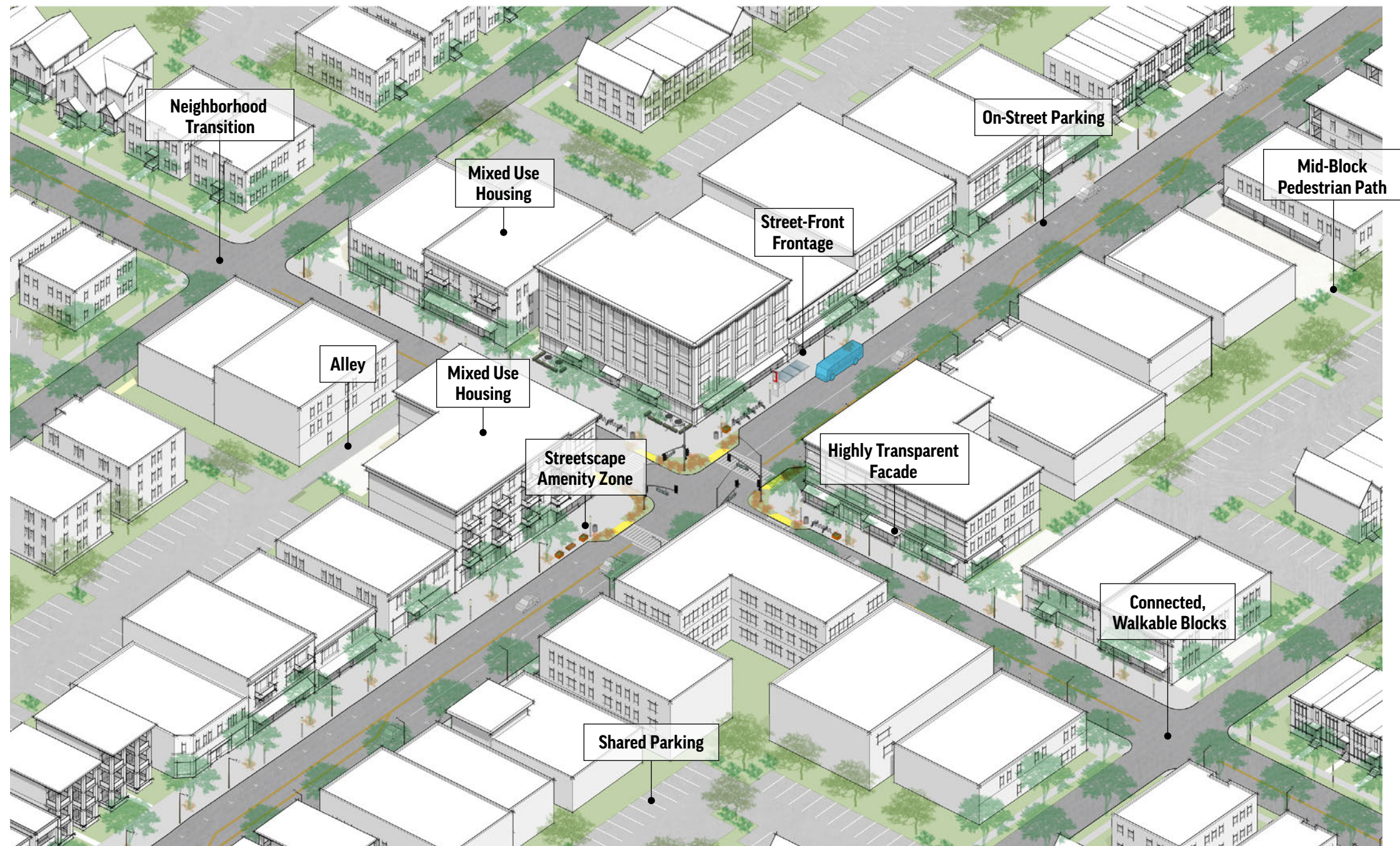
Environment & Natural Features Summary

Introduction

Environment and natural features are an important contributor to unique identities for regions, cities, districts and neighborhoods, and specific projects. Integrating these natural and environmental elements into the development code can help strengthen the regional distinctiveness of Springfield, help beautify the city, promote environmentally functional site design, and preserve ecosystem services that minimize the impacts of new development.

In the past, development codes have viewed environmental issues and development as being in opposition, or alternatively have relegated these issues to site design strategies that resort to "the more green the better." This ignores opportunities to think about how natural systems can shape, relate to, and ultimately support development with different design strategies in different contexts. An effective development code will promote green design strategies in every project and at every scale, while ensuring that the chosen strategies are contextually appropriate and strengthen the contribution of sites and buildings to overall urban design patterns. Linking natural systems across projects and between scales of development maximizes the opportunity to allow environmental and natural features to serve many different aesthetic, recreational, and environmental goals.

Springfield, MO

> **What does *Forward SGF* say about Springfield's Environment & Natural Features?**

Quality of Place

Quality of Place means our ability to provide amenity-rich neighborhoods and commercial districts. Three themes further define Quality of Place in Springfield:

- **Community Physical Image:** Strengthening Springfield's authentic urban and natural assets.
- **Arts, Culture, & Historic Preservation:** Celebrating the arts, culture, and history that defines Springfield's diverse communities.
- **Health & Well-being:** Integrating health and wellbeing into all aspects of community design.

Environment & Natural Features Goals

Forward SGF defines key goals to enhance the quality of the Environment and Natural Features in Springfield:

- **Trails & "Un-gapping the Map":** Strengthen connections of regionals, district, and local trails and integrate trails with other civic and open spaces.
- **Connect to Nature:** Include "green" elements (street trees, green infrastructure, and quality landscaping) in all contexts (development, redevelopment, open spaces, and streetscapes) and at a variety of scales to increase livability, walkability, and to beautify Springfield.
- **Quality Public Spaces:** Organize development around quality public and common spaces that serve social, recreational, and aesthetic needs.
- **Increase Access to Healthy Foods:** Increase ways to connect people to healthy food resources in their own neighborhoods and accessible by walking or transit, and reduce barriers to providing healthy food access throughout Springfield.
- **Preserve Springfield's Natural Features and Ecosystems:** Protect Springfield's unique natural assets for recreation and tourism by promoting low-impact development, sustainable site design, preserving and increasing the urban forest, and greening the city through functional landscapes and green infrastructure.

Forward SGF Placetypes

This topic is relevant to all Placetypes:

- Neighborhood (Center City)
- Neighborhood (Traditional)
- Mixed Residential
- Mixed Use (Corridors, Hubs, and Districts)
- City Corridors
- Downtown
- Institutional & Employment Center
- Business Flex
- Industry & Logistics
- Urban Green Space & Recreation

What does Springfield's development code currently require?

- Open space requirements in subdivision standards depend on designation on a master plan. Requirements lack clear criteria for the amount, type, or relationship of open spaces to future development. *(Sections 36-248 and 36-252)*

- Process, administration, and timing for open space dedication needs to be coordinated with development applications. *(Section 36-248)*

- Stream protection relies solely on stormwater justifications and is not emphasized as a community design feature, recreational asset, or ecosystem element. *(Section 36-253 and reference to Chapter 96 Storm Water)*

- Open space requirements in zoning districts only address lot coverage and impervious surface coverage, without considering open spaces intentionally designed for specific functions (social, recreational, or ecological). *(All districts in Article III Zoning Regulations, Division 4 District Regulations)*

- Landscape standards are primarily focused on buffers, screening, and mitigating development impacts, and do not foster intentional design of site components like streetscape, frontages, parking, social and gathering spaces. *(Section 36-482)*

- There are no specific requirements for street trees, and there are no requirements for tree preservation. *(Sections 36-243, 36-482, and Design Specifications)*

Community Discussion Starters

- **Open Space Typologies:** Consider a system of open space typologies for Springfield, similar to *Forward SGF's* street typologies. What open space typologies would serve Springfield's communities, ecology, and add to "Quality of Place"? For example:
  - Trails: Greenways, multi-use trails (on- & off-street), nature trails.
  - Parks: mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, school parks, sports complexes.
  - Natural Areas: water bodies, prairies, wetlands, floodplains, woodland areas.
  - Civic & Social Spaces: greens, squares, plazas, courtyards & gardens, streetscapes.

- **Street Trees:** How can street trees enhance streets as "linear parks" and increase Springfield's urban forest through standards that take into account context, standards, specifications, and preservation?

- **Native & Regionally Appropriate Landscaping:** What standards and guidelines will ensure longevity of landscape investments and promote landscapes that serve both aesthetic goals and provide ecosystem services?

- **Landscape & Site Design**: What considerations are important for coordinating site and landscape design with streetscapes and a broader system of landscapes and open spaces?

- **Ownership:** How can we promote a wide range of natural and open spaces to support development, including public, common, and private spaces?
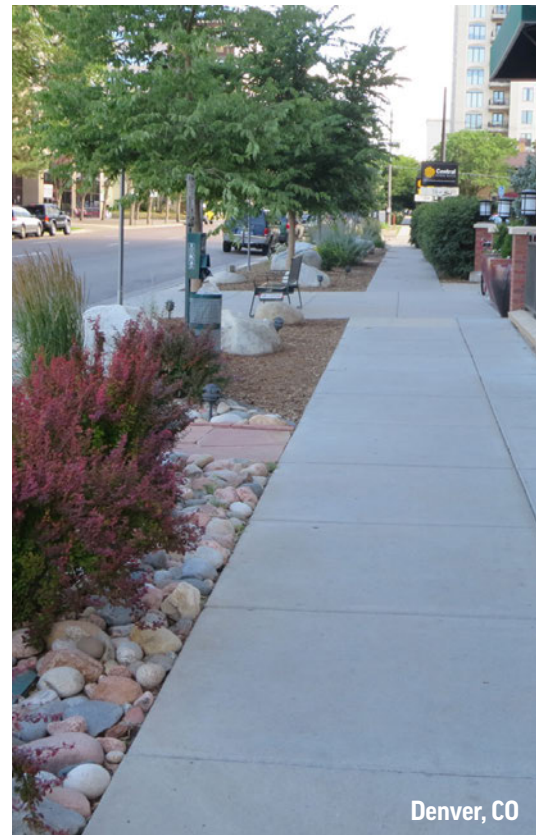
Denver, CO

Environment & Natural Features Topics

Open Space Typologies

Open space typologies refers to a defined set of different categories of open spaces, and helps a community determine where different types of open spaces are most appropriate. Defining a system of open space typologies allows a community to create standards that promote open spaces designed to 1) fit into and strengthen their surrounding context, 2) contribute to a network of usable and high-quality public spaces, and 3) increase the city's resilience and provide important ecosystem services. Although Springfield's code currently does not include a system of open spaces, the Springfield-Greene County *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* does define and apply various park typologies, and *Forward SGF* calls for a defined and codified system of open spaces. This update to the Community Development Code provides the opportunity to continue refining a tailored system of open space typologies appropriate to the Placetypes established by *Forward SGF* and that consider the context, scale, function, and design of open spaces throughout the city to promote "Quality of Place" in open spaces city-wide.

Landscape & Site Design

Beautifying Springfield, in part through high-quality landscape and site design, is a key goal of *Forward SGF*. The Community Development Code can directly implement this goal through landscape and site design standards, by requiring nature and plantings in all development and at all scales. This can and should be highly context-dependent; for example, a site in a very urban setting may need to emphasize streetscapes for planting opportunities or incorporate smaller-scale elements of landscaping and "greenery" like planters, window boxes, tree pits, and green roofs, while a site in a less urban setting may have room for larger-scale and less formal landscape elements, with more interconnected green spaces to leverage other nearby natural or landscape areas.

Native & Regionally-Appropriate Landscaping

Native landscaping utilizes plant species native to the ecosystem of the region or that have a high survival rate due to the climate and species attributes, but avoids non-native plants that are invasive or could harm native species. When utilized in their native regions, native plants provide crucial ecosystem services for a city including stormwater management and improved water quality, pollination, reduced soil depletion and erosion, and reduced need for maintenance and watering. *Forward SGF* calls for native landscaping throughout all Placetypes in order to strengthen Springfield's unique natural resources, and this update to Springfield's Community Development Code is an opportunity to create landscape standards that will ensure long-lasting landscapes that consider appropriate species, locations, installation, and maintenance to enhance Springfield's appearance and increase benefits from ecosystem services.

Water as a Resource, Green Infrastructure, & Low-Impact Development

Forward SGF consistently prioritizes water considerations, including stormwater, as a resource for the city. This principle touches a wide range of water and stormwater management issues that the Community Development Code can impact: aspects of stormwater management, stormwater runoff, site drainage, impervious surface coverage, and water quality. Utilizing green infrastructure is recommended throughout *Forward SGF* to reorient the city's relationship with these issues. Green infrastructure is an approach to stormwater management that utilizes nature-based systems to filter stormwater back into the ground where it falls, allowing the stormwater to pass through layers of filtration materials and finally back into the groundwater system. Two key aspects of this approach are: (1) addressing stormwater throughout the community at many scales, and and relating site designs to these nature-based solutions; and (2) harnessing the natural water cycle instead of diverting rainfall into the stormwater system or allowing it to become runoff. In this way, green infrastructure relieves pressure on the sewer systems, improves local water quality, reduces impervious surfaces, and provides options for site drainage and stormwater management that beautify sites and communities. Open space systems (trails, greenways and natural areas) address this at the largest district or community scale (see Open Space Typologies); Green Streets address this at the block or street scale (see the Multimodal Transportation section for more on Green Streets), while Low-Impact Development addresses this at

Environment & Natural Features Topics (Continued)

the private development and site design scale. Development standards, and particularly the stormwater requirements with development standards, should systematically coordinate all scales of stormwater management together. Strategically utilizing green infrastructure to reduce the impacts of private development on municipal stormwater systems and local ecology will also contribute to beautifying public spaces and private development through functional landscapes.

Community Gardens & Urban Farming

Community gardens are shared spaces within neighborhoods for community members to grow foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, and are most commonly located on formerly vacant lots, school grounds, or land owned by a community group or non-profit. Urban farming is a broader concept and includes food production on a variety of scales: from a community member growing vegetables on an apartment deck or rooftop, to incorporating edible landscaping within a site or streetscape, to small-scale for-profit food production (vertical or traditional) occurring in an urban setting. Development codes often unintentionally make this kind of small-scale food production difficult to impossible, creating barriers to communities meeting food needs in their neighborhoods. *Forward SGF* calls for removing barriers to community gardens and urban farming in Springfield's Community Development Code, and making the regulatory environment easier to navigate for community members looking to grow fresh fruits and veggies to supplement their own diets or to meet the needs of their neighbors.

Food Deserts & Food Outlets

Forward SGF describes a food desert as an area where city residents cannot easily access fresh, healthy food within a 15-minute walkshed. The difficulty of accessing healthy foods is compounded for households with no or limited access to a vehicle and those living in areas without reliable transit access. Development codes often make food outlets (grocery stores, convenience stores with fresh, healthy foods, farmers markets, co-op groceries, etc.) challenging to build in urban areas, and *Forward SGF* lays out goals to remove barriers in the Community Development Code to developing neighborhood-scale food outlets throughout Springfield.

St. Louis, MO

Shawnee, KS

Two contrasting open space typologies: an urban plaza, and a trail within a larger natural resource park.

Trail Network

Neighborhood Park

Mini-Park

Natural Resource Corridor

Community Park

School Park

Open space and trail network connecting multiple open space typologies.