

Redevelopment of Existing Corridors

VALUE ADDED

The use of new zoning controls that contain innovative development tools and strategies needed for a comprehensive corridor design process can improve the aesthetics, economic vitality, and traffic safety of existing corridors.



Successful corridor redevelopment requires that the interface between the public right-of-way, building frontages, and the adjacent land uses are addressed comprehensively. Proper redevelopment of a corridor should also improve the corridor’s value to adjacent neighborhoods. To accomplish this, adjustments to zoning and development regulations should consider the transitions between the corridor and adjacent development, providing enhanced buffers between commercial development and abutting residential neighborhoods, deterring traffic from entering adjacent neighborhoods, and offering amenities to area residents, such as public open space and safe, walkable pedestrian connections to desired goods and services.

Master Plan – Developing a master plan for a corridor is an important first step that can establish the appropriate design requirements in the corridor. The corridor’s businesses, stakeholders, and adjacent neighborhoods must be engaged in the master planning process to ensure that the concerns and goals of all are heard.

Overlay Zoning – A zoning overlay district tailored to the corridor’s needs is a valuable tool to incorporate the many development tools that are described below and to ensure consistently safe, appealing and functional character. See *Application of Overlay Zoning Districts IPA paper* for additional information on this topic.

- **Access Management**

Access management is one of the most important tools that can aid mobility and safety along a thoroughfare that is undergoing redevelopment. The overlay zone for the corridor should provide specific standards for the number, spacing and location of driveways. The ordinance should also require that adjacent commercial parcels should provide interparcel access for vehicles and pedestrians. This is essential if access to the thoroughfare is, or will be, median controlled.

- **Traffic Calming**

Neighborhood residents may express concerns about “cut-through-traffic” or excess vehicular speed through their neighborhoods. The overlay district can require a traffic study to identify these threats and then provide multiple options for calming traffic on the impacted neighborhood streets.

- **Enhanced Connectivity for Vehicles and Pedestrians**

One source of dysfunction in corridors is the concentration of traffic along a single corridor. When all the businesses or residences along a corridor depend on a single street for access, traffic congestion will limit the potential of redevelopment. A goal of a corridor overlay district is to identify how and where a coherent grid network of secondary streets will be created to distribute vehicular flow efficiently. Requiring a continuous grid of safe pedestrian pathways for circulation, including walkways through parking lots and between all stores, can also enhance multi-modal connectivity.

- **Corridor Cross Sections**

The retrofit of a corridor should include cross-section redesigns of the entire public realm including streets, streetscape, landscapes, signs, and building frontages. The overlay district should incorporate these cross-sections with design guidelines to be met by redevelopment projects throughout the corridor.

Streetscape improvements often defined in overlay districts include underground relocation of utilities, attractive, well-designed sidewalks and crosswalks with attractive pavements, plans for street furniture such as trash receptacles, street lights and benches, street trees, wayfinding signage, public art, and entrance features.



Urban Design

Relating the street to the buildings, from sidewalks, to signs, to utilities, to street trees and landscaping, the overlay regulations along a corridor help to shape the physical environment and support the kind of street activity that makes an area vibrant. The proper variations and combination of streetscapes, facades, building setbacks, heights and massing to recognize major activity nodes can create the effect of gateways and transitions that differentiate the corridor into a series of distinct districts.

- **Parking Management**

Views of surface parking can easily dominate the aesthetics of a corridor, particularly if parking is placed in front of buildings. Where a pedestrian environment is desired, infill buildings should be placed fronting the edge of the streetscape and framing it to create an attractive outdoor room. Parking can be placed out of sight behind the front row of buildings, accessed by convenient pathways to the street, and a shared parking ordinance can reduce the amount of parking that is needed.

- **Sign Ordinance**

Typically, a corridor overlay ordinance will address new signs for developing areas and replacement signs for existing businesses. In the pedestrian oriented portions of the corridor, wall signs and smaller, pedestrian oriented signs along the sidewalks can replace monument signs and pole signs used along most highways.

- **Green Infrastructure**

Corridor redevelopment provides an opportunity to encourage innovative approaches to address stormwater management, the heat island effect, and alternative energy needs. Consideration of best management practices, alternative energy production, and other related strategies can have a transformative influence on a corridor.