

One of the key goals of this Master Plan is to encourage redevelopment of the existing low density, auto-oriented commercial and industrial uses into a higher density mixed-use neighborhood that takes advantage of the links to rail transit. The intent is to bring in a significant number of new residents into the area to accommodate some of the expected population growth in the region; and to provide the associated community and neighborhood services, parks, and public spaces important to making a great neighborhood. These may include restaurants, small local businesses/retailers, and multi-story, mixed-use buildings with direct pedestrian access to public transit.

This plan will serve as a framework for infrastructure improvements and changes to zoning that will guide future development. With the possible exception of existing city-owned sites in the area, redevelopment of properties will not be conducted by the City, but by private property owners and developers over time.

The major land use and zoning changes recommended by the Master Plan are outlined below:

Recommendations

1. Allow increased density and building heights to accommodate some of the expected population growth in the region.
2. Encourage neighborhood services and activities such as restaurants, small retailers and local businesses.
3. Encourage well-designed multi-story, mixed use buildings with direct pedestrian links to transit.
4. Create a “design-based” zoning overlay with urban design standards. Establish subdistrict boundaries as part of a zoning overlay that would determine the FAR, height restrictions, setbacks, environmental and design standards for properties within the neighborhood (see Figure 4.22).

5. Create a “public benefit” density bonus system to provide incentive for the creation of affordable housing, civic facilities better street connectivity, additional stormwater management and publicly-accessible parks and open space.

6. Redevelop City of Austin properties to serve as catalyst sites for redevelopment (relocation of city services would be “revenue neutral”, meaning that revenues from redevelopment needs to equal or exceed the cost of relocating the existing city services on the properties.)

If the land development code and development review process for the North Burnet/Gateway neighborhood is made simple and understandable, better projects will result with greater benefit to both public and private sector interests. Existing zoning in the North Burnet/Gateway area does not easily enable the kind of mixed-use, walkable, high-density places envisioned in this plan. This is underscored by the long process for zoning changes undertaken by property owners to allow the mixed-use development plans of the Domain to proceed. This North Burnet/Gateway Plan establishes subdistrict boundaries and development standards within the sub-districts, as well as a system of density bonuses to achieve certain ‘public benefits’, including affordable housing, and additional stormwater management, parks, and street connectivity beyond what is already required by City code. The recommended subdistrict delineation, paired with the Urban Design Standards detailed later in this chapter, is intended to encourage the walkable, mixed use redevelopment envisioned by the Master Plan.

The design guidelines and potential regulatory changes presented in this Master Plan involve a significant shift in approach to development. Most conventional zoning ordinances are structured around a strict segregation of uses and a focus

only on quantitative limits such as height, density, floor-to-area ratios, etc. The type of development proposed here responds better to a newer style of zoning ordinance that is more concerned with qualitative design characteristics in addition to the quantitative limits. These so-called “design-based” ordinances seek to establish a certain quality of place by regulating such elements as the character of the street frontage, human scaled amenities, building placement, and architectural characteristics. They allow for the type of tightly integrated, denser mixed-use development that is typically precluded by conventional zoning.

SUBDISTRICTS

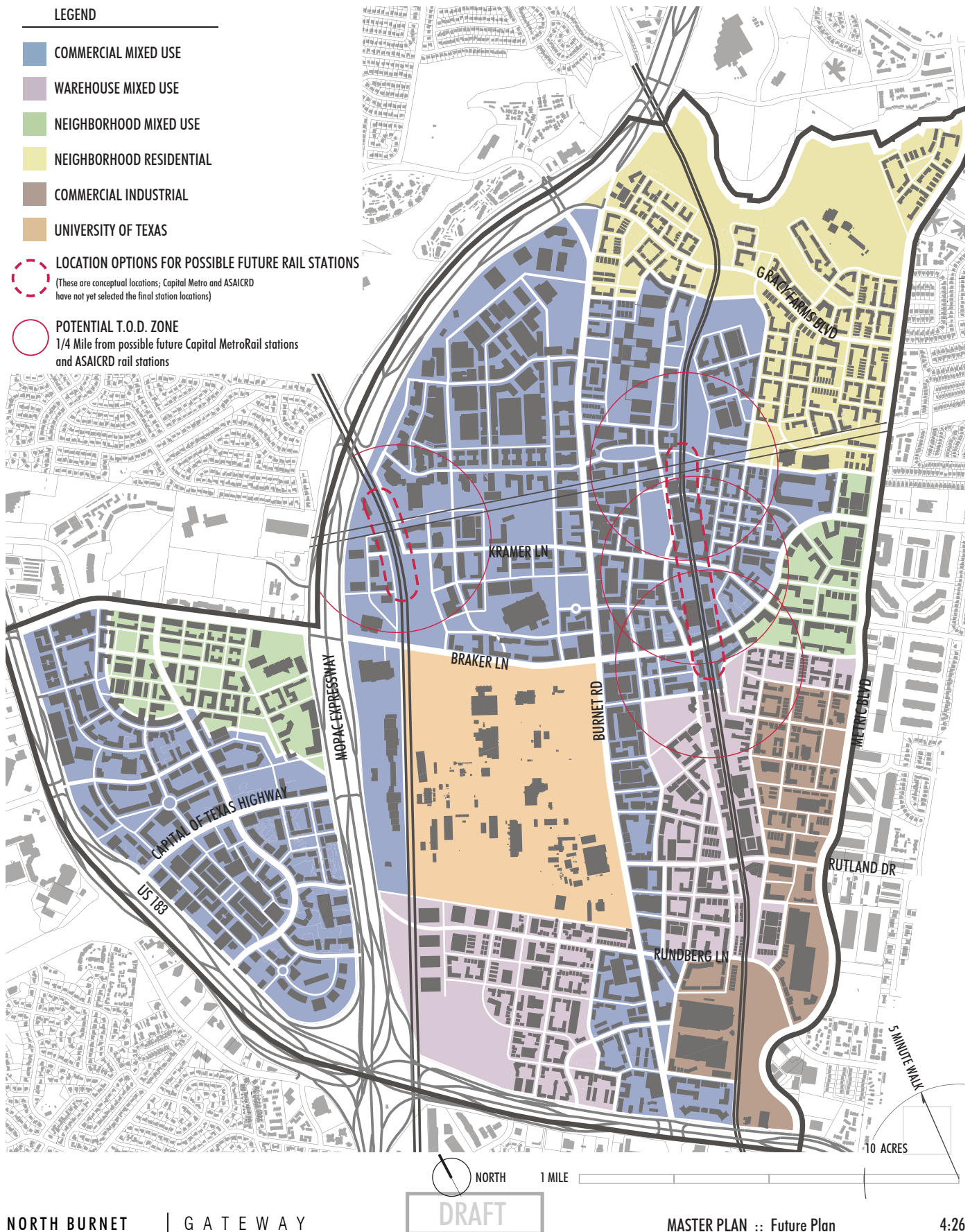
Following are descriptions of the various subdistricts recommended and illustrated by the Master Plan. The densities encouraged by these subdistrict descriptions were driven by public input, the market study conducted by Capital Market Research Inc, and research by the Urban Land Institute examining the minimum densities that are able to support extensive transit services (ULI: Developing Around Transit, 2005). Details of street types, allowable densities, and building massing are outlined in the “Urban Design” section later in this chapter.

COMMERCIAL MIXED-USE (CMU)

Commercial Mixed-Use is the most diverse and dense subdistrict. It has the largest reach across the plan, running north and south along both sides of Burnet Rd., west to MoPac, and east just beyond the Capital Metro Red Line. It extends north to include all of The Domain development and to just south of Gracy Farms Blvd. in the northeast. The entire Gateway shopping center is also illustrated as Commercial Mixed-Use. The character of this district is modeled after many of the great urban neighborhoods around the U.S. including Downtown Austin.

PROPOSED SUBDISTRICT PLAN

Figure 4.22



Building heights upwards of 15 stories would be allowed within this subdistrict, with additional height allowed near transit stations; sidewalks are proportionately wide and lined with street trees. Broad boulevards move traffic through the commercial corridors of this subdistrict and secondary streets are kept wider than usual to balance the allowed building height. Specific building massing regulations are also recommended for this district, requiring buildings to front directly on the sidewalk, stepping back 30 feet after seven floors. This is designed to mitigate a canyon effect along streets in this district. Encouraged uses would range from high density residential to high rise office and entertainment complexes. See Figure 4.23 for building type examples in this subdistrict.

Destination retail and large scale civic uses would also be allowed in this subdistrict. Density bonuses would be available near the rail transit stations in exchange for specific public benefit additions to developments. By encouraging very high densities in this subdistrict, more land is available for high quality open space. Some of the largest parks in the North Burnet/Gateway neighborhood should be within the Commercial Mixed-Use subdistrict. Industrial, detached residential and auto-oriented retail are among the prohibited uses in the subdistrict. Parking would primarily be in parking structures, but on-street parking and shared parking could be used to meet parking requirements.

STATION AREA/TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

Within the Commercial Mixed Use subdistrict, greater density and building heights of up to 30 stories would be allowed and encouraged on properties located within a 1/4 mile of any rail transit station. This distance is recommended as roughly a 5 to 10 minute walk from potential devel-

opments to any proposed rail station. In these areas, density will be allowed to step up significantly in return for specific public benefit bonuses within the development, such as providing affordable housing, parks and open space, additional stormwater management controls, vehicular and pedestrian connectivity, and/or civic facilities. By increasing density near transit stations, a greater number of people benefit from being able to rely on transit for daily transportation needs. The increased density also would allow for consolidated open space close to the transit stations.

NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED USE(NMU)

Neighborhood Mixed-Use is the first step down in density from the Commercial Mixed-Use subdistrict. It is intended to be primarily mid-rise residential with neighborhood-oriented retail and smaller employers. The subdistrict is illustrated in two areas: the east edge of the plan from Metric west to Braker Ln. along a span of six to eight blocks north and south, and the land owned by UT north of the Gateway shopping center, known as the “Western Tract”. The look and feel of this subdistrict is modeled after neighborhoods at the fringe of central business districts in Chicago, Denver or Seattle.

Figure 4.23 : Examples of Buildings Typical of the Commercial Mixed Use District



These neighborhoods are highlighted by commercial streets lined with small local businesses, restaurants, and offices, with residential above. Narrower streets peel off of the main streets and are lined with mid-rise residential buildings. Open space is distributed throughout the subdistrict in the form of large neighborhood parks and small pocket parks. Building heights would be allowed up to 10 stories with a public benefit density bonus. Similar building massing requirements are recommended to those in the Commercial Mixed Use subdistrict, but at a slightly smaller scale. See Figure 4.25 for building type examples in this subdistrict. Much of the parking would be structured, but shared and on-street parking could be used to meet parking requirements.

COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL (CI)

Commercial Industrial is the subdistrict intended to accommodate existing industrial uses while enabling diversification. The subdistrict has been identified as the southeast corner of the plan, from Metric Blvd. west nearly to the Capital Metro Red Line, south to US 183 and north to just south of Kramer Lane. The subdistrict also includes Capital Metro's existing maintenance facilities west of the Red Line, just south of Rundberg. Existing uses range from home improvement showrooms to light duty manufacturing and processing facilities to office warehouse. These uses would be allowed to diversify through increased height and density entitlements.

While existing properties would not be required to redevelop, as property values increase, it may be sensible for industrial uses to move to a stacked, urban format. Storefront uses would remain on the ground floor, pushed up to the street, with light manufacturing facilities above. These could also be paired with office buildings. Parking and loading areas would be accessed via wider alleys at the rear of buildings, creating a more cohesive street

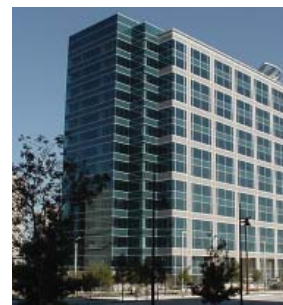


Figure 4.24 : Commercial Industrial Building Types



Figure 4.25 : Neighborhood Mixed Use



Figure 4.26 : Warehouse Mixed-Use

front. Prohibited uses are residential, destination retail and hospitality. Shared and on-street parking are allowed to meet parking requirements. See Figure 4.24 for building type examples in this subdistrict.

WAREHOUSE MIXED-USE (WMU)

Warehouse Mixed-Use is a transition subdistrict used to accommodate existing industrial uses and enable adaptive reuse of the existing development to include residential and local retail uses. This subdistrict would allow up to 10 stories in height. The subdistrict is recommended in two locations: in the southwest portion of the plan south of the UT Pickle

Research Campus, and running along the Capital Metro Red Line from just south of Braker Ln to Rundberg Ln. This type of development can be seen to a small degree in Austin's warehouse district along 4th Street downtown, and to a greater degree in more heavily industrialized cities. Existing warehouses are encouraged through entitlements to be re-used as residential and retail uses. Existing uses in this subdistrict were seen by the public to be older and closer to being turned over to a new use in the southwest portion of the plan. Most buildings would initially be surface parked, but structured, shared and on-street parking could be used to meet parking requirements. See Figure 4.26 for building type examples in this subdistrict.

NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL (NR)

The area to the northeast of the conceptual station location becomes primarily a residential subdistrict between the station area and the existing residential neighborhoods east of Metric. This Neighborhood Residential District provides an opportunity for a gradual height transition from the taller, more mixed-use districts, down to the single family residential north and east of the North Burnet/Gateway neighborhood. At the same time, current land values support a denser, and more urban form of housing. This subdistrict would allow up to 5 stories in height. Townhomes and condominiums, which have not been built in great quantity in Austin, are ideally suited for this type of environment where they can be located within walking distance of a pedestrian, mixed-use area. The housing types recommended here have a narrow street frontage and are rear-loaded (i.e., with car access from a rear lane) so that the front of the unit could face an attractive landscaped court or street. Residences would be surface parked, but on-street parking could count towards minimum parking requirements. This concept is illustrated in Figure 4.27.

THE UNIVERSITY TEXAS PROPERTIES

The University of Texas (UT) is a significant landowner in the North Burnet/Gateway area and thus any future building expansion or redevelopment of their properties over the next 30 years could have a significant impact on the area with respect to land use, urban form, traffic volumes and circulation, and utility infrastructure capacity.

Properties owned and occupied by UT are not subject to City of Austin land development regulations unless sold or long-term leased for private development, at which time the property becomes subject to the City of Austin Land Development Code (LDC). For this reason, the Arbor Walk property is identified as part of a land use subdistrict in the North Burnet/Gateway Plan, with associated development standards that would be applicable if this property were to redevelop in the future.

UT does not currently have an adopted plan for the J.J. Pickle Research Campus or the Western Tract properties. Although there are no defined future plans, a number of participants during the charrette process indicated a strong desire to identify a vision for the mostly vacant Western Tract in case UT decided in the future to either sell or long-term lease the property for private development. For this reason, the Western Tract is shown with a future concept plan.

Any decision by UT with regards to future use of their property, either for UT purposes or for private development, would have to first be approved by the UT Board of Regents. If the decision is made in the future to allow private development on the UT-owned land, UT and the City would work together to make sure the property has appropriate zoning and any future development of the property would be a successful venture.

The North Burnet/Gateway Plan does not show a potential future concept plan for the J.J. Pickle Research Campus, as it seems less likely that UT would sell or long-term lease the property for private development. However, to be conservative, some growth assumptions were made for the property in the future traffic and utility infrastructure analyses for the Plan. These assumptions were made to ensure that those analyses were not underestimating the potential demands on the planning area's transportation and water and wastewater systems over the next 30 years. It is strongly encouraged in the North Burnet/Gateway Plan that any future development along the edges of the Pickle Research Campus follow the urban design standards associated with the land use subdistrict adjacent to the site.

PHASING OF REDEVELOPMENT

Ambitious and comprehensive redevelopment master plans such as this one take time and commitment to implement. The total amount of development envisioned in this plan cannot be absorbed by the market quickly. The rationale proposed for this extraordinary opportunity is to assume two 15-year periods of redevelopment. The first would be characterized by catalyst projects on tracts that are ripe for near-term development such as existing vacant properties. The second 15 years would likely see the area mature and build out as the catalyst projects help the market understand the paradigm shift to a new, more urban form of development.

The 2020 plan shown in Figure 4.28 is based on taking advantage of the large vacant tracts and public land to establish an initial focus of development. The area identified represents approximately one-third of the overall planning area. This could be accomplished while leaving the majority of the existing uses undisturbed, and would present an opportunity to establish the northern end of the Burnet Road Transit Boulevard. The tracts of land that could potentially act as cata-

2020 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

Figure 4.28

This map presents a potential redevelopment vision and does not constitute regulatory standards



lysts for redevelopment include a 24-acre Austin Water Utility property southeast of the intersection of Burnet Rd and Braker Ln; 40+ acres owned by the City of Austin straddling the Capital Metro Red Line one half mile north of Braker Ln; and 50+ acres owned by IBM, adjacent to the City of Austin property. The Master Plan has conceptualized these three properties as some of the highest density development in the plan, by collectively accommodating over 15 million square feet of mixed use development and approximately 20 acres of developed parkland. This type of development has the opportunity to not only catalyze future redevelopment, but to set a standard for design and performance for the entire North Burnet/Gateway neighborhood.

Another opportunity is the chance for the “Western Tract” - land owned by UT north of the Gateway shopping center - to develop, either by UT or through a purchase or long-term lease with a private developer. This area would be less transit-driven, but nonetheless offers a clean slate to establish a rich, integrated Neighborhood Mixed-Use subdistrict. UT has not expressed specific plans for this property, and anything that takes place here would require approval of the UT Board of Regents in order to be brought to fruition.

Several other portions of the planning area contain contiguous tracts with common ownership. These areas could redevelop sooner as long as the existing owners feel that the process of redevelopment is predictable. Additionally, investment of well-timed infrastructure projects is critical to redevelopment phasing. For example, the new street crossing over MoPac at Longhorn and York is an important component of the overall transportation network as properties in the southern portion of the planning area redevelop.

The Gateway area is relatively independent of the North Burnet area, and redevelopment of land within that area might

Figure 4.29 : View along a converted street illustrating a possible Gateway redevelopment.



Figure 4.30: Illustration of a boulevard with usable space in the center, in the more pedestrian-friendly retail environment envisioned for the Gateway Shopping Center.

proceed due to market forces being favorable before the 2020-2035 time frame. Figure 4.31 illustrates a recommended strategy for staged redevelopment of the Gateway shopping center. As parking lots are replaced by parking structures and additional buildings, a street grid can evolve and densities similar to other places in the plan could more easily be supported. Figures 4.29 and 4.30 show how this area

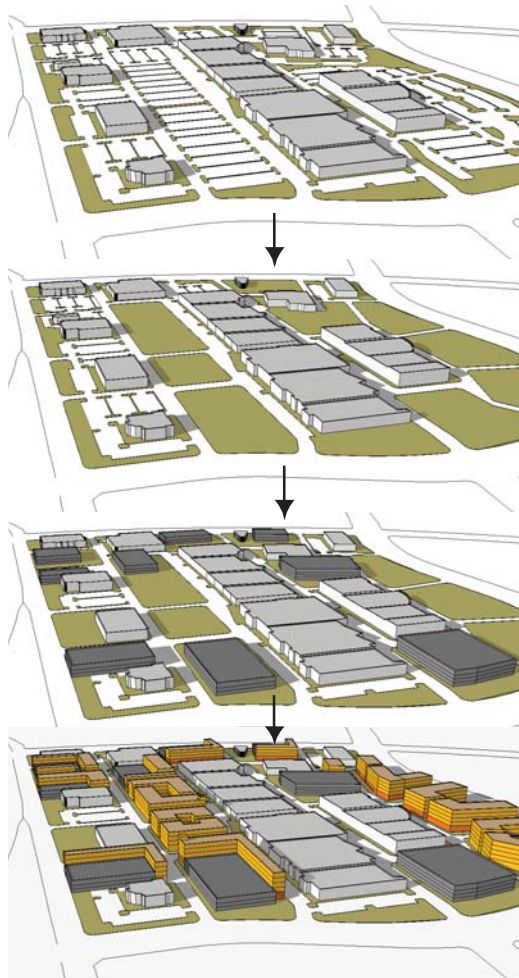
could change to significantly improve the pedestrian experience.

It is assumed that the most fragmented ownership areas will be the most difficult to assemble and will, consequently, not redevelop until the later stages of the process. Land assembly of smaller properties could allow individuals and landowners of smaller parcels to partici-

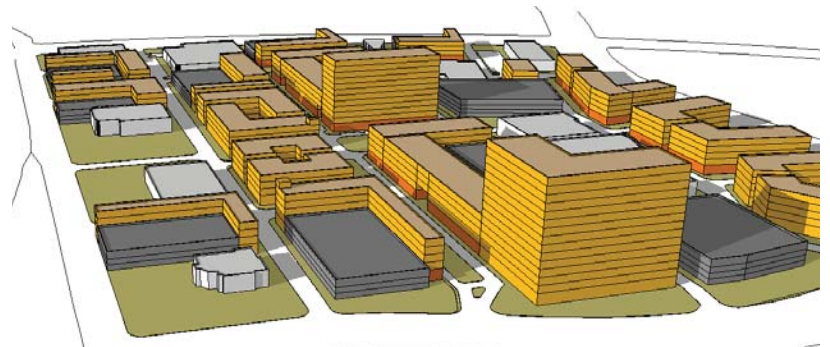


Existing Gateway Shopping Center

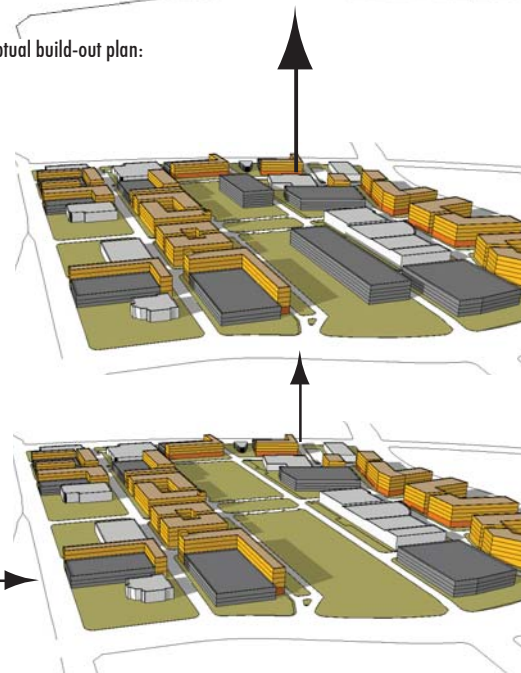
Figure 4.31 : Conceptual re-development sequence of the Gateway shopping center from retail uses into a mixed-use center



2020 Build-out:



2035 Conceptual build-out plan:



pate in a larger development scheme. It is recommended that the City help facilitate, these multi-owner redevelopment efforts.

Since much of the area is already developed, there needs to be an implicit understanding that certain uses will remain in operation and may gradually transition to another use. As indicated on the Land Use and Zoning maps (Figures 2.6 and 2.7), a large portion of the plan area is currently zoned for industrial use. In some subdistricts, certain industrial land uses may be prohibited by the new North Burnet/Gateway zoning changes.

In these cases, existing industrial businesses would become non-conforming uses, and City regulations regarding non-conforming uses would apply. Existing businesses may continue to operate, but only limited physical expansion of buildings on site would be allowed. Industrial and warehouse uses would continue to be allowed in the Commercial Industrial and Warehouse Mixed Use subdistricts, and some operations who would like to expand could relocate to these areas. As properties redevelop, consideration should be given to providing appropriate screening

between residential or mixed-use and existing industrial uses.

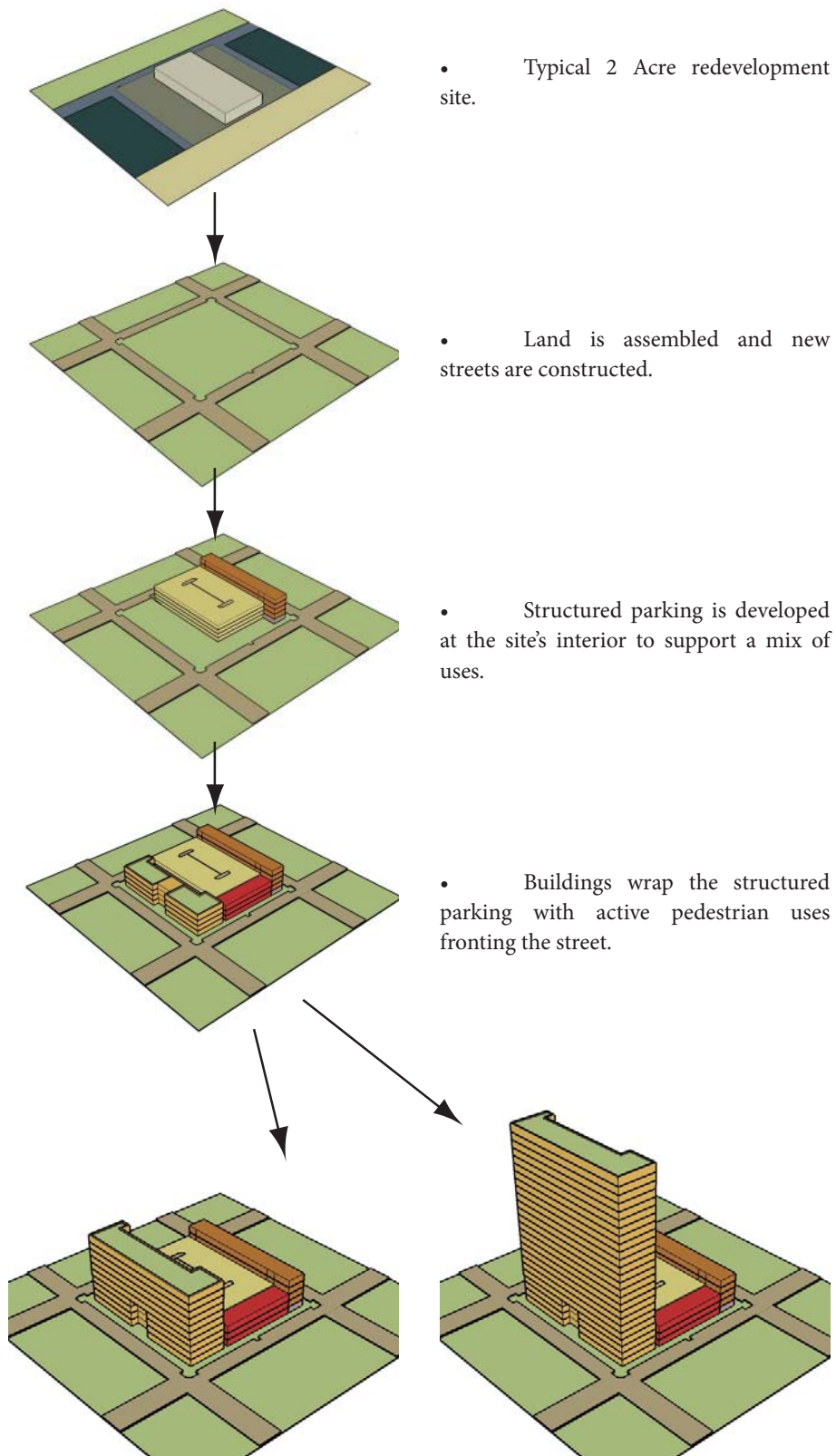


Figure 4.32: Typical site development scenario