

Summary of Changes

MODULE THREE – NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

Background

The Use Table and Standards project began in 2018 as one of the Planning Board’s priority items for land use code updates. The goals of the revisions include:

- Simplifying the [Use Table](#) and streamlining the regulations where possible, making the use standards and table more understandable and legible.
- Creating more predictability and certainty in [Chapter 9-6, “Use Standards,”](#) of the Land Use Code.
- Aligning the use table and permitted uses with the BVCP goals, policies, and land use designations.
- Identifying community-desired land use gaps in the use standards and table, and better enabling the desired land uses in identified neighborhoods as well as in commercial and industrial districts.

Module Two Purpose

The second phase of the Use Table and Standards project is divided into three modules. The intent of Module Three is to better align the uses allowed in the land use code with the policies in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, specifically:

2.19 Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood centers often contain the economic, social and cultural opportunities that allow neighborhoods to thrive and for people to come together. The city will encourage neighborhood centers to provide pedestrian-friendly and welcoming environments with a mix of land uses. The city acknowledges and respects the diversity of character and needs of its neighborhood centers and will pursue area planning efforts to support evolution of these centers to become mixed-use places and strive to accomplish the guiding principles noted below.

Neighborhood Centers Guiding Principles

1. **Meet everyday needs of neighboring communities.** Include a mix of locally serving retail (e.g., retail anchors, such as grocery stores and personal services such as hair salons or small local markets) and other activities, such as smaller-scale office uses to meet every day needs.
2. **Ensure appropriate scale transitions to neighboring residential uses.** Be at a scale and intensity lower than downtown and the regional centers, ensuring compatibility of buildings with adjacent residential uses decreasing intensity of activity around edges or “transition zones” near neighborhoods. These transition zones should encourage a diversity of low- and medium-density residential uses, such as attached single- family housing, row homes and a variety of flats.
3. **Encourage a richness of transportation amenities.** Neighborhood centers should include attractive pedestrian routes and conveniences such as sheltered seating, shared bicycles, bike cages and repair stations, among others, and have access to greenways, when practical.
4. **Encourage parking management strategies.** Encourage parking management strategies, such as shared parking, in neighborhood centers.
5. **Ensure comfort and safety. Include human-scaled lighting, furnishings, signs and way-finding that feel welcoming, safe and comfortable for users of all ages and abilities.** Provide unimpeded connections within neighborhood centers between parking, transit, retail and residential uses.

2.24 Commitment to a Walkable & Accessible City

The city will promote the development of a walkable and accessible city by designing neighborhoods and mixed-use business areas to provide easy and safe access by foot, bike and transit to places such as neighborhood centers, community facilities, transit stops or centers and shared public spaces and amenities (i.e., 15-minute neighborhoods). The city will consider additional neighborhood centers or small mixed use retail areas where appropriate and supported by the neighbors they would serve. In some cases, the definition of mixed use and scale and character will be achieved through area planning.

Residential Uses

- **Duplexes and townhomes:** Allow duplexes and townhomes to be permitted by-right on the ground floor in the BT Business Transitional District. They currently require a Use Review if located on the ground floor.

Public and Institutional Uses

- **Community services:** Allow by-right in Mixed Use 1, 2, 3, and 4 Districts and Public District. They currently require Use Review in MU-1, 2, 3, and P, and are a Conditional Use in MU-4.
- **Governmental facilities:** Allow by-right in Mixed Use 1, 2, and 3 Districts and Public District. They are currently prohibited in MU-1, 2, and 3 and require Use Review approval in P.
- **Museums:** Allow in Mixed Use 1, 2, and 3 Districts through a Use Review process and allow by-right in the Public District. They are currently prohibited in MU-1, 2, and 3, and require Use Review approval in P.

Restaurants, Brewpubs & Taverns

Streamline the approval process citywide by providing more opportunities for these uses to be approved by-right by:

- Increasing the allowable size by-right
- Removing patio size restrictions that necessitate Use Review approvals and instead establishing general outdoor seating standards for patios near residential areas
- In some districts, allow by-right subject to size and hours of operation standards such as size and hours of operation, rather than automatically requiring a Conditional Use approval.

Other Commercial Uses

- **Animal hospitals/vet clinics:** Allow through a Use Review process in Mixed Use 1, 2, and 3 Districts, where currently prohibited.
- **Medical offices:** Allow with size limit in Mixed Use 1 and 2 Districts, where currently require Use Review.
- **Non-vehicular repair/rental:** Allow with size limit in Mixed Use Districts, Business Transitional Districts, and Business Main Street District, where currently prohibited.
- **Outdoor recreation or entertainment:** Allow by Use Review in the Agricultural District, where currently prohibited.
- **Retail:** Allow with size limit in Mixed Use 1, 2, and 3 Districts and Business Transitional District. Currently require Use Review in MU-2 and MU-3 and are prohibited in MU-1 and BT.
- **Small theaters/rehearsal spaces:** Allow through a Use Review process in Mixed Use 1, 2, and 3 Districts and Business Transitional District, where currently prohibited.
- **Temporary events:** Allow as a Conditional Use in Mixed Use Districts and Agricultural District, where currently prohibited.