7 Shopping District — SD

The following sample approach is designed to encourage a community to describe its location and characteristics — its unique local assets. Based on these assets and the community's goals for the future, an intent / vision statement can be crafted. Land uses, guidelines, and standards are then suggested to support a vision specifically oriented towards the SD, as one of six prototype commercial districts.

Location and Characteristics

All Sierra communities need convenient grocery stores, hardware stores, pharmacies, and other services. These commercial establishments are typically placed in shopping districts ranging from 10 to 30 acres. Individual retail units may exceed 35,000 sf of gross leasable area. SDs are centrally located to serve a community or regional market. Building size varies with the customer base, but shopping districts that service populations of over 40,000 people are often built to accommodate "big box" stores (over 40,000 sf). The customer base for Sierra shopping districts is principally made up of regional residents, but includes a strong support market of seasonal visitors. Quick auto access and "park once and walk" environments are essential. Shopping district improvement projects require high levels of coordination for the full array of landowners and retailers to work together.

Intent

Shopping districts service both residents and seasonal visitors with convenient retail stores that avoid duplicating Downtown / Main Street services. SDs should be connected to surrounding neighborhoods with easy access through the road grid, transit stops, and pedestrian connections. In larger towns, multiple SDs should be oriented toward the axes of disparate residential neighborhoods near the DMS.

Schats Bakkery in Mammoth Lakes is part of a larger SD adjacent to the highway.

Land Use

Appropriate Uses — Ready, Set, Go

- Retail sales and service under 35,000 sf
- Residential units in upper stories and in transitional buildings (e.g. multi-family housing)
- Offices, clinics and services (e.g. cleaning)
- Restaurants / bars / lodging
- Entertainment (e.g. theater)
- Vehicle fuel sales
- Drive-through services (e.g. restaurant, banks) in nodal development
- Public plazas, pedestrian connections, parks and open space
- Transit stop for regional and local shuttles.

Conditional Uses — Proceed with Caution
(Appropriate Design Solution Required)

- Retail sales and service over 35,000 sf
- Wholesale or light industrial under 20,000 sf
- Manufacturing less than 10,000 sf with retail outlet
- Vehicle services (including parts stores) — preferred in light industrial zone
- Outdoor commercial storage
- Government uses (e.g. DMV, secondary post office, emissions testing)

Non-Appropriate Uses — Stop

- Schools, daycare facilities, clubs and religious institutions
- Processing of raw materials
- Vehicle sales and service
- Warehouse, freight and distribution
- Town hall, main post office, prominent civic uses

General guidelines are discussed in Chapter 3 with specific guideline recommendations for SDs included in Appendix A.

Standards

Lot

- Floor area ratio (floor space to land area) — minimum 0.3 - 0.5 to 1.
- Site frontage — create internal street frontage and streetscape within SD. 50% of façades facing town grid and maximize internal façade frontage for retail display and pedestrian access.
- Front yard setbacks — minimum 0 ft. to maximum 30 ft.
- Side yard setbacks — minimum 0 ft. to maximum 60 ft. to minimize pedestrian exposure to vehicular areas.
- Rear yard setbacks — as needed in nodes or multi-story parking.

Building

- Building height — minimum 25 ft. to maximum 50 ft.
- Building width — minimum 15 ft. to maximum 100 ft. per retail establishment.
- Building transitions — height transitions adjacent to residential development.
- Building projections — balconies, canopies, or awnings to create protected walkways.
- Articulated façades. Architectural treatments should respect the historic character of the authentic downtown.
- Orient to grid and build around internal streetscape with walkways and pedestrian amenities.

A remodel of an existing SD better reflects the alpine community character of Tahoe City.

Streetscape / Landscape

- Traffic — one- or two-way streets, narrow lane widths and speed bumps to slow traffic in network of internal public streets.
- Bicycles — accommodate circulation and parking.
- Sidewalks — wide — minimum 8 ft. to maximum 30 ft. with outdoor dining / retail display areas. Bench seating at every 100 ft. maximum.
- Crosswalks — slow traffic for pedestrians with different pattern and heavier texture than traffic lanes. Walkways accessible to all parking spaces.
- Plaza — provide spaces with gathering areas, seating, tree canopy, planters, bicycle racks.
- Trees / Planters — street tree canopy with surrounding planter areas following walkways.
- Lighting — articulate pedestrian walkways and provide minimum safe lighting for parking areas — refer to ***www.darksky.org*** standards.
- Signage — monument signage on main street directs driver and lists services. Internal signage is pedestrian-oriented with concealed light sources directed downward. Signage of higher design quality than suburban standards to be authentic in Sierra communities.
- Snow storage — designated storage on or off site. Coordinate on-site storage with storm water detention facilities.

Parking

- Parking — create a "park once" environment in small nodes oriented to internal streetscape and connected to walkways or multi-tiered structure.
- Transit stops — required and part of Transportation Element of the General Plan to link with DMS and NC shuttle service.
- Density — minimum 2.5 spaces / 1,000 sf to maximum 3.5 spaces / 1,000 sf.
- Orientation — nodal off-street parking in rear or side, public garage.
- Special events — internal street and parking area closure.
- Services / Deliveries — in rear or on side, removed from internal traffic orientation.

7 The Rock in Truckee — A SD Case Study[1]

For this case study we have chosen a planned vs. built shopping district, given the paucity of mixed use and non-linear shopping districts in the Sierra.

Location and Characteristics

As a major local thoroughfare and gateway to Truckee, the site could easily have been developed as a commercial corridor (CC), especially considering that until very recently this was a state highway. However, the town and developer have chosen to encourage nodal mixed use. The 6.9-acre site chosen for this CMU development adjoins a hotel and a golf course and sits across Brockway Road from a major neighborhood of some 528 homes. Other neighborhoods located farther south have no convenient retail, and this SD is placed on the axis into town. While small for an SD, the site goes beyond NC services by serving this broad population of multiple neighborhoods and relatively high levels of drive-by and vacation traffic.

Intent

The developer, the Town, and the adjoining hotel have partnered to develop a CMU gateway to service local neighborhoods and drive-by traffic. The project will avoid a commercial corridor design, creating a nodal retail center with offices designed to serve existing and planned neighborhoods that utilize this road to enter Truckee. The SD will provide housing options with 7 lofts and 19 townhomes. Finally, it is designed to be pedestrian-friendly, provide community gathering spaces, and fit the town patterns and building styles that characterize the Truckee-Tahoe area.

Land Use

Planned Uses

- 66,000 commercial sf (office and retail) with no one store greater than 35,000 sf
- Residential units in upper stories and 36,000 residential square feet in 19 townhomes
- Offices and clinics
- Coffeeshop / deli / restaurants / bars
- Lodging (on adjacent site)
- Services (e.g. drycleaning and shoe repair)
- Bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways with public plaza
- Transit stop for regional and local shuttles

Planned Standards

Lot

- Floor area ratio (floor space to land area) — minimum 0.22 to 1. This low ratio is due to the need to incorporate snow storage and Truckee's zoning regulation requiring less than 70% of the site to be covered.
- Site frontage — create internal street frontage and streetscape, maximized for retail display and pedestrian access.
- Front yard setbacks — 40 to 50 ft. setback from Brockway Road that integrates a bike path, landscaping, and covered pedestrian walkways. 0 ft. setback on internal street grid.
- Side yard setbacks — unusual triangular site, but most set up around 10-ft.fire code requirements.
- Rear yard setbacks — 0 ft.

The Rock uses Sierra design vernacular with extended overhangs and a trellis bridge linking the buildings.

Building

- Four commercial buildings, 2 mixed use buildings, and 19 town homes.
- Building height — minimum 25 ft.to maximum 44 ft.
- Building width — minimum 75 ft. to maximum 178 ft. per retail establishment.
- Building transitions — 3-story buildings in center with a 1-story building at Brockway Road.
- Building projections — visors, balconies, overhang with knee braces, shed dormers, and a trellis bridge.
- Articulated façades. Diverse textures and paints will provide sense of historic patterns.

Streetscape / Landscape

- Traffic — A roundabout is planned as the primary entrance to the site. This ties the site to the major neighborhood artery, slows traffic on corridor, and reduces traffic congestion as cars continuously move in and out of roadway.
- Internal public streets will have 2-way circulation and are designed for 90° parking. 12-ft. lane widths as required by Town.
- Bicycles — Class I bike path consistent with Truckee Trails Master Plan sets the standard for expanding bike path to DMS.
- Pedestrian crossings will be differentiated by pavement pattern.
- Sidewalks — minimum 6 ft. to maximum 20 ft. width.
- Internal plaza with gathering areas, seating, tree canopy, planters, bicycle racks.
- Trees / planters — mature trees largely protected on site around parking nodes.
- Lighting — building lighting will be directed downward toward pedestrians.
- Signage — monument signage on Brockway Road. Hanging internal signage will be pedestrian-oriented with concealed light sources directed downward.
- Snow storage — 60,000 sf of snow storage will be accommodated in landscaped areas.

Parking

- Parking — create a “park once” environment in small nodes oriented to internal streetscape and connected to walkways or multi-tiered structure.
- No on-street parking provided.
- Transit stop with shelter is incorporated.
- 225 parking places given need for both commercial and designated residential parking. 3.4 spaces / 1,000 sf.
- Special events — internal plaza built between buildings.
- Services / Deliveries — in rear or on side.

The Rock faces Brockway Road as well as internal plaza areas.

Community

The Rock uses a CMU approach to address a number of key issues for Truckee:

- Truckee is a rapidly expanding town with a large neighborhood growing across from The Rock and four new planned communities up the road. This southern side of town has few neighborhood services and no shopping district, so The Rock meets a real retail need, mirroring some services offered in the largest SD and cutting crosstown traffic.
- Brockway Road is historically a highway, and people are used to traveling it at high speeds. The roundabout is designed to slow traffic and enhance the sense of a community street. It will also ease left-turn access from the neighborhood during commuter hours and create a shared entry between The Rock and the neighboring hotel.
- The Town has a strong commitment to increasing the diversity of its housing types. This project was planned to include both townhomes and lofts.
- Truckee has a Trails Master Plan to connect communities to the downtown and natural areas. This site sets the standard for building a section of this major trail corridor along Brockway Road.
- Truckee lacks hotel rooms and office space. This site enhances a neighboring hotel with another new hotel being built close by. The Rock will help meet the needs of these guests and office workers.

Buildings

- Buildings face streets and interior driveways through the site, while also creating internal courtyard space. Buildings don't "turn their back," creating a welcoming shopping node.
- The orientation of the buildings will respond to sun angles and shading. Solar control is integrated into all building designs.
- 1-3 story stepped masses are articulated well, with many exterior balconies and protected pedestrian circulation routes.
- Buildings draw from a rich palette of local architectural period elements and are mixed into a lively and diverse composition. Facades include steel galvanized siding, cedar shakes, lapped cementitious siding, reclaimed barn wood, and wood board and bat. Roofs include metal, composition shingle, and rusted corrugated materials. Windows are vertical-divided lite. Wider sash windows are set at storefront level for pedestrian orientation.

Lofts and offices look down on retail and pedestrian plazas.

- The buildings take great advantage of projections from visors with a diversity of textures to shed dormers and extended overhangs with knee braces. Brick columns, porches, wood columns, and heavy timber detailing further enhance the building façades.
- A unique reclaimed heavy timber trellis bridge connects two of the buildings, making a link with Truckee's railroad heritage.

Walkways

- Protected pedestrian walkways are constant throughout the project. Open plaza space is designed into it with solar exposure and landscape detail. Bicyclists and pedestrians are welcomed with a Class I bike path and numerous connections from the trail into the site.
- Buildings maintain a nice scale in relation to the pedestrian with articulated covered walkways and pedestrian-height signage and lighting. Lighting is incorporated into low-level bollards, with some upper-level lighting integrated into the tree canopy to avoid typical parking lot overhead lighting.

Landscaping

- Mature trees and boulders are being maintained and highlighted in the design. A large boulder will be the major entry focal point for "The Rock".
- The most acute end of the triangle is being landscaped and revegetated, doubling for snow storage and storm water retention. This area parallels Brockway Road, providing green vistas and continuing the sense of a rural road while approaching Truckee.

Parking and Services

- The undeveloped site has an acute triangular configuration, creating unique challenges for parking and circulation. Small parking nodes will be integrated around the buildings.
- Two vehicle entrances to the project will be approximately 450 feet apart, to accommodate the buildings in the internal plaza space and ensure efficiency of the roundabout.
- Internal centrally located service areas will be out of the pedestrian flow.

Incentives

- Due to the Open Space / Recreation zoning of the adjacent golf course, the townhomes are built right on the lot line to enjoy the open space. The Town abandoned the rear setback requirement due to this adjoining golf course.
- Truckee has been very committed to roundabouts and creative traffic-calming approaches like the one being planned at this site.

Building façades have diverse composition.