Activity Center
Development Guidelines
January 18, 2012
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**Purpose**

In December of 2009 the Pinal County Board of Supervisors adopted the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. This plan was the culmination of a tremendous amount of public input which resulted in a Pinal County Vision. This vision stresses the importance of sense of community. The primary purpose of this guideline manual is to influence the general character of new projects within designated activity centers in an effort to create a strong sense of community.

The guideline manual lists recommendations for site development, building form and landscape character to assure that new development contributes to activity center development goals.

**Activity Center Development Goals**

Mixed use developments incorporate residential units, commercial properties, and employment uses and may also include cultural amenities such as performing arts centers, entertainment venues, museums, education and training centers, and community gathering places.

Areas designated on the Comprehensive Plan as an Activity Center should be designed with the following Planning Guidelines in mind.

1. Create a center with an intensified and diverse mix of activities.

2. Located where there is good access to appropriate transportation corridors that can accommodate the projected traffic.

3. Where feasible, integrate the different uses such as residential, commercial or employment as part of a coherent master plan.

4. Mid and High Intensity activity centers can be either vertically or horizontally mixed.

5. Encourage economic uses within activity centers that offer a range of quality jobs.

6. Locate housing throughout activity centers so that shorter commutes are encouraged and congestion reduced.

7. Encourage transit-oriented development near future multimodal corridors and transit centers.

8. Encourage pedestrian and transit-oriented developments that de-emphasize auto-oriented land uses.

9. Encourage context sensitive development that addresses environmental characteristics, surrounding land uses, and scale.

10. Where appropriate, building heights should transition or step down to ensure compatibility with adjacent development.

11. Mixed Use Activity Centers are encouraged to provide internally connected streets and pedestrian amenities that provide direct access to land uses and adjacent development.

12. Support the continuation and expansion of historic downtown areas because they define community
character and often have smaller scale mixed use development.

To accomplish the objectives identified above, these guidelines are divided into four sections: General Activity Center Guidelines (Section 1), Single Family Residential Guidelines (Section 2), Multi-Family Residential Guidelines (Section 3) and Commercial Guidelines (Section 4).

The guidelines as presented in each section should not be considered all inclusive; through the zoning process, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors may approve additional conditions in order to further the Activity Center goals.
SECTION 1
GENERAL ACTIVITY CENTER GUIDELINES

Designated Activity Centers should be designed in conformance with the development guidelines presented in this section.

- The recommended zoning designation for Activity Centers are outlined below:

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<th>Comprehensive Plan Category</th>
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- Development in AC-1 zoning should be based on a street grid, with a street every 1/4 mile. Developments with AC-1 zoning adjacent to AC-2 and AC-3 zoning should incorporate pedestrian access points that match the adjacent grid.

- All development in AC-2 and AC-3 zoning should be based on a street grid, with a street every 1/8 mile. Uses that cannot meet this guideline should incorporate pedestrian access points that match the adjacent grid. Grid streets should have angled parking on both sides of the street.

- Activity centers where transit is planned should plan for a transit stop, unless one has already been set aside.

- All Mid Intensity and High Intensity Activity Centers should be developed with a Loop Road System. The purpose of the loop road is to:
  - Allow greater access to the periphery of the Activity Center
  - Reduce the amount of traffic and the number of lanes passing through the center of the Activity Center
  - Create vital core areas by assuring a comfortable street width for pedestrians to cross

- Loop Road Systems should be developed with the following parameters:
  - Three lanes, one inside and two outside in a Mid Intensity Activity Center
  - Five lanes, two inside and three outside in a High Intensity Activity Center
  - No on-street parking

Potential Loop Road Location
High Intensity Activity Center

- Roadways passing through the core should have no more than four through lanes
• Provide internally connected streets and pedestrian pathways that provide direct access to adjacent development

• Sidewalks, pathways and trails should be designed to shelter pedestrians by incorporating trees, canopies, or arcades to encourage a pedestrian environment

• In areas next to major streets or with larger front setbacks, incorporate planting strips between the sidewalk and the back of the curb to promote a pedestrian environment. Planting strips should be a minimum of 5 feet in width.

• All mechanical equipment such as air conditioning units should be screened by balconies, parapets or fencing so that they are not visible from streets, walkways, common areas or the ground level of surrounding living units.

• Front setbacks should be no greater than 15 feet for buildings located along local streets. Along collector level streets and above, front setbacks should be no greater than 20 feet. Smaller setbacks are encouraged. Buildings may be set back further to provide outdoor dining space or courtyards

• The front facades of taller buildings should be stepped back to make sure that Activity Center streets have an open feeling. Recommended stepbacks include:
  
  o Rooftop mechanical enclosures should have a 10 foot stepback on all sides from the floor immediately below
  
  o Buildings taller than 40 feet in height should have a minimum 15 foot stepback above 40 feet in height
  
  o In addition to the 15 foot stepback at the 40 foot level, all buildings taller than 65 feet in height should have a minimum 25 foot stepback above 65 feet in height
SECTION 2
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

All single family residential units located within a designated Activity Center should be designed in conformance with the development guidelines presented in this section.

- Incorporate standard covered front porches, defined courtyards or other defined front yard outdoor living spaces to facilitate activity in the front yards and provide semi-public transition zone between the street and the residence.

- Provide a mix of garage orientations. 80% of the units should be designed in a manner to de-emphasize front load garages. Options may include:
  - Rear garage with alley access;
  - Garages with front access set back a minimum of 10 feet from the primary front façade of the residence.
  - Side entry or angled entry garage;

- Design homes to have a clearly identified entry and have active use windows (i.e., living room, kitchen) facing the street.

- Minimize the use of walls along roads

- Limit walls used to separate individual residential lots to a maximum of six feet in height
SECTION 3
MULTI FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
GUIDELINES

All multi family residential units located within a designated Activity Center should be designed in conformance with the development guidelines presented in this section.

- Multifamily buildings should be oriented toward and fronting on the street and should not be designed so that buildings are surrounded by perimeter parking areas.
- Use common driveways, private streets or alley-loaded access where garages are used. The design of these structures should relate to the primary building.
- Trash bins/dumpsters shall be located within a trash enclosure at all times
- New building design should respect the context of adjacent residential neighborhoods, including the height, scale, form and character of surrounding development.
- Required parking areas should utilize landscaping to minimize their visual impact.
- Provide weather and sun protection, such as overhangs, awnings, canopies, etc. to mitigate climatic and solar conditions.
- Façades of long buildings shall be architecturally subdivided into shorter segments every 25 to 50 feet maximum.
- In multi-family residential developments common open space areas should be readily accessible from all buildings with the maximum number of units possible sited adjacent to the common open space areas.
- Provide secure bicycle parking facilities to encourage the use of bicycles instead of automobiles.
SECTION 4
MIXED USE BUILDING DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

- Retail uses should generally be limited to the ground floor along major street frontages

- Office uses may be located on the first and/or upper floors

- Commercial loading areas, trash facilities and mechanical equipment should be screened from sight from all pedestrian ways and should be located away from residential entries, open space and windows to avoid visual, noise and odor impacts on residential areas

- All buildings greater than 40 feet in height with AC-2 zoning and above 65 feet in height with AC-3 zoning should incorporate retail uses on the first floor
SECTION 5
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

- Locate pad buildings closer to arterial intersections to provide a strong visual and pedestrian relationship to the street; locate parking behind the building.

- Allow for outdoor dining and/or other amenities to enliven plazas and open space areas. Outdoor dining and pedestrian amenities should be separated or screened from residential areas.

- Buildings and, in particular, entrances should be oriented toward transit stops for convenient access by public transit passengers.

- Walkways should be designed with covering such as:
  - Mature or fast growing trees in a growing environment which will promote long-term survival of the trees
  - Trellises or lattice work
  - Solid roofs or canopies.

- Street parking, either parallel or angled, is encouraged along the public right of way. Any surface parking should be provided in well screened parking lots at the rear or sides of projects.

- Provide secure bicycle parking to encourage the use of bicycles instead of automobiles.