

# Economic Development Queensland



## Centres

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# Introduction

## Purpose of guideline

This guideline outlines the standards for the planning and design of centres in Priority Development Areas (PDAs) in Queensland. This guideline should be read in conjunction with the provisions of PDA development schemes, interim land use plans (ILUPs) and relevant PDA guidelines and practice notes. A development scheme or ILUP may specify a different standard or specific response.

In consultation with the Minister for Economic the MEDQ and other relevant parties, applicants may propose alternative, innovative solutions which do not comply with the following standards but meet the PDA-wide criteria or related provisions of ILUPs.

Centres are locations where a wide range of activities including shops, offices, community and cultural facilities are clustered together. Centres also accommodate medium and high density residential and low impact industry uses. Clustering of activities in centres reduces the need for separate trips, makes it easier to provide access by public transport and active transport modes, and encourages social and economic interaction.

The scale and nature of centres vary along a continuum depending on each centre's particular attributes, and the size and characteristics of its catchment. Individual centres form part of a network of centres.



# Design standards

## Types of centres

For the purposes of this guideline, the hierarchy of centres is considered to comprise the following types:

### Major centres

Major centres (also called town centres or sub-regional centres) are located around a significant transit node, and at the centre of the transport networks serving the community. These are relatively large centres that typically serve a catchment population of 50,000-150,000 people, and provide a large number and range of employment opportunities. They contain the greatest mix of land uses and the highest development densities, and are the principal focus of the community.

Major centres usually have a central, highly accessible core which contains the highest density of development, and accommodates land uses such as major and specialist retail, professional and other specialist services and civic, education, health and cultural facilities that benefit from a highly accessible location.

The major centre frame has a lower intensity of development and accommodates uses that support the activities in the major centre core or serve a similarly large catchment but do not require the same high level of accessibility.

### District centres

District centres (or secondary centres) also provide a wide range of services and facilities but are significantly smaller in scale and lower in development intensity than major centres, serving a catchment population of 40,000-80,000. District centres provide a focal point for inter-suburban transport networks and for surrounding medium density neighbourhoods. District centres provide health, education and community facilities, and a range of shops, including full-line supermarkets and specialist stores to cater for weekly shopping needs.



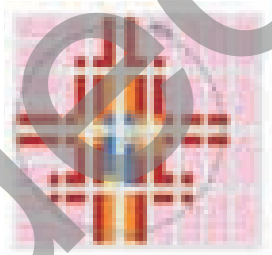
### Neighbourhood centres

Neighbourhood centres provide a limited range of services, including convenience retail, to a cluster of local neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood centres attract frequent trips from within their catchments. They have good local accessibility, particularly by active transport, and act as a focal point and meeting place for the local community. Neighbourhood centres generally serve a catchment population of 10,000-15,000.

In addition to those centres a community can also contain small local groups of shops and offices. However, these are small scale, stand-alone developments rather than centres and are not addressed in this guideline.

## Centre layout

The layout of each centre needs to respond to its particular setting and characteristics, including such matters as existing natural features, role in the centres network and relationship to transport networks. However there are certain basic principles that underpin the structure of successful centres, and should provide the initial starting point for any centre design activities.

	Major centre	District centre	Neighbourhood centre
Structure			
	<div> <div> <div>Retail</div> <div>Commercial</div> <div>Mixed-use</div> </div> <div> <div>Community</div> <div>High / medium density residential</div> <div>Medium / low density residential</div> </div> <div> <div>Park</div> <div>Plaza</div> <div>Transit interchange</div> </div> <div> <div>Train line</div> <div>Bus route</div> <div>400m / 800m walkable catchments</div> </div> </div>		
	Comprised of a high density, walkable core, generally occupying the primary walking catchment (approximately 400m radius) around the focal point, and a less dense frame occupying the secondary walking catchment between 400 metres - 800/1000 metres from the focal point.	Medium to high density core (400 metre radius), depending on the size of the centre may be accompanied by a lower density frame.	Compact and walkable usually not extending more than 400 metres from focal point.
Focal point	Significant public space such as a plaza or square suitable for community events, and located adjacent to transit interchange.	Public plaza or square, preferably co-located with local public transport hub.	Plaza, square or local park located close to public transport stop.

	Major centre	District centre	Neighbourhood centre
Land use mix	<p>Core - wide range of land uses including retail, business, residential, education and community/civic facilities with main street precinct focus. Substantial retail with high degree of vertical separation with active uses on ground floors and commercial/residential uses above.</p> <p>Frame - wide range of activities including lower intensity retail uses such as showrooms, light and service industry and short-term accommodation. Can also include neighbourhoods of predominantly medium and high density residential.</p>	<p>Wide range of land uses focussed around a "Main Street" retail precinct with at least one full-line supermarket. Some vertical mixing of land uses with residential/business uses above active ground floor uses, particularly in the main streets.</p> <p>Lower intensity development towards edge of centre or in centre frame.</p>	<p>Predominantly retail and community uses at ground level, with residential/office activities above.</p> <p>Retail to include a supermarket which may not be full-line depending on centre catchment.</p>
Community facilities	Locate community facilities requiring high levels of accessibility within or adjoining centres. Refer to <i>PDA Guideline no.14 - Community facilities</i> for more guidance on locating community facilities.		
Height and density	Tallest buildings and highest development density in its catchment area. Height and density should be highest in the core and generally decrease with distance from the core.	Significantly lower building height and development intensity than the major centre. Density should be highest near the focal point and generally transition to match surrounding heights and densities.	Commensurate with surrounding development. Usually no more than 3 storeys in suburban neighbourhoods.
Transition	Incorporate residential into mixed-use developments near residential neighbourhoods to provide a transition between residential and non-residential uses.		
Public transport	Focused on a major transport interchange based around a line haul transit station (usually rail or busway).	Local public transport hub - can be rail/bus or connection of inter-suburban bus routes.	One or more local bus routes linking catchment neighbourhoods to centre.
Relationship to transit node	Integrate transit station entries/forecourts into the centre's public realm/open space network. Ensure areas around transit station entries are developed for retail and other active uses that stay open for extended periods to provide activity and improve personal safety.		Locate bus stop close to focal point and retail core.
Development staging	Higher density buildings may not be viable until the community reaches certain development thresholds. Key, highly accessible lots should be retained for longer-term development when these thresholds are achieved. Staging of development to replace initial lower intensity development with more intense development over the longer term is also acceptable. Appendix B - Centre Staging provides an example of how this can be achieved.		

	Major centre	District centre	Neighbourhood centre
Interim uses	Depending on the specific context, a range of interim uses may be acceptable within a centre. The key tests to determine acceptability are whether the interim use would be compatible with existing and proposed centre activities and whether the interim use would be likely to prejudice or delay the ultimate development of the site and adjoining areas. Interim uses should be low intensity in nature and characterised by a low investment in buildings and infrastructure relative to the value of the site. Examples of uses that could pass these tests include: bulk landscape supplies, garden centre, market, outdoor sales, wholesale nursery, indoor or outdoor sports and recreation.		
CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)	Ensure that the centre layout achieves the CPTED principles for the design of centres*.		

\*Refer to the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Guidelines for Queensland.



## Streets and lots

A fine-grained street network encourages pedestrian movements and street activity, contributing to the vitality of the centre.

	Major centre	District centre	Neighbourhood centre
Street network (internal)	<p>Highly connected, legible and permeable grid. Network promotes safe movements and provides direct pedestrian and cyclist access to the centre's focal point/transit opportunities.</p> <p>All streets should accommodate multiple transport modes to encourage activity and personal safety.</p> <p>Streets should accommodate on-street parking and vehicle movements without compromising walking and cycling safety and amenity.</p> <p>The street network should provide sufficient capacity for service vehicles, taxis and public transport stops and layovers as required.</p> <p>Focus internal street design around achieving a safe and attractive main street as the heart of the retail, entertainment and civic/cultural uses.</p> <p>Development on Main Streets with active frontages are provided with access from rear lane or other access streets for service vehicles and to parking areas to reduce potential conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists.</p>		
Internal street types and designs	Grid network of main streets, connector streets, access streets and lanes.		Main street located parallel to and adjacent to connector street where necessary to maintain pedestrian amenity due to traffic volumes. Rear lane to service centre.
	<p>Streets should be designed to accommodate all activities that take place in the street (such as outdoor dining, landscaping, bus stops, cycle lanes and on-street parking), not just the roadway or vehicle movements.</p> <p>Ensure streets provide access for emergency vehicles. Refer to PDA <i>Guideline no.6 - Street and movement network</i> for guidance on streets and lanes within centres.</p> <p>Appendix A shows indicative street types and layout for centres.</p>		
Preferred block size	Parallel streets not more than 100 metres apart, and total block perimeter no greater than 600 metres.		
Maximum block size	200 metres x 120 metres	180 metres x 80 metres	150 metres x 70 metres
Pedestrian links	Where block lengths exceed 120 metres, a mid-block pedestrian and cycle connection with a minimum width of 6 metres, constant public access and incorporating CPTED principles should be provided.		
Active transport links	Provide direct links from the centre street network to the main pedestrian and cycle network.		
Weather protection	All streets (except lanes) are provided with awnings where buildings are built to the street frontages and/or street trees to provide weather protection and visual amenity.		

## Built form

Buildings in centres play an important role in defining the streetscape and public realm, and determining the character and amenity of a centre.

	Major centre	District centre	Neighbourhood centre
Streetscape	Buildings on main streets in the centre core, and along major movement corridors such as connector streets in the frame should be built to the street alignment for at least 75 per cent of the street frontage.  Initial development stages should achieve at least a partial "Main Street" retail precinct. See Appendix B - Centre Staging for an example of how this can be achieved.		Buildings on a main street or connector street should be built to the street alignment for at least two-thirds of the street frontage.
Building scale	Buildings built to the street alignment are commensurate in scale with the width of the street. The minimum height for buildings built to the street alignment is 2 storeys (see Figure 1).		
Ground level	Built to street alignment buildings provide an awning over the footpath for weather protection. Awnings may need to be set back from the kerb or include cut-outs to allow for street trees.  The ground floor of buildings on active frontages (including mid-block pedestrian walkways) should accommodate high activity uses such as retail, entertainment or community activities, present an interesting facade with extensive use of windows and doors (see Figure 2). Long single use frontages should be avoided. Large format retail uses such as supermarkets or discount department stores should be sleeved by smaller retail and similar uses along active street frontages.		
CPTED	Ensure that built form incorporates CPTED principles for the design of buildings. In particular, buildings fronting public realm such as streets, parks, plazas, walkways and the like should be designed to provide significant opportunities for passive surveillance of the public realm.		
Building typology	Within centre cores and along active frontages, podium and tower building forms are preferred for taller buildings. This allows podiums to address the street frontages and towers to be appropriately oriented to take advantage of solar access, views and breezes.  Perimeter built forms with zero side and rear setbacks for podiums.		Generally low-rise buildings
Upper levels	Upper levels of buildings have visually interesting facades and roof forms (see Figure 3) (Refer to <i>PDA Guideline no.8 - Medium and high rise buildings</i> for further information).		Not applicable
Corners	Buildings on corners must address both street frontages. Corners should be expressed as stronger visual elements, including feature building entries.		



Figure 1: Buildings are set to the street and maintain an appropriate scale relationship with the street



Figure 2: Buildings with windows and doors to the street maintain an active frontage even with residential buildings



Figure 3: Visually interesting facades

## Public realm

The public realm includes both public and privately owned land to which the public has access. It includes parks, plazas and squares and pedestrian areas along footpaths and around and through buildings. A high quality public realm is an essential component of a successful centre.

	Major centre	District centre	Neighbourhood centre
Network	<p>Each centre provides a variety of public spaces commensurate with its size and function. Public spaces should provide a variety of low intensity recreational opportunities including seating, eating, resting and play areas (see Figure 4).</p> <p>Each centre should include a public space designed to accommodate community activities such as markets or outdoor concerts.</p> <p>Footpaths are a significant element of the public realm and should be provided with shade and seating (see Figure 5).</p>		
Types of spaces	Significant range of spaces ranging from the main civic space for the entire community, which may take the form of a large plaza or square, to small local parks catering to a local catchment of workers and residents.	Significant range of spaces including a plaza or square and small pocket parks.	Limited range of public spaces - may simply comprise a local park, depending on size of centre.
Design	<p>Public spaces should be designed as an integral part of the centre, and defined by and integrated with the street network and surrounding buildings (see Figure 6). Simply designed, well proportioned public spaces that can accommodate a variety of spaces, facilities and activities that meet the needs of all ages, abilities and cultures are preferred. Larger public spaces should be provided with appropriate facilities including water bubblers and toilets. Design should incorporate Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) best practice.</p>		
Landscaping	<p>Public spaces and footpaths to be provided with shade trees and furniture. Each centre should have a consistent landscape theme using a limited palette of vegetation species, furniture and signage to contribute to the identity of the centre. Use of endemic species is supported where practicable.</p>		
Lighting and signage	<p>Public realm should be provided with adequate lighting and signage for way finding and safety. Care should be taken with lighting design to ensure that nearby residences are not affected by "overspill".</p>		
CPTED	<p>All areas of the public realm should be designed to achieve the CPTED principles for the design of the public realm.</p>		



Figure 4: Public plazas are commensurate in size and scale with their surroundings



Figure 5: Shade and seating are vital elements of the public realm



Figure 6: Public spaces should integrate with buildings and the surrounding pedestrian network

## Car parking/service areas

Adequate car parking must be available for a centre to be economically viable. The location and design of car parks strongly influences the walkability and amenity of centres.

	Major Centre	District Centre	Neighbourhood Centre
Number of spaces	The development scheme will set out specific requirements for car parking for particular uses. The MEDQ encourages development that reduces the total number of on-site spaces required through approaches including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» sharing of car parking between activities with different patterns of parking use in mixed use developments</li><li>» provision of on-street spaces</li><li>» maximising accessibility by public and active transport</li><li>» matching provision to specific demands (e.g. housing targeted for the elderly).</li></ul>		
Location/design	On-site car parking and service areas are either integrated within or under buildings and sleeved by useable floor space, or are located away from the public realm behind buildings*.		
Ground level parking	Ground level car parking areas are screened from the public realm by buildings or landscaping, are provided with night lighting, and have at least one shade tree per 6 parking spaces with 15sqm of deep soil and permeable surface per tree.		

\* This may not be achievable for all site frontages in the initial stages of development (see Appendix B - Staging). Where at-grade car parking adjoins the public realm an appropriately landscaped interface should be provided to minimise visual impact of parking and provide a sense of enclosure and definition for the public realm.

# Appendix A - Indicative street types and centre layout

## Street typologies

The street typologies are aligned to a hierarchy of movement, reflecting wider urban design objectives. They are based on prioritising pedestrian movement and maximising connectivity.

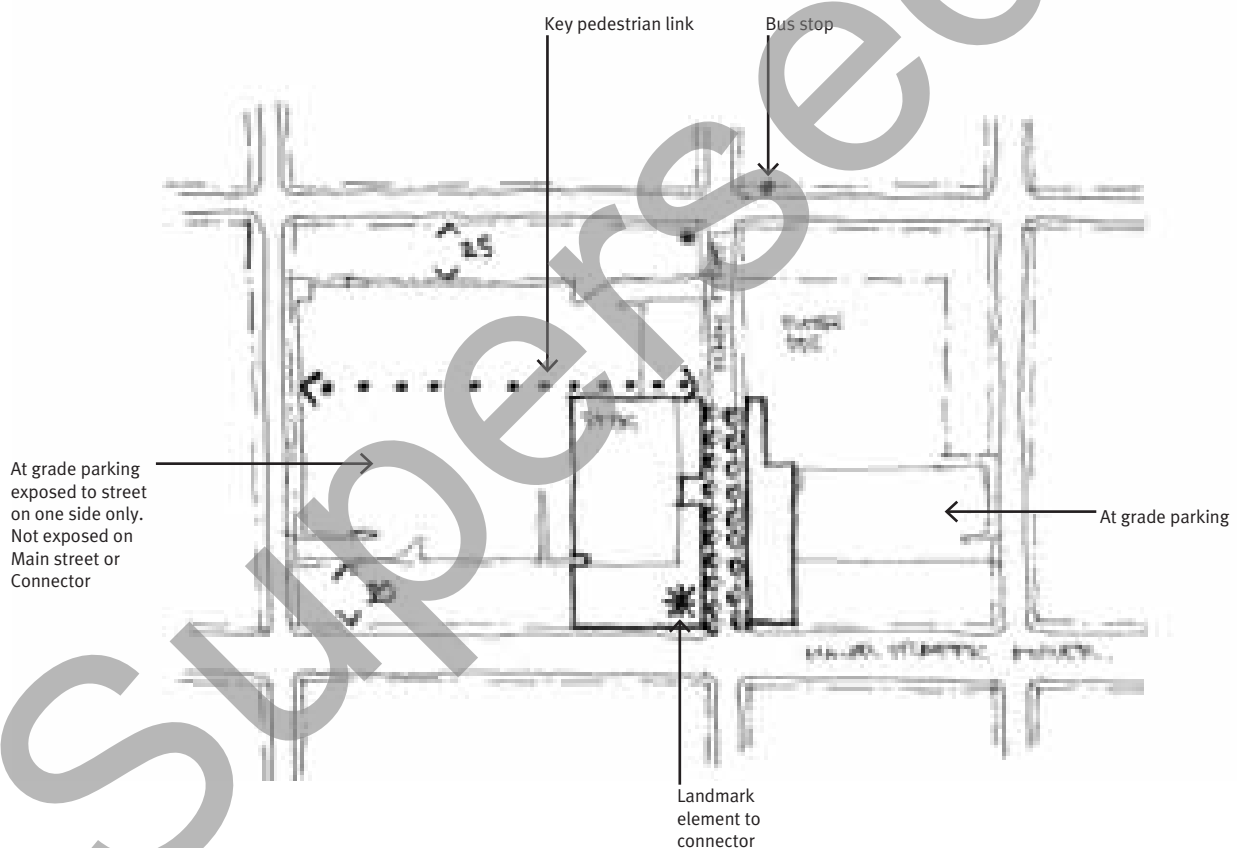


## Appendix B - Staging

### Staging

The following diagrams and notes describe a potential staging sequence that delivers both big box retail, street based retail (a Main Street), good public realm and a well connected street network.

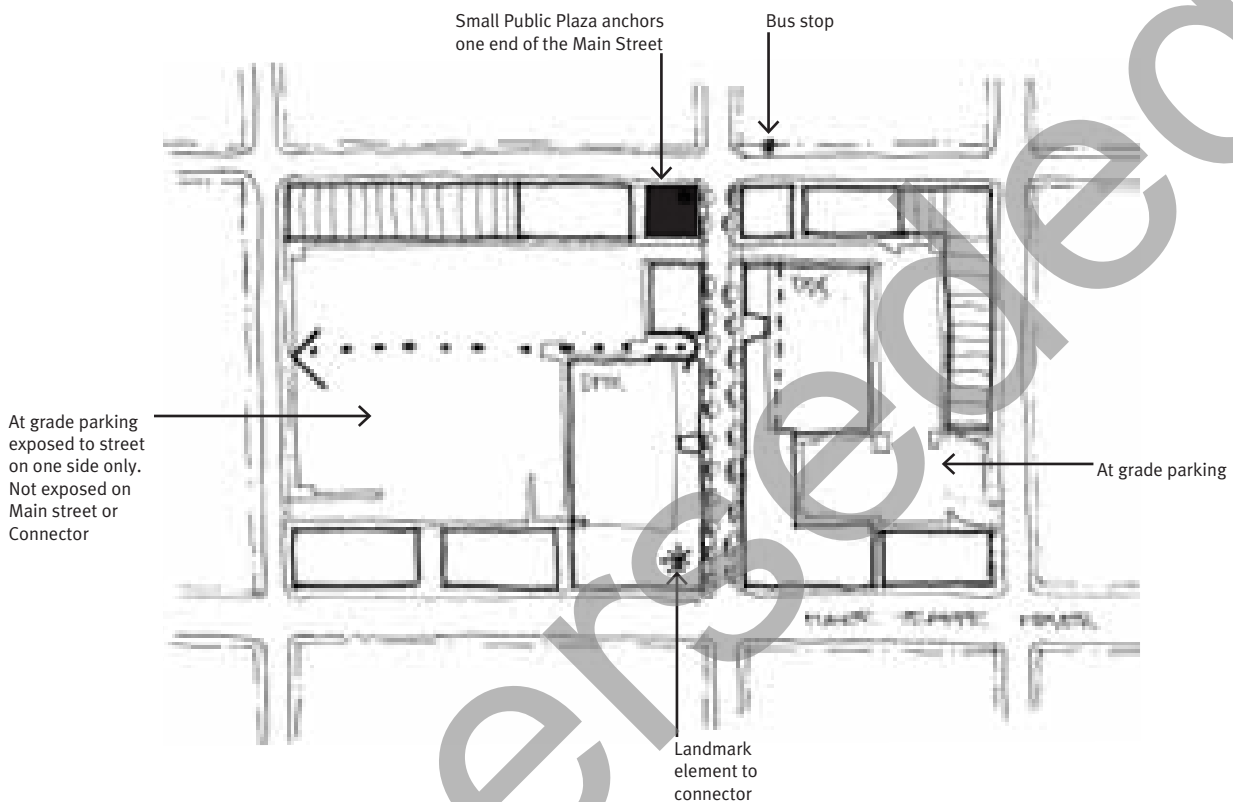
#### Stage 1 - At grade



- » Establish location of anchor uses, such as supermarket (SMK) + Discount Department Stores (DDS)
- » Establish heart of Main Street and active frontages
- » Provide at-grade parking to rear in areas that can be redeveloped in the long term
- » Locate public transport stops in proximity to Main Street along connector streets
- » Reserve sites for sleeving 30 metres deep minimum to connector 25 metres deep minimum to other street
- » Little demand for basement parking solutions at this stage
- » Two storey built form to Main Street and connector streets helps establish identity
- » Identify key pedestrian links early as possible streets/laneways or mid block connections

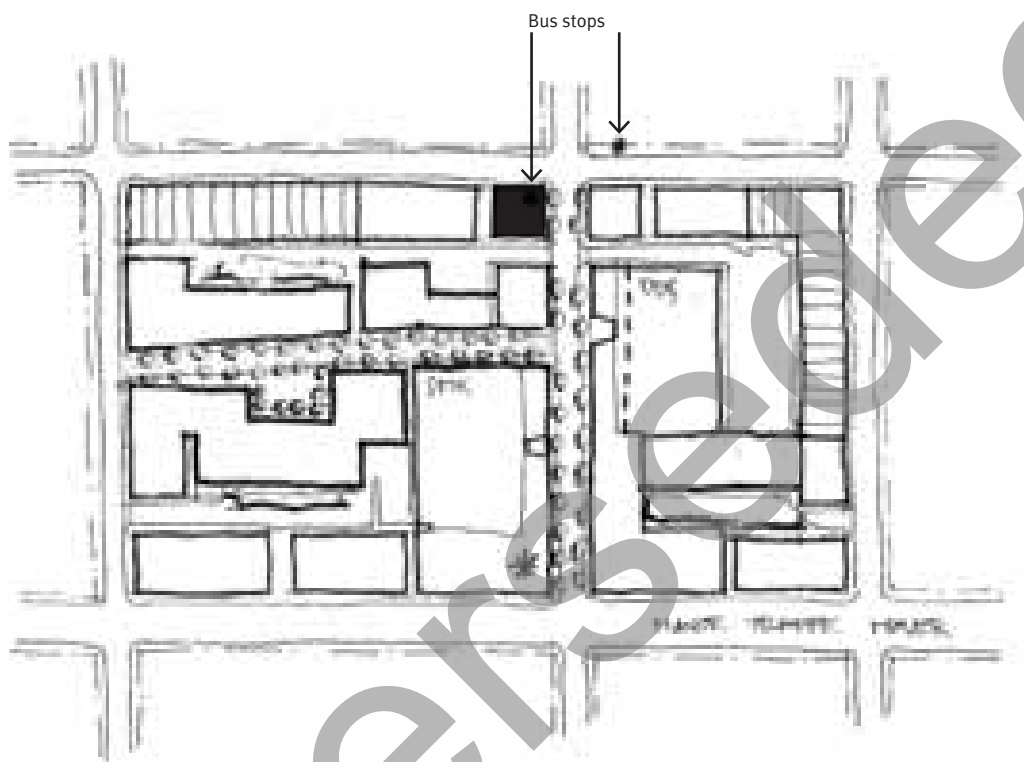


## Stage 2 - Multi level/ mixed use



- » Pressure for basement parking as centre intensifies
- » Complete buildout of Main Street frontage and parts of the frontage to adjoining connector streets
- » Complete sleeving of at-grade parking areas
- » Small public plaza developed
- » Taller built forms populate the main street and adjoining areas
- » Smaller residential parcels to be furthest from connector

### Stage 3 - Transit supported



- » Enhanced public transport reduces parking need
- » Areas of at-grade parking (no longer needed) can be developed with further mixed use development
- » Additional Main Street may be developed
- » Further finer grain road connections develop
- » Predominantly basement parking with on street parking regulated



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