



# Community Character Analysis

## Introduction

Cedar Rapids's comprehensive plan, EnvisionCR, outlines an approach to regulating future land use that encourages a mix of uses at a range of intensities and densities through the creation of Land Use Typology Areas (LUTAs). One of the key features of this approach is to place less emphasis on the separation of land uses, and greater emphasis on location and compatibility standards as a regulatory tool. This change requires rethinking the zoning ordinance in order to better address the physical form and character of development (in addition to use and density).

*Compatibility in today's world can be attained in a more sophisticated way by focusing on the performance of various uses and designing regulations that allow greater integration of uses. If carefully done, the integration of uses can be achieved so that commute times become shorter, and neighborhoods become more walkable and interesting, all while preserving privacy, security and aesthetics. – EnvisionCR p.55*

Compatibility standards that address both physical form and performance can encourage a range of uses that actually complement one another (and thrive) by being integrated or located in close proximity, and establish methods for transitioning between areas of lower and higher intensity. In order to implement EnvisionCR, the City has requested a new zoning code that is sensitive to different contexts within the community and will ensure and promote high quality development in mixed and integrated land use patterns. Writing a new ordinance that is context-sensitive and focuses on physical form, character, and compatibility requires answering two initial questions:

- Where and how does the existing zoning ordinance (and related development regulations) need to be revised or replaced, in order to remove obstacles and better encourage the type of future development envisioned?
- What is the existing form and character of the neighborhoods, districts, and corridors within the city today?

The first question is addressed in the *ReZone Cedar Rapids Code Assessment Report*. This Community Character Analysis report provides a summary documentation and analysis of the existing conditions in the city. Using the lens of physical form and character, it identifies general types of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors—or character areas—that are found throughout the city, as well as those areas of unique or special character.

EnvisionCR established broad ranges of uses, densities and development characteristics that are appropriate for each LUTA. However, in order to better integrate uses through location and compatibility standards at the fine-grained level of zoning districts, it is important to understand the extent of vertical and horizontal integration that exists today. Which existing development patterns and building forms accommodate and encourage (greater) integration and which do not? How might new zoning address these issues? Building on the LUTA framework, this report further categorizes development forms and patterns into a series of character areas, each of which has a similar range of uses, building forms, street patterns, and overall transportation orientation (generally auto or pedestrian). This identification of character areas will assist in revising existing, and writing new, zoning districts to better address the issues of intensity, location and character, form, compatibility, and transitions and enable the type of growth and development outlined and recommended in EnvisionCR.

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The individual LUTAs designated in EnvisionCR encompass large geographic areas. Rather than applying the defined ranges uniformly across each LUTA, identifying character areas acknowledges that certain characteristics within a LUTA are concentrated in specific locations, creating individual neighborhoods, centers, corridors and special districts—or different types of places—depending on context. Each type of character area is defined by a set of physical development characteristics. These different character areas work together to establish the overall character of Cedar Rapids. The definition and description of the general character areas are based on physical analysis (driving and walking), review of the existing zoning and other maps, web-based aerial and street level “site visits,” and general knowledge of current and historic American urban development patterns. This report identifies thirteen prototypical character areas, described on the following pages.

### Character Areas: Framework for the Future

All areas within Cedar Rapids have been analyzed and identified as one of the thirteen character area types. (Community character analysis is a general tool to assist with drafting of new zoning districts, where needed; character area designations are not regulatory.) This identification is based on current context and development patterns. Defining the desired future character of these areas in greater detail will take place in the next phases of the ReZone Cedar Rapids effort, building on the EnvisionCR foundation, and based on additional public input and future corridor and neighborhood planning efforts.

The character areas generally fall into one of two categories—“pedestrian-oriented” or “automobile-oriented.” This is reflected in their components, described in the following pages. Are they walkable, compact, mixed-use, with an interconnected network of streets and blocks, and buildings and signage oriented to pedestrians (while accommodating cars)? Or are they less intense, with uses separated, and a development pattern that favors, if not requires, an automobile? This report recognizes that many areas of Cedar Rapids are and will remain automobile-oriented, while others are expected to become more pedestrian-friendly and multi-modal, or like Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, already have a pedestrian-oriented structure that can be maintained and improved.

Understanding the existing and desired character of a place can inform new development regulations and municipal investment to consistently promote the appropriate character (scale, form, and function) of future development, whether fine-grained infill, redevelopment and revitalization, or in a greenfield location. The community may desire that many areas remain substantially as they are today; so the zoning goal would be to maintain the public realm while allowing compatible, fine-grained infill. In other areas, the community may want significant enhancement, such as the creation of new public spaces, with some growth and intensification, and even potential change from one character area classification to a similar one. In a few areas, the expectation will be for complete transformation to a different character area, whether that be new development in the growth areas, redevelopment of aging strip centers, or transforming auto-oriented corridors. The degree of change to the zoning of each area, if any, will vary accordingly.

Where does existing development match the community aspirations? Where does it conform to the existing zoning? Where are the existing zoning and desired future development patterns out of sync? These questions will be addressed in the next phases of ReZone Cedar Rapids. This report focuses on the existing character of areas—context and scale, street and block layout, building forms and orientation, public realm, intensity, and uses that build on the LUTAs. In order to help guide the drafting of new zone district(s) for Cedar Rapids, individual character areas will be evaluated through the lens of their existing and community-desired future character and placed into one of the following development classifications:

- **Preserve:** Areas in the community where design and character are established and will remain relatively stable over time. New development should be designed to work with existing development and reinforce the character of the area in a contextually appropriate manner.
- **Enhance:** Areas where gradual improvements through infill and redevelopment will improve the design and function of the existing development over time. New development should build upon the area’s uniqueness, as well as anticipated changes in the area.
- **Transform:** Areas where significant redevelopment is critical to the long-term economic health of the geographic area. This category may also apply to some new greenfield development.

## Design Matters!

While conventional comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances often emphasize quantifiable factors such as dwelling units per acre, floor area ratios, and narrow land use categories, a plan with a focus on placemaking and the form, character and quality of new development places a priority on design—the physical form that buildings take, their details and placement on the lot, and their relationship to one another, along with the creation and character of *public spaces*. As the photographs below illustrate, buildings that fall into the same statistical category can be fundamentally different in character and in their contribution to creating a *sense of place*. For ReZone Cedar Rapids, the location and compatibility standards should emphasize design rather than density!

### Preferred



### Not Preferred



The same zoning categories can result in very different types of places.

Townhouses  
Medium density  
16 - 24 units per acre

Small Apartments  
High density  
20 - 40 units per acre

Structured Parking

Transportation  
Corridors  
Mixed Use  
Medium density

## Character Areas: Summary Descriptions & Components

Each of the thirteen prototypical character areas (plus corridors) are briefly described below. An individual sub-section describing and illustrating each type of character area is provided later in this report. These sub-sections describe key physical components of each character area in greater detail.

**Downtown**, the historic center of Cedar Rapids is large-scale, mixed-use, compact, and walkable. It is the most intense area in the city, and very pedestrian-oriented, although individuals may arrive via many modes of transportation.

**Urban Mixed-Use Areas** are of moderate to high intensity, and include a range of uses from residential to commercial, and institutional to industrial, within a framework of urban building forms and an interconnected street network, generally surrounding downtown. They often include rail lines. They typically include pedestrian streetscapes and other public spaces.

**Traditional Neighborhood Centers** are similar in character to a downtown but on a much smaller scale and lower intensity. They typically include locally serving retail, office, and residential uses in a compact, walkable form. They are located within, adjacent to, or between traditional neighborhoods or urban neighborhoods, and may range in size from a few blocks to an individual corner store. These centers may be located on a neighborhood “Main Street” corridor or other large thoroughfares, but they are pedestrian-oriented.

**Urban Neighborhoods** are predominantly residential areas in close proximity to Downtown, comprised of a range of housing types, from apartments to townhouses and, in limited locations, small lot single family homes, arranged in a compact, walkable form. These areas are more intense than a traditional neighborhood and may encompass a traditional neighborhood center or “Main Street” that includes small commercial uses as well as civic and institutional uses.

**Traditional Neighborhoods** may be historic neighborhoods or a newer neighborhood development. They have an interconnected network of walkable streets, and include a range of housing types (but are less intense than an urban neighborhood). These neighborhoods may include small mixed-use traditional neighborhood centers within their borders as well as some institutional uses such as elementary schools and small places of worship.

**Streetcar or Garden Suburb Neighborhoods** were typically developed in the late 19th to early 20th century. They are usually comprised of single-family houses, but may include accessory dwelling units in the form of detached garages or carriage houses, as well as small apartment buildings. Street patterns are often irregular but interconnected. These neighborhoods are typically adjacent to or within walking distance to a traditional neighborhood center (or historic streetcar station or route).

**Regional Suburban Centers** are large-scale, auto-oriented areas, typically developed as a cohesive center following a master plan, located on major arterials, and often serving as a citywide or regional destination for goods and services. They are predominantly comprised of retail, restaurant and office uses, but may include a residential component. The different uses are often developed in separate pods, separated by streets and/or landscaped buffers. These centers may include an internal (private) street network.

**Suburban Mixed-Use Areas** are auto-oriented locations of moderate to high intensity, frequently located along a major suburban corridor or highway frontage. The uses range from light industrial to office, from retail to residential, and are typically configured in “horizontal mixed-use” patterns, usually developed separately in standalone buildings or strip centers with pad sites. Highway commercial areas are a sub-category of suburban mixed-use areas. They are very auto-oriented, with a mix of uses oriented to travelers and easy auto access; most have standalone building forms with minimal landscaping or pedestrian infrastructure, which should be improved.

**Suburban Neighborhood Centers** are primarily auto-oriented (yet still accessible by pedestrians) commercial areas, but may include attached single-family and multi-family residential sub-areas, as well as some civic and institutional uses. They are a range of sizes, typically less intense than regional suburban centers or mixed-use areas, and are usually located along larger thoroughfares or corridors and provide goods and services to the surrounding suburban neighborhoods.

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**Suburban Neighborhoods** are residential areas, primarily built after WWII up until the present day, developed around a framework of irregular, often large, blocks. Street networks are often curvilinear and disconnected and frequently include cul-de-sacs. Although they may include a range of housing types, these are typically concentrated in sub-districts of a consistent type. (These areas are commonly referred to as subdivisions and apartment complexes.) **Conservation Neighborhoods** are a sub-category of suburban neighborhood. They are low intensity residential areas with limited development potential due to topography or other natural features. (Many were developed as planned unit developments.) The houses may be clustered in order to retain a larger portion of the area in a natural state. The street network is frequently curvilinear, following the topography, and disconnected.

**Industrial Areas** are large scale and dominated by manufacturing, processing, and distribution facilities, but may also include supporting commercial and retail services, including restaurants. They are frequently located along highway and rail corridors and are easily accessible by large trucks/tractor-trailers. (This character area designation is applied to those large geographic areas fulfilling the parameters above, not to every industrial use and/or parcel within the City limits.)

**Special Districts** are typically single-use areas with a form and character specific to their function and context. They may include small industrial areas, office parks, recreational facilities and signature parks, corporate and college campuses, and large institutional and public uses such as airports or waste-management facilities.

**Agricultural/Rural Areas** are dominated by active agricultural uses, primarily cultivated fields and pastures with little built form. (These areas may also include other activities such as mining.) The structures that do exist (in addition to individual family residences) are typically accessory to the agricultural use, such as barns and silos. Agriculture-related commercial/retail uses may also exist in a limited number.

**Corridors** are thoroughfares that provide vehicular connections between and through different Character Areas. (They are not actually character areas in and of themselves, but provide a framework and definition for the adjacent character areas.) Ideally, corridors are directly accessible by the neighborhoods they abut. Longer corridors frequently change form and character along their length, as they pass through various centers and neighborhoods. The built form, landscape and signage along corridors affect the overall character and perception of the city. Corridors may have an urban, suburban, rural, or highway commercial character. They often take on and influence the character of the areas through which they pass. Corridors are typically auto-oriented; but railways and greenways/bike trails also serve as corridors and contribute to the character of different parts of the city.

### **Character Area Components**

Although there are many elements that work together to create a *sense of place*, this analysis identifies six key components that establish the physical framework for development and define the basic form of each character area, summarized below.

**Context & Scale** identifies the appropriate LUTA(s) for a character area and its typical geographic size and intensity. It also includes a general description of the place, including a range of appropriate uses.

**Blocks & Streets** describes the typical block and street network for each character area, where appropriate, and how building sites relate to one another.

**Site & Lot Configuration** identifies the typical placement of a building on its lot, including typical setbacks, yards and lot coverage within each character area.

**Buildings** describes typical building form and function and any characteristic architecture (if one exists) for each area.

**Streetscapes & Public Spaces** describes the typical and preferred public realm—the spaces between building facades, including sidewalk details, and greens, squares, plazas and parks appropriate to each character area. This section may also describe typical signage and some basic landscaping characteristics found within private lots.

**Parking** specifies the typical and preferred parking locations, arrangements, and configurations for each character area. The accommodation of automobile storage has a significant impact on the character of a place.

## Character Area by Land Use Typology Area

Just as the range of uses, intensities, and densities in EnvisionCR have some overlap between the designated LUTAs, many character area types are appropriate in more than one LUTA. For example, a traditional neighborhood center may be located in an Urban High Intensity, Medium Intensity, or Low Intensity LUTA. The matrix below summarizes the character areas that may be accommodated in each LUTA.

			LUTAs												
			Downtown	Urban High Intensity	Urban Medium Intensity	Urban Low Intensity	Urban Large Lot	Commercial	Industrial	Public/Semi-Public	Employment Reserve	Flood Control Study Area	Open Space	Rural	Agricultural Preserve
Character Areas	Urban Form	Downtown	●												
		Urban Mixed-Use Area		●	●			●							
		Traditional Neighborhood Center		●	●			●	●						
		Urban Neighborhood	●	●	●			●							
		Traditional Neighborhood		●	●	●									
		Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood			●	●	●								
	Context/Use-Specific Form	Corridors	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●
		Industrial Areas		●	●			●	●						
		Special Districts		●	●	●		●	●	●		●			
	Suburban Form	Regional Suburban Center		●	●			●							
		Suburban Mixed-Use Area		●	●			●							
		Suburban Neighborhood Center			●	●		●	●						
		Suburban Neighborhood			●	●	●								
	Rural Form	Agricultural/Rural Area					●						●	●	

The Employment Reserve and Flood Control Study Area LUTAs do not currently have any character areas identified with the exception of existing corridors. These areas have been reserved for future development. The desired character area types will be established during the future planning phase(s) for these set-aside areas.

### Notes:

- In this report, character areas and their components are described in definitive terms for purposes of clarity and ease of comprehension. It should be understood that in nearly all cases, exceptions to the description provided can be found. This report describes the “typical” form and character traits, not every possible variation that may exist within Cedar Rapids.
- Both traditional and suburban neighborhood centers often include a grocery store. Due to the nature of their business, these stores typically have medium to large building footprints and significant parking requirements. Although there are urban format neighborhood markets, most grocery stores in Cedar Rapids currently have a relatively suburban format for both site configuration and parking, regardless of context.
- Many of the neighborhoods built in Cedar Rapids following WWII and into the 1960s have traits in common with both traditional and suburban neighborhoods. The street and block pattern is typically an interconnected grid and parking is accommodated in detached garages at the rear of the lot, both of which are common features of traditional neighborhoods. At the same time, many of the lots (and houses) in these neighborhoods are oriented with the long side toward the street, driveways are front-loaded, and the neighborhoods often lack sidewalks (and alleys). For the purposes of this report, those post-war neighborhoods that were developed in a relatively compact, walkable pattern have been identified as traditional neighborhood character areas. Those with longer distances between intersections, wider lots, and attached, front-loaded garages have been designated as suburban neighborhood character areas.

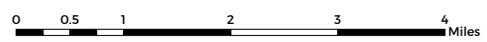
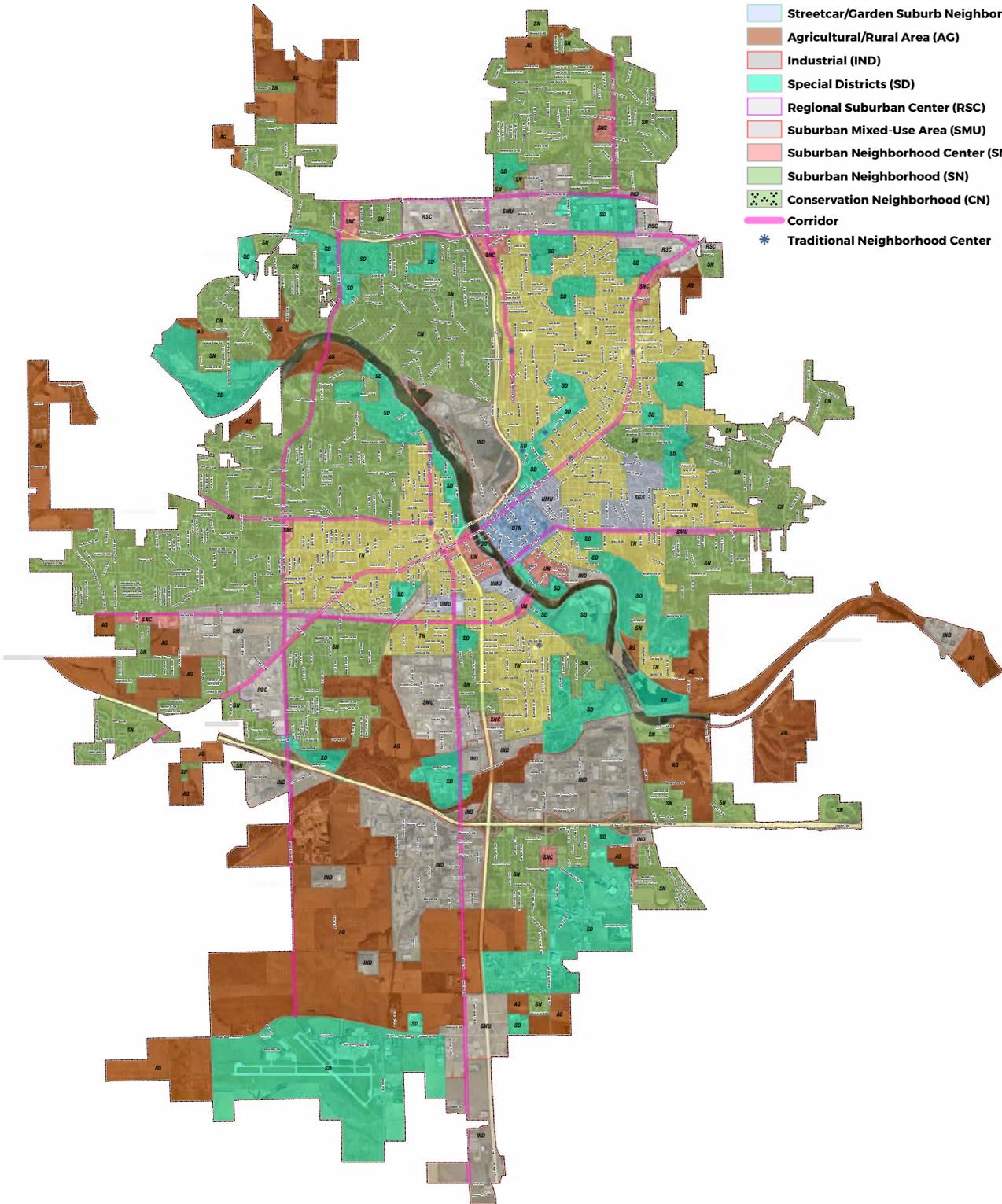


# Cedar Rapids Citywide Character Areas Map & Key

Larger scale map sub-sections are included at the back of this report.

## Character Areas

- Downtown (DTN)
- Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)
- Urban Neighborhood (UN)
- Traditional Neighborhood (TN)
- Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SGS)
- Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)
- Industrial (IND)
- Special Districts (SD)
- Regional Suburban Center (RSC)
- Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SMU)
- Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC)
- Suburban Neighborhood (SN)
- Conservation Neighborhood (CN)
- Corridor
- \* Traditional Neighborhood Center



## Downtown



Downtown is both the historic and current center of Cedar Rapids

### Context & Scale

Downtown is both a character area and a LUTA. It is the central, and most intense, character area within Cedar Rapids. Pedestrian-oriented and compact, it draws people from across the region for a range of activities. It is accessible by transit, auto, bicycle, and foot. Street character within downtown varies, with ground floor retail along many blocks, ideally clustered to promote synergy, and other blocks characterized by residential, office, or civic and institutional uses.

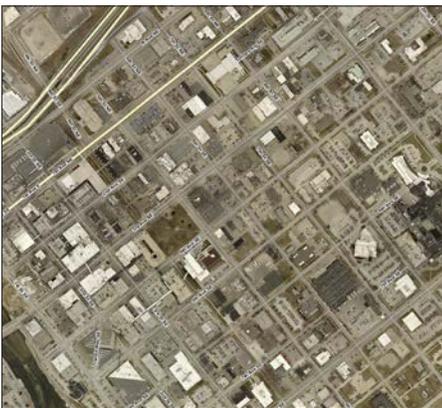
Downtown can accommodate nearly all the functions of daily life—from business, dwelling, recreation, civic and institutional, to research and development—and is therefore able to respond to market conditions within the existing urban framework. Due to its limited size and compact pattern, a range of activities are accessible within a 5- to 10-minute walk, including many that are in the character areas adjacent to downtown.

### Street & Block Pattern

Downtown has an interconnected network of streets and small blocks (primarily in a rectilinear grid pattern) with dedicated bicycle infrastructure. This pattern establishes a walkable, pedestrian-oriented scale with multiple street connections to adjacent areas and a secondary network of alleys providing rear service access through many blocks. The streets are designed for slow-moving multi-modal traffic and typically have wide sidewalks, street trees, and on-street parking. There is a secondary network of skywalks which, although serving a specific purpose, actually detract from the desired street life and undermine the downtown retail market.

### Site & Lot Configurations

All downtown lots have street frontage. Typically there are multiple lots/buildings within each block and no side lot setbacks. This continuous street frontage reinforces the pedestrian-oriented nature. Complete lot-coverage is allowed, which is balanced by the location of numerous public open spaces within a short walking distance. Downtown site and lot configurations do not accommodate standard suburban large format (big box/auto-oriented) retail.



Downtown street and block pattern



Downtown street view with dedicated bicycle lane



Downtown buildings fronting the street



Complete lot-coverage and no side setback

## Buildings

The downtown buildings are street-oriented, aligned along the back of the sidewalk, and typically multi-storied. Some streets will be lined with traditional “main street” shopfront buildings with ground story retail display windows and offices or residences above. (Because an area can only absorb a finite amount of retail, ground floor retail or shopfront space should not be expected on every downtown block.) Most buildings are mixed-use, but some are single use, and all (should) define the public realm (blank walls should never face the street or other public space).

Architectural detailing is pedestrian in scale, with frequent windows and functioning entry doors along the sidewalk. These features promote an active and walkable streetscape. Downtown also includes civic buildings, such as City Hall and the public library. Such buildings have a more unique, monumental design, but still address the street or public realm.

## Public Spaces & Streetscapes

Streets and sidewalks are the city’s foremost public spaces. Downtown sidewalks are wide and tree-lined, to promote *walkability* and accommodate significant pedestrian traffic along with such features as sidewalk cafes. In addition, downtown includes other kinds of public spaces, such as Green Square and the riverfront area for gathering and passive recreation. These spaces are defined and fronted by buildings and are generally formally arranged. Signage is (primarily) pedestrian-oriented and streetlights enhance the pedestrian realm.

## Parking

Parking is on-street parallel or located away from the street/sidewalk in block-interior lots or structures. (Surface lots exposed to the street are the exception and should be thought of as “future building sites.”) On-street parking contributes to pedestrian comfort, shielding the pedestrian from moving automobile traffic without detracting from *walkability*. Because downtown is a compact and intense mixed-use area, on-site parking is not required. Off-site and shared parking arrangements encourage foot traffic on downtown streets, promoting street life and additional “eyes on the street.”



Historic mixed use building



Newer street-oriented building



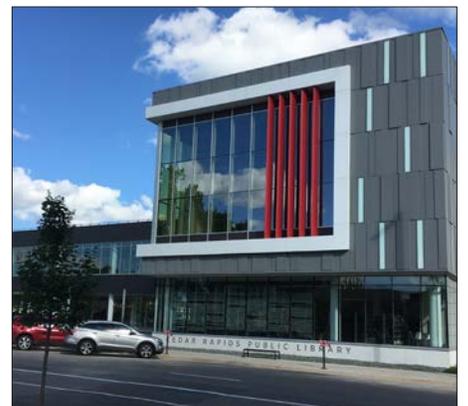
Downtown public space



Downtown streetscape



Downtown streetscape



Downtown civic building



Existing surface lots should be the exception



Example of street level retail with parking above

## Urban Mixed-Use Areas



Street and block pattern with eclectic range of uses in near southwest

### Context & Scale

The urban mixed-use character areas are located in and around the historic core of Cedar Rapids, and are of a generally high intensity. They are typically multi-block areas and accommodate a range of uses—from commercial and residential to industrial and institutional, all in close proximity to one another. These areas are experiencing some infill and redevelopment, (with more anticipated) but the expectation is that they will retain an eclectic character and mix of uses, maintaining their economic vibrancy. (Over the past few decades some auto-oriented development has encroached into these areas; further development of this form and character should be discouraged.)

### Street & Block Pattern

The street character in urban mixed-use areas can vary dramatically from street to street and even from block to block, but the street network is predominantly interconnected, creating a pattern of small blocks, primarily in a rectilinear grid pattern. (Even the industrial uses are integrated into the street grid and the larger urban fabric.) This pattern establishes

a pedestrian-friendly scale with street connections to adjacent neighborhoods. These areas are also very accessible by bicycle.

Urban mixed-use areas also include alleys that provide rear service access through many blocks. The streets are designed for slow-moving multi-modal traffic and can frequently accommodate large trucks. These areas typically have sidewalks and some streets may also have street trees and on-street parking. They often include one or more corridors, including railways.



Industrial uses located within the urban street grid



New street-oriented residential building



New street-oriented urban mixed-use building



Horizontal mixed-use within the urban street grid

## Site & Lot Configurations

Virtually all lots have street frontage, although there may be some that only have railway frontage, with vehicular access provided via alleys. Individual lots in these areas are a range of shapes and sizes, often based on their historic use and development patterns. Complete lot coverage may occur and street frontage is usually maintained and defined by buildings or fences and walls. Larger parcels may be configured with multiple buildings or structures within the lot or block interior. Many lots can accommodate outdoor work areas, but these are usually screened from the public realm and from adjacent lots.

## Buildings

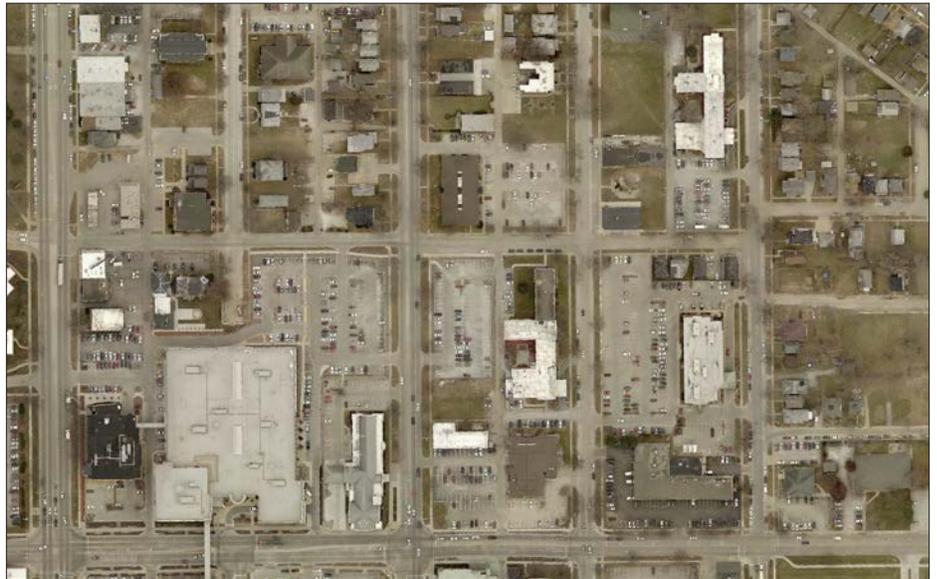
Buildings are typically street-oriented, located at the back of the sidewalk with windows and doors aligning the street. Individual buildings may house one or more uses and they may be single or multi-story, depending on their function. Additional structures may be placed within the interior of larger lots. Architectural detailing on the street façade is usually pedestrian-scaled. Rooflines may be flat (with parapets) or pitched.

## Public Spaces & Streetscapes

The streets and sidewalks are the principal public spaces in urban mixed-use areas, although these areas may include small greens and plazas or neighborhood parks. There are also larger public spaces in close proximity, along the river and in adjacent neighborhoods. Depending on the character of the individual street, the sidewalk width and the presence of street trees will vary. In addition, on some blocks, the lots may include small landscaped dooryards between the building and the sidewalk, creating a softer, green edge for the public realm.

## Parking

Parking is provided on street, in surface lots (preferably away from the street and sidewalk), and in some cases in parking structures. As these areas continue to redevelop and intensify, parking structures may become more common.



Block pattern with primarily street-oriented lot configurations and excessive surface parking



Fencing used to screen work area and define public realm



Street-oriented residential building with enclosed side yard and small landscaped dooryard

## Traditional Neighborhood Centers



Traditional neighborhood centers can exist in different contexts and at different scales



Under-utilized traditional neighborhood center



Center with context-sensitive infill development

### Context & Scale

Traditional neighborhood centers can be found in the Urban High, Urban Medium, and Urban Low Intensity LUTAs (and in limited circumstances, Commercial and Industrial LUTAs, as well.) They may be located within or between traditional neighborhoods and urban neighborhoods, and in some instances, adjacent to suburban neighborhoods.

These centers are mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented. They may be as small as a few storefronts at an intersection or a few blocks-long neighborhood “Main Street.” They accommodate neighborhood-serving retail, such as a small grocery, dry cleaners, and coffee shops, small professional offices, and civic or institutional uses including religious facilities, schools, or even a fire station. They may include a residential component, and in limited locations, there may also be services such as auto repair.

These centers are accessible by many modes of transportation and should be found near current (or future) bus/transit routes. Their size is limited and walkable. They are

the heart of their traditional and/or urban neighborhoods.

### Street & Block Pattern

Traditional neighborhood centers are designed within the neighborhood’s interconnected, walkable, network of streets and small blocks (typically in a grid pattern). They may be located along a corridor with multiple street and pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods. The ideal center provides service access to the rear of the buildings and through the block. Their streets are designed for slow-moving, multi-modal traffic.

### Site & Lot Configurations

All lots have street frontage. Typically multiple lots sit along a block-face with a continuous street frontage. Buildings are placed toward the front of the lot and have a rear lot setback from the adjacent neighborhoods that is generally used for service and parking. Individual building placement (relative to the sidewalk) is consistent for the entire block-face.

## Buildings

Buildings in traditional neighborhood centers are street-oriented. The buildings may be attached or detached, but work together to define the street and a pedestrian realm.

Typically one to three stories, buildings may have shopfronts and one or more functioning entrances on the street. The scale of the traditional neighborhood center buildings is typically in proportion to, or slightly more intense than, the surrounding neighborhoods (due to the mix of uses).

The architecture is typically “Main Street” in character with pedestrian-scaled details, such as vertically proportioned windows and sidewalk-oriented signage. In some growing/evolving neighborhood centers, single-family houses immediately adjacent to the original neighborhood center may have been converted for commercial uses. Residential uses are usually either configured as apartments above shops, small apartment buildings, or row houses.

## Public Spaces & Streetscapes

Traditional neighborhood centers may include a small public open space in addition to their streets and sidewalks. Streets have on-street parking and street trees shade sidewalks. The streetscapes will generally have an active edge due to the storefronts. Lighting and signage is scaled to the pedestrian.

## Parking

In addition to on-street parking, traditional neighborhood centers provide parking at the rear of the lot. Parking lots should be coordinated and shared, promoting a “park once” environment, and sized for neighborhood-serving businesses, not destinations, with the anticipation that many people will arrive on foot, via bicycle, or transit. Lower minimum parking requirements should be considered for neighborhood centers with transit stops.



Detached buildings in a neighborhood center



A corner store anchoring a neighborhood center



A neighborhood center can be a single storefront



Neighborhood centers may include schools



Simple Neighborhood Center streetscape



Example of small but significant public open space



Example of traditional neighborhood center with on-street parking along a bus route



Example of parking behind the buildings in traditional neighborhood center

# Urban Neighborhoods

## Context & Scale

Urban neighborhoods are located in the Downtown and Urban High Intensity LUTAs. Predominantly residential and always pedestrian-oriented, these high intensity areas are generally adjacent to downtown and their residences complement and support the commerce within downtown. Urban neighborhoods accommodate civic or institutional uses including places of worship and schools as well as small neighborhood-serving retail, such as corner stores, dry cleaners, and coffee shops. They may include small parks.

These neighborhoods are accessible by many modes of transportation. Street character will vary, depending on width, traffic capacity, sidewalk design, and building form. An individual urban neighborhood is of walkable size. Major streets, large parks or waterways often define the neighborhood edges.

## Street & Block Pattern

Urban neighborhoods are designed with an interconnected, walkable, network of streets and small blocks (typically in a grid pattern). They may include a neighborhood “Main Street.” Rather than isolated “pods” of development, these neighborhoods have multiple street connections to adjacent areas. A secondary network of alleys often provides access to the rear of the buildings and through the block. Urban neighborhood streets are designed for slow-moving, multi-modal traffic, including bicycles.

## Site & Lot Configurations

All lots have street frontage and there are typically multiple lots per block. (A single building filling the block is an exception rather than the rule.) Small or no side setbacks foster a continuous street frontage. Lots may be narrow, to fit a single townhouse, or larger to accommodate an apartment or loft building. Buildings are placed toward the front of the lot with the rear generally used for private yards, gardens, and parking.

## Buildings

Buildings in urban neighborhoods are street-oriented; they may sit directly at



Urban neighborhoods are primarily residential, with street-oriented buildings in compact, walkable form.

the back of the sidewalk or behind a dooryard (a shallow front yard). In either configuration, the buildings work together to define the street or pedestrian realm that is typically consistent for each block face. Typically multi-storied, buildings in urban neighborhoods may be in a variety of configurations, including apartments, lofts, townhouses, brownstones, and some small-lot detached single-family houses. Neighborhood buildings have functioning entrances on the street and may also have front porches, stoops, and balconies.

Roofs may be pitched or flat with low parapets. The architecture is pedestrian in scale and primarily residential in character, except in a neighborhood center.



Historic apartment building

## Public Spaces & Streetscapes

These neighborhoods should include a range of public open spaces in addition to the streets and sidewalks; from greens and squares, to play grounds, and small parks. Sidewalks, typically narrower than in downtown, are shaded by street trees in individual pits or continuous tree lawns. Some streetscapes have a green edge due to small, planted dooryards. Signage is limited and lighting is pedestrian-scaled.

## Parking

In addition to on-street parking, urban neighborhoods provide parking at the rear of the lot in the block interior, in garages or small parking lots. Lower parking requirements should be considered for urban neighborhoods served by transit.



Rowhouses with simple dooryard and streetscape

## Traditional Neighborhoods



One of the many traditional neighborhoods in Cedar Rapids



Common traditional neighborhood street and block pattern



Typical siting: houses front the street with small front yards and garages at rear, accessed from alley

### Context & Scale

Traditional neighborhoods are located in the Urban High, Urban Medium, and Urban Low Intensity LUTAs. Primarily residential and pedestrian-oriented, most of these areas are in proximity to the historic core of Cedar Rapids, but new traditional neighborhoods may be developed in the growth areas. These areas may also have a mixed-use traditional neighborhood center located within their boundaries. Traditional neighborhoods also accommodate civic or institutional uses including places of worship, schools, and neighborhood parks.

Traditional neighborhoods are accessible by many modes of transportation. The street character varies, depending on the neighborhood location within the city, and individual street width, traffic, and building form. Neighborhoods are a walkable size, with edges defined by major streets or large parks.

### Street & Block Pattern

Traditional neighborhoods are designed with an interconnected, walkable network of streets and small blocks (typically in a grid pattern). They have multiple street connections to adjacent areas, including other neighborhoods. A secondary network of alleys often provides access to the rear of the buildings and through the block. Their streets are designed for slow-moving, multi-modal traffic. These neighborhoods may include a mixed-use corridor that serves as a neighborhood “Main Street.”

### Site & Lot Configurations

All lots have street frontage. Typically multiple lots sit within a block. Small side lot setbacks foster a continuous street frontage. Lots may be narrow, to fit cottages, bungalows, and row houses, or wider to accommodate larger houses or small apartments. Buildings are placed toward the front of the lot with rear and side yards generally used for private yards, gardens, and parking. Generally, traditional neighborhood lots are deeper than they are wide, but in those neighborhoods developed after World War II, the lot configuration and siting began to change, with lots becoming wider and front yard depth increasing. Individual building

placement (relative to the sidewalk) is often consistent for the entire block face. Front-loaded driveways may separate lots, but garages are typically detached and located at the back of the lot.

### Buildings

Buildings in traditional neighborhoods are street-oriented; they typically sit behind a small to medium front yard. In either configuration, the buildings work together to define the street and a pedestrian realm.

Typically one-and-a-half to three stories, houses may be in a variety of configurations, from bungalows, to cottages and four-squares, with small to medium lots. Some traditional neighborhoods also include townhouses, duplexes and triplexes, and/or small apartment buildings, especially where they transition to a more intense character area such as a traditional neighborhood center, an urban neighborhood, or an urban mixed-use area.

Regardless of form or type, buildings have one or more functioning entrances on the street and may include front porches, stoops, and balconies. Their roofs are typically pitched with gable or hipped ends, and often include dormers, but some buildings such as row houses and small apartment buildings, have flat roofs. The architecture is pedestrian in scale and residential in character.

### Public Spaces & Streetscapes

In addition to streets and sidewalks, traditional neighborhoods may include a range of usable public open spaces. Greens, tot lots, playgrounds, and neighborhood and signature parks are often within a close walking distance.

Neighborhood streets usually have on-street parking and sidewalks shaded by street trees, planted in continuous tree lawns, along both sides. They generally have a greener, softer edge than those in the more intense character areas due to the front yards and tree-lawns. Street lighting is scaled to the pedestrian.

### Parking

In addition to on-street parking, traditional neighborhoods provide parking at the rear of the lot, typically in garages.



Street of traditional neighborhood houses



Compatible context-sensitive infill



Traditional neighborhood house with front porch



Small apartment in a traditional neighborhood



Example of new traditional neighborhood houses



Simple pedestrian streetscape

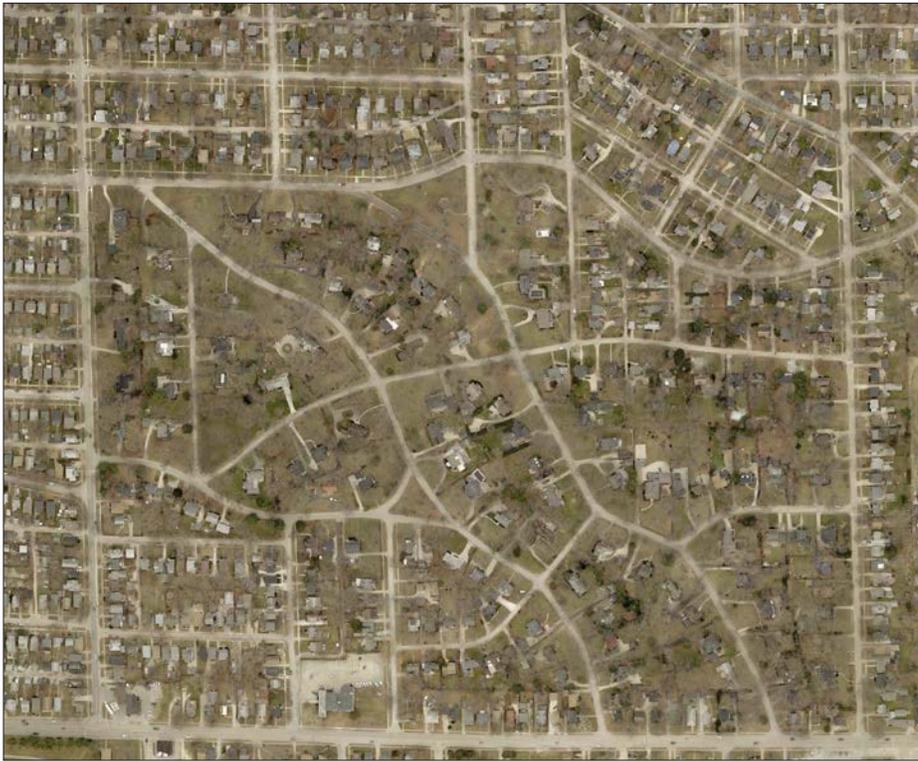


Parking located at the rear of the lot



Example of new garages facing alley, not the street

## Streetcar and Garden Suburb Neighborhoods



Curvilinear street grid creates irregular blocks and lots



Early 20th century houses with large front yards



### Context & Scale

Streetcar or Garden Suburb Neighborhoods were developed in the late 19th to early 20th century. They were often the first neighborhoods planned and developed to accommodate the private automobile, but they were also usually accessible by streetcar lines. These neighborhoods are typically adjacent to, or within walking distance of, a traditional neighborhood center (or historic streetcar station or route). They are almost exclusively residential, but may be proximate to neighborhood schools or religious facilities. They usually have defined boundaries and are of a walkable size, but their form and character is not typically compact.

### Street & Block Pattern

The streets within these neighborhoods are typically curvilinear and narrow, yet still interconnected. (The streets were often laid out to address the topography.) The block shapes and sizes are usually irregular, and they may or may not include alleys. A corridor may traverse the neighborhood, but more commonly, corridors define their edges.

### Site & Lot Configuration

Due to the irregular-shaped blocks, the lots also tend to take polygonal shapes in a range of sizes, most are usually much larger than those found in the surrounding traditional neighborhoods. The houses are often placed near the center of the lot, with a large front yard and generous side and rear yards. Driveways may be front-loaded, but they lead to detached garages and/or carriage houses at the rear of the lot.

### Buildings

The buildings in these neighborhoods are almost exclusively two- to three-story detached single-family houses (although in some contexts, small apartments may be located where the neighborhoods transition to a traditional neighborhood or center.) The architectural styles range from the Victorian era into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century period revivals, including Queen Anne, Craftsman, Tudor, French Country, Spanish Colonial, and Georgian. The rooflines are generally pitched, and houses often have front and/or side porches and sometimes porte cocheres. Garages and carriage houses reflect the style and detail of the house and may include an accessory residential unit.

### Public Spaces & Streetscapes

The neighborhood streets are narrow and often lack sidewalks or formally arranged street trees, although the streets are defined by canopy shade trees in the large front yards. The neighborhoods do include small, informal green spaces, often created/defined by irregular intersections.

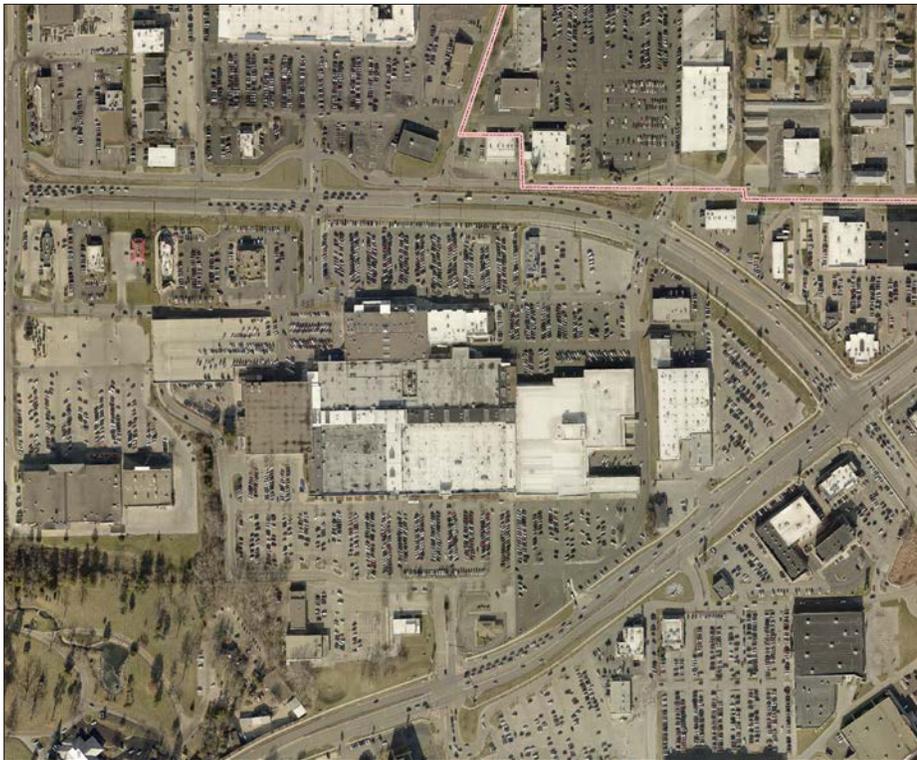
### Parking

Parking is almost exclusively handled at the back of the lot (or within the long driveways); streets are generally too narrow to accommodate on-street parking.



Small, informal neighborhood green

## Regional Suburban Centers



Enclosed regional suburban center with surface parking and surrounded by major thoroughfares



Example of suburban center with multi-modal access



Large format (big box) retail in regional suburban center

### Context & Scale

Regional suburban centers are located in the Urban High Intensity and Commercial LUTAs. They are large-scale, auto-oriented and dominated by retail, restaurant, and office uses. They were typically planned and constructed as a comprehensive development in proximity to highways and other major roads, to provide work places, goods and services to the entire region. These centers typically cover hundreds of acres. Different uses are often located in separate pods or development bays, with a coordinated landscaping, parking, and signage design.

Regional suburban centers should be accessible by many modes of transportation, but usually bounded by major roads, the primary access is limited to private automobiles. Due to location and access, their design, of necessity, has a large parking component.

### Street & Block Pattern

Regional suburban centers are typically planned as “self-contained” areas on large development tracts within a major roadway system, with limited connectivity and access to the surrounding areas, and long distances between intersections. Although pedestrians may be accommodated, the primary roads are for auto access and circulation. Within the regional center, there may be an internal circulation pattern of streets (often a ring road) and pedestrian paths disconnected from the city streets. Rather than streets and blocks, there is usually a system of land bays and development pods.

### Site & Lot Configuration

These centers can accommodate sites for large format commercial uses such as shopping malls and “big box” retailers, parking structures or landscaped surface lots. Sites are often irregular in shape with limited street frontage, and they may be internally oriented. Suburban center lots tend to be much larger than those in downtown and should have a lower percentage of lot coverage. Individual lots or parcels typically accommodate multiple buildings, or the center was subdivided with out parcels and pad sites.

## Buildings

Buildings are often standalone and single-use or in an indoor/enclosed mall or outdoor shopping center configuration, with architecture and signage scaled to fast-moving automobile traffic.

The building character (particularly the window and door configuration) is usually reflective of its use—from retail to office or residential. There may be some mixed-use buildings, but they are still the exception in these centers. Building heights are reflective of the size or scale of the center on the whole; offices and hotels are frequently multi-story. Buildings may be street-oriented or front a parking lot. They tend to have larger footprints than the those in downtown and neighborhood centers.

In the absence of a street and block structure, which provides a framework for buildings with “fronts and backs,” buildings in these centers are often designed with “four-sided architecture” since they can be approached from all sides (often requiring more expensive construction, but not necessarily improving the overall design and “sense of place.”)

## Public Spaces & Streetscapes

Older regional centers often have no usable public (or publicly accessible) spaces; however, new or redeveloped centers often include a range of usable public open spaces, such as centrally located greens, squares and plazas. Sidewalks are usually limited to placement along the building fronts (for circulation within the center) but they should be encouraged, along with street trees, throughout the development. Fences should be used (in the absence of buildings) to help define the streetscape. Signage within a center is often coordinated, with perimeter signage oriented to vehicular traffic, and interior signage to the pedestrian.

## Parking

Parking is usually accommodated on-site, primarily in large surface lots, but potentially in structures. Surface lots should be heavily landscaped (to reduce the heat island effect and assist with stormwater management) and screened from the street by decorative fencing or vegetation.



Standalone suburban center office building



Example of formal green space in a suburban center



Example of large surface parking lot screened by fence and trees

## Suburban Mixed-Use Areas

### Context & Scale

Suburban mixed-use areas are located in the Urban High, Urban Medium, and Urban Low Intensity; and Commercial and Industrial LUTAs. They are medium to large-scale geographic areas that are auto-oriented and dominated by an assortment of commercial (sales and service), office, and industrial uses. They often include hotels and motels, and sometimes apartment complexes. These areas were typically developed in a piecemeal fashion, on multiple parcels, in proximity to highways and other major roads. Each use is typically standalone, with little physical relationship to those on either side, or to the surrounding neighborhoods.

These areas should be accessible by many modes of transportation, but usually located along major corridors, the primary access is private automobiles. Because of their location and access, their design includes a significant parking component.

### Street & Block Pattern

Suburban mixed-use areas are often developed on large tracts within an irregular street pattern, with limited connectivity and access to the surrounding area, and long distances between intersections. (As these areas grow and redevelop, increased connectivity should be a priority.) They may or may not have a block pattern and they often include railway corridors. Although many modes of transportation are accommodated, including large trucks, these areas tend to be unfriendly toward pedestrians; the streets are primarily for auto access and circulation, with sidewalks frequently punctuated by curb cuts.

### Site & Lot Configurations

As they were often developed over a period of time, suburban mixed-use areas frequently have a range of lot sizes and configurations, depending on the individual uses. They can accommodate sites for large format commercial uses, including retail and industrial, along with surface parking lots. Sites are often irregular in shape with limited street frontage, and they may be internally oriented. Individual lots or parcels may

accommodate multiple buildings, and they typically provide parking between the building and the street.

### Buildings

Buildings in these areas are often standalone and single-use or in a strip-shopping center configuration, with architecture and signage scaled to fast-moving automobile traffic. Corporate architectural styles are common. The building character (particularly the window and door configuration) is typically reflective of its use—from retail to office or industrial. Mixed-use buildings are not common. Buildings tend to be low-rise, usually one or two stories, with a few taller office buildings. Flat roofs are common, but smaller buildings may have pitched roofs. Buildings may be street-oriented or front a parking lot. The building footprints range in size, from small pad site structures, such as fast food restaurants, to large industrial facilities.

### Public Spaces & Streetscapes

These areas often have no usable public (or publicly accessible) spaces beyond the streets; however, newer areas may include sidewalks with individual green spaces located within private lots. Improved sidewalks and street trees should be encouraged. Fences can also be used (in the absence of buildings) to help define the streetscape. Signage is usually unique to each parcel or development.

### Parking

Parking is accommodated on-site in surface lots, usually between the building and the street. Surface lots should be heavily landscaped and consolidated and shared where feasible.



Auto-oriented horizontal mixed use



Suburban apartment building



Auto-oriented mixed-use building



Auto-oriented retail



Standalone suburban office building

## Suburban Neighborhood Centers



New suburban neighborhood center with shopfronts and sidewalk fronting the parking lot



Aging suburban neighborhood center



Aging suburban neighborhood center

### Context & Scale

Suburban neighborhood centers are located in the Urban Medium and Urban Low Intensity LUTAs. Developed from the post-WWII era to the present day, they are auto-oriented at a low- to medium-intensity, in support of (but clearly separated or buffered from) the surrounding suburban neighborhoods. These centers are commonly a collection of retail and office uses, but may include residential uses, such as apartments, and civic or institutional uses, such as places of worship, schools, and libraries, or even a neighborhood park. They are locally oriented rather than destinations, providing goods and services to the surrounding neighborhoods. They are usually located along corridors and they may be as small as a single acre. Suburban centers should be accessible by many modes of transportation, particularly by pedestrians and bicycles from the adjacent neighborhoods, but the anticipated access is by automobile.

### Street & Block Pattern

Neighborhood suburban centers are usually designed on large development tracts, embedded within an irregular suburban street pattern or located along a corridor (or at the intersection of two corridors). These centers often have limited (vehicular) connectivity and little direct access to the surrounding neighborhood. Although pedestrians are accommodated, the streets are primarily for auto access and circulation. The scale of these centers is much smaller than a regional center; internal vehicular circulation is usually limited to parking lot drive aisles and fire lanes. If a suburban neighborhood center is large enough to occupy more than one block, the blocks are frequently over-size and of irregular shape, with long distances between intersections and a distinct separation or buffer from adjacent residential areas.

### Site & Lot Configuration

Neighborhood suburban centers can accommodate sites for large format commercial uses, such as grocery stores, (as well as surface parking lots), and small shops and offices. Sites are often

irregular in shape and they may be internally oriented. Suburban center lots tend to be larger than those in traditional centers with a lower percentage of lot coverage. Individual lots or parcels may accommodate multiple buildings.

### Buildings

Buildings are often standalone and single-use or in a shopping center configuration, with architecture and signage scaled to automobile traffic. The building character (particularly the window and door configuration) is typically reflective of its use—from retail to office or residential. There may be small mixed-use buildings, but they are not common. Buildings in these centers are often only one story. They may be street-oriented or front a parking lot. They tend to have larger footprints than the buildings in traditional neighborhood centers. If the center was planned and developed in a compressive fashion, the architecture may share a common design theme or aesthetic.

### Public Spaces & Streetscapes

Older suburban centers often have no usable public (or publicly accessible) spaces; however, new or redeveloped centers may include a central public space, such as a small green or plazas, with features such as fountains or public seating. Depending on scale and context, these centers may include sidewalks and street trees; if not, they should be encouraged. Fences (in the absence of buildings) and pedestrian-scaled streetlights should also be used to help define the streetscape and promote walkability. Signage within a suburban center is usually coordinated.

### Parking

Parking is accommodated on-site in surface lots, typically between the building(s) and the street. Ideally, especially when integrated into a suburban neighborhood, surface lots should be heavily landscaped and placed to the side of buildings, or screened from the street by decorative fencing or vegetation.



Example of new street-oriented suburban grocery with pedestrian-scale architectural detailing



Suburban neighborhood center with landscaped detention amenity



Typical newer suburban center parking lot



Limited connectivity with adjacent neighborhood



Example of surface lot with canopy shade trees

# Suburban Neighborhoods



Suburban neighborhood street and block layout



Mid-20th century curvilinear suburban street



Long suburban block with large front yard setbacks



A street of front-loaded duplexes



Siting: houses in mid-lot with front-loaded garages

## Context & Scale

Suburban neighborhoods are located in the Urban High, Urban Medium, and Urban Low Intensity, as well as the Urban Large Lot LUTAs. These neighborhoods, developed from the post-WWII era up to the present day, are predominantly low- to moderate-intensity residential areas with an auto-orientation. They are often described as subdivisions, townhouse developments and apartment complexes. They may abut suburban or traditional neighborhood centers, other neighborhoods, or farmland, with major thoroughfares defining their edges. They may include civic uses such as schools, religious institutions, and neighborhood parks. Suburban neighborhoods should be accessible by many modes of transportation, but the primary access is by private auto.

## Street & Block Pattern

Suburban neighborhoods are typically designed around a curvilinear street pattern and irregular block structure, with limited points of connectivity and access, and long distances between intersections. The use of cul-de-sacs often limits internal vehicular connections within and between these neighborhoods. Depending on the age of the neighborhood, internal pedestrian (and bicycle) connectivity and amenities may be limited, but in newer subdivisions pedestrian pathways and trails within common open spaces may be found.

## Site & Lot Configuration

Suburban lots tend to be larger than those in urban and traditional neighborhoods with a lower percentage of lot coverage, and generous front, side and rear yards or setbacks. Within a neighborhood, lots are of similar size. Lots are sometimes wider than they are deep and typically front-loaded, with attached garages. They may be irregular in shape, particularly when located on a cul-de-sac. Buildings usually sit in the middle of their lot, well back from the street.

## Buildings

Suburban neighborhoods are usually composed of residential buildings of a single type and consistent size, or sub-areas with consistent types grouped together—such as single-family detached

houses in one area, duplexes in another, and apartment complexes in another. Houses are usually one to three stories, and townhouses and apartments are typically two to four. Pitched roofs are common throughout, although townhouses and apartments may have flat roofs with parapets. Often built by a single developer, houses within a neighborhood are of the same era, designed in the same architectural style. (Some newer developments may include be a range of models, based on different period revival styles.) Houses within a neighborhood have similar front yard setbacks, driveway and garage arrangements.

Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century houses were often low-slung, with hip roofs and a horizontal emphasis. Later 20<sup>th</sup>- and early 21<sup>st</sup> century houses were often configured with split-levels or multi-stories, and complex/multi-gabled roofs, or with traditional architectural details, such as colonial revival or craftsman. Depending on the era, suburban houses have no (or shallow) front porches and regardless of the individual house style, garages usually play a prominent, visible role in the relationship between the house and the street.

### Public Spaces & Streetscapes

Older suburban neighborhoods often include wide streets without sidewalks due to their original auto-orientation; however, newer ones typically include sidewalks on at least one side of each street. Suburban neighborhood streetscapes tend to be more informal or irregular than those found in traditional neighborhoods, although sidewalks and street trees should be encouraged. Front yards often appear as a continuous green space, with no formal separation between lots. Suburban neighborhoods should include public spaces accessible on foot or bicycle, such as parks, playgrounds or schoolyards.

### Parking

Parking is accommodated in attached garages for single-family houses and some townhouse developments. For other townhouse and apartment complexes it is usually provided in surface lots (but in some instances there are separate rows of attached garages or carports). Surface lots should be landscaped and located away from the street or screened from view by fencing or vegetation.



Newer suburban colonial revival house



Front-loaded split-level house



Suburban apartment complex



Mid-century suburban house



Simple newer suburban neighborhood streetscape



Suburban neighborhood green space



Detached garages for townhouse development



Apartment complex with surface parking

# Industrial Areas



Industrial area with interstate and railroad access

## Context & Scale

Industrial areas are located in the Urban High Intensity and Industrial LUTAs. They are large-scale geographic areas dominated by manufacturing, processing, and distribution uses, but they may also include supporting commercial and retail services, including restaurants. These areas are typically located along highway and rail corridors and are easily accessible by large trucks/tractor-trailers. These areas may be planned and developed as a comprehensive industrial park or as individual/separate projects over time. The entire industrial area may be buffered from adjacent character areas.

## Street & Block Pattern

Industrial areas have an irregular street and block pattern, often configured specifically for individual facilities and modes of transportation. They have limited connectivity with surrounding character areas, to both limit potential conflicts created by cut-through traffic, and to provide a separation or buffer to limit the impacts on and potential nuisance for adjacent residential areas.

## Site & Lot Configurations

Sites are typically large to accommodate large format facilities and any necessary buffering, as well as large truck circulation. Depending on the nature of the industry, lots may be configured to provide security and/or to address any environmental and/or health issues.

## Buildings

Buildings in industrial areas are the epitome of “form following function”. They are typically one story with flat roofs, although related office uses and technology or research facilities may be multi-story.

## Public Spaces & Streetscapes

Industrial areas have minimal public space beyond the city streets; however, depending on their individual location, they may include access to parks and bike trails. If they are a planned development, streetscapes and landscaping along street and roadway frontages should be encouraged. Signage in these areas may include large corporate logos affixed to buildings as well as way-finding to facilitate pick-up and delivery traffic.



Street-oriented industrial facility with landscaping



Heavy industry with security fencing

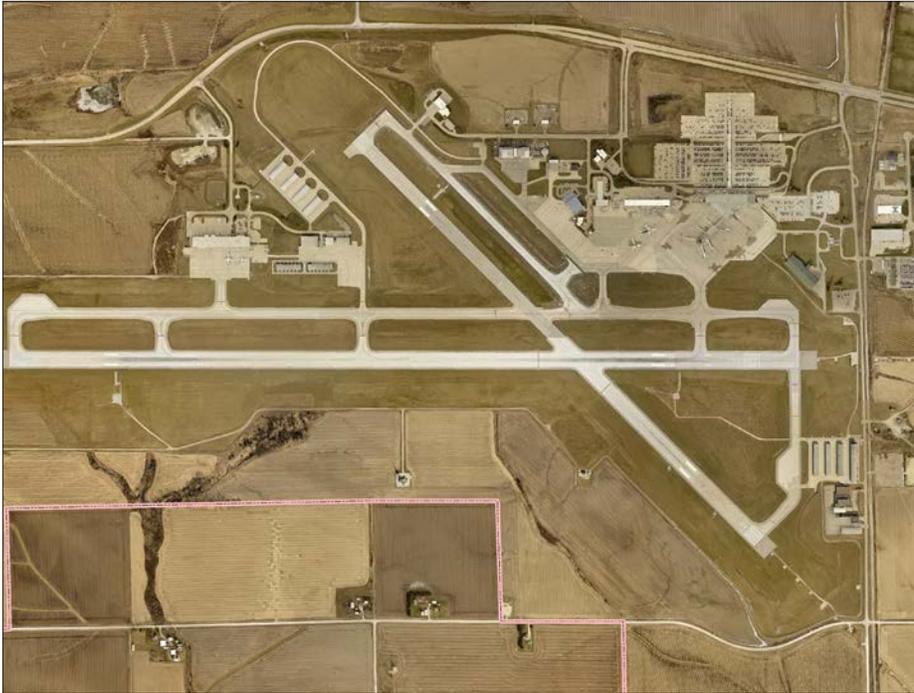


Industrial facility with landscaping and sidewalk

## Parking

Parking in these areas is typically provided on-site, in surface lots. For those uses providing support services and other related uses, opportunities to create consolidated/shared parking should be considered. All parking should be well landscaped.

## Special Districts



The airport has unique space and security requirements

### Context & Scale

Special districts have been identified throughout the city. They exist for exceptional uses that do not comfortably fit within a center or neighborhood character area. Some require clear separation from the general population for health and safety reasons and/or require adjacency to rail and interstate transportation. Others simply need their own distinct area to operate. These districts are typically large scale and single-use. The expectation is that current special districts will continue to exist and play an important role in the economic, social, and cultural life of the city and they will continue to need flexibility to improve and respond to market changes over time.

Some special district uses, such as waste management facilities and other utility infrastructure, sit outside of, and as an exception to, the needs and activities of the general population. The various physical components of these districts will be governed by and configured for their specific functional requirements. Extra care should be taken at their edges to respect adjacent neighbors and buffer any impacts.

Others, such as airports, colleges and universities, and hospitals, provide an

interface between the general population and their own special technical needs. These districts respond to both their technical/functional requirements and those of the general population they serve. This may entail adopting the character and configurations of an appropriate or adjacent character area for the portion of the district serving the public.

The last group is public (or semi-public) facilities that should be compatible with the abutting character areas, but are often not regulated by the City zoning ordinance or other development regulations. These include the City's signature parks, golf courses and other athletic facilities, and public utility infrastructure. Signature parks and greenways/trails often define the edges of the surrounding character areas but are fundamentally of a different character. Trails also serve as a type of corridor; they may define the edges of character areas or pass through them.

### Streetscape

The streetscape within a special district will respond first to its functional requirements. Common elements such as streetlights, street trees, and signage can establish an appropriate sense of place.

### Parking

Parking (off-street) should be shielded from the view of adjacent properties. Low Impact Design (LID) should be encouraged.



Parks play special roles in the city, depending on context and character



Corporate campuses often have an internal focus

## Agricultural and Rural Areas



Limited rural road network



Agricultural vista with minimal structures



Roadway that accommodates local, through and agricultural traffic

### Context & Scale

Agricultural and rural areas are dominated by active agricultural uses, primarily cultivated fields and pastures with little built form. (These areas may also include other place-based activities such as mining.) They are primarily located within the Agricultural Preserve LUTA and comprised of large-scale acreage; however, some smaller agricultural areas are currently sprinkled throughout the city. In many instances, the development (and transformation) of these areas into a different character area is anticipated (and the land has already been zoned for a use other than agriculture), but such development has not yet been planned. Any proposed future development within these character areas should be carefully reviewed to ensure that it falls within the designated LUTA. These areas preserve Cedar Rapids' natural and agricultural assets. They do not have all of the same components as the other character areas.

### Rural Roads

Rural roads accommodate both through and agricultural traffic. Their rural character should be protected along with the functionality of the roadways for agricultural uses.

### Site & Lot Configurations

Building placement in the rural landscape should respect existing viewsheds and generally be set back from the roadway. Service areas (especially parking) should be shielded from view.

### Buildings & Parking

The buildings that do exist (in addition to individual family residences) in these areas are typically accessory to the agricultural use, such as barns and silos. These structures are an inherent part of the character area and should be sited as appropriate for their function. The architecture should be traditional rural/agricultural in scale and character. Other buildings and structures for commercial and retail uses directly related to agricultural production and products may also exist in a limited number. Significant setback from rural roadways is typical.

## Corridors



An aging auto-oriented corridor



High traffic capacity suburban corridor



A corridor through a rural area



High traffic capacity urban corridor with defined pedestrian realm

### Context & Scale

Corridors are found in all of the LUTAs. They are usually thoroughfares that provide vehicular connections between and through different character areas; and depending on context and design, they may function as dividers/edges or connectors. Corridors are typically auto-oriented; but railways and greenways/bike trails also serve as corridors and contribute to the character and perception of different areas.

Ideally, corridors are well integrated with, and directly accessible from, the neighborhoods they abut. Longer corridors frequently change form and character along their length, as they pass through various centers and neighborhoods. When passing through a character area, a corridor should reflect that character area.

Corridors generally take on and influence the character of the areas through which they pass—they may have an urban, suburban, rural, or highway commercial character, and they may also serve as a gateway or entrance to the city.

In the more urban neighborhoods and centers, they may serve as a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use “Main Street” (with the design details that entails) or a tree-lined residential avenue, with regular intersections providing multi-modal access to the adjacent areas. In the more suburban character areas, their role as transportation corridors may be more pronounced, with less frequent intersections, but they are still frequently mixed-use, with design details (such as signage, lighting, and landscaping) reflecting a more auto-oriented character. However, such corridors should still accommodate pedestrians. Rural corridors typically have an agricultural or natural context, typically without formal landscaping (although allees of trees are not uncommon), no sidewalks, and minimal signage. Accommodation for bicyclists should be encouraged. Highway commercial corridors are very auto-oriented, with a mix of uses oriented to travelers and easy-access; most have standalone building forms with minimal landscaping or pedestrian infrastructure, which should be improved.

Each corridor is unique, and should be carefully planned and developed in accord with its existing context (historic, built and natural environments), and desired future character, while also addressing its role in the larger transportation network.

### Other Components

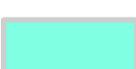
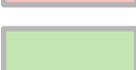
The street and block pattern, site and lot configuration, and building character along a corridor will vary widely by character area. Corridor character is often defined by the streetscape. The built form, landscape and signage along corridors affect the overall character and perception of the city as a whole. Common elements such as streetlights, street trees (and other landscaping), and signage can establish a consistent sense of place for a corridor either along its length or within a specific character area. Parking will also vary based on the character area; however, off-street parking should always be buffered or screened from corridor view, or it will become the dominant characteristic of the thoroughfare.

# Community Character Areas: Map Sub-Sections and Key

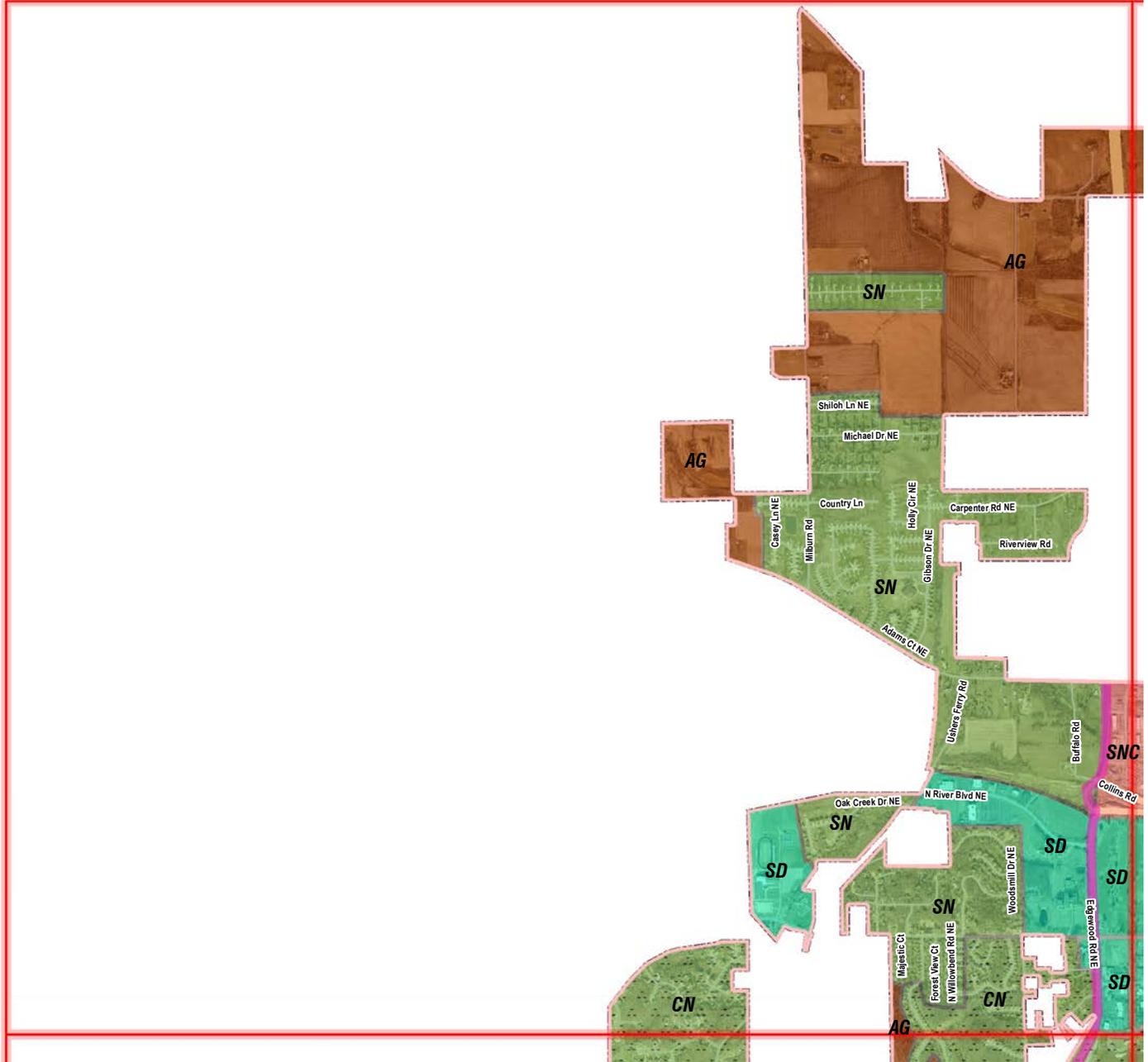
As stated at the beginning of this report, the Community Character Areas Map is an analytical tool to assist with reviewing existing, and drafting new zoning districts, where needed. The map may undergo further revision during the course of the *ReZone Cedar Rapids* effort—it is intended to provide a snapshot of the current patterns, form, and character, of development in the city. *The Community Character Areas Map is not regulatory.*

The pages that follow provide a larger scale view of the Character Areas Map, broken down into eleven sub-sections of equal size to improve legibility and comprehension. The sub-section maps are organized from left to right and top to bottom (from northwest to southeast)—as if the full citywide map were configured in a 3x4 matrix. The key provided below applies to all of the sub-section maps (however, not every character area occurs on each map.)

## Character Areas

-  **Downtown (DTN)**
-  **Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)**
-  **Urban Neighborhood (UN)**
-  **Traditional Neighborhood (TN)**
-  **Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SGS)**
-  **Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)**
-  **Industrial (IND)**
-  **Special Districts (SD)**
-  **Regional Suburban Center (RSC)**
-  **Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SMU)**
-  **Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC)**
-  **Suburban Neighborhood (SN)**
-  **Conservation Neighborhood (CN)**
-  **Corridor**
-  **Traditional Neighborhood Center**

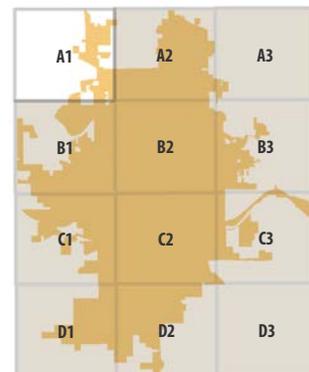
# Character Areas Map: Sub-Section A1



PAGE

# A1

CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS  
CHARACTER AREAS



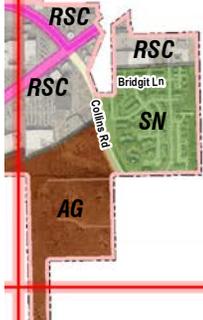
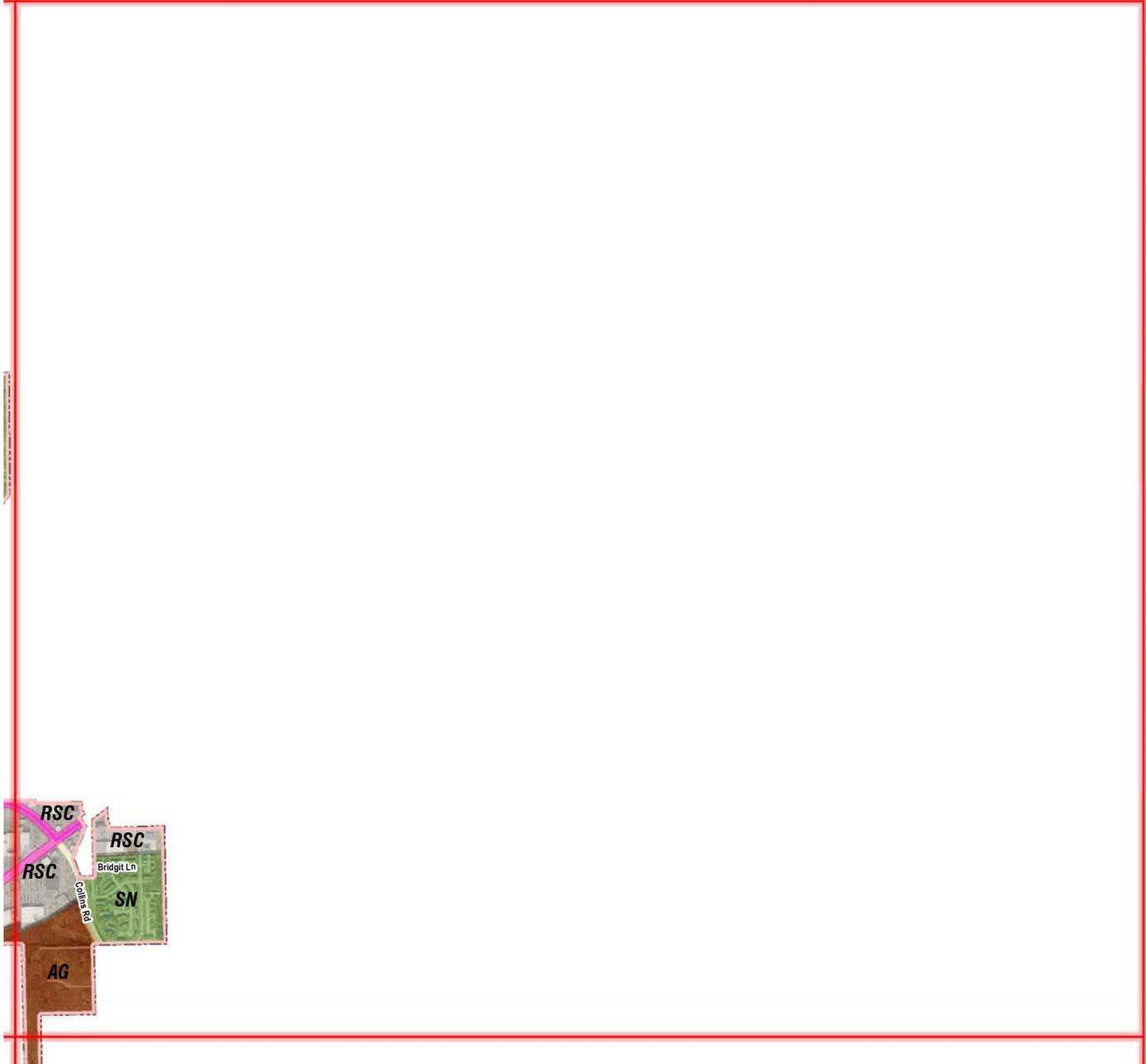
**Character Areas**

- Downtown (DTN)
- Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)
- Urban Neighborhood (UN)
- Traditional Neighborhood (TN)
- Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SGS)
- Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)
- Industrial (IND)
- Special Districts (SD)
- Regional Suburban Center (RSC)
- Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SCMU)
- Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC)
- Suburban Neighborhood (SN)
- Conservation Neighborhood (CN)

- Corridor
- Traditional Neighborhood



# Character Areas Map: Sub-Section A3

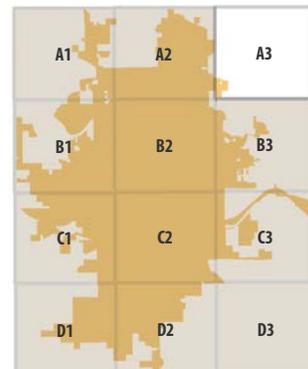


PAGE

# A3

CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS  
CHARACTER AREAS

0 625 1,250 2,500 3,750 5,000 Feet



**Character Areas**

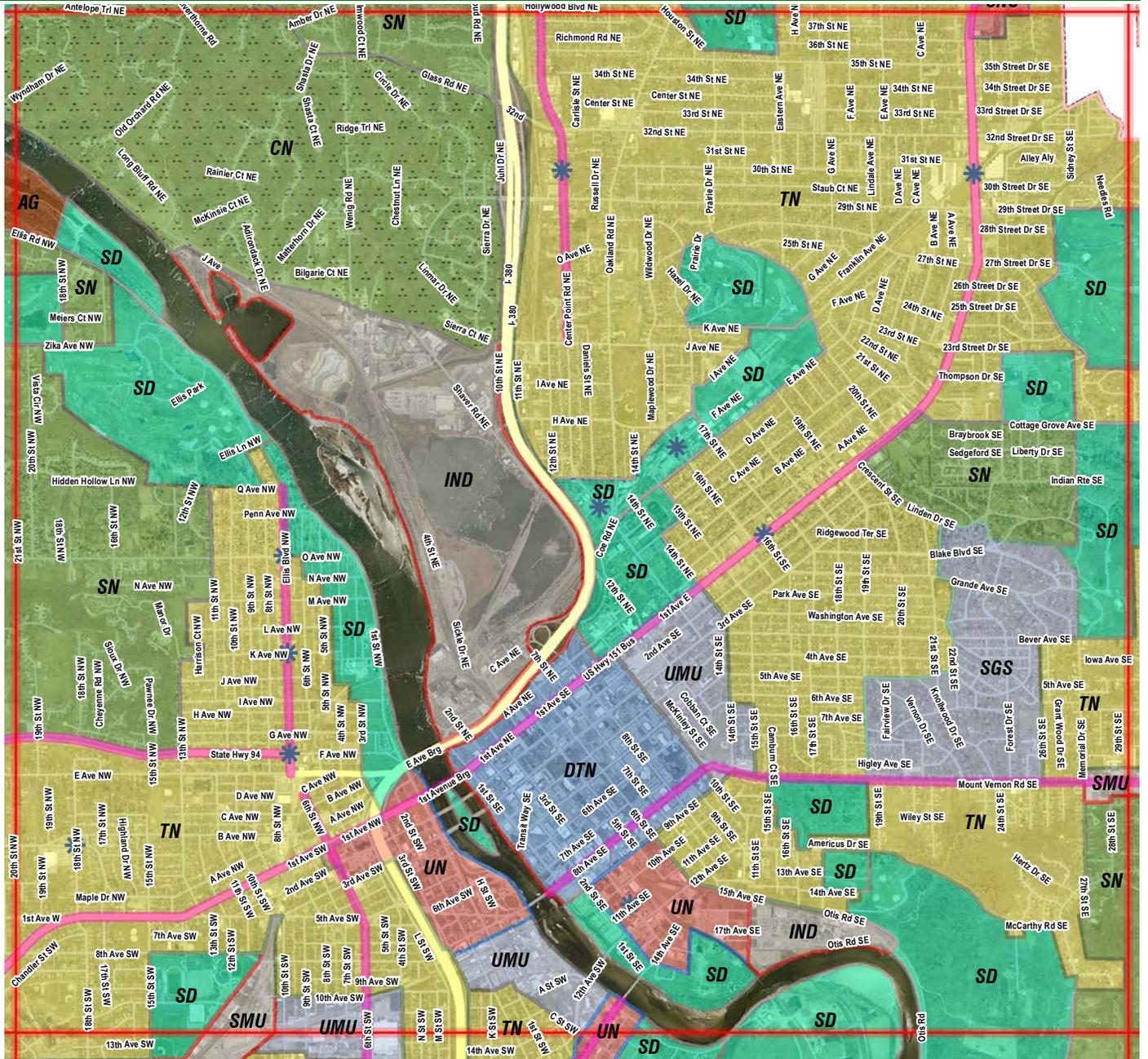
- Downtown (DTN)
- Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)
- Urban Neighborhood (UN)
- Traditional Neighborhood (TN)
- Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SCS)
- Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)

- Industrial (IND)
- Special Districts (SD)
- Regional Suburban Center (RSC)
- Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SCMU)
- Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC)
- Suburban Neighborhood (SN)
- Conservation Neighborhood (CN)

- Corridor
- Traditional Neighborhood



# Character Areas Map: Sub-Section B2



PAGE

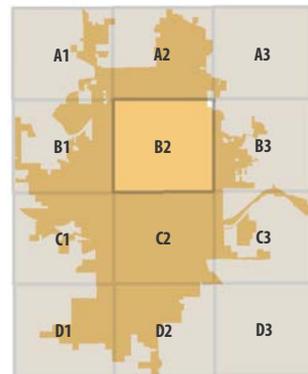
# B2

CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS  
CHARACTER AREAS

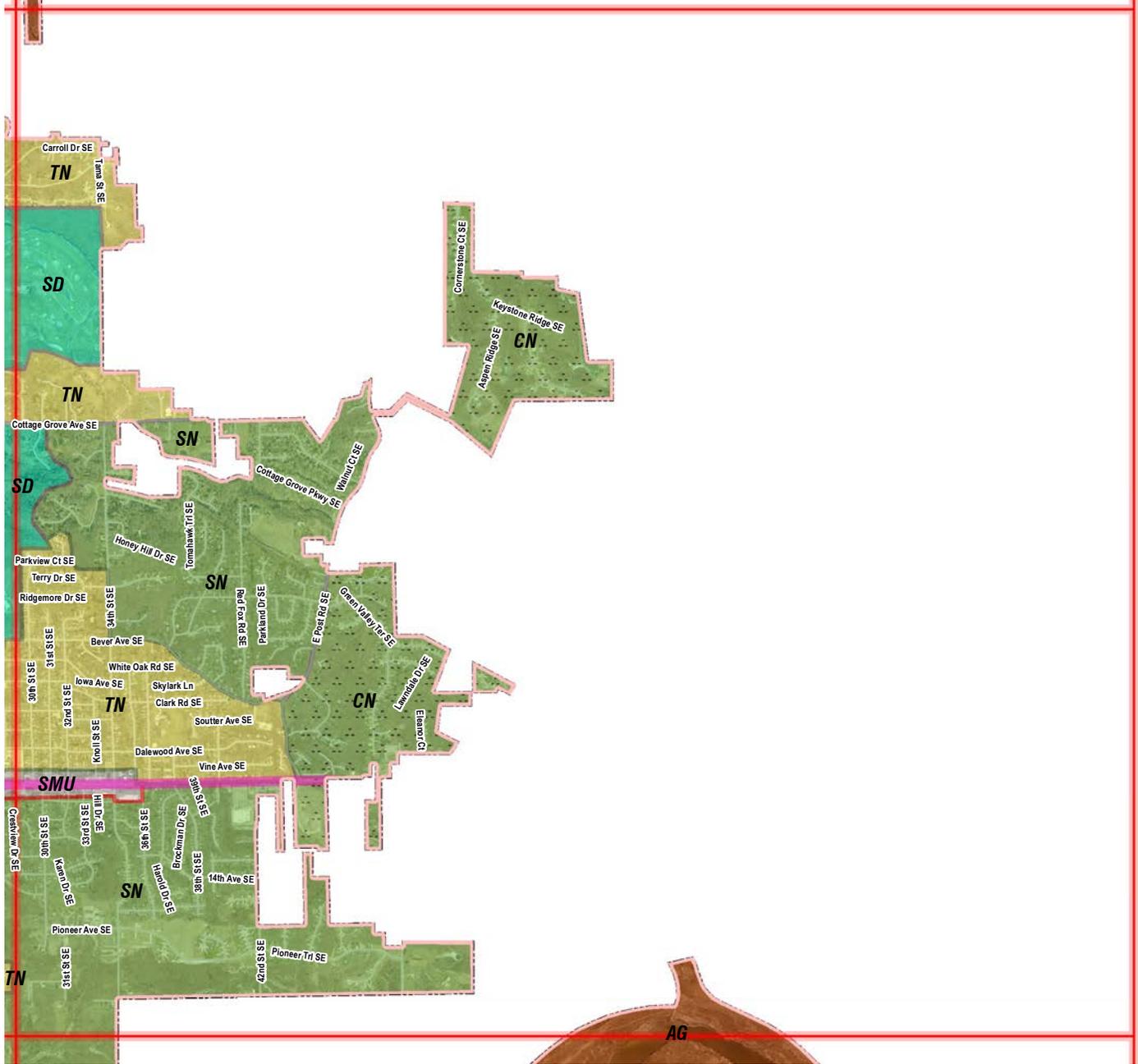


**Character Areas**

- Downtown (DTN)
- Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)
- Urban Neighborhood (UN)
- Traditional Neighborhood (TN)
- Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SGS)
- Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)
- Industrial (IND)
- Special Districts (SD)
- Regional Suburban Center (RSC)
- Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SCMU)
- Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC)
- Suburban Neighborhood (SN)
- Conservation Neighborhood (CN)
- Corridor
- Traditional Neighborhood



# Character Areas Map: Sub-Section B3



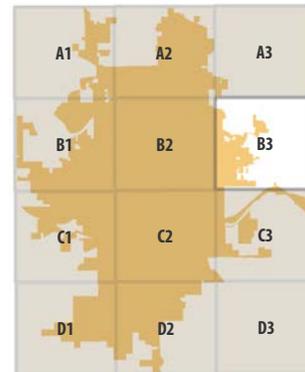
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# B3

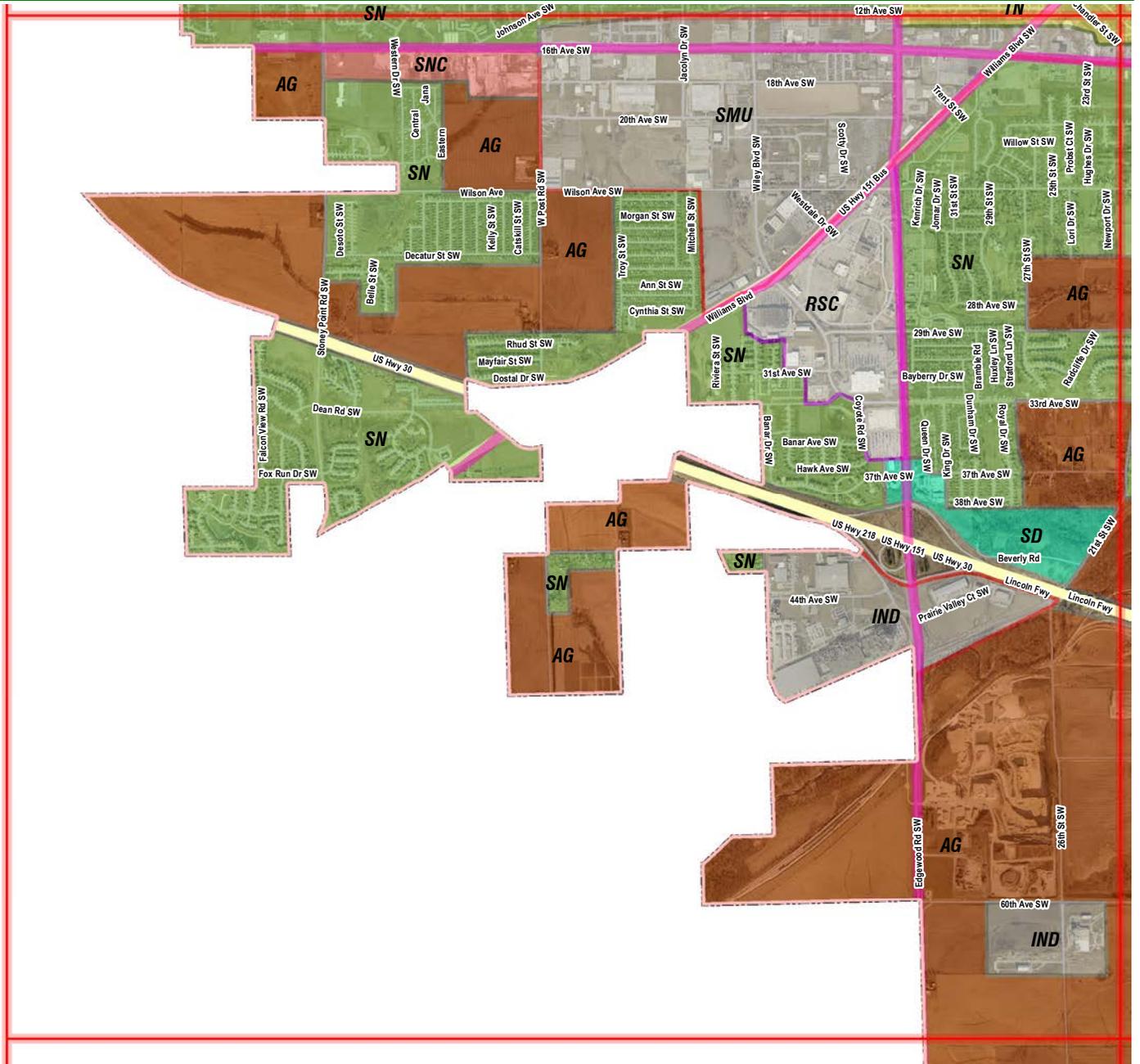
CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS  
CHARACTER AREAS



- |  |                                    |                          |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Character Areas</b>                     | Industrial (IND)                   | Corridor                 |
| Downtown (DTN)                             | Special Districts (SD)             | Traditional Neighborhood |
| Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)                 | Regional Suburban Center (RSC)     |                          |
| Urban Neighborhood (UN)                    | Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SCMU)     |                          |
| Traditional Neighborhood (TN)              | Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC) |                          |
| Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SGS) | Suburban Neighborhood (SN)         |                          |
| Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)               | Conservation Neighborhood (CN)     |                          |



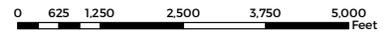
# Character Areas Map: Sub-Section C1



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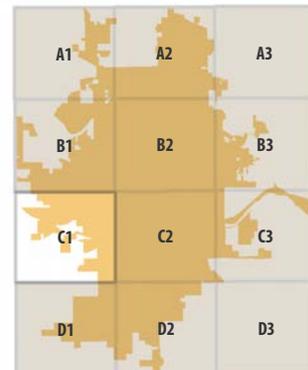
# C1

CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS  
CHARACTER AREAS

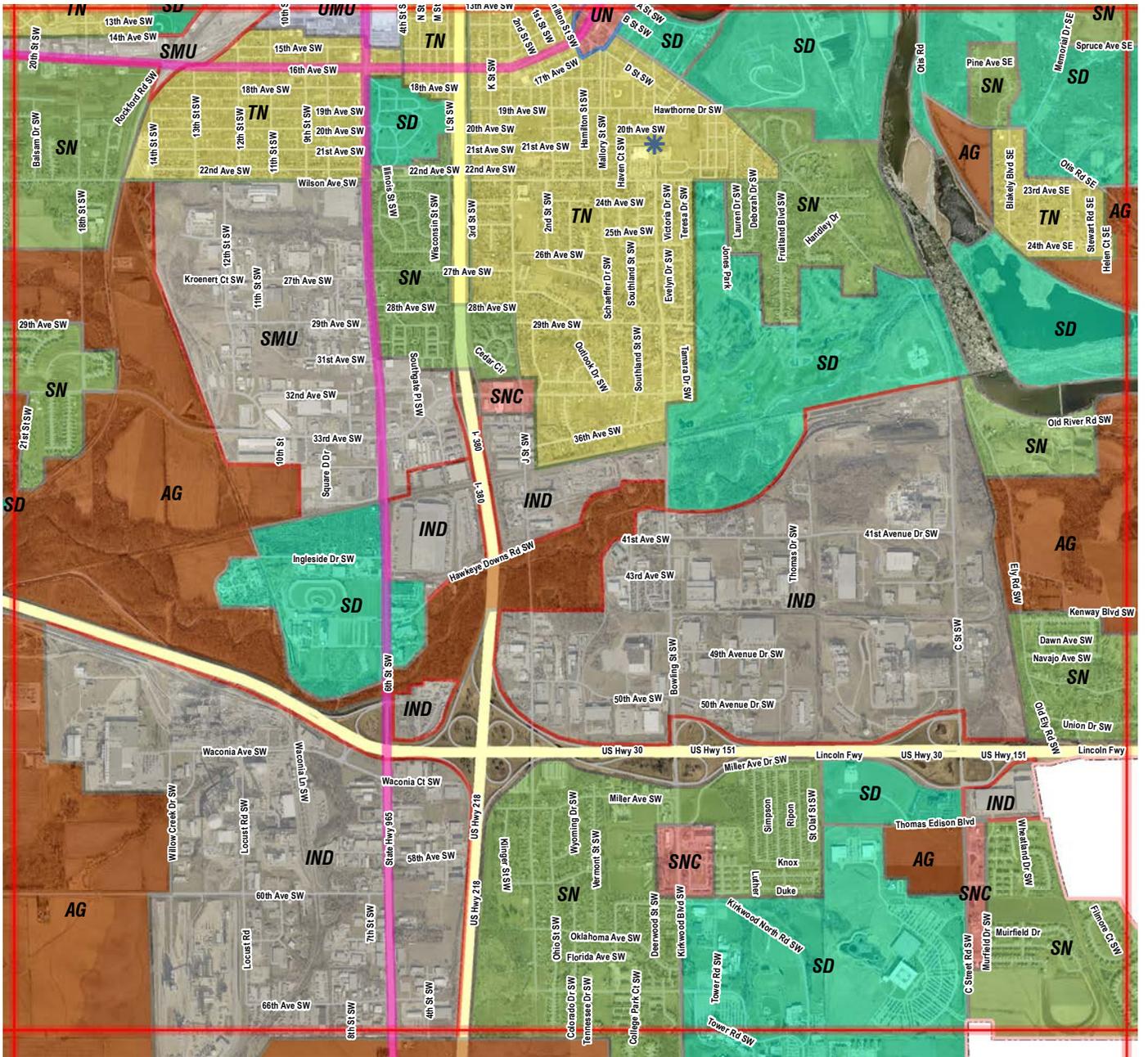


**Character Areas**

- Downtown (DTN)
- Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)
- Urban Neighborhood (UN)
- Traditional Neighborhood (TN)
- Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SGS)
- Agricultural/Rural Area (AC)
- Industrial (IND)
- Special Districts (SD)
- Regional Suburban Center (RSC)
- Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SCMU)
- Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC)
- Suburban Neighborhood (SN)
- Conservation Neighborhood (CN)
- Corridor
- Traditional Neighborhood



# Character Areas Map: Sub-Section C2



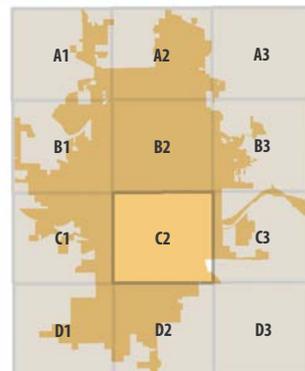
PAGE

**C2**

CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS  
CHARACTER AREAS



- |  |                                    |                          |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Character Areas</b>                     | Industrial (IND)                   | Corridor                 |
| Downtown (DTN)                             | Special Districts (SD)             | Traditional Neighborhood |
| Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)                 | Regional Suburban Center (RSC)     |                          |
| Urban Neighborhood (UN)                    | Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SCMU)     |                          |
| Traditional Neighborhood (TN)              | Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC) |                          |
| Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SGS) | Suburban Neighborhood (SN)         |                          |
| Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)               | Conservation Neighborhood (CN)     |                          |



# Character Areas Map: Sub-Section C3



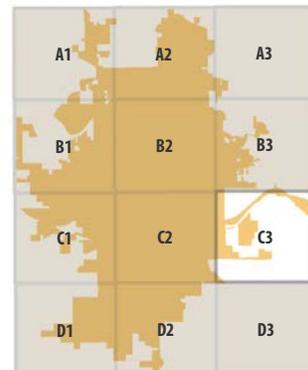
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# C3

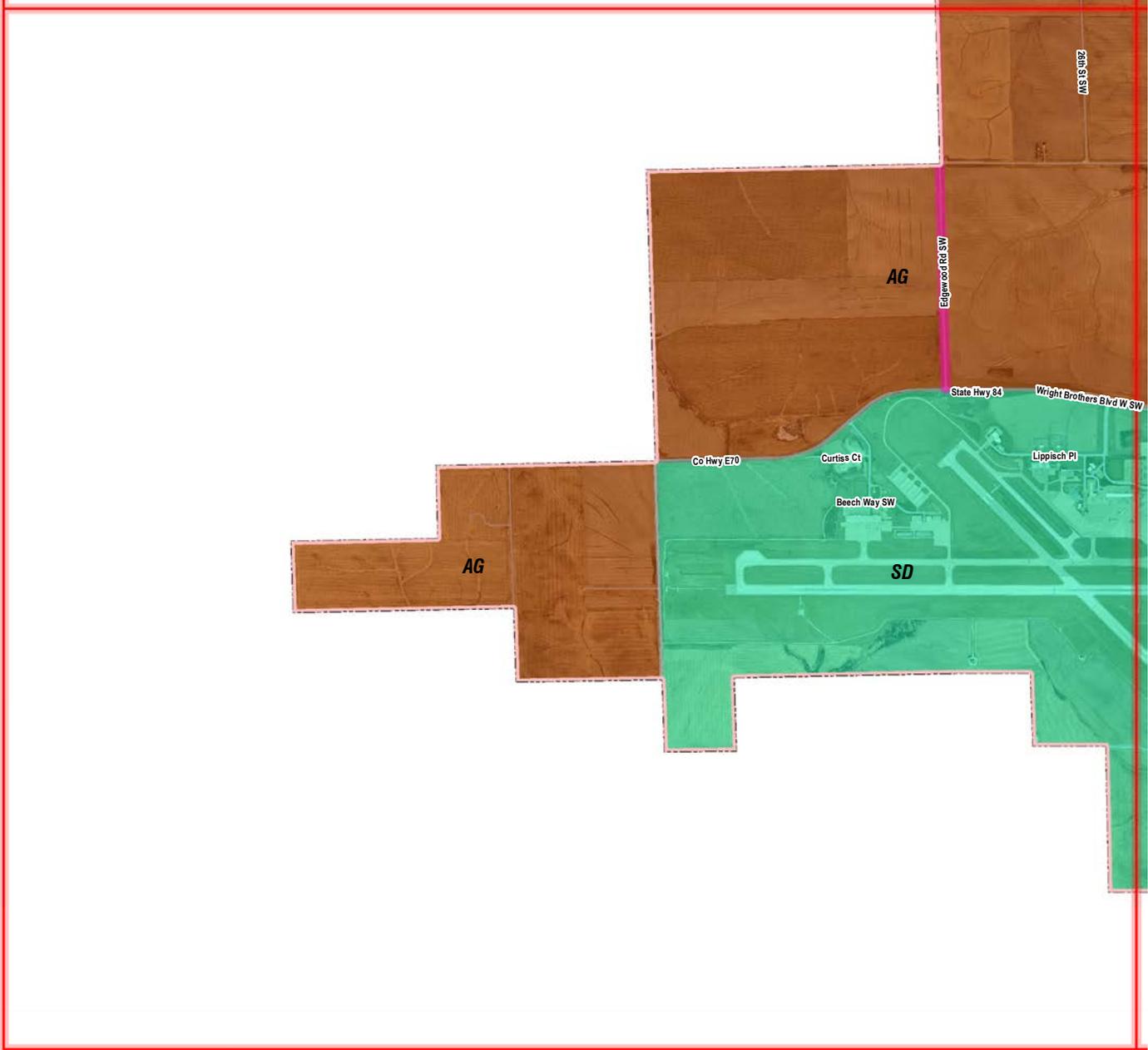
CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS  
CHARACTER AREAS



Character Areas	
	Downtown (DTN)
	Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)
	Urban Neighborhood (UN)
	Traditional Neighborhood (TN)
	Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SCS)
	Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)
	Industrial (IND)
	Special Districts (SD)
	Regional Suburban Center (RSC)
	Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SCMU)
	Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC)
	Suburban Neighborhood (SN)
	Conservation Neighborhood (CN)
	Corridor
	Traditional Neighborhood



# Character Areas Map: Sub-Section D1



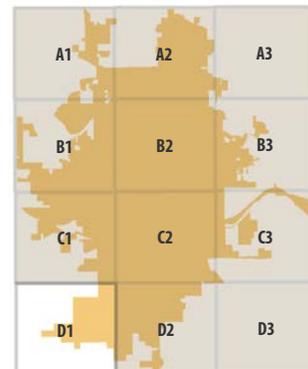
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# D1

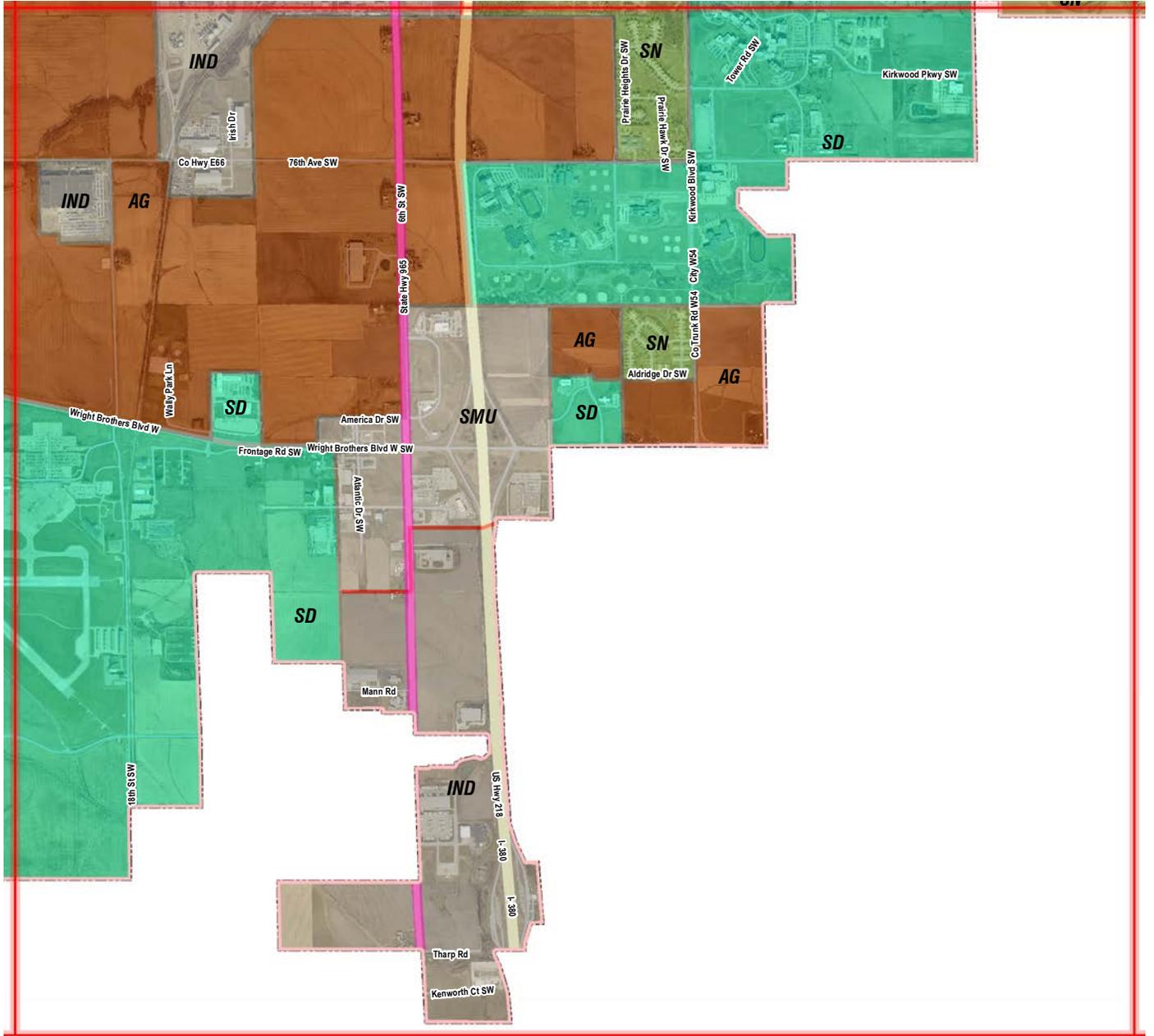
CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS  
CHARACTER AREAS



- |  |                                    |                          |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Character Areas</b>                     | Industrial (IND)                   | Corridor                 |
| Downtown (DTN)                             | Special Districts (SD)             | Traditional Neighborhood |
| Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)                 | Regional Suburban Center (RSC)     |                          |
| Urban Neighborhood (UN)                    | Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SCMU)     |                          |
| Traditional Neighborhood (TN)              | Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC) |                          |
| Streetcar/Garden Suburb Neighborhood (SCS) | Suburban Neighborhood (SN)         |                          |
| Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)               | Conservation Neighborhood (CN)     |                          |



# Character Areas Map: Sub-Section D2

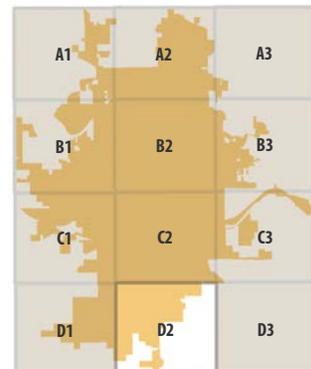


PAGE

# D2

CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS  
CHARACTER AREAS

0 625 1,250 2,500 3,750 5,000 Feet



**Character Areas**

- Downtown (DTN)
- Urban Mixed-Use Area (UMU)
- Urban Neighborhood (UN)
- Traditional Neighborhood (TN)
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- Agricultural/Rural Area (AG)
- Industrial (IND)
- Special Districts (SD)
- Regional Suburban Center (RSC)
- Suburban Mixed-Use Area (SCMU)
- Suburban Neighborhood Center (SNC)
- Suburban Neighborhood (SN)
- Conservation Neighborhood (CN)
- Corridor
- ✳ Traditional Neighborhood