

## BALANCING DENSITY WITH DESIGN

There are certain design principles that can be applied to higher density developments to achieve the desirable characteristics typically associated with suburban neighborhoods. These principles can be applied at various levels of a development. At the neighborhood level this includes:

**Roadway and Lot Arrangement** - Roadways and lots can be arranged to create public spaces such as parks and playgrounds and to preserve natural features such as wetlands and wooded areas. These areas open spaces become part of the neighborhood's "green infrastructure."

**Interconnected Transportation Network** - Roadways designed with sidewalks, bicycle lanes and trails can also result in an interconnected network providing convenience for both vehicles and pedestrians to move throughout the neighborhood.

**Green Infrastructure** - The placement of street trees along roadways creates additional green infrastructure and offers shade for pedestrians.

Design at the lot level also contributes to creating the desirable characteristics of a neighborhood:

**Maximum Lot Coverage** - By establishing a maximum lot coverage and encouraging multi-story buildings, the remaining lot area can accommodate lawns and gardens in side and back yards.

**Parking Location** - Parking located to the side or behind houses emphasizes the front yard and main entry.

**Architectural Standards** - Subtle architectural elements such as varying rooflines, wall plane projections, recesses and the spacing of windows and doors add visual interest and enhance the quality of design.

Through a variety of lot types, building types and architectural elements, a neighborhood can avoid monotony and create a distinct character that appeals to a range of residents.

Find more information on density on-line at:

City of Lakeland Website -  
<http://www.lakelandgov.net/commdev/planning/>

Lincoln Land Institute Website -  
<http://www.lincolnlnd.edu/subcenters/visualizing-density/>

Community Development Department

Tel: 863-834-6011



"A Community Working Together to  
Provide an Exceptional Quality of Life."

# Housing Density and Suburban Character



Community Development Department

## What difference does density make in your community?

Most often the concern that people have about density isn't really related to the number of homes per acre or persons per square mile, but to the character of their neighborhood or the look and feel. This brochure is intended to demonstrate that increasing density does not result in a radical change to the character of a suburban community and that certain levels of density can have considerable benefits to the residents of those communities.

The character of the neighborhoods located outside of Lakeland's downtown and historic urban core, is predominately suburban, similar to much of Florida's metropolitan areas. In fact, one of the many attractors to current and future Lakeland residents is the abundance of suburban neighborhoods and open green space that accompanies them.

The Lakeland metro area is projected to grow by more than 70,000 new residents by the year 2025. With the arrival of these new residents, buildable land will become more scarce and the cost of housing will likely increase putting pressure on the current development pattern that exists today. Some high density urban housing development is anticipated to occur in and

around downtown. While a significant amount of suburban development is expected to be in demand, it will have to occur in a more compact and dense manner than in the past.

The characteristics of a suburban neighborhood include green lawns, trees, gardens, backyards, primarily single family housing, swimming pools, open space, and parks. These are all part of the aesthetic qualities that people commonly cite when discussing the character of suburban neighborhoods. These positive aspects can be preserved regardless of the density of a suburban neighborhood.



9 Units per Acre - Single Family Detached with  
Garage Apartment in rear of lot facing an alleyway.

*“Mobility, convenience, privacy, recreation. These are some of the good things in life and they can be found in all types of neighborhoods. Many of the amenities associated with low-density neighborhoods-private yards, greenery, and space to roam- can be created at medium density levels by using space efficiently and following specific design principles.”*

Lincoln Land Institute – Visualizing Density

## **BENEFITS**

The benefits of dense or compact housing include:

- Reduced per unit cost of land,
- Economic and efficient delivery of public services and infrastructure,
- Increased convenience of public transit,
- The ability to preserve natural habitat and agricultural lands,
- Create walkable communities,
- Diversify housing options.

Land is one of the most expensive components of development. Distributing the cost of land between a greater number of households reduces the per-unit cost of housing. This is true for all types of housing, from affordable housing projects to expensive custom-built housing. Similarly, higher density makes possible more efficient delivery of all public services and infrastructure, from garbage collection, parks and waste water service to libraries, all at a lower per-unit cost. The funding of sidewalks connecting the neighborhoods to the places people would like to walk become more economical. Furthermore, when higher density is located near public transit, such as bus routes, it can support more frequent and convenient bus service which in return increases the mobility of the elderly, disabled, youth and others that can not or choose not to drive.

A more compact development pattern consumes fewer acres of land per unit and makes it easier to preserve natural habitats in sensitive areas. Finally, communities that permit higher density housing are able to accommodate a greater diversity of housing types, helping households at all stages of life (youth, adulthood, elderly) to find a home that meets their needs and preferences.

**HERE ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES:**



**7 Units per Acre - Single Family Detached**



**7 Units per Acre - Single Family Detached**



**8 Units per Acre - Single Family Detached**



**8 Units per Acre - Single Family Detached**



**9 Units per Acre - Single Family Detached**



**12 Units per Acre - Single Family Detached**



**12 Units per Acre - Single Family Attached**



**14 Units per Acre - Single Family Detached**



**14 Units per Acre - Single Family Detached**