

Strategic Investment Districts – Charrette Project Drivers

Building Stronger Communities Through Place-Based Economic Development

The Strategic Investment Districts initiative is a transformative approach to economic development that prioritizes people, place, and prosperity. By leveraging each district's unique character and economic potential, we can attract investment, create jobs, and enhance quality of life in ways that are sustainable, retention-focused, and community-driven.

At the core of this initiative is place-based economic development—a strategy that aligns public and private investment with the specific strengths, needs, and opportunities of each district. Through the charrette process, we will create district plans that foster local business growth, encourage mixed-use development, and enhance public spaces, ensuring each Strategic Investment District becomes a thriving, resilient hub.

Core District Planning Principles

Urban Center (½ Mile Radius from Economic & Activity Hubs)

A high-density district focused on economic vitality, business growth, and mixed-use development with strong connections to transportation, housing, and public amenities.

- Maximize appropriate density to support economic vibrancy and create a walkable, active environment.
- Locate parking away from pedestrian pathways to enhance public space activation.
- Promote ground-floor activation in new buildings to encourage business activity and street engagement.
- Support small businesses and entrepreneurs through flexible retail and office space options.
- Promote alternative transportation modes, including biking, walking, and transit.
- Introduce significant parking reductions to align with urban accessibility goals and increased housing supply opportunity.
- Dedicate land for parks, plazas, and open spaces to foster community interaction.
- Ensure a pedestrian-oriented environment with complete streets and urban amenities.

- Encourage diverse housing options, including affordable and attainable workforce housing, to create an inclusive community.

Community Center (1 Mile Radius from Economic & Activity Hubs)

A moderate-density, mixed-use district supporting housing, commercial, and civic uses while maintaining strong neighborhood connections.

- Increase development density while preserving neighborhood scale and character.
- Encourage walkable streetscapes with pedestrian-friendly design elements.
- Expand access to local businesses, public services, and community spaces.
- Introduce moderate parking reductions while ensuring accessibility for residents and businesses.
- Prioritize placemaking strategies that strengthen the district's sense of identity.
- Support neighborhood-oriented retail, cultural, and recreational amenities.
- Encourage homeownership opportunities alongside rental housing to build long-term community investment.

Key Project Drivers for the Charrette Process

Driver 1: Place-Based Economic Development & Business Growth

Each Strategic Investment District must be designed to stimulate economic activity and business investment in ways that reflect the local economy and workforce needs.

Charrette planning should:

- Identify underutilized commercial spaces for adaptive reuse, business incubation, and new development.
- Support local entrepreneurs by incorporating flexible retail and workspaces.
- Align investment strategies with district-specific strengths, such as innovation, manufacturing, arts, hospitality, or other neighborhood character elements.
- Encourage anchor institutions (such as schools, healthcare, and major employers) to play a role in district revitalization and investment.
- Leverage public-private partnerships to create financially sustainable development opportunities.

Driver 2: Connectivity & Access to Essential Services

For districts to thrive, they must offer seamless connections between homes, jobs, services, and public spaces. Charrette planning should:

- Ensure direct access to grocery stores, childcare, healthcare, and employment hubs.
- Strengthen multimodal transportation connections (including transit, bike infrastructure, and walkable networks).
- Optimize shared or underutilized parking for business and residential needs while reducing surface lots.
- Enhance public spaces to encourage community engagement and outdoor activity.
- Support business clusters and activity centers that reinforce economic synergy within each district.

Driver 3: Housing Diversity & Affordability

Sustainable districts must include a mix of housing options that are affordable, diverse, and designed for long-term community stability. Charrette planning should:

- Ensure a mix of housing types, including multi-family, townhomes, and live/work units.
- Prioritize affordability by integrating workforce and low-income housing options.
- Leverage incentives for mixed-income developments that provide a range of price points.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings to create new residential opportunities.

Driver 4: Placemaking & Public Space Activation

Vibrant public spaces are essential to creating a sense of identity, community, and economic vitality in each district. Charrette planning should:

- Expand public gathering spaces, including parks, plazas, and outdoor dining areas.
- Promote cultural programming and artistic expression to make districts distinct and dynamic.
- Support safe, well-lit, and engaging streetscapes that encourage foot traffic.
- Encourage temporary and pop-up uses to test market demand and generate activity.

Driver 5: Increasing Transportation Resiliency & Expanding Sustainable Mobility

To support long-term growth, districts must be designed with walkability, biking, and transit access at the forefront, in addition to appropriate parking. Charrette planning should:

- Encourage compact, mixed-use development that allows people to live, work, and access amenities within walking distance.
- Improve transit accessibility and last-mile connections for more efficient mobility.
- Design streets that prioritize pedestrians and cyclists, incorporating traffic calming measures.
- Develop innovative parking solutions, such as shared parking structures and mobility hubs.

A Framework for Smart Growth & Economic Resilience

The Strategic Investment Districts initiative is an intentional, long-term investment in economic resilience, business growth, and sustainable community development. These project drivers will shape the charrette planning process, ensuring that each district plan:

- ✓ Creates an attractive environment for businesses and investment
- ✓ Strengthens local neighborhoods and community connections
- ✓ Reduces reliance on outdated development patterns
- ✓ Enhances public spaces and cultural assets
- ✓ Supports a diverse and inclusive local economy

By embracing place-based strategies, we will ensure that our region remains a vibrant, forward-thinking, and economically strong place for decades to come.