

# Spotlight on: Suburban Retrofit

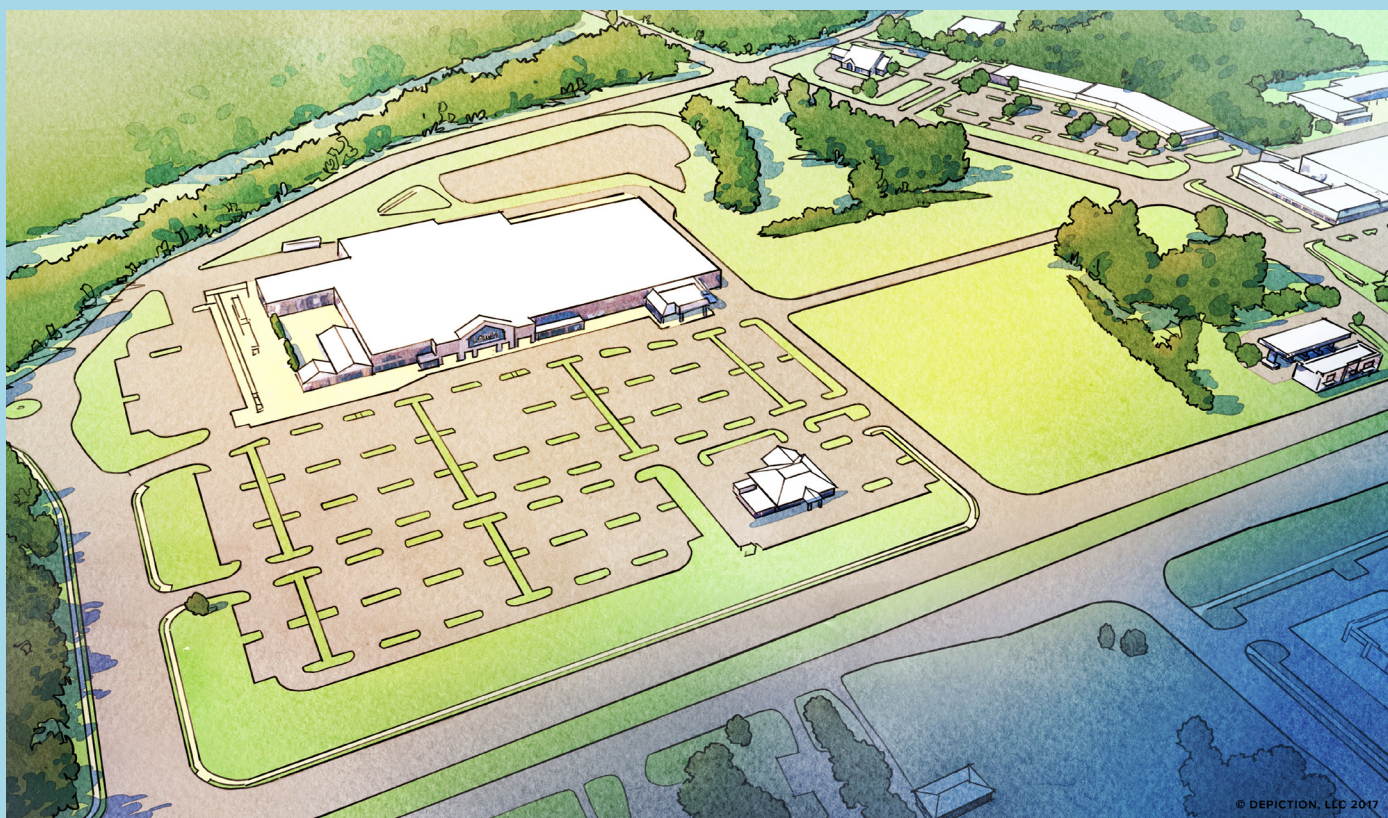
Suburban Retrofit is the process of converting areas that are already developed in conventional suburban patterns into mixed-use, multi-modal, activated corridors or centers. This approach reflects a change in preference from suburban, auto-oriented development to a more traditional mixed-use form, where people can and will want to walk between new residences and a range of small and large retail shops, businesses, offices, and recreational opportunities. Context-sensitive Suburban Retrofit addresses typical conflicts between commercial and residential uses by carefully transitioning from small- to large-scale building types.

Suburban retrofit occurs in areas that are mostly developed, but may have underutilized parcels or excessive surface parking. Retrofitting existing building sites allows developers to take advantage

of existing infrastructure and services, and helps to mitigate the effects of sprawl by improving transportation connections.

Suburban retrofit also helps address barriers to bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in places like aging shopping centers by enhancing pedestrian connections and recreating internal driveways and internal streets with infill buildings fronting onto them. This redevelopment approach relocates parking to the rear of buildings, rather than having large surface parking lots between the building and the street.

The illustrations show a conceptual and incremental approach to suburban retrofit of a suburban, big-box shopping center with a large parking lot between the street and the building.



*A typical layout for a suburban, big box shopping center located several hundred feet back from the public street with a large surface parking lot in between. One or more outparcels in the shopping center support restaurants with drive-throughs, banks or other uses. The outparcel buildings appear to almost float in the sea of asphalt allocated for surface parking.*



Early infill development on vacant property next to the existing big box shopping center is sensitive to the overall vision and plan for the new activity center. Buildings are oriented toward the access driveway that will become a new main street in future phases of the project. Parking is located behind buildings to reinforce a walkable and activated streetscape planned for the new main street.



Infill development on vacant property next to the big box shopping center continues. In this case, new townhouses are added to the activity center. A new park is also built behind the big box store that is phased in construction to allow for continued operations at the declining business. The park is also connected with the adjacent greenway. Redevelopment on some portions of the existing surface parking lot swap under utilized parking areas for new buildings and civic spaces.



Redevelopment on the remaining portions of the existing surface parking continue as the big box store is now closed. A new block pattern for the activity center is complete by converting additional drive aisles to walkable streets.



The closed big box store is demolished to make room for additional mixed-use development , which brings new residential uses (in this case townhouses) into the activity center. Access to the new park built in an earlier phase is also increased via the new grid street network. The former suburban shopping center is now a mixed-use activity center.