

GARDEN CITY MIXED-USE DISTRICT SMARTCODE

Garden City, Georgia



TUNNELL-SPANGLER-WALSH & ASSOCIATES

GEORGIA PLANNING ASSOCIATION 2008 AWARD
SMALL COMMUNITY OUTSTANDING INITIATIVE/SPECIAL PROJECT

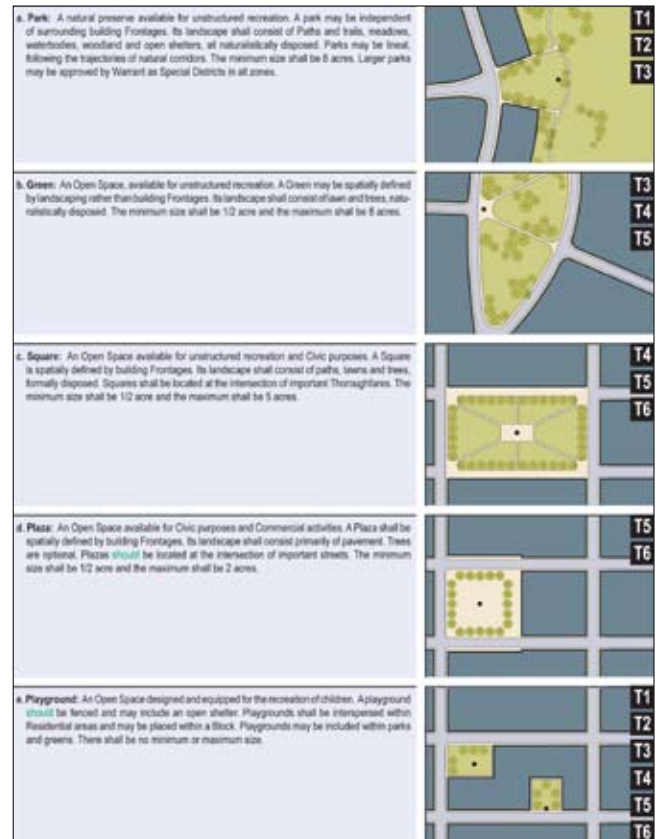
In 2007, the City of Garden City embarked on a bold plan to create a mixed-use downtown to surround its new city hall, which was being consumed by an expansion of the Port of Savannah. A site was selected that included additional acreage for the construction of commercial, residential, and mixed-use buildings by private developers. Unfortunately, the city did not have the zoning necessary to recreate the traditional town envisioned, so TSW was retained to prepare a code to enable such.

The Garden City Mixed-Use District is the result of this effort. The district is based on the principles of new urbanism, in general, and the SmartCode, in particular. However, unlike the standard SmartCode, it has been calibrated to match the needs and staffing capabilities of Garden City. As such, its design-based strategy focuses on using basic principles of place-making to establish framework for change, but without some of the complex verbiage of the SmartCode.

Key goals of the code are to:

- Create an environment where residents and visitors can live, work, meet, and play.
- Provide safe and accessible public space.
- Establish an interconnected system of pedestrian-oriented streets, both within a development and to adjacent developments.
- Improve the aesthetics of street and built environments.
- Promote pedestrian safety by ensuring sidewalk-oriented buildings and attractive street-facing facades that foster pedestrian activity and liveliness.
- Provide accessible and sufficient parking in an unobtrusive manner.
- Promote a coherent architectural identity.
- Encourage a balanced mix of retail, professional, residential, civic, entertainment, and cultural uses.
- Recognize that some streets are going to be more pedestrian oriented than others in the short term, but provide basic pedestrian facilities on all of them.

The code also includes provisions to expedite developments consistent with its goals. These include administrative approval of certain plans, as well as a variance process that encourages the preservation of specimen trees and other natural features.



top: Site plan showing new city hall and surrounding development
bottom: SmartCode diagram showing some of the types of Civic Spaces mandated by the code (graphic courtesy of Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company)