



CREATING NEW NEIGHBORHOODS

Updating retail centers offers flexibility and opportunity in an ever-changing world.

Even before the pandemic, the trend of converting retail centers to include new uses was becoming popular. The rise of online retailers left retail centers with a need to adjust on the fly to remain relevant and profitable. It is no secret that the pandemic created even more challenges for these assets. But the pandemic also provided greater insight. HED designers found the inherent walkability of retail centers made them prime candidates for adaption and conversion into true lifestyle centers: adding a mix of uses and giving space and opportunity for creating experiences.

KEY LIVE WORK PLAY LIFESTYLE CENTER CONSIDERATIONS

Retail centers were planned to be a destination, roughly 16 to 20 miles apart in both traditional urban or suburban regional areas. With the rise of online shopping, we have seen the overall decline of use of these large footprint centers. HED explores how to create new neighborhoods or 'lifestyle centers' out of retail centers based on these seven principles:

1 Character | Character of a new lifestyle center Development refers to the unique identity and brand created. It includes the physical layout of the buildings and public spaces, the types of businesses and amenities, the target market, and demographics that the development is intended to serve and the overall vibe. The character of a new lifestyle center can influence how people perceive the development and contribute to its success as a place to live, work and play.

2 Community | In the context of new lifestyle centers, a community refers to a group of people who live, work and interact within an area surrounding the development. This can include local residents, business owners, employees and stakeholders who have a shared interest in the success and vibrancy of the lifestyle center. Community also refers to the sense of belonging and connection that people feel with each other and with the place they live.



3 Safety | Safety in a lifestyle center development refers to the degree to which people can feel secure and protected from harm while living, working, and visiting the development. This would include physical safety from crime, intimidation, discrimination, and harassment but also concepts of walkability, proper lighting, surveillance, and the reduction of fraud opportunities. Safety is an important aspect of a well-functioning lifestyle center development because it can affect people's willingness to use and invest in the area, as well as their overall quality of life.

4 Restoration | The concept of restoration in a lifestyle center development refers to creating an environment that supports physical and mental health. This can be achieved through various means, including the design of public spaces, access to nature, and the availability of health and wellness services. One way that a lifestyle center development can support restoration and wellness is by providing safe and accessible opportunities for physical activity, such as walking and biking paths, fitness facilities, and parks. This can promote physical health and well-being by encouraging people to stay active and engage in outdoor recreation. Another way that a lifestyle development can support restoration and wellness is by incorporating nature into the design of the environment, such as through green spaces, trees, and water features. Exposure to nature has been shown to have a positive impact on mental health, reducing stress and improving overall mood.

In addition, a lifestyle center development can support restoration and wellness by providing access to health and wellness services, such as medical clinics, mental health services, and healthy food options. This can help people maintain their physical and mental health by addressing their healthcare needs and promoting healthy lifestyle choices.

5 Opportunity | A new lifestyle center development can create opportunities in several ways. They can provide new jobs through the construction of buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces. This can stimulate economic growth and provide employment opportunities for residents, and the regional population. A new lifestyle center development can attract new businesses, such as restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues, which can provide additional job opportunities and increase the range of goods and services available in the area.

It can also create opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners to start or expand their businesses. This can be facilitated through the provision of affordable commercial spaces, mentorship programs, and access to funding. New lifestyle center developments can provide opportunities for community engagement and social interaction, creating a sense of belonging and connectedness within the community. This can be achieved through the design of public spaces, community events, and cultural programming.



6 Retreat | A new lifestyle center development should create a sense of comfort and belonging by providing green spaces, public seating, and other amenities that encourage people to spend time outdoors and connect with each other. Moreover, a town center development can offer a range of services and amenities that support people's well-being and quality of life, such as healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and cultural centers. This can help people feel supported and cared for in their daily lives, making the lifestyle center a haven for those who live and work there. Finally, a lifestyle center development can promote community engagement and social interaction through events, activities, and programming that bring people together. This can help foster a sense of community and belonging, creating a retreat where people feel connected and supported by those around them.

7 Experience | Experiences can create a sense of community among like-minded individuals in a lifestyle center development by providing opportunities for people to connect and engage with each other based on shared interests and values. A lifestyle center development can host events or activities, such as music, art, or sports. This can attract people who share those interests from the broader region, creating a sense of community around a shared passion.

Similarly, developments can offer educational or cultural programming that brings people together to learn about or appreciate a particular topic, such as history, science, or literature. Moreover, a town center development can provide spaces and resources that encourage collaboration and creativity, such as co-working spaces, maker spaces, or community gardens. This can facilitate connections between people

who are working on similar projects or have complementary skills, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. A lifestyle center development can support local businesses that cater to niche interests or values. This can attract people who prioritize those values and create a sense of community around sustainable and ethical practices. By providing experiences that cater to the interests and values of like-minded individuals, a It can also create a sense of community and belonging, bringing people together around shared passions and goals.

NEW USES CREATE A NEW VIBE

HED finds the mix of uses can be many things. Many of the big box tenants also own their field of parking. This could mean 10-16 Acres in some cases of dedicated land. That is significant. Those big boxes can be repurposed into many uses, Youth Sports, Medical Facilities, Data Center, Educational or Training Centers. Those same big box areas can be turned into a mix of uses including housing, entertainment, service retail and food and beverage. In most major metropolitan areas, there is public transportation already established for connectivity. The new uses and experiences can only supplement the new dynamics.

Retail centers buildings themselves are inherently flexible. They can be adapted to many uses and have always been developed for change. The spacing between buildings were always planned to be like city streets to allow sunlight and pedestrian flow. Enclosed malls are planned similarly. They are neighborhoods waiting to happen. The master planning effort of these conversion need to establish a new cultural structure based upon the new uses and experiences. The uses and experiences are what will drive the foot traffic and will be the new generators of regional and local gravity.



Experience Mapping

Experience mapping is critical to pedestrian flow planning. This will also inform traffic patterns to support safe, walkable environments for all ages. Like the retail center, the new lifestyle center should maintain the regional focus of being a destination while creating a new neighborhood experience, filled with variety and comfort. As part of any redevelopment, a key consideration is men shop on average about 45 minutes whereas women shop on average three times longer. Developing a mix of uses can help even out those differences and keep people on property longer, spending more money and generating more sales tax with new destinations.

DESIGNING FOR TIME

From an urban planning perspective, HED thinks of these mixed-use development needs as a 18-Hour neighborhood. Mix of uses that supplement the retail center should look to bring in people for as long as possible, during the course of a day, to maximize the foot traffic that supports the retail. Increased foot traffic on an 18-hour scale also helps supports creating a secure environment as there are always people coming and going. Thus creating different focuses or anchors for the extended hours of the day. The morning might be a mix of food service, fitness/wellness, office, and healthcare uses. The afternoon might be retail, food service, and office. While the evenings could be retail, fitness/wellness, entertainment, and food and beverage. All these overlapping, proximate group of uses could all support the residential use.

Planning for Seasons

Beyond the average day, planning for the seasons is also critical for new lifestyle center developments. It is not uncommon to see programming for 200+ days a year for these facilities.

What are the various needs? How will the property be during the holiday season? What are the opportunities in the Spring or Fall? Are there special events that can be planned for in the early design process that will act as an experience anchor that will draw people to the property? Once cultural consistency occurs, it will tie the new development to the cultural of the region.

Retail centers are inherently flexible due to their amount of land that has been banked over time. They have been planned for change due to cultural dynamics. Given this flexibility, HED can help these properties evolve into new, lifestyle centers with branded experiences as their new destinations.



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