WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

An Interdisciplinary Discussion
New Partners for Smart Growth
February 3, 2012
Smart Growth Principle 1: Mix Land Uses

Vertically integrated residential over retail mixed use
Changing patterns of living: What people want
The goal: Vibrant urban street life
(Vancouver, Canada)
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

GENERALIZED LAND USE
WEST LOS ANGELES
The reality: It doesn’t always work
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(Los Angeles, CA)
The Mixed Use Checklist:

### Economic Design
- Mix compatible uses
- Connect to retail environments
- Know your catchment area
- Evaluate the Real Costs (& Benefits) of Parking in Your Proforma
- Understand the Timeframe for Success (Proforma)

### City Context Design
- Invest in great streets (and transit)
- Know the length of a retail district
- Choose uses that enhance existing uses
- Coordinate public benefits with market realities
- Provide parking on a district level
- Choose your primary street face

### Building Design
- Orient facades and entries to public streets
- Provide intricate detail and visual interest at street level uses
- Design flexible and reusable spaces
- Locate residences appropriate to the context
- Design human-scale buildings
Skyline Condos, Los Angeles, CA

Cost:
Built in 1983

Program:
200 residential units (30 affordable)
24,000 SF street retail
15-story reinforced concrete subterranean parking

Public assistance:
- Tax exempt mortgage loan
- Fee relief
- Partial land write down
Metropolitan Rental Apartments Los Angeles, CA

Cost:
- Built in 1989
- Total Cost: $45.5M (1989)
  $81M (2010)

Program:
- 270 units (41 affordable = 80% AMI)
- 4-story frame and stucco over subterranean parking
- 30,000 SF retail/commercial

Public assistance:
- Over 25% of cost advanced by public agency in consideration of a note payable only after developer earned target return
- No payment made on loan
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

The Met and Skyline Los Angeles, CA
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Downtown LA Context

Project

LA Live

Parking Lots
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

The Met & Skyline
Introducing mixed use to Downtown
Token entry to residential units at street level
Lack of scale in ground floor retail design
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Ground floors vacant for many years
Comparison: Flexible Design at Ground Floor
(Baldwin Park, FL, Torti Gallas and Partners)
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Ralph’s Mixed Use
New development takes advantage of new market
Downtown L.A.
“Old” vs. “New” mixed use
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Ground floor is activated: the Renaissance of Downtown
One new active use: restaurant
The Met and Skyline - Lessons Learned

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Centre Street Lofts San Pedro, CA

Overview:
Redevelopment Project (2002-2005)
Developer: CIM & Lee Homes
Size: 1.18 acres
Total Cost: $32.5 Million

Public Assistance:
$40M in total improvements
$1.45M (estimated value of land)
$4.5M CRA contribution
$1.3M CDBG for predevelopment costs
$960K Special Parking Revenue
$2.28M Tax Increment
Centre Street Lofts San Pedro, CA

Program:
- 116 loft dwelling units
- 6 live/work “gallery” units
- 20,500 SF retail
- 4 stories residential
- 312 parking spaces
- 40 public parking spaces
- Interior courtyard
- Public art

Public Benefits:
- CIM & CRA share net parking revenue
- Affordable Housing Program
- 100 construction related jobs
- 30 permanent retail jobs

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“Main Street” San Pedro
Project located at terminus of retail district
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

“Main Street” - Surrounding Context
Lack of pedestrian linkages to development
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Ground floor & typical residential floor plans
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Not so neighborly parking garage
Parking is expensive. Get it right the first time.
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Unusable Space:
“Dry cleaner plaza” with public art
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Textbook mixed use project?
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Inviting “Main Street” storefronts
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Repetitious storefronts lacking visual interest
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Trader Joe’s large airy storefront bays
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Narrow storefront bays
### Centre Street Lofts - Lessons Learned

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Americana at Brand Glendale, CA

Completed: 2008
Site Area: 15.5 acres
Cost: approx. $400M

Program:
- 338 market rate residential units
- 475,000 SF retail
- 66,500 SF restaurants
- 3,500 seat theater
- 2,700+ parking spaces

Features:
- Lifestyle retail center
- Open space “anchor” destination
- Full-service residential

WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER
Americana at Brand Glendale, CA

Cost and Financing Information:

Land acquisition method:  
Lease $1/annum for 45 years  
Option of extending by 4 x 10 years

Public assistance:  
$70M land assembly  
(City of Glendale)
Central open space and focus of activity
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Point of arrival and guest services
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Vibrant activity at open spaces
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Human scale spaces packed with program and amenities
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Traditional and modern storefront design side by side
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

High-end, full-service residential units
WHY MIXED USE ISN’T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Americana at Brand  (Glendale, CA)
Mixed use lifestyle center and regional destination
Transition at Colorado Boulevard
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SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

1. Mix Land Uses
2. Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
3. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities & Choices
4. Create Walkable Neighborhoods
5. Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
6. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty & Critical Environmental Areas
7. Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
10. Encourage Community & Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions
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### Economic/Policy Design
- Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost Effective
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions
- Mix compatible uses

### City Context Design
- Mix Land Uses
- Neighborhoods
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
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