

People Spaces

Making Mixed-Use Neighborhoods Happen

[By Mark Humphreys]

Americans seem drawn to mixed-use developments that combine residential and retail components—so much so that they are often referred to as “people spaces.” In addition to giving communities a focal point, they often add tremendous value to downtown neighborhoods. They encourage revitalization and create the atmosphere of a small-town neighborhood.

With the proper ambience and economics in line, mixed-use environments can be a great opportunity to create a vital neighborhood in which to live, shop, and work. For all the value they create, however, they can be among the most difficult projects to pull off. Here are some ways to deal with the concerns inherent in building mixed-use.

The Parc condominium, developed by Cowboy Partners, is part of The Gateway, a mixed-use project in Salt Lake City.



THE PERILS OF PARKING

Parking is consistently the biggest challenge in mixed-used development. No matter what you do, someone will complain that there aren't enough spaces. Even so, anticipating potential problems such as space requirements, garage design, and security can keep the building process perking along smoothly.

1. Drive-by traffic: The most common causes of death for retail in residential developments are a lack of parking directly facing storefronts and no drive-by visibility. Retail, in fact, doesn't lease up unless it has a high car count in front of it. Moreover, cities typically require one parking space for each 200 square feet of retail, substantially more than the average of one space per 500 square feet of residential. Increasing the size of the garage solves that problem.

2. Garage solutions: Parking for retail and residential is usually in a garage next to or underneath the building. In general, land that costs less than \$20 per square foot should have a separate parking garage, while land that costs more than \$20 per square foot should have an underground parking garage. If the garage is next door, it should have entrances connecting to the residential building. Dedicating the first level of the garage to retail and putting a gate to the second level—where the residential spaces are—keeps residents' parking separate and secure.

3. Take advantage of the mix: Mixed-use projects work best with a combination of residential and office elements. Offices require twice as much parking per square foot as resi-

dential. Since residents typically need parking at different times than office tenants, office spaces can do double duty.

4. Density: In Salt Lake City, The Gateway retail and residential project was designed with a garage that has one level below ground and four levels above ground. There are two levels of retail in front with up to 12 stories of residential space on top. In addition, there is a two-level pedestrian walkway around the project, creating tremendous density. The project is a place for shopping, dining, and living. This development has as many square feet of retail space as a suburban mall, with the residential component built on top. Essentially, there was no land cost for the 696 units of residential space.

Ionic Studios, LLC.