*Roger S. Waldon, FAICP*

*108 Bristol Drive Chapel Hill, NC 27516*

*rogerwaldon@gmail.com*

*(919) 824-6549*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ben Perry, East-West Partners

FROM: Roger Waldon, FAICP

SUBJECT: Mixed Use Development Principles, Regulations, and Examples

DATE: December 8, 2014

At the last Town Council Work Session on the Obey Creek Development Agreement, there was discussion about the possible mix of uses that could/should be present on a development site such as Obey Creek. Roger Perry responded with good information about market considerations and what type of mix is most likely to be successful - - both from a synergy perspective and from a financial viability perspective. There were also questions about “best practices” - - what has experience shown to be good blends of uses, what does research and literature suggest? This memorandum offers observations and information on three issues related to mixed-use development, from a land use planning perspective.

First: The following message is ubiquitous in planning studies and articles: There is no one answer to the question, “What is the ideal mix of uses in a mixed-use development?” The most successful ratios of residential, commercial, and office/institutional components are different for most every site, and can change over time. The geography of a site and market conditions are prime determinants in whether commercial, office, or residential uses should be emphasized. Any formula for the mix of uses on a particular site needs to build in flexibility.

Next, a key concept in the vision of mixed use development is that each of the use groups contributes to the vitality of the other use groups, creating synergy; but also each of the use groups involved needs to be of significant size. The Urban Land Institute describes successful mixed use this way: “At least three integrated uses and each of them must be substantial enough to attract a significant market in their own right (not simply serve as amenities for a primary use.”

Finally, a review of mixed-use zoning regulations currently in place around the country confirms the viability of the practice of using ranges rather than specific formulas to shape the mix of uses on any particular site. A table on the following page offers examples of ranges suggested by the American Planning Association, and regulations currently in place elsewhere. Also included in the table are figures showing the distribution of uses for three successful mixed-use sites from other cities. The last row on the table shows the proposed mix of uses for the Obey Creek site, showing how the Obey Creek proposal aligns with current best practices.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Source** | **Residential Uses Min-Max %** | **Office Uses**  **Min-Max %** | **Commercial Uses**  **Min-Max %** |
| APA Suggested Mix | 20 – 60% | 20 – 60% | 20 – 60% |
| Existing Regulations: | | | |
| Colorado Springs CO | 10 – 80% | 10 – 80% | 10 – 80% |
| Broward County FL | 10 – 80% | 10 – 80% | 10 – 80% |
| Wilmington NC | 20 – 60% | 20 – 60% | 20 – 60% |
| Sparks NV | 25 – 60% | 40 – 75% | |
| Chapel Hill MU-V | 25 – 75% | 25 – 75% | |
| On-the-ground Examples: | | | |
| Pittsburgh PA Example | 10% | 58% | 32% |
| Austin TX Example | 33% | 7% | 60% |
| Westlake OH Example | 30% | 19% | 51% |
| Proposed: | | | |
| Obey Creek | 50% | 17% | 33% |

For further information and reference to the sources for material in this memorandum: Here is a set of links to relevant documents:

* APA Memorandum: <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6791>
* Virginia “Toolkit” description of Best Practices: <http://www.tjpdc.org/livablecommunities/Code%20and%20Ord%20Toolkit.pdf>
* Amherst MA report on Zoning Codes: <http://www.amherst.ny.us/pdf/planning/compplan/zcrc/amendments/report.pdf>
* Urban Land Institute Report for Loudoun County: <http://www.loudoun.gov/DocumentCenter/View/107409>
* Urban Land Institute: 10 Principles for Developing Successful Town Centers: <http://www.greatstreets-stl.org/component/option,com_docman/task,cat_view/gid,107/Itemid,44/?mosmsg=You+are+trying+to+access+from+a+non-authorized+domain.+%28www.google.com%29> (Scroll down the page to download document)