



Mixed Use Zoning Advisory Committee Roundtables Summary

August 20, 2014



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
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Mixed Use Zones Assessment Public Outreach

- Project Advisory Committee
- Community meetings
- Community Walks
- Roundtables



Other input

- Technical Advisory Group
- BDS Assessment



Roundtable Discussions

August 6-7, 2014; ~ 60 participants

- Private For-Profit Developers
- Non-Profit/Affordable Housing Developers
- Designers/Architects
- Neighborhood Small Businesses

Roundtable Highlights

Developers

- Certainty, flexibility, and code simplicity.
- Public goods such as affordability, open area/plaza, etc. should be incentivized - with additional height or floor area, fee waivers, or reduced permit times.
- Code should be sensitive towards size of lots.
- Requiring retail/commercial uses at ground floor is problematic - prefer “active use” - allow flexibility throughout life of building.
- Design system does not work well now, and needs to be more predictable, particularly if expanded.
- Other city requirements sometimes create conflicts with zoning standards - need for better alignment.

Roundtable Highlights

Architects/Designers

- Be clear about what is allowed vs what is negotiable.
- Issues such as material choices, on-site open areas, etc. should be left to market and not prescribed.
- Provide more flexibility to allow taller building heights - strict height limits result in blocky buildings and make it difficult to create good ground-floor spaces.
- FAR and height can work together to help sculpt buildings.
- Consider “setback budget” or a flexible build-to line that allows for articulation, recesses and areas for people to pause or gather.
- Design system needs overhaul to work better; community design standards are not appropriate/workable; wary of broader application on design overlay.

Roundtable Highlights

Affordable Housing Developers

- Certainty, flexibility, and code simplicity.
- Program determined by funding sources - does not respond to incentives same as private for-profit.
- Bonuses and incentives such as additional height or FAR may work for private developers to provide affordable housing.
- Concerned about costs of expanding design review and requiring outdoor spaces - use incentives and simple, flexible regulations to achieve desired outcomes.
- Mixed use developments/ground floor commercial uses add costs - BOLI wage regulations apply for commercial development.

Roundtable Highlights

Neighborhood Businesses

- Parking concerns are real - most recognize benefits of added households, but people often frequent business by car.
- Explore shared, public or other community parking resource.
- Design and context is important to many districts - some support regulations that encourage compatibility, including design review.
- Not every place is pedestrian/mixed-use district - some places will/should remain flexible for auto-oriented uses.
- Concerned about loss of affordable commercial space.
- Desire for commercial/active ground floor uses in key places.



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