

# Encouraging mixed use in practice

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As planners, we find ourselves charged with offering advice about how to create better communities for the future. Conventional contemporary wisdom suggests a few key choices. Whether falling under the rubric of “smart growth” (US) or “urban renaissance” (UK) or “*machizukuri*” (Japan), the solutions and prescriptions seem quite similar: compact form, public participation, mixed use, pedestrian orientation, and open space planning. We find widespread consensus in theory on the principles of good development and urban form. In practice, however, we see less commitment that these ideas can or should shape building patterns.

In this paper, I examine one principle of the contemporary planning paradigm: mixed use. I will consider how mixed use came to be seen as key to good urban form, discuss the barriers to implementing it, and offer suggestions on how higher levels of government may develop strategies for promoting it.

## **1. Mixed use in history**

Pre-industrial cities were mixed as a matter of course (Morris 1994). In ancient Chang’an (Xian), for instance, a million people lived within the city walls around the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century, living and shopping near their work (Wright 1967). Most people walked everywhere in the ancient city. Uses were distributed widely. Small shops, workshops, homes, and places of worship intermingled throughout the urban fabric. Any externalities of mixing were seldom acknowledged, although they appear clearly in the archaeological record. For example, the environmental consequences faced by industrial workers in ancient Greece and Rome are well documented (Hughes 1994, Simmons 1993).

From the early days of the modern town planning movement, mixed use became part of the philosophy of town planning. Ebenezer Howard’s (1902) garden city movement advocated complete new towns that would be reasonably self-contained, and modest in size. The concept provided well-planned areas for each kind of use, linked by transportation systems that facilitated mobility. Another mandate of the garden city idea, of course, was to generate safe and comfortable residential areas. Homes were located away from industry through a carefully patterned coarse-grain mix. As a theory, then, the garden city generated a loose mix necessitated by the externalities of industrial production and enabled by new

transportation technologies. In practice, however, few self-contained garden cities were built. Elements of the garden city model instead became principles employed for generating residential suburbs whose primary purpose was to protect the family from the risks of the city.

Facilitated by public transportation systems, and later by private automobiles that made longer distance commuting possible, developers found new niches for building residential suburbs around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century. Zoning, widely adopted in the 1920s and 1930s, entrenched the idea of separated uses throughout North America. It suited popular values, and moderated the need for restrictive covenants to maintain the character of a neighbourhood (Moore 1979). Through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the expansion of large-scale retail and large-scale office uses in city centres often forced alternative uses out because they drove up land values. Thus a combination of technologies (eg, street car, elevator) and cultural behaviour (eg, growing middle class looking for quiet seclusion) enabled and supported separating land uses.

By the post-WWII period, most Western cities had large areas of segregated uses: enclaves of housing; zones of commercial uses; pods of office developments. Governments supported the philosophy of separate development of areas for industry by financing industrial parks and estates. Incentives to industry to relocate, usually to areas of segregated industrial activity, were seen as a way of enhancing national competitiveness and economic growth.

By the 1960s and 1970s, environmental movements were pushing for greater government responsibility and action to clean up air and water, and citizens groups were trying to protect heritage resources threatened by urban renewal. Governments responded in a variety of ways, with initiatives to conserve urban heritage, and with programs to improve the environment. Jane Jacobs (1961) gained prominence with her critique of segregated uses in North American cities. Increasingly, community critics and planners embraced mixed use as part of a strategy of reducing energy demands and enhancing the livability of the city. Building cities where walking is an option because stores and work are near homes came to be seen as more affordable and more responsible than conventional post-war sprawl. Mixed use and the concept of “social mix” generated discussion in the planning literature and at conferences as

offering new strategies for urban development.

Throughout the 1970s, Canada had a national agency devoted to urban issues. The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs helped to promote the concept of mixed use, among other new ideas, with publications and workshops. Key projects in Vancouver and Toronto led to the redevelopment of former industrial lands for mixed use housing and commercial activities. False Creek in Vancouver and the St Lawrence neighbourhood in Toronto were very successful mixed use projects in Canada (Gordon and Fong 1989; Vischer 1984). The revitalization of inner cities districts in other major centres also stimulated mixed use; for instance, loft developments in areas like Soho in New York revealed the economic potential of mixed use for reviving ailing districts (Zukin 1989).

Many North American cities were preoccupied through the 1970s and 1980s with fighting off mega-malls, and trying to save declining central cities from losing population and business.

Mixed use zoning became a popular strategy in many Canadian cities in the 1980s as a way to trying to correct the problems associated with single-use zoning. New growth areas were zoned for mixed use. Easing zoning rules, increasingly perceived to slow down markets, became government policy during the recessionary 1980s. Fiscal conservatism led governments to pull back in many areas of market regulation, including planning. Despite flexible rules that allowed mixing, though, the market was slow to respond to opportunities for mixed use.

In the Halifax region of Nova Scotia, Canada, local governments created several mixed use zones to stimulate new project types in suburban developments. In one project in Dartmouth, an area adjacent to an industrial park and a major circumferential highway was zoned for mixed use commercial, hotel, and medium-density residential in the mid-1980s. At the public hearings before approval, planners explained that local schools could accommodate any increase in students from the project because the mix of commercial and apartment residential was not expected to generate many school-aged children. As the project built out, however, planners realized that the developers were constructing mostly mid-rise apartment buildings. Due to a glut of commercial in the region, only a few commercial buildings rose on the site. The district rapidly became a centre of low-cost market-built

housing, contributing to the closure of older apartment buildings in other areas of the city. Many of the new apartments housed single parents with children looking for space in the local elementary school. Rather than generating a vibrant mixed-use district as anticipated, the project became a euphemism for a problem neighbourhood.

Another attempt to generate mixed commercial and light industrial use in Halifax produced the first big-box retail park in the region. To stimulate leasing in an under-utilized industrial park, the city applied mixed use zoning to allow commercial outlets to co-locate with industry. Instead of resulting in a mix of manufacturing and compatible retail, though, the park became a haven for the newly developing big-box industry. One after another, the big stores moved in, creating a windswept landscape of parking lots and chain retail giants. While the park became an economic driver, planners do not see it as an unqualified success story.

Both these Halifax examples reveal the difficulty of achieving objectives of mixed use in the context of unpredictable economic circumstances and investment decisions driven by short-term returns. The interests of capital may make social objectives of mixed use impossible to achieve. If capital finds greater returns in residential construction than in commercial development, then projects may feature many more apartment units than store fronts. If retail trends turn to a new industry, like big-box stores, then an opening for major commercial with abundant parking may well displace any hope of integrating light manufacturing in the industrial park zoned for mix. Zoning for flexibility is a necessary but not sufficient condition to generate mix. The 1980s and early 1990s did not prove supportive of mixing, at least in some Canadian cities.

Environmental and economic concerns continued to develop and gain media attention through the 1980s. By the end of the decade, two movements seemed to offer strategies to respond: both saw mixed use as part of the solution to urban problems.

The healthy cities movement proved quite influential in Europe and in Canada. Its proponents suggested that cities should promote health, not detract from it (Hendler 1989, Witty 2002). Clean environments, good employment and education, resource conservation, healthy living, and livable cities are essential to human and environmental health. Compact cities with good public transportation and walkable neighbourhoods would contribute to

community health. The Canadian Institute of Planners played a lead role in the movement in Canada, serving as the secretariat for the Healthy Communities Project funded by the national government from 1987 to 1991. Similar projects operated throughout Europe, pushing for a new urban and environmental agenda (WHO 2004).

An international movement for sustainable development gained steam with the publication of the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987). Sustainable development offered strategies for economic improvement without damaging environments or robbing future generations of their opportunities. The initial push of sustainable development theory involved a message of restraint: for instance, minimizing use of non-renewable materials, reducing waste outputs, and finding strategies that protected the environment. Over time, various interests have debated the meaning of sustainable development and argued a wide range of options for achieving it.

Both these movements supported mixed use as a strategy. Mixed use could contribute to community health by reducing the need for car transportation and enhancing local self-sufficiency. Strategies that might reduce energy consumption could also be defined as sustainable. Both movements also tended to see growth as potentially problematic. Growth may undermine communities' abilities to conserve heritage resources or control economic change, thus undermining health. Sustainable development implies limited growth in that it seeks to minimize resource consumption and waste generation. Both theories looked for bottom-up solutions, often providing support for local initiatives such as running recycling drives, planning open space systems, and revitalizing neighbourhoods.

While healthy communities and sustainable development enjoyed a brief flourish of support from national governments, continued fiscal conservatism in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century eventually brought the demand for growth back onto the agenda. Public resistance to growth continued through the 1990s as urban residents experienced increasing traffic gridlock, endless sprawl, and escalating house prices. Upper levels of government, though, have traditionally been concerned with promoting – not controlling – economic growth. The 1990s brought new trade arrangements, like the North American Free Trade Agreement. The European Union expanded and developed greater strength. Governments turned renewed attention to financing export industries (eg, with agricultural subsidies). Just as growth is

essential to our capitalist economy, it is vital to our governments which depend on taxes for their spending. That gives them clear incentives for growth, and reason to fear conservation or decline. Thus even as planners and governments supported many of the strategies promoted through the healthy communities and sustainable development movements, they looked for ways to tie the approaches to a model of growth that could ensure economic gain.

“Smart growth” appeared in the US by the late 1990s as a new synthesis for planning. This theory suggested that growth is possible and can be good. Smart growth employed many of the strategies promoted in the sustainable development and healthy communities movements, although it focussed less on reducing overall consumption than on finding physical and policy solutions to improve the outcomes of growth. Mixed use survived as a principle of smart growth. The social responsibility implicit in the healthy communities movement, and the environmental responsibility central to the concept of sustainable development, were downplayed as economic vibrancy rose to a place of greater prominence in the new model. To a considerable extent, the new paradigm appropriated the rhetoric and responses of these earlier movements, but put growth back into the equation.

## **2. Mixed use and smart growth**

Smart growth was originally an initiative principally of higher levels of government, especially states and provinces. More recently, cities and regions have also signed on to promote smart growth. Higher levels of governments generally looked to incentives to push smart growth: for example, they offered loans, tax relief, rapid approvals, or other ways to facilitate preferred options. As Frece (2001:21) notes, a key characteristic is that “Smart Growth takes an incentive-based rather than a regulatory approach to reversing trends.”

Mixed use constitutes a central principle of smart growth, along with compact form, walkable neighbourhoods, transportation choices, housing choices, sense of place, open space protection, and community collaboration (Smart Growth Network 2004). Although planners have shared a fair degree of consensus since the 1970s, through a range of theories, promoting mixed use and integrating diverse populations remains a challenge.

Smart growth advocates mixed use to generate economic and social diversity. Mixing can enhance economic activity to create vibrant urban districts: 24 hour business zones with

something for everyone. The side benefits of mixed use should include a reduced need for car travel and enhanced demand for public transportation. In zones with a wide range of uses in close proximity, people will be able to walk to work, school, or shops.

Achieving this level of diversity is not easy for most city districts, though. People cannot always live near their work, especially in two-income households. The full range of local shops needed for daily requirements is missing in many neighbourhoods. Big-box retail locates for optimal automobile accessibility. Most office space is not built in mixed use areas, but either in the central city or in amorphous zones around the urban periphery (Lang and LeFurgy 2004). Industry shows little interest in mixing (Grant et al 1994).

How much mixing is appropriate? Duany et al (2000:53) suggest that, “When it comes to the integration of different housing types, there is no established formula, but it seems safe to say that a neighborhood can easily absorb a one-in-ten insertion of affordable housing without adverse effects.” Where do the rest of the poor go? Too much mixing, or the wrong elements in the mix, experts appear to argue, may unbalance an area.

Mixed housing types promises to generate social diversity. Smart growth reflects a normative position that values heterogeneous and integrated communities. The focus of planning efforts would thus be to promote equity, access, and affordability. But achieving social mix is also a challenge. Despite the hope that a range of detached units, townhouses, and apartments might bring together diverse households, experience indicates that many projects with mixed housing types end up with relatively homogeneous populations, aside from variation in household size.

Jerry Neuman (2003) reports that while governments favour mixing affordable units amongst market units in new developments, such a strategy can undermine the value of the market units. From a developer’s perspective, it is better to separate subsidized and market housing in nearby areas to conserve the value of the overall project. Thus, achieving a substantial mix of affordable units in projects is difficult in practice unless government is a contributing partner. While such mixing occurs with some frequency, especially in European countries, it remains a relatively insignificant part of urban development in some nations. The private market may be more comfortable with “product segregation”, whereby units are clustered by price point.

The HOPE VI initiative of HUD to rehabilitate public housing in the US sought to integrate market and affordable housing units. The project renewed or rebuilt housing on sites formerly occupied by public housing developments that had become severely deteriorated. The philosophy of HOPE VI was to generate mixed and integrated neighbourhoods, using new urbanist principles. In many of the projects, one-third of new or rehabilitated units were reserved as affordable housing; redevelopment thus resulted in a net loss of public housing units, often in areas desperate for affordable housing (Smith 2002). Reducing the number of affordable units available was seen as a necessary condition for generating appropriate mixes for future neighbourhood stability and project viability.

In the American context, and to a growing extent in other nations facing significant waves of immigration, race and ethnicity play a significant role in limiting mix. American cities are highly segregated by race as well as class: for instance, there is very little mixing of whites and blacks in neighbourhoods in the Detroit area (CensusScope 2004). The “melting pot” worked effectively in integrating immigrant groups in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but in the contemporary context mixing proves a greater challenge. Immigration by groups eager to maintain their religious and cultural values in their new homeland can exacerbate fears of mixing and reinforce patterns of segregation.

### **3. Kinds of mix**

Grant (2002) identifies three kinds of mixing of uses:

- a. increasing intensity of land uses - eg, mixing housing types
- b. increasing diversity of uses - eg, mixing commercial with residential
- c. integrating formerly segregated uses - eg, allowing light industry in residential areas

Where do we see these types of mix occurring? Type “a” mix – intensification – is happening in many cities, especially in redevelopment projects, but also in the suburbs of cities like Toronto (Bourne 2001; Isin and Tomalty 1993). Planners often encourage a mix of housing types on a finer scale than appeared in suburban development in the immediate post-war period. Today it is not uncommon to find semi-detached or row houses near detached homes, even in new suburbs. Some municipalities are revising regulations to allow accessory

units in suburban zones. Escalating land costs contribute to driving market demand for smaller lots and finer grained mixing of housing types in high growth areas.

Type “b” mix – diversification -- is common in projects that represent large scale redevelopments, such as waterfront zones or entertainment districts. Greyfield conversion projects like Santana Row in San Jose CA include upscale shops and housing. Urban villages are appearing in upscale high-growth areas where there is a demand for urban living or where residents have resources to spend on high-end consumer goods; Poundbury and Greenwich Millennium Village in the UK offer good examples. This tends to be a small, but economically important, part of the market.

Type “c” mix – integration – is less common. Some municipalities facilitate the integration of special needs housing, such as group homes, by easing zoning regulations to allow such uses as-of-right. Home businesses are increasingly allowed by local governments. Most uses that have been intentionally limited in the city - such as industry, adult entertainment, urban agriculture, and other locally-unwanted land uses (LULUs) - are not easily integrated. While a wide range of uses occurs often in Asian cities, the range of uses deemed “compatible” in Western cities is quite narrow.

#### **4. Issues and barriers to mixing**

The culture of separation that keeps particular land uses apart derives from the industrial era in the West, to the image of the dirty and dangerous city. Zoning laws and planning policy have supported and reinforced preferred practices. However, as we see in the case of cities like Houston with no zoning, in the absence of public rules to enforce separation, the market may find other means to achieve the same end (M. Neuman 2003).

Western cities contrast considerably with cities in Asia in their use patterns. Japanese cities, for instance, often show fine-grain mixing of uses (Mather et al 1998, Shelton 1999). It is not uncommon to find small manufactories between houses and shops, or to see apartment dwellings sprinkled amidst low-rise units. In suburban areas, rice paddies, institutional uses, high density residential clusters, and apartment buildings jostle for space in a fragmented

landscape (Sorensen 2002). The level of environmental concern that drove separation of uses in the Western city has come only relatively recently to Asian urban dwellers, and has not resulted in rules to drive industry out of mostly residential neighbourhoods.

What can contemporary cities do to accommodate LULUs? No one living in an exclusive residential district wants industry in their neighbourhood. No one wants a half-way house for sexual predators on probation. Few residents want a group home for schizophrenics. Cities need to accommodate a diversity of uses, yet the occupants of the city may resist diversity. Control over the local environment is tightly bound to ideas of citizen democracy and property rights. People fear change and may reject others who are different from themselves. They find comfort in homogeneity, and fight vociferously to protect their concept of their neighbourhood. Allaying community fears about mixing is the most significant challenge planners face.

While some lenders have become interested in the redevelopment market, financing risks have made bankers and lenders cautious about mixed use projects. Financiers want high and predictable returns, and tend to invest their funds where they know they can succeed. As Constance Perin (1977) argued years ago, the shape of our communities reflects the tendency of all of those involved in the development industry to seek to put things in their appropriate place. Only as mixed use projects prove their success in the market place will lenders begin to feel confident about investing in them.

In contexts where competing governments operate in an urban region, the scale of many development projects is too small to facilitate workable mixing. Several thousand people may be necessary to support a “village centre” with convenience retail. Even where the numbers may be sufficient, however, changing retail patterns present a serious barrier to efforts to generate neighbourhood mixed use. Big-box retail enhances segregation and car-oriented development. Neighbourhood convenience retail (Mom and Pop stores) are failing in many regions as chain stores grow. People have changed their shopping behaviour: they travel to regional malls and distant shopping precincts rather than shopping near home. Even in Asian and European cities with their trend of mixed use and local shopping, larger-scale retail establishments are threatening the viability of smaller shopping precincts. Is it reasonable to assume that we can change retail patterns simply by proposing mixed use? Car

use makes separation easy for people to accept, and has shifted lifestyles so much that it will be difficult to transform. Efforts to implement mixed use in new urbanist communities have run into obstacles as the commercial components have struggled to prove their viability (Grant 2002). Retrofitting existing single-use areas and conserving older mixed-use districts may also prove problematic.

## **5. What government can do**

Is growth always good? Can it be “smart” if only we find the appropriate form? That is a debatable premise. Growth is not indefinitely sustainable, for a myriad of environmental reasons. That challenge aside, however, we may argue that mixed use is inherently good as an urban strategy. Mixed use was the typical urban form for 8000 years over a range of technologies and cultural practices. It is likely to remain viable in future even as we develop new technologies or as we cope with deteriorating urban conditions.

Governments may take a number of steps to promote mix. First of all, they can ensure that enabling legislation for local planning encourages mix, reduces segregation of uses, and supports public transportation and compact form. Other statutes or acts that may inadvertently limit mixing (such as building codes that increase materials standards for mixed uses) should be examined for suitability in the contemporary context. Policies that allow accessory units or home businesses anywhere can override local resistance to intensification and mixing.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw rising expectations for safety and space that we could argue led to over-regulation in many aspects of Western society. Achieving new values in the city requires that we re-examine all of our rules – zoning codes, engineering standards, fire standards, and building codes – to be sure they are reasonable in the contemporary context (eg, with new building materials and technologies). Certainly when we compare the rules that govern North American cities with those in place in other parts of the world we find immense contrasts. Do our rules really create more “livable” cities, or have we set the parameters in such a way as to condemn ourselves to sterile and safe options?

Higher levels of government may also consider ways to facilitate initiatives from lower levels of responsibility. In some cases they may favour “sticks”; in others, “carrots”.

To enforce an agenda of regional planning that would improve the global competitiveness of Canadian cities, several provinces engineered municipal amalgamations. For example, in the last decade, cities and suburbs around such cities as Toronto, Montreal<sup>1</sup>, Ottawa-Carleton, and Halifax were amalgamated with their larger urban centre into regional cities. Because cities are creatures of the provinces under the Canadian constitution, their fates depend on decisions taken by higher levels of government. Such enforced regionalisation may not be possible in all jurisdictions.

Highly centralized governments can impose policy decisions from above. For instance, in the UK, the government issues Planning Policy Guidance statements (ODPM 2004). In recent years, those documents have promoted urban villages, mixed use, compact form, and urban redevelopment. Regulations may force local planning authorities to comply with central guidance, thus giving higher levels of government the ability to promote particular agendas.

Carrots to encourage local governments to adopt smart options may include incentives such as transferring tax points, or providing surplus land for redevelopment. Granting access to financing from higher governments and passing legislation to limit the financial risks for redeveloping urban land can also speed development according to new principles.

Maryland, often seen as the home of smart growth, developed several successful programs to promote new forms of urban development (Frece 2001). Government designated priority funding areas for growth, and then provided incentives for “smart” options: for example, they offered loans and grants to small businesses and non-profits, job-creating tax credits, grants to home-buyers to live near work, brownfield cleanup programs, and historic preservation tax credits. Other initiatives included easing building codes to facilitate rehabilitation of older buildings, and developing model zoning codes for smart neighbourhoods (Frece 2001).

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<sup>1</sup> Montreal was amalgamated by a Parti Quebecois government in 2002. A referendum put by a new Liberal provincial government in June 2004 allowed local residents to “opt out” of the regional municipality. Fifteen of the 28 former municipalities voted to cede from the Montreal Urban Region. (CBC 2004)

Governments can also provide a useful service by supporting or conducting research on what kinds of mixes can work and under what conditions. What are the criteria for success in developing mixed use or integrated housing? What are the components and financing practices that make economically viable mixed use districts? What may induce people to shop locally and to walk to those shops on a regular basis? What cultural mechanisms may reduce the fear of mixing.

Larger scale mixed use projects often need government support to succeed. Master-planned communities have the potential to fully integrate mix. They can design for walkability and diversity of housing types. Some of the best examples of mixed use projects are ones in which higher levels of government provided land or financing to enable the projects to proceed. For instance, the Ontario provincial government made land available for Cornell new town in Markham, and hired designers DPZ to complete a site plan. Projects like Karow Nord in Berlin became possible because the government provided financing for social housing.

After WWII, governments supported the growth of the suburbs by helping to finance the building industry to develop economies of scale (Sewell 1977). Mortgage insurance allowed working class residents to borrow money to buy homes. The same kind of support could be used today to support the financing of mixed use projects: government could encourage and assist lenders, and facilitate mortgage insurance. Public/private partnerships, enterprise zones, and venture capital funds could be other ways for higher levels of government to support initiatives for mixed use.

Governments that advocate mixed use have a responsibility to find ways to conserve mixing in older districts. Little will be gained in terms of community health or long-term sustainability of the city if we build new mixed use districts while older areas of the city lose their hard-won mix. While a mix of upscale cafes, expensive boutiques, and luxury condominiums may be better than big-box outlets, few planners would argue that it has the same character as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century neighbourhood where people walked to work, gossiped with their neighbours as they bought meat from the butcher, and went home to houses shared by extended families. Through the 20<sup>th</sup> century those small businesses like butchers and green-grocers gave way to grocery chains, leaving neighbourhoods with limited

local retail. Old main streets saw shops close, and retailers increasingly relocating to more popular commercial areas. As retail patterns have changed, many residents find themselves with no retailers within walking distance of their homes.

Governments could develop programs to support financing or redevelopment to retain mix in areas where some uses are leaving. For instance, neighbourhood commercial uses (like small convenience stores) are abandoning older suburbs; aid to small businesses to modernize to compete with expanding chain stores may help to retain neighbourhood mix. Many older districts are seeing local service stations close, replaced with new residential uses; while redevelopment of the sites is beneficial, loss of the retail component in residential districts enhances land use segregation and forces people to find new sites to meet their needs.

Mixing housing types and providing affordable housing requires government participation. Government financing for moderate cost and public housing has been refocused or decreased in many jurisdictions, as governments work to reduce spending deficits. For instance, the province of Nova Scotia had a public development agency that produced low and moderate cost building lots for three decades, prior to being closed down within the last five years. While the Department of Housing produced serviced lots at cost, it could implement goals of mixed tenure, smaller lots, and other objectives connected to smart development. With the program ended, lot values are escalating dramatically in the province, and the potential for promoting mix now depends on the market sector. Governments committed to healthy and sustainable cities need to be strong partners in the housing market to ensure that the poorest inhabitants of our cities are included in the mix.

Should government take a permissive or a prescriptive approach to mixed use? For much of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the mantra was “flexibility”. The market needs space to respond to demand. Experience has shown that flexibility – planning to allow mix – does not guarantee mix. Will planning to secure mix be more effective? If developers are forced to include mix, but have trouble securing tenants for some components of the mix, then they will suffer and complain. Agreement on the importance of mixed use has become so widespread that in some instances governments are prescribing mix. In the general principles of *Planning policy guidance 1* produced by the UK government (ODPM 2004), local governments are advised

that their plans may set requirements for mix: in such cases, developers proposing single uses would have to justify their requests. Here we see a switch from the situation in the 1980s when governments revised their zones to allow mixing to policy in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that secures desired levels and types of mixing. Faith in the sustainability and healthiness of mixing has not, to date, been supported by an adequate research base so that we might ensure we understand the implications of any prescriptions we make.

Governments can work with industry and the academy to identify strategies for overcoming unbalanced mixes. How can we bring jobs to areas that are only residential at present? What are the most effective ways to mix a range of residential types in commercial districts? What are the appropriate uses to mix with industry? What are the best ways to manage the risks associated with mixing? At present we don't have the answers to these questions. We need to develop a research agenda to underscore successful strategies.

We can and must learn from contemporary experience. We can look at notable examples of projects designed as mixed use centres to see how well they meet the objectives associated with mix. Some do; some don't. For instance, Kentlands (in Gaithersburg MD) is a new urbanist project described as mixed use; on closer inspection it reveals some of the challenges of implementing the principles. Kentlands has most of its commercial uses in a large regional mall rather than a town centre. Integrating residential and commercial uses is not as easy as mixing housing types, and mixing housing types may not result in the kind of social mix the project proponents may have anticipated.

Successful mixed use is intended in part to create more self-contained local districts than contemporary cities generally experience. Perhaps rather than focussing on changing the form of the city and expecting appropriate social behaviour to result - an approach that many would see as spatially determinist - perhaps we might ask governments to focus on helping to shape cultural choices that support mix. If governments developed programs to encourage local shopping and working, or greater use of public transportation, for instance, could we create a cultural context in which people support mixed use more effectively? Could governments consider offering residents incentives for not having cars: lower taxes for units with less parking, for example. In Japan, businesses cover employees' public transportation costs as a tax-free benefit; high levels of transit use are the norm. Higher gas taxes, car

licensing fees, and road tolls could discourage car use. Land used for parking may need to be taxed at higher rates than has traditionally been the case. Investments in public transportation can increase coverage and improve mobility. Governments committed to shaping transportation behaviour have a wide range of mechanisms to consider.

Campaigns to encourage people to “shop locally” or “shop daily” could support local merchants trying to carve out a niche in a context where international chains of big-box retail draw customers from across large regions. In my grocery store – I can no longer call it “local”, as the smaller neighbourhood grocery store closed about two years ago after being purchased by a superstore grocery chain, forcing me to drive some distance to buy food – there are three choices of containers for shopping. I can use carry baskets (which are often impossible to find when I enter the store), very large carts (which are also limited in supply), and huge carts. The store thus invites me to shop for the week; dreading the time it takes to travel the long route through the huge store, I comply. By contrast, when I spent a sabbatical in Japan, I shopped often: the only carts available in the grocery stores were sized to hold only a carry basket. Stores set up to facilitate daily shopping encourage local purchases, and vice versa. Would legislation to regulate the size of grocery carts encourage people to shop locally? Probably not, but finding ways to transform consumer behaviour will be essential for mixed use to succeed. Concerted campaigns against drunk driving and smoking have succeeded in changing cultural values. Do governments have the political will to intervene the same way in shaping our cities?

It seems likely that areas that are growing fast will have mixed use and a level of “smart growth” as they develop. Rapid growth generates pressures that encourage higher densities and transit-oriented options to cut costs and reduce land consumption. Such strategies can be assisted by government intervention to promote viable options for compact form and mixed use. Ultimately, though, we face the prospect that growth may come to an end. Threats of international instability, pandemics, climate change, and new energy crises require us to think beyond the immediate challenge of coping with intense growth pressures. The long-term sustainability of our cities requires that we develop a mix of uses that can thrive in the absence of growth as well as it can in the presence of growth. While Starbucks Cafes and Gucci Boutiques have an intense appeal to a segment of the population today, they may

contribute less effectively to a sustainable long-term mixed use strategy than could opportunities for urban agriculture, small-scale manufacturing, or local producer market places. We must avoid cutting off options for the future by defining mix too narrowly for the contemporary market.

While the focus of most media attention and planning literature is on coping with growth, less is said about good strategies for areas in decline. We can predict that areas that are stable or declining will not attract mixed use and smart growth without government intervention. Those areas will often accept any growth that is possible, even if it means becoming more car-dependent. They will likely continue to lose elements of their current mix as businesses go bankrupt or large chains close down small outlets. Peripheral communities will find it a challenge to be either “smart” or sustainable.

Mixed use characterized cities through history until a peculiar confluence of technologies and cultural behaviour in the 20<sup>th</sup> century presented an alternative option. After several decades of living with that alternative, we understand its limitations and consequences. We also recognize, however, that changing it will take concerted action and political will. Mixed use cannot resolve all the problems of the city, but cities that lack mixed use cannot hope to enjoy long-term prosperity or viability.

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