

Examples of Industrial – Residential Collocation in Other Cities

I. University Park at MIT

Project Summary

University Park at MIT is a 27-acre development in Cambridge, Massachusetts that combines residential, service commercial and office/R&D uses. The development spans the gap between an existing residential neighborhood and the MIT campus. Originally the project area was a declining industrial district characterized by warehousing and vacant industrial sites. The campus was redesigned specifically to be attractive to high tech and biotech companies. Office/R&D buildings implemented several design features to make the buildings flexible enough to meet the needs of bio tech and industrial users in the future, these include: floor to floor heights of 13'8" to 15" (ground floor higher), floor loads of 125 lbs/sq ft, power capacity of 25 watts/sq ft, large ventilation shafts, and freight elevators and interior loading docks hidden from the street for each building.

The development includes several public open spaces, a grocery store, hotel, banking services, daycare center and community serving art programs and special events. The project's proximity to a residential neighborhood allowed the developers to place the new residential complexes (townhomes and other multifamily dwellings) on the half of the site closest to existing residential, connected to the office/R&D buildings by greenways and pedestrian paths. The master plan calls for 400 units, 25% of which are affordable housing. The final residential complex will not be complete until 2005. Transit orientation is a large component of site design, the street network and pedestrian pathways are highly connective. In addition to a subway stop within one mile of the site, a shuttle service provides service between to an additional subway line and commuter rail hub.

A lengthy public planning process addressed several compatibility issues between industrial and residential development. Noisy rooftop machinery was a major concern; the developer was eventually required to perform several retrofits in order to mitigate noise pollution. Concern about the dangers of materials used in biotech research and development was not great due to existing experience with mixing these uses. Cambridge does have a special ordinance for Recombinant DNA technology and has created a Biosafety Committee to establish relevant policies. A traffic demand management plan was created to prevent truck traffic from routing through residential streets and deliveries were constrained to certain hours.

Relevance to San Diego and Compliance with Proposed Criteria

This project revitalized a stagnant, mostly vacant industrial area, creating employment demand in a place where it otherwise may not occur. Although some areas of San Diego could be characterized in this manner, others are in such high demand that the main concern with allowing residential development is that it might preclude more intense

industrial usage. The preservation of industrial land threshold criteria places this issue as the paramount concern and establishes a strict test for collocation proposals. University Park is an example of how industrial development intensity can be preserved, while allowing some residential development. By linking University Park to a well known technology-driven institution, MIT, and targeting appropriate businesses, the park provides a location for high intensity industrial uses. Development is specifically aimed at high technology industries that tend to provide high quality jobs with benefits and career ladders. The provision of these “middle-income” jobs is an integral part of San Diego’s recently adopted Strategic Framework Element.

Cambridge has similar affordability and housing supply concerns as the City of San Diego and provision of 25 percent of housing as affordable units was a very important component of the development. Project requirement 1, “providing for a minimum of 10 percent affordable housing onsite” takes this account. The development’s design and location also facilitate alternative transportation modes, which are important to the “smart growth” and transit policies in requirement 2 and evaluation criterion 1. There is little truck traffic, noise and other external environmental impact from employment uses that are not within the project due to the specific location and size of the Cambridge site. This may not be the case in San Diego, due to the large size of industrial areas and existing viable development evaluation criterion 2 directs applicants and staff to consider these issues.

The residential densities of this project are lower than might be desirable for San Diego projects because of the need to transition from a low density existing residential neighborhood to medium densities. Evaluation criterion five directs staff to consider what level of housing will the City gain in return for giving up industrial land and the potential for middle-income jobs on that land.

In addition, due to the proximity to the existing residential neighborhood, the new University Park residents will be able to access existing community resources, such as schools and libraries, and the development augments existing community resources with more public open space, a large grocery store and venues for public events. Concern has been expressed in San Diego that collocation projects which are surrounded by industrial areas would not be able to access necessary community resources. Project requirement 3 would require projects to address the feasibility and cost of providing these community facilities.

II. Long Island City Core

Zoning Initiative Summary

Located in the center of the New York region and five minutes from Midtown Manhattan by subway, Long Island City the area’s traditional base of industrial and distribution firms has broadened to include offices, services and institutions as the city's economic activity has diversified during the past half-century. The New York Department of City

Planning rezoned this area to allow, in addition to existing low density light manufacturing, ministerial development of mixed residential and commercial uses including office buildings with large, efficient floor plates.

The goal of the zoning is to foster reinvestment and redevelopment that takes advantage of Long Island City's excellent public transit access and its supply of large, underdeveloped properties. Several under built sites, containing at least 50,000 square feet of space, provide development opportunities near area subway stations. The rezoning effort, combined with additional city and state initiatives to develop more attractive streetscapes, renovate subway stops, improve the flow of traffic and provide new targeted tax and economic development incentives, lays a strong foundation to support Long Island City's continued growth and enhance its distinct sense of place.

Relevance to San Diego and Compliance with Proposed Criteria

Long Island City is an example of an older industrial area that still houses some viable manufacturing and industrial uses that is prime for residential and high intensity office development due to a high level of urbanization and public transit connections. The highly urbanized development pattern of the area is a constraint on its potential for industrial employment use. This issue is considered in evaluation criterion 3.

Although ministerial development is not an option that the City is considering, New York's experimentation with mixed industrial and residential is an interesting example of collocation in a highly urban area. Some of San Diego's older industrial districts might be able to accommodate this type of urban mixed use, with corporate headquarter and industrial office. Residential development that would constitute a loss of development opportunity in sections of the city that are attractive to key industrial clusters is discouraged by the threshold criteria. However, in areas where key industrial clusters are not currently locating because of existing office development, small parcel size, traffic and community character, residential development could generate a more vibrant and attractive business climate than waiting for new industrial development.

Residential development could also assist with traffic in these areas, a major factor in decreasing San Diego's attractiveness as a business location. Existing transit connections' contribution to an area's desirability for residential development is addressed in project requirement 2 and evaluation criterion 1. Neither affordable housing nor community facilities are addressed directly by New York's zoning initiative, as would be required by requirements 1 and 3.

III. Baltimore, Maryland, Johns Hopkins Project

Project Summary

A project currently being constructed in Baltimore, Maryland, is adding a biotech center on the edge of a residential neighborhood. The site, within a redevelopment area adjacent to Johns Hopkins University, primarily contains blighted single-family residential uses.

The plan includes office use, biotech, ground floor retail, and mid-rise housing stepping down to lower density housing near the neighborhood edge to create a smooth transition. The project aims to revitalize a blighted area with new jobs, better connections to a large institutional neighbor and substantially change the image of the existing neighborhood. Historic preservation is a key component. Street design encourages alternative modes of transportation and a future commuter rail station and shuttle service through the neighborhood are proposed.

Relevance to San Diego and Compliance with Proposed Criteria

The Johns Hopkins project is unusual in that it is adding biotech uses to a previously residential area in an attempt to revitalize the residential neighborhood. This is the opposite of the major concern San Diego, which is that collocation of industrial and residential development would decrease future industrial development potential. The John Hopkins project adds previously unanticipated industrial development, which would meet the threshold industrial preservation requirements, as well as evaluation criteria two and four.

The neighborhood is also being completely re-characterized to transform a blighted rail corridor into a greenway, implement smart growth policies, and create a revitalized residential community. These facets of the project would be evaluated by criteria one, three, and four. Unlike Baltimore, there is no demand to utilize industrial areas for residential uses.

This project is an example of how industrial collocation can be used to design a new image for a community while preserving as much as possible historic structures and the homes of existing residents. Affordable housing is not a key component of the project. However, this is an important consideration in San Diego and the affordable housing contribution of all proposed collocation projects would be evaluated based on project requirement 1. Since the residential portion of the project replaces previously existing units there is no additional impact on community facilities.