Creating the Urban Environment

How Do You Get the Ball Rolling?

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Why Is Urban Development So Difficult?

Infill urban development is like finishing a puzzle with pieces from a different puzzle.
The Major Challenges for Pioneering Urban Developers

- Designing right product in the right location
- Lack of product type experience
- Unrealistic projections
- Trying to do too much too soon
- Lack of Equity, Development Financing, and Buyer Financing
- Working with neighborhoods
What Makes Great Urban Cities?

Distinct identifiable areas
Density
Central Gathering Places
Walkability / Urban Transportation
Youth
Commerce
Culture
Sense of Safety
The Balanced Urban City
Poor Use Transitions
Phoenix Attributes

- ASU Downtown 12,000 / 19,000 Students
- Light Rail – Ridership Exceeding Estimates
- Gen Y and Empty Nester Coming Back to Downtown
- Relatively Cheap Land
- Pro-development City
- Positive Neighborhood Activism
Planning and Visioning

Big Ideas
place-making
plaza

Community Core
- The Plaza, a place-making gathering place
- Proximity to Village Club
- Seamless integration across all ages
- Short-range visible edge requirements on all elevations
- Resort landscape character

Enhanced Alleys
- Enhanced architecture and garage doors on alleys
- Massing articulated by miradors
- Parking screen required

Pedestrian Experience
- Paseos lead to the central plaza
- Strong internal relationship of buildings created by massing and courtyards
- Signature plazas and signature landscape features
- Trees soften architectural massing

Sequence of Outdoor Spaces
- Greater emphasis on public spaces
- Homes exemplify indoor/outdoor living
- Landscape defines paseos, courtyards and private spaces

Plaza Site Criteria Map

- Central paseo
- P10 A product
- S3 A product
- One primary signature plaza 60' min. dimension
- P10 B product
- S3 B product
- Provide articulation along the setback line to create architecture/landscape interest.
1998 Artisan Lofts
Wood Frame over Podium
2000 TOD Housing
22/ac Wood Frame Tandem Parking
2004

Everybody Jumped on the Urban Bandwagon with Unrealistic Developments
Cielo Lofts
Cosmopolitan Lofts
Metro Lofts
2002 Live / Work Housing
Artisan Haus
Micro Urban Development
Change is Inevitable

Communities will not stay the same. They are either constantly evolving or in decline. You have to find a balance between respecting the existing fabric and encouraging new development. Gentrification will happen when an area gets popular.
What Makes Communities Great

There has to be a “There” there. People like places that feel authentic and that have a “soul”.

Balanced growth happens organically. Focus on the most promising area(s) first and adjacent areas will improve with time.
Adaptive Re-use
People like to “find” places
Create Activities / Scheduled Events
Designing for the Environment
Narrowing Wide Streets
Activate Unused Alleys
Everything can be done a little better
Conclusions

• An urban area needs to support the pioneers and encourage the champions of development.

• The best city assistance to development is to improve public infrastructure.

• A city has to have the will to evolve. New York, Chicago, Denver, and now Detroit are examples to consider.

• Economic incentives are very helpful for pioneers but must be fair and phased out.