

MYRIAD OF  
WESTERN U.S.  
MIXED-USE  
PROJECTS  
**BLEND FORM  
AND FUNCTION**

# In the Mix



Americans today increasingly strive to spend less money on gas and make a smaller impact on the environment while having everything they need to live, work and play within reach. It's a tall order, but mixed-use construction fits the bill—offering everything from luxury condos stacked on top of restaurants to high-end retail intertwined with entertainment venues and corporate offices sharing land with public institutions.

BY JOANNA MASTERSON



Much of the western United States, with its sprawling cities and booming populations, has proven to be ripe for mixed-use activity. Billion-dollar and small-scale projects alike are moving forward despite the shaky economy, with developers sometimes electing to place residential components on hold until market conditions improve.

Owners and designers also are focusing on making individual buildings within developments unique, yet unified. Contractors must be ready to work with a variety of materials, manage schedules with phased openings, and take on new leadership roles when it comes to executing plans and solving problems.

help of San Antonio-based Middleman Construction Company. The project consists of a three-story, 100,000-square-foot office building with a 500-space parking garage; a two-story, 92,000-square-foot retail center; and two out-parcel retail buildings located across a new public roadway.

Two landmarks resembling an ancient Roman aqueduct system greet motorists approaching La Arcata, as well as signal that the buildings on either side of the road are tied together. This Tuscan theme continues throughout the development with the use of clay tile roofing, crumbled sandstone masonry, brick pavers,

The Tucson-themed La Arcata development (here and at left) brings retail and office space to the growing northwest part of San Antonio.



MIDDLEMAN CONSTRUCTION (3)

### WAVE OF THE FUTURE

A major factor driving mixed-use construction is population growth and the needs that go along with it. For example, many corporations relocating to San Antonio are putting down roots in the northwest suburbs, where their employees likely will live. With the nation focused on rising energy prices, developers like REOC Partners, Ltd. are zeroing in on what these residents will need by bringing shopping centers, restaurants and offices into the mix.

About a year ago, REOC Partners completed a 10-acre, \$20 million mixed-use development called La Arcata with the

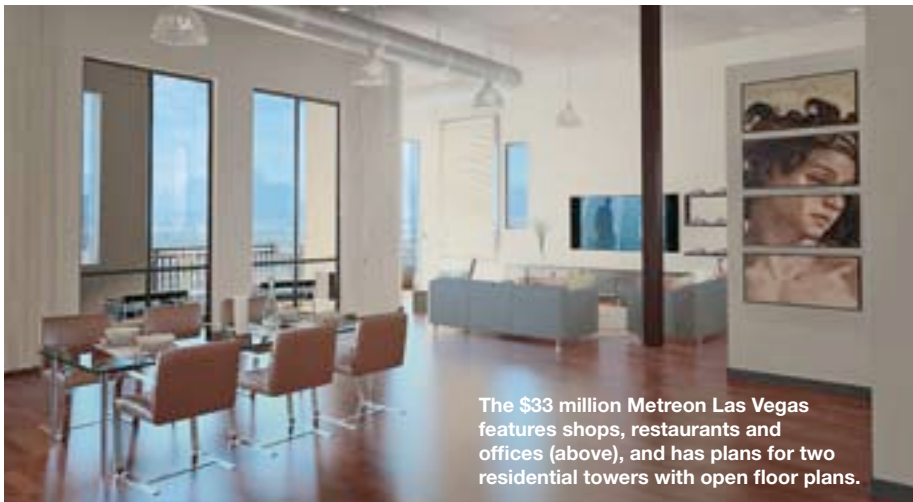
ornamental metal work, stone archways, handcrafted light fixtures and travertine tile floors custom-quarried in Spain.

“San Antonio has been relatively immune from the bust-boom cycle,” says Robert Keeper, vice president of Middleman Construction. “As our city grows and we have less property, these themed properties are going in. The themes differentiate developments and make them more marketable.”

The theme-based features also required Middleman to go beyond the normal services offered by a general contractor. During preconstruction, for example, the firm provided a variety of masonry and EIFS



KENNEDY COMMERCIAL (2)



The \$33 million Metreon Las Vegas features shops, restaurants and offices (above), and has plans for two residential towers with open floor plans.

“With a lot of different elements playing together, each part of the building has a different look,” Breslin says. “It makes it look like individual buildings are stacked on top of one another. It’s a pretty interesting, boutique mixed-use idea.”

Metreon is positioned on 5½ acres just outside the Summerlin master-planned community in an upscale, up-and-coming part of town. There’s easy access to the freeway and the bus line stops nearby.

“Las Vegas is a very mobile town; it’s spread out,” Breslin says. “We’re seeing more people interested in proximity and having things where they can live and work. Mixed-use is the wave of the future, especially in the outer areas of Las Vegas.”

**MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE**

Another mixed-use term proving to be the wave of the future is smart growth (also called new urbanism), which revolves around efficient land and transportation use. According to [www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org)—a subset of the Sustainable Communities Network—principles of smart growth include providing quality housing for residents of all income levels,

samples so the desired Tuscan look could be achieved without going over budget.

“We spent time coordinating upfront with the owner and two architects to make sure we had a blended, seamless design,” Keeper says. “It looked like a single complex and we were charged with making certain that was the final effect.”

Combined with a revision to the foundation design and the utilization of onsite rock millings for site fills and grading, Middleman’s suggested material substitutions helped save the owner approximately \$200,000 without jeopardizing aesthetics.

Appearance also is a key component of Metreon, a \$33 million mixed-use development about to open six miles off the Las Vegas strip. Developed by Kennedy Commercial, the horseshoe-shaped project’s first phase consists of 110,000 square feet of shops, restaurants and offices that display modern southwestern flair. (Slabs have been poured for two five-story residential towers, but this phase is on hold until the condo market rebounds.)

“Each building has three to four different styles of elevation,” says Jack

Breslin, president of Las Vegas-based Breslin Builders, Metreon’s general contractor. “The owner wanted to use a lot of iron, and the metal roofing has an interesting appeal from the street level because of the different look it takes on.”

Raw plaster finishes, split-faced masonry block, glass storefronts, exposed balconies and metal canopies—along with a desert color scheme and native Southwestern landscaping—help bring together the overall look. Yet, no two buildings are exactly alike.



In line with smart growth principles, Pringle Creek offers a variety of residences, including cottages.

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encouraging stakeholder collaboration, integrating mixed land uses, creating walkable urban villages, preserving open spaces and providing a variety of transportation options.

Pringle Creek, a 32-acre mixed-use community still under development in Salem, Ore., hits on all of these points.

“Smart growth has different definitions,” says Don Myers, president of Sustainable Development, the project’s owner. “We wanted to make sure we started with the land itself. Smart growth starts with maintaining trees, enhancing the landscape and treading lightly on the ground as we develop.”

Sustainable Development only plans to build on 20 of the 32 acres, leaving 12 acres open to green infrastructure, such as the revitalized creek, parks, and community greenhouses and orchards. Eighty percent of existing trees have been saved as well.

Additionally, several existing buildings are being restored and repurposed. An old root house is now a community wine cellar, a rehabilitated painters’ hall is now a community center, another structure is poised to become a restaurant, and four other commercial pads could see new life as anything from a wellness center to a bed and breakfast.

All eight commercial lots are aiming for LEED Platinum certification. Recycled concrete, metal and wood are used whenever possible, and all buildings in the community use 100 percent Forest Stewardship Council-certified lumber.

Green elements also infiltrate the residential side of the development, which encompasses 139 lots. (Lots are still available; Myers expects the community to fill out in three to five years.) Homes must meet LEED Silver standards, and 26 dwellings plan to be carbon neutral. All housing materials are sourced within 100 miles of the community.

“We also wanted to use the latest techniques in urban planning,” Myers says. “Each subdivision is designed to facilitate different housing—cottages, row homes, tall houses and attached homes. Smart growth not only looks at the development of land and infrastructure and implementing alternative energy and solid construction practices, but also makes sure there is a diversity of housing price points.”

Located just three miles from downtown Salem, the community is connected to local bus service and bike trails. Biodiesel is sold to members of a co-op, and a community car-sharing program may be available in the future.



Prepping the site for roadwork and landscaping.

NORTH SANTIAMI PAVING

## On the (Western) Map: A Sampling of Mixed-Use Projects Worth Billions

**CityNorth, Phase 1**, Phoenix; Hensel Phelps Construction Co., Sundt Construction. \$300 million of retail, office, residential and parking; full build-out during next 10 years will cost \$1 billion and cover 144 acres.

**CityScape, Phase 1**, Phoenix; Hunt Construction Group. \$150 million of parking, retail, office, boutique hotel and condos; full build-out will cost \$900 million and cover 2.5 million square feet.

**Westgate City Center, Phases 2 & 3**, Phoenix; JE Dunn Construction. \$240 million of residential, retail, office and parking; phased openings will occur through 2011.



▲ **Museum Place**, Fort Worth, Texas; Thos. S. Byrne, Inc., Key Construction, Texas BBL, AUI Contractors. \$200 million of retail, dining, office, condos, hotel and parking on 11 acres.

**SkySong, Phases 1 & 2**, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Sundt Construction. \$200 million of retail, restaurants and technology-focused research offices developed through a private-public partnership; future construction will include a hotel, apartments and parking.

**Park Lane, Block C/D/E/F**, Dallas; Rogers O’Brien/Beck. \$120 million of retail, office, hotel and housing; part of \$500 million, 33-acre project with light rail access.

**Centennial Hills Center**, Las Vegas; Lusardi Construction. \$100 million of retail and medical and professional offices.

**One Park Place**, Houston; D.E. Harvey Builders. \$91 million of apartments, retail, restaurants, parking and a new city park.

**Orchard Town Center**, Westminster, Colo.; Roche Constructors Inc. \$76 million of retail, restaurants and office featuring prairie-style architecture; ties into regional bike trail.

**Arista Place**, Broomfield, Colo.; Pinkard Construction. \$14 million of office, retail, restaurants, entertainment venues, hotel and live/work spaces.

**Steel Building/Fontius Building**, Denver; Milender White Construction. \$13 million historic redevelopment with office and retail space.

**Brick Light Courtyard**, Albuquerque; Enterprise Builders. \$6 million of residential and retail near the University of New Mexico.

MUSEUM PLACE DEVELOPMENT GROUP



All Pringle Creek homes are built to meet LEED Silver standards.

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Stayton, Ore., to help develop a pervious road system that would aid their stormwater management goals.

“This was a whole new concept. Most of the time, you want roadways to be impervious to water,” explains Bill Lulay, an engineer and project manager with North Santiam Paving. “We worked with the team to come up with a base system that would be durable as well as pervious. The roads had to work long term, as well as be strong enough to hold up the short-term construction traffic.”

Lulay says the team settled on a quarry-like rock that performs well in winter weather, yet lets water run through. North Santiam finished paving last spring and recently won a first place award from the Asphalt Pavement Association of Oregon.

Because no one has built a road system that uses both porous asphalt and concrete, the City of Salem was hesitant to take ownership of the streets as it normally



Several buildings in the village center have been restored and repurposed.

PRINGLE CREEK

Myers says the Pringle Creek team has pushed the envelope on every aspect of the project, and nowhere is that more evident than the community’s infrastructure. The narrow, curbless streets exude a private, natural feel. But, there’s more to the road system than aesthetics.

“They might look like nice, narrow streets that slow down traffic, but really the

street system is a stormwater management system,” Myers says. “Our engineers and contractors designed a street system that captures 90 percent of rainwater through bioswales and the ground, and then returns it to the aquifer.”

Sustainable Development and its team of architects and engineers called on North Santiam Paving Co., a design-build firm in

would in residential subdivisions. So, a homeowner’s association was created to own and manage the streets, and the city only took over the community’s sewer and water infrastructure.

North Santiam also served as the project’s site contractor, performing excavation and utility work for the community’s power, sewer, water, telephone and cable needs. The company constructed geothermal lines to heat and cool commercial and residential structures, as well as reclaimed a concrete bridge from a state highway project for use crossing the creek—saving the owner money and incorporating yet another recycled element into the community.

“The owners allowed us to consider different options. We gave them the project they wanted, but sometimes implemented it in a different way,” Lulay says. “A lot of players were involved, and we called on their expertise because if you don’t do it right, it’s a disaster. This was a real team effort.”



NORTH SANTIAM PAVING

The community’s pervious street system captures 90 percent of rainwater.

Joanna Masterson is staff writer of *Construction Executive*.

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