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REAL ESTATE

Infill housing design, public transit gain popularity

Mixed-use, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods like Juhl, under construction in downtown Las Vegas, can improve health and promote a more vital community, a new report suggests.
COURTESY PREFERRED PUBLIC RELATIONS



Denser urban sites take pragmatic approach to living

BY TONY ILLIA

A housing slump and increased commuting costs are fueling more infill design near public transit sites, the American Institute of Architects, a Washington, D.C.-based trade group, reports.

Traditional neighborhoods are designed with homes planted on small lots next to the street and sidewalk. But that is now changing. New developments are increasingly focused on denser urban sites instead, the institute's latest home design trend survey finds.

Much of the design shift stems from the economic downturn. Households are increasingly emphasizing more pragmatic considerations. Durable exterior furnishings and sustainable roofing are now chief considerations.

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"As home values have dropped in most markets, buyers are considering which options will have the most resale value," said Kermit Baker, the institute's chief economist. "Infill locations, with their convenient access to employers, retail, entertainment and public transit options, are proving to be appealing from both a livability and investment perspective."

Mixed-use developments are gaining popularity, but at a slower rate than in recent years due to pre-existing nearby uses. The same holds true for dedicated open space and recreational facilities, the institute reports. But research suggests a design strategy using pedestrian-friendly residences with shops, entertainment and transit nearby can promote a healthier, more vital community. The American Journal of Preventative Medicine reports that green neighborhood design can help mitigate childhood obesity, diabetes, asthma, and hypertension.

CityMark Development's Juhl in downtown Las Vegas features many of those design qualities. It combines pedestrian-friendly residences with retail shops and studios. The six-building complex at 255 E. Bonneville Ave. will include 330 residences, 13 live-work units and 24,000 square feet of shops. CityMark, the firm credited with re-energizing San Diego's Gaslamp District, was selected from a nationwide request-for-proposal process



to develop the 2.38-acre city-owned site. The project is expected to finish in 2009.

PROJECTS

The local chapter of SGI-USA, a national Buddhist group, recently broke ground on a \$1.4 million, 6,000-square-foot community center at Charleston Boulevard and Cahlan Drive in Las Vegas. R&O Construction is the contractor. The building, designed by Indigo Architecture, features multifunction conference rooms. The project is scheduled to finish in the third quarter of 2009.

SR Construction is rebuilding the

4,980-square-foot Paradise Pet Hospital at 1060 E. Flamingo Road in Las Vegas. The refurbished facility, designed by 10 Nine Design Group, uses a fire-resistant wall product called Ecolite. In March, the hospital caught fire and burned down. The new building features a pharmacy, surgery suite, hospitalization area, boarding kennels and outdoor play areas.

Einstein Bros. Bagels opened a 3,000-square-foot restaurant at 372 E. Tropicana Ave. in Las Vegas. The 50-seat breakfast-and-lunch venue, which has a patio area seating 28 people, is the 14th Einstein Bros.

restaurant in the Las Vegas Valley.

Meadow Valley Contractors is performing \$15.6 million in road improvements on Jones Boulevard between Elkhorn Road and Horse Drive, on Grand Teton Drive between Maverick Street and Decatur Boulevard, and on Farm Road between Maverick Street and Leon Avenue. The upgrades will create two travel lanes in each direction and add sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and underground improvements. The project is scheduled to finish in December 2009.

MILLION-DOLLAR DEALS

In-N-Out Burger signed a 20-year, \$1.7 million lease for 3,500 square feet of retail space inside Tropicana Heights Shopping Center at 9640 W. Tropicana Ave. in Las Vegas. Grubb & Ellis | Las Vegas' Chris Godino and David Lipp represented the tenant; Sun Commercial's Cathy Jones represented the lessor; Teepee Development LLC. The reported average rent equals \$2.07 per square foot.

Attorney Keith Bassett & Partners signed a five-year, \$1 million lease for 4,663 square feet of office space inside Molasky Corporate Center at 100 City Parkway, 15th floor, in downtown Las Vegas. Commerce CRG's Keith Bassett represented the lessor, Parkway Center LLC. The reported average rent equals \$3.72 per square foot.

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