

Central West Austin

Mixed Use land uses and zoning options

What is mixed use?

Mixed use is an important topic in cities and planning right now, in Austin and across the country. That's because of a recognition that, while some neighborhoods benefit from being protected from different uses, other neighborhoods thrive on having a lot of different uses close together. This happens at different scales—if uses are mixed within a building, we tend to call that vertical mixed use. If uses are mixed building by building along a city block, we have picked up from some of you the habit of calling that horizontal mixed use.



How does mixed use get represented on the Future Land Use Map?

We have four mixed use Future Land Use categories:

- **Neighborhood Mixed Use:** An area that is appropriate for a mix of neighborhood retail, offices, or professional services and residential and that serves as a focal point for the neighborhood, such as in Hyde Park or North Loop.
- **Mixed Use/Office:** An area that is appropriate for a mix of residential and office uses.
- **Mixed Use:** An area that is appropriate for a mix of residential and non-residential uses and is a focal point for a larger area than a neighborhood, such as the Triangle, Guadalupe, or South Congress.
- **High Density Mixed Use:** An area that is appropriate for an intense mix of residential and non-residential uses and serves the city and beyond, such as downtown.

How do the Mixed Use Future Land Uses get implemented?

Austin's Future Land Uses cannot, by law, directly regulate land development. Instead, they are used to guide the use of other regulations. In this case, those other regulations are zoning districts. Mixed use is unique among most of the other zoning districts we'll be working with, because it is implemented in two parts. First is the **base zoning district**, which is a commercial or office zoning district; the base zoning districts prohibit residential uses. Second is some form of a **mixed use option**. These options come in four varieties. All four work by allowing residential uses on the property, *in addition to* whatever is allowed by the base zoning district. Some of them have additional requirements that must be met in order to get the residential allowance.

- **-MU: Mixed Use Combining District:** Permit any combination of office, retail, commercial, and residential uses within a single development. –MU is the broadest mixed use district. Allows development of all types of residential uses, including single-family residential, multifamily residential, and townhomes.
- **-V: Vertical Mixed Use Combining District:** To allow the development of a vertical mixed use building. Requires at least some commercial uses, as well as affordable housing; has design standards to promote street activity and walkability.
- **MUB: Mixed Use Building:** Permits a mix of uses, including residential, within a single building. Requires pedestrian-oriented features, including windows along the front façade and overhead pedestrian cover extending from the building over the sidewalk. For properties smaller than 1 acre.
- **NUC: Neighborhood Urban Center:** Permits the redevelopment of an existing commercial center or development of a vacant site into a mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-supporting center. For properties between 1 and 40 acres in size.

Each of these can be used with any office or commercial zoning district. However, it is the base zoning district (such as LR, GO, or CS) that determines which Future Land Use category is used:

- **Neighborhood Mixed Use:** NO, LO, LR
- **Mixed Use/Office:** NO, LO, GO
- **Mixed Use:** GO, GR, CS
- **High Density Mixed Use:** CBD, DMU