

# Appendix A

## Shopping Center Conversion Case Studies



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Shopping center conversion tools are rapidly improving through practice, as underperforming suburban retail strips proliferate, due to changing demographics and lifestyle preferences and current economic conditions. Shopping center conversion is the art of converting underperforming retail strips into vital new uses. Examples of shopping center conversion into walkable community centers abound, and can help inform the Antelope Crossing Transformation Project.

(All following citations, unless otherwise noted, are from *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs*, by Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2011.)

### Belmar/Lakewood, Colorado

The Belmar project in Lakewood, Colorado converts an underperforming shopping center into a green downtown. Like the Antelope Crossing shopping center, the center was a retail strip fronted by surface parking, with premium access to major roadways. Lakewood was a residential suburb of Denver that incorporated into a City, and medium density residential uses surround the area. Like Antelope Crossing, Lakewood is near a larger city that is an employment center for its suburban residential development. Belmar's area is just over twice as big as Antelope Crossing, at 104 acres. The conversion began in 2001, and is still underway (pp. 154 - 155).

The converted site is designed as a walkable, mixed-use destination that combines shopping, residences, office and civic uses on a pedestrian-scaled street network. It features interconnected public spaces for civic uses and cultural events, similar to the public greens and community spaces supported in public workshops for the Antelope Crossing Transformation (pp. 155, 169).

The community is proud of the project's commitment to green development: new buildings have green building certifications, site drainage is carefully handled, demolition materials were recycled, and there is a wind farm on one parking lot, as well as a rooftop solar array under construction. (p. 155) Funding for the development was supplemented with a Public Improvement Fee (PIF) and green bonds that are/were available for developments with energy-efficient construction, through the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004. The PIF was passed by a resolution of Lakewood's City Council and was a sales tax that remitted to the site developer rather than the City (pp. 159 – 160).

The site hosts thriving businesses, including a pedestrian-oriented Whole Foods, and a Home Depot built at the eastern edge of the site, where traffic generated creates minimal impediment to pedestrians. To attract smaller, specialty and independent local retailers, the leasing group devised attractive leasing arrangements for them. They arranged for a series of 500 – 1,000 square foot retail / studio spaces



that rent for a discounted rate. These buildings also serve as so-called “parking lot liner” buildings: small retail spaces that front onto the sidewalk, separating the sidewalk from parking, to create a more pleasant pedestrian environment (pp. 165 – 167).

Belmar’s conversion lessons are as follows:

- Rebuild the site by first dividing it with a pedestrian-friendly street network that connects with adjacent streets to form smaller blocks, with more direct pedestrian connections.
- Develop the site in phases, where the mix of uses on each block is subject to adjustment over time.
- Create a continuous network of streets and open spaces activated by events programming.

The site’s retail uses still benefit from its excellent access to major roadways, but it is designed to be walkable, creating a vibrant retail environment (p. 155).



### **Winter Park Village /Winter Park, Florida**

Winter Park Village’s phased development approach to shopping center conversion could inform Antelope Crossing’s development. Winter Park Village converted a 32-acre shopping center into a mix of land uses with a walkable center along a promenade. Like Citrus Heights, the Winter Park community also has a large senior population. Additionally, the scale of development in Winter Park Village is relatively consistent with the scale of development existing around Antelope Crossing, and could help inform development standards for the Antelope Crossing transformation.



Winter Park Village’s phased approach developed out of a community design charrette. The approach called for breaking the site into blocks and gradually introducing additional square footage over time. “Seed” buildings central to the site consist of some of the original construction, along with some new construction, running along a central promenade. This created a center early in the phasing, and other portions of the site are slated for development as economic conditions improve. The central portion is populated with businesses including restaurants, a movie theater, a grocery store, and other retail (pp. 126-129).

Conceived in the 1990s, Winter Park Village is one of the earlier efforts at shopping center conversion and holds some lessons learned. Pedestrians must cross a parking lot to get to the promenade from some outer portions of the site. Some of its outer facades are blank, which does not maximize the shopping center conversions’ potential visual benefit for surrounding properties, among other issues. While the promenade is pleasant, with a fountain and seating, it is too small for civic events.

Nevertheless, Winter Park enjoys better use and is more economically successful than what it replaced. It has provided valuable lessons for later shopping center conversions. Incorporating design features early in development to mitigate parking's impact on pedestrians, such as parking lot liner buildings, and accommodating programmed events, are important elements of more recent shopping center conversions.

