

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

PLANO MUNICIPAL CENTER

1520 K AVENUE

September 2, 2008

ITEM NO.	EXPLANATION	ACTION TAKEN
	<p>6:30 p.m. - Dinner - Planning Conference Room 2E</p> <p>7:00 p.m. - Regular Meeting - Council Chambers</p> <p>The Planning & Zoning Commission may convene into Executive Session pursuant to Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code to Consult with its attorney regarding posted items in the regular meeting.</p> <p>1 Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance</p> <p>2 Approval of Agenda as Presented</p> <p>3 Approval of Minutes for the August 18, 2008, Planning & Zoning Commission meeting.</p> <p>4 General Discussion: The Planning & Zoning Commission will hear comments of public interest. Time restraints may be directed by the Chair of the Planning & Zoning Commission. Specific factual information, explanation of current policy, or clarification of Planning & Zoning Commission authority may be made in response to an inquiry. Any other discussion or decision must be limited to a proposal to place the item on a future agenda.</p> <p><u>CONSENT AGENDA</u></p> <p>5a BT Revised Site Plan: Willow Bend Office Park, Block 1, Lot 4R - General office building on one lot on 3.6± acres located on the south side of Plano Parkway, 400± feet west of Winding Hollow Lane. Zoned Planned Development-190-General Office. Neighborhood #54. Applicant: Mediplex Medical Building Corp.</p> <p>5b EH Final Plat: Parkwood Centre, Block A, Lot 2 - General office building on one lot on 8.2± acres located on the east side of Dallas North Tollway, 280± feet south of Chapel Hill Boulevard. Zoned Regional Commercial. Neighborhood #41. Applicant: Sagebrush Partners, Ltd.</p>	

**5c
EH**

Final Plat: RCCG-HGE Addition, Block A, Lot 1 - Religious facility on one lot on 11.9± acres located on the south side of Parker Road, 900± feet east of Los Rios Boulevard. Zoned Agricultural. Neighborhood #50. **Applicant: RCCG-HGE**

**5d
TF**

Final Plat: Hillary Acres Addition, Block A, Lot 1 - Medical office on one lot on 1.3± acres located on the west side of Shiloh Road, 1,500± feet south of Global Lane. Zoned Research/Technology Center. Neighborhood #68. **Applicant: Healthspace Plano LLC**

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

PUBLIC HEARINGS

**6
TF**

Public Hearing - Replat: East Plano Islamic Addition, Block A, Lot 1 - Religious facility with medical and general offices on one lot on 9.9± acres located at the southeast corner of 14th Street and Star Court. Zoned Research/Technology Center. Neighborhood #69. **Applicant: East Plano Islamic Center**

**7
BT**

Public Hearing - Preliminary Replat: West Park Preston Addition, Block A, Lot 1R - Bank on one lot on 1.6± acres located at the northeast corner of Park Boulevard and Prestwick Road. Zoned Planned Development-68-Retail. Neighborhood #42. **Applicant: Frost Bank**

END OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

**8
KP**

Discussion and Direction: Mixed-Use Policy Statement - Discussion and direction on the development of a mixed-use policy statement that will be adopted as part of the City of Plano Comprehensive Plan. **Applicant: City of Plano**

9

Items for Future Discussion - The Planning & Zoning Commission may identify issues or topics that they wish to schedule for discussion at a future meeting.

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Plano Municipal Center is wheelchair accessible. A sloped curb entry is available at the main entrance facing Municipal Avenue, with specially marked parking spaces nearby. Access and special parking are also available on the north side of the building. Requests for sign interpreters or special services must be received forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting time by calling the Planning Department at (972) 941-7151.

**CITY OF PLANO
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURES**

The Planning & Zoning Commission welcomes your thoughts and comments on these agenda items. The commission does ask, however, that if you wish to speak on an item you:

1. **Fill out a speaker card.** This helps the commission know how many people wish to speak for or against an item, and helps in recording the minutes of the meeting. **However, even if you do not fill out a card, you may still speak.** Please give the card to the secretary at the right-hand side of the podium before the meeting begins.
2. **Limit your comments to new issues dealing directly with the case or item.** Please try not to repeat the comments of other speakers.
3. **Limit your speaking time so that others may also have a turn.** If you are part of a group or homeowners association, it is best to choose one representative to present the views of your group. The commission's adopted rules on speaker times are as follows:
 - 15 minutes for the applicant - After the public hearing is opened, the Chair of the Planning & Zoning Commission will ask the applicant to speak first.
 - 3 minutes each for all other speakers, up to a maximum of 45 minutes. Individual speakers may yield their time to a homeowner association or other group representative, up to a maximum of 15 minutes of speaking time.

If you are a group representative and other speakers have yielded their 3 minutes to you, please present their speaker cards along with yours to the secretary.

- 5 minutes for applicant rebuttal.
- Other time limits may be set by the Chairman.

The commission values your testimony and appreciates your compliance with these guidelines.

For more information on the items on this agenda, or any other planning, zoning, or transportation issue, please contact the Planning Department at (972) 941-7151.

CITY OF PLANO
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

September 2, 2008

Agenda Item No. 5a

Revised Site Plan: Willow Bend Office Park, Block 1, Lot 4R
Applicant: Mediplex Medical Building Corp.

General office building on one lot on 3.6± acres located on the south side of Plano Parkway, 400± feet west of Winding Hollow Lane. Zoned Planned Development-190-General Office. Neighborhood #54.

The purpose of this revised site plan is to add a second level to the existing building and add new parking spaces.

Recommended for approval as submitted.

Agenda Item No. 5b

Final Plat: Parkwood Centre, Block A, Lot 2
Applicant: Sagebrush Partners, Ltd.

General office building on one lot on 8.2± acres located on the east side of Dallas North Tollway, 280± feet south of Chapel Hill Boulevard. Zoned Regional Commercial. Neighborhood #41.

Recommended for approval as submitted.

Agenda Item No. 5c

Final Plat: RCCG-HGE Addition, Block A, Lot 1
Applicant: RCCG-HGE

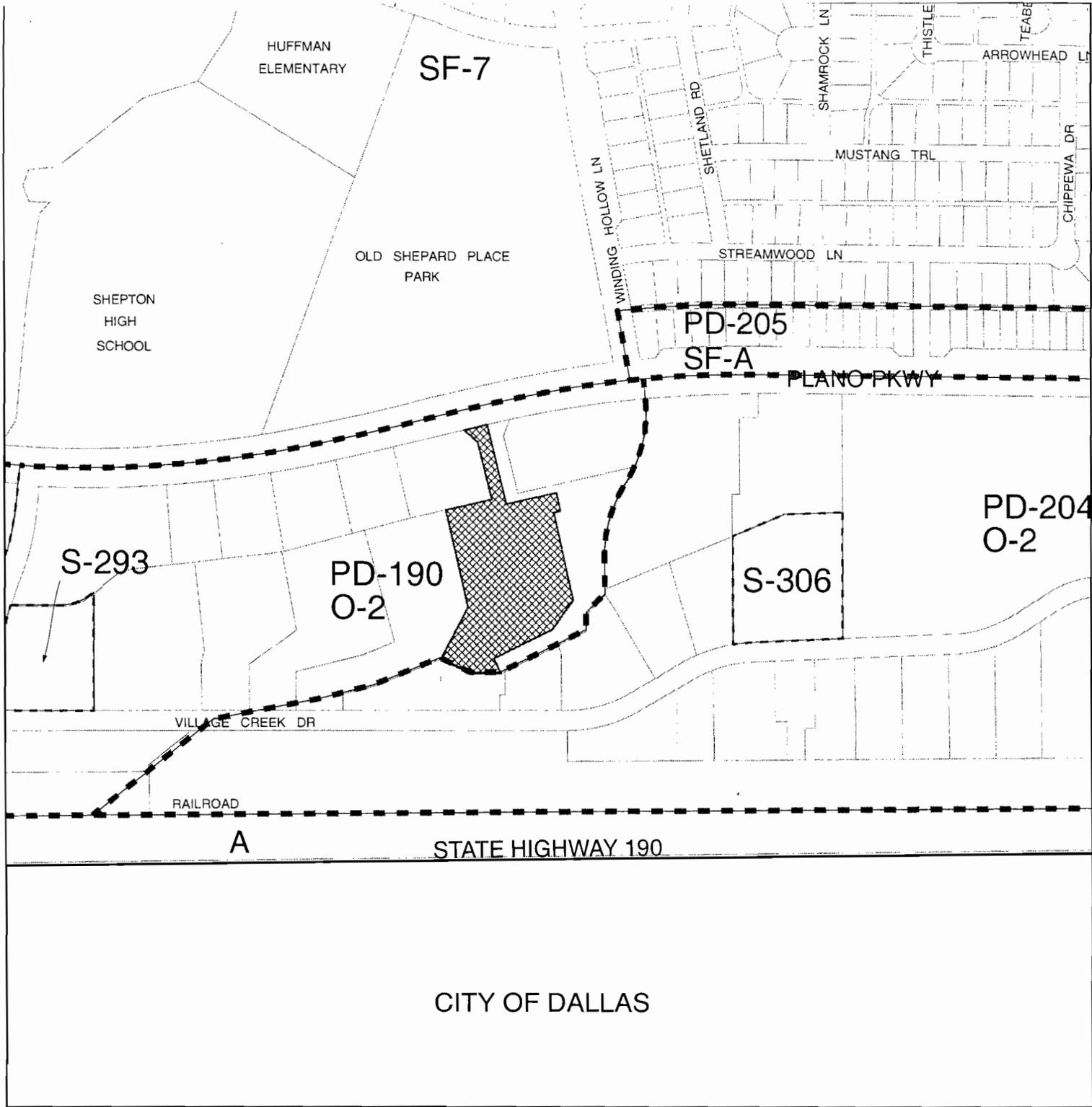
Religious facility on one lot on 11.9± acres located on the south side of Parker Road, 900± feet east of Los Rios Boulevard. Zoned Agricultural. Neighborhood #50.

Recommended for approval as submitted.

Agenda Item No. 5d
Final Plat: Hillary Acres Addition, Block A, Lot 1
Applicant: Healthspace Plano LLC

Medical office on one lot on 1.3± acres located on the west side of Shiloh Road, 1,500± feet south of Global Lane. Zoned Research/Technology Center. Neighborhood #68.

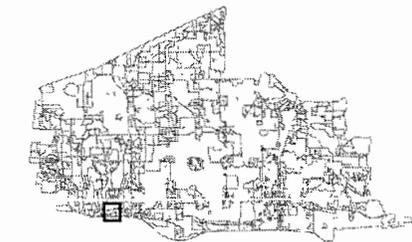
Recommended for approval as submitted.



Item Submitted: REVISED SITE PLAN

Title: WILLOW BEND OFFICE PARK
BLOCK 1, LOT 4R

Zoning: PLANNED DEVELOPMENT-190-GENERAL OFFICE



○ 200' Notification Buffer





CITY OF PLANO SITE PLAN GENERAL NOTES:

- Buildings 6,000 square feet or greater shall be 100% fire sprinkled.
- Fire lanes shall be designed and constructed per city standards.
- Landscaped parking areas shall be designed and constructed per city standards and comply with requirements of the American Society of Landscape Architects and the International Building Code.
- Final site plan shall be provided 3.5 feet off of the property line within the right-of-way unless a sidewalk easement is provided for a meandering sidewalk or an alternative design is approved by the city. Barrier-free ramps, per city standards, shall be provided on sidewalks at all curb crossings.
- Memorial walls, dumpsters, and trash compactors shall be screened in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance.
- All signage contingent upon approval by Building Inspection Department.
- Approval of the site plan is not final until all engineering plans are approved.
- Open storage, where permitted, shall be screened in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance.
- Setback Corner Design Guidelines.
- Setback Guidelines shall comply with minimum standards within Section 5-465 of the Code of Ordinances.
- Please contact the Building Inspection Department to determine the type of construction and occupancy group.
- All electrical transmission, distribution, and service lines must be underground where required.
- Uses shall conform in operation, location, and construction to the following performance standards in Section 3-1300 of the Zoning Ordinance: noise, smoke and particulate matter, odors, motor-vehicle or explosive material, toxic and noxious matter, water, and/or other performance standards.

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

- The purpose of this revised site plan is to add a second level to portions of the existing building and add parking spaces.

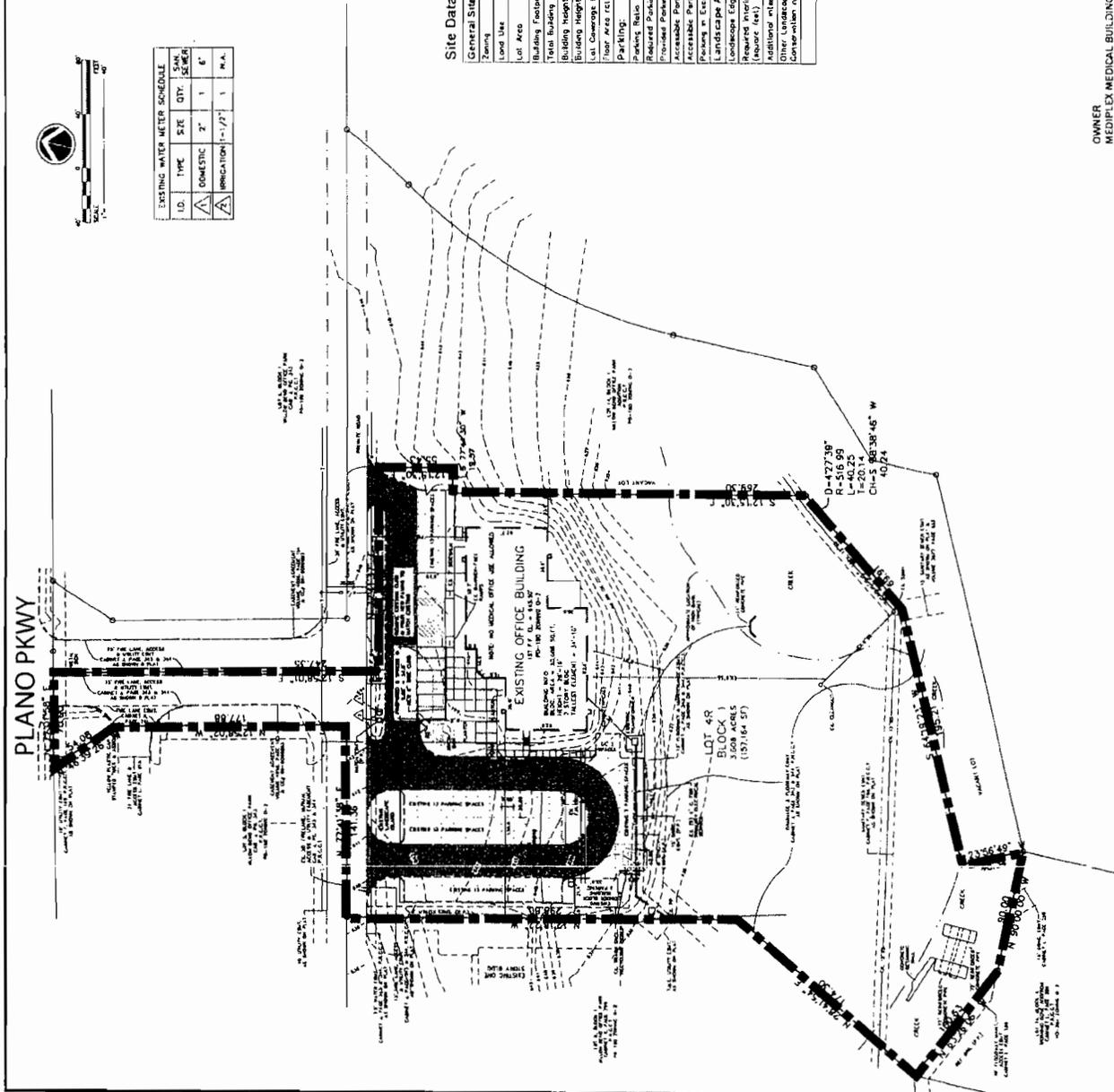


ID	TYPE	SIZE	QTY.	SIZE
A	DOMESTIC	3"	1	8'
A	IRRECONCILIABLE	1-1/2"	1	N/A

Site Data Summary Table

General Site Data:	Lot 4R, Block 1
Zoning	PD-180 / O-2
Land Use	GENERAL OFFICE
Lot Area	157,164 SF / 3,608 AC
Building Footprint Area (square feet)	11,016
Total Building Area (square feet)	20,608
Building Height (# stories)	2
Building Height	34'-10"
Lot Coverage (percent + area)	7.03% / 11,016
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.131
Parking	1-300 SF
Required Parking	63
Provided Parking	63
Accessories Permitted	3
Accessories Required	3
Placing in Excess of 110% of Required Parking	0
Landscaping Area	0
Required Interior Landscaping Area (square feet)	512
Additional Interior Landscaping Area (square feet)	12,716
Other Landscaping Area within the lot including Storm Water Conservation Areas	91,094
Total Landscaping Area	104,324

Permeable Area (not including landscaping or turf areas)	Permeable Pavement	Other Permeable Area within the lot not including landscaping or turf areas	Total Permeable Area
0	0	0	0
11,016	11,016	0	11,016
40,284	40,284	0	40,284
1,680	1,680	0	1,680
52,680	52,680	0	52,680
157,164	157,164	0	157,164
52,680	52,680	0	52,680
52,680	52,680	0	52,680



REVISED SITE PLAN
 LOT 4R, BLOCK 1
 WILLOW BEND OFFICE PARK



AN ADDITION TO THE CITY OF PLANO, COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS
 BEING A 3.608 ACRES TRACT OF LAND LOCATED IN THE WH
 WITT SURVEY ABSTRACT NO. 1006, CITY OF PLANO, COLLIN
 COUNTY, TEXAS.

JULY 13, 2008



OWNER
 MEDIPLEX MEDICAL BUILDING CORP
 AL SEELY
 2300 WILLOW BEND PARKWAY
 PLANO, TEXAS 75093
 PH: 972-248-5100
 FAX: 972-931-6966
 E-MAIL: al.seely@lillibridge.com

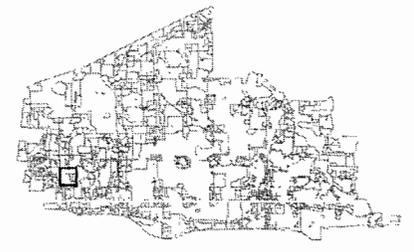
ARCHITECT:
 LILLIBRIDGE
 PHIL TAYLOR
 2300 WILLOW BEND PARKWAY
 PLANO, TEXAS 75093
 PH: 972-248-5100
 FAX: 972-931-6966
 E-MAIL: philip.taylor@lillibridge.com



Item Submitted: FINAL PLAT

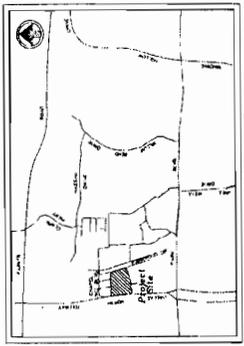
Title: PARKWOOD CENTRE
BLOCK A, LOT 2

Zoning: REGIONAL COMMERCIAL/
DALLAS NORTH TOLLWAY OVERLAY DISTRICT

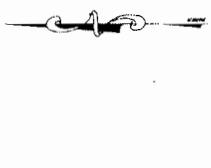


○ 200' Notification Buffer





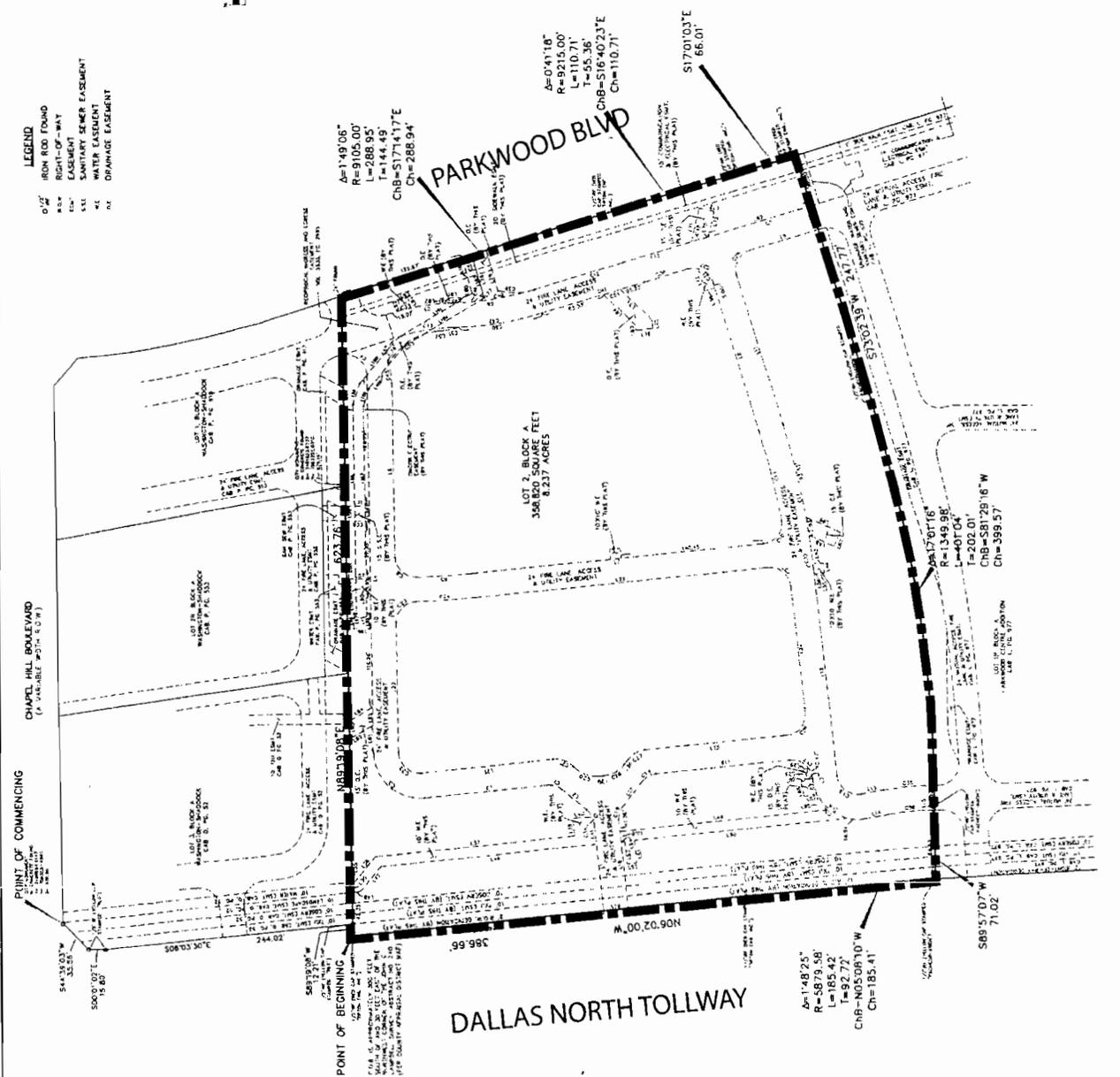
LOCATION MAP
(NOT TO SCALE)



GRAPHIC SCALE
1" = 50'

- LEGEND**
- 0/0" IRON ROD FOUND
 - RIGHT-OF-WAY
 - EASEMENT
 - WATER EASEMENT
 - WATER EASEMENT
 - DRAINAGE EASEMENT

NO.	AREA	PERCENT	AREA	PERCENT	AREA	PERCENT
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FINAL PLAT

PARKWOOD CENTRE
LOT 2, BLOCK A

8.237 ACRES OUT OF
18.301 ACRES OF
JBI PARTNERS
CITY OF PLANO
COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS

SELLING A PORTION OF THIS PROPERTY BY METES AND BOUNDS IS A VIOLATION OF THE CITY SUBDIVISION IMPROVEMENT AND STATE PLATTING ACTS WHICH REQUIRE THIS PROJECT TO BE FILED AND WITHDRAWN OF RECORDS AND RECORDING CERTIFICATES.

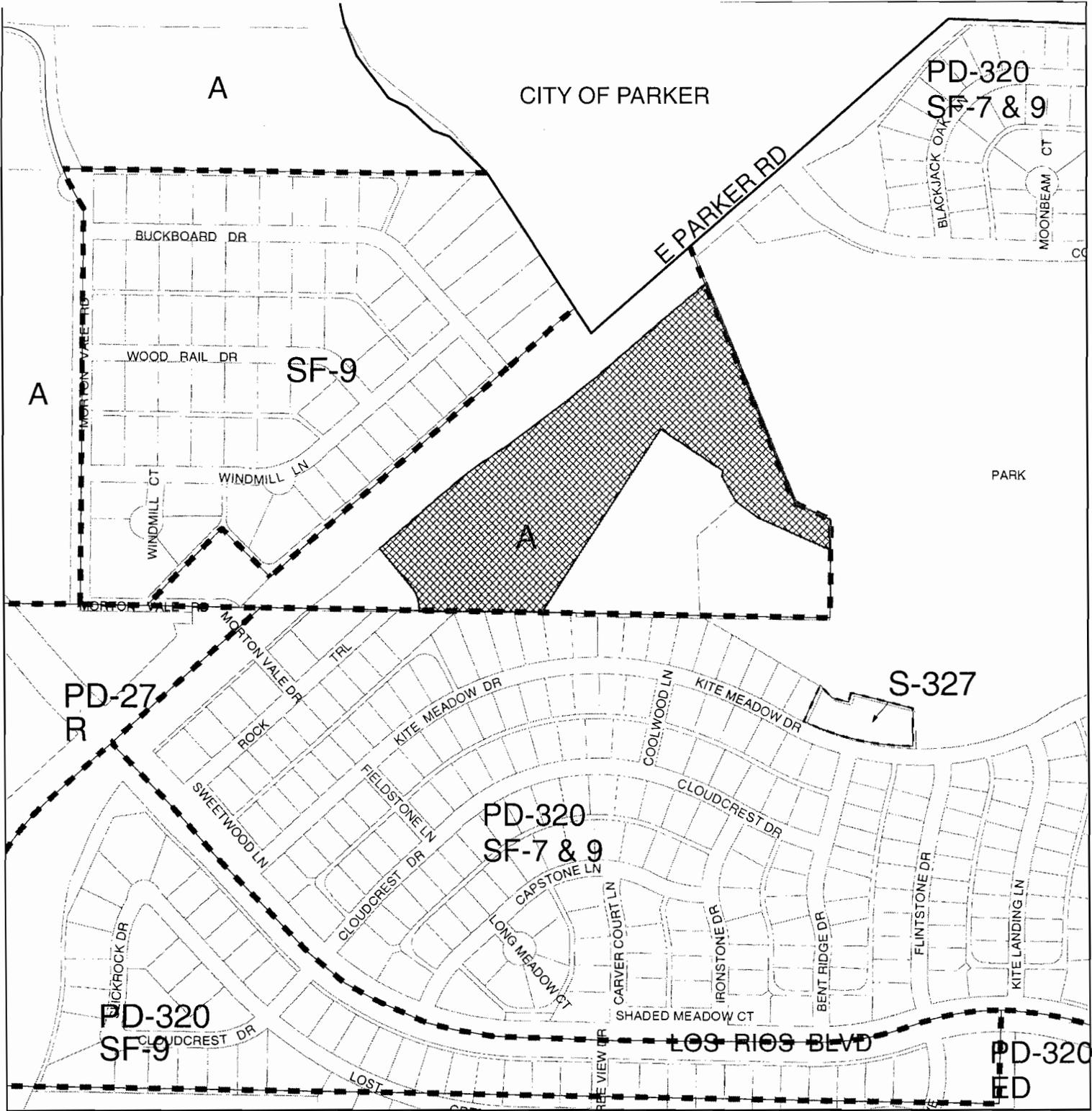
SAGEBRUSH PARTNERS, LTD.
3323 Spring Valley, Suite 220
Dallas, Texas 75240

JBI PARTNERS
18301 Quorum Drive, Suite 200 B
Addicks, Texas 75001

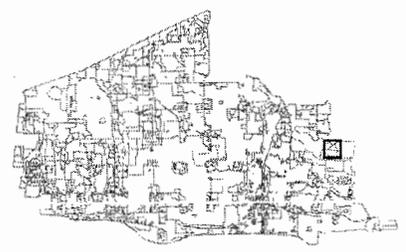
OWNER
(972)861-1608

SURVEYOR/ENGINEER
(972)3748-7676

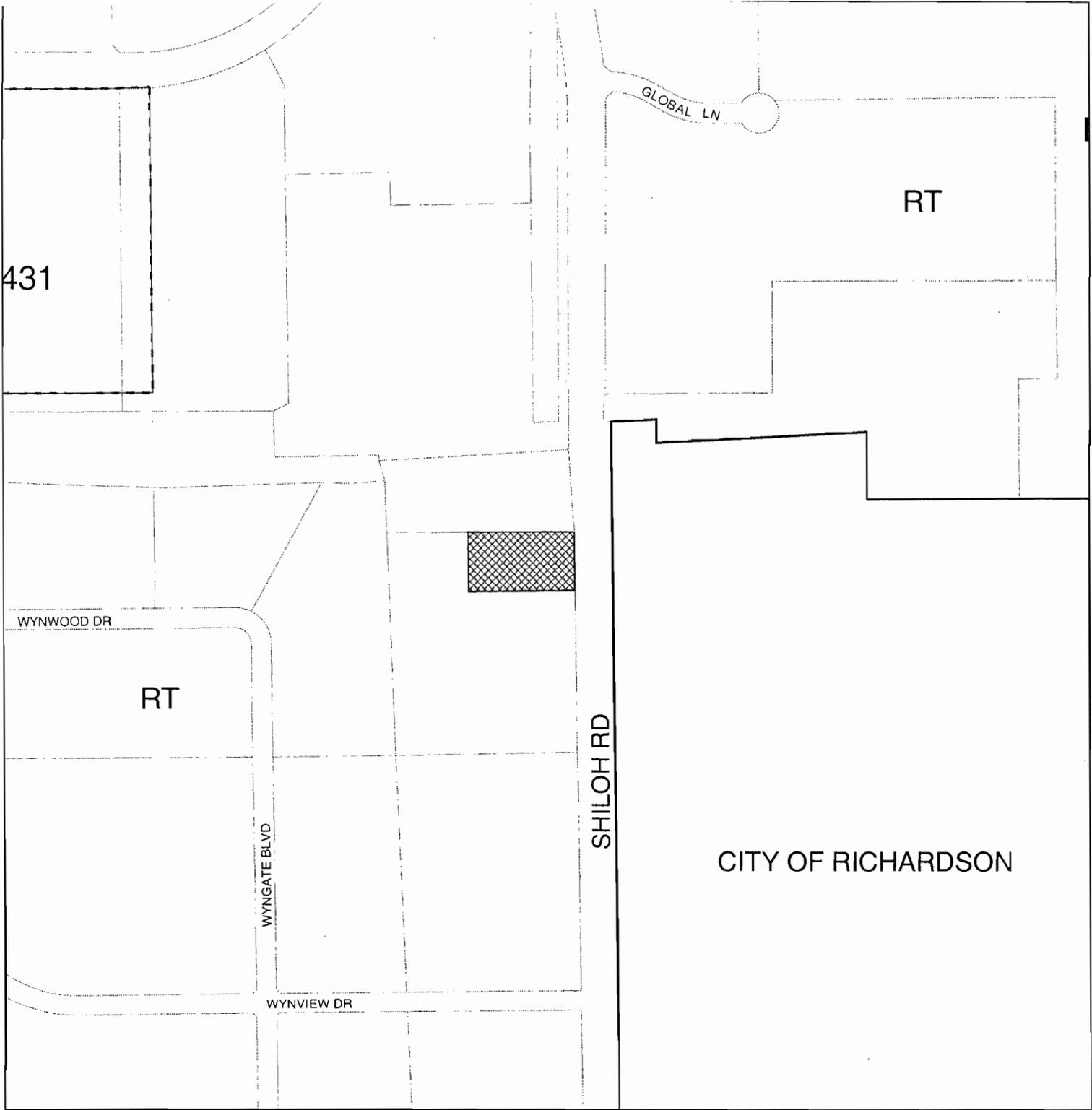
1 LOT
Revised August 18, 2008
August 06, 2008



Item Submitted: FINAL PLAT
 Title: RCCG-HGE ADDITION
 BLOCK A, LOT 1
 Zoning: AGRICULTURAL

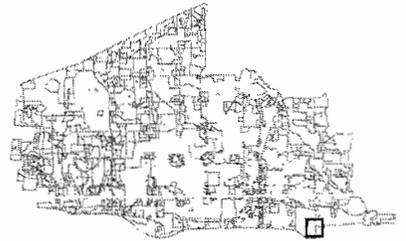


○ 200' Notification Buffer



Item Submitted: FINAL PLAT

Title: HILLARY ACRES ADDITION
BLOCK A, LOT 1



Zoning: RESEARCH/TECHNOLOGY CENTER/
190 TOLLWAY/PLANO PARKWAY OVERLAY DISTRICT

○ 200' Notification Buffer

CITY OF PLANO
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

September 2, 2008

Agenda Item No. 6

Public Hearing - Replat: East Plano Islamic Addition, Block A, Lot 1

Applicant: East Plano Islamic Center

DESCRIPTION:

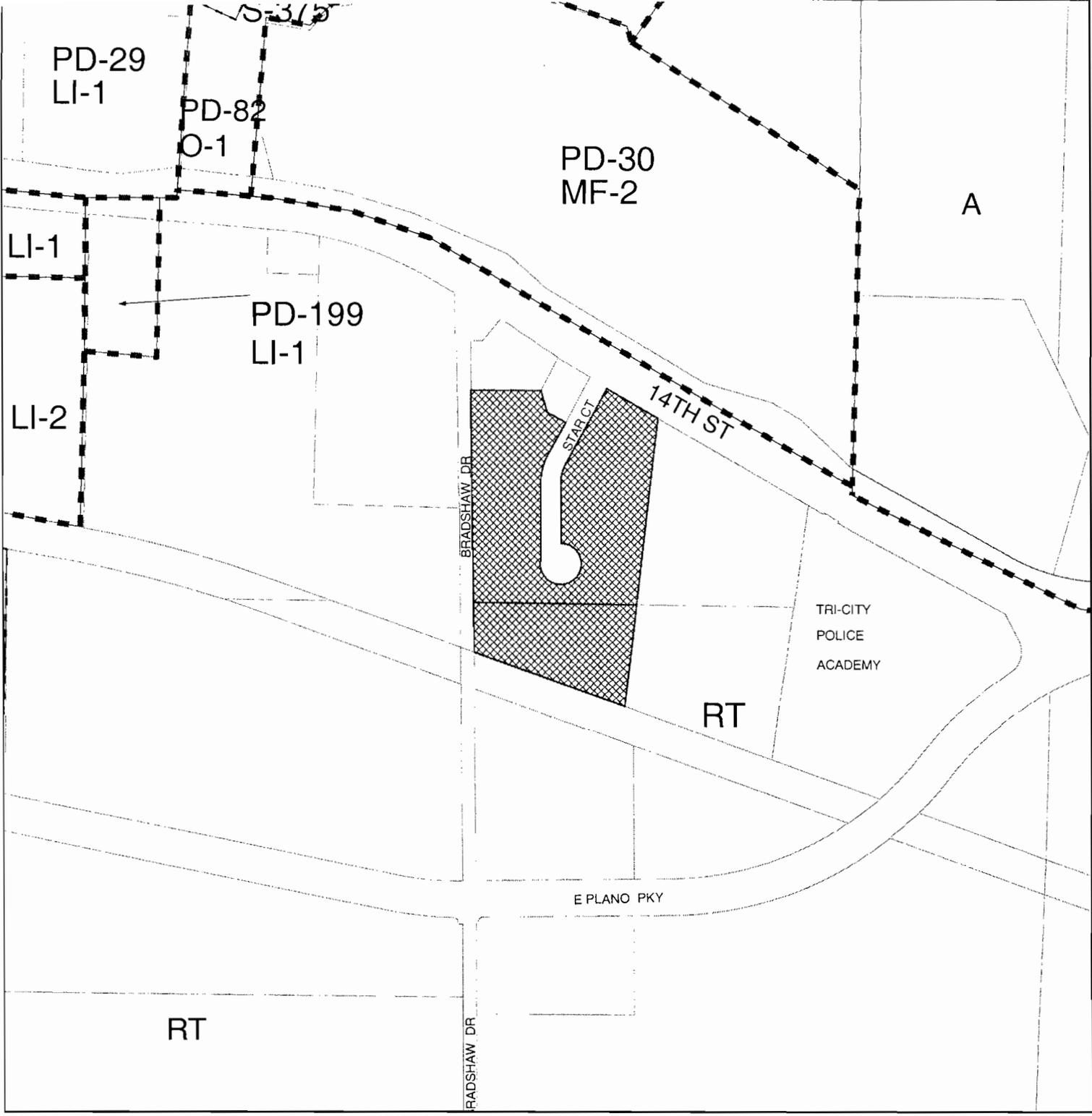
Religious facility with medical and general offices on one lot on 9.9± acres located at the southeast corner of 14th Street and Star Court. Zoned Research/Technology Center. Neighborhood #69.

REMARKS:

The purpose of this replat is to dedicate easements necessary for development.

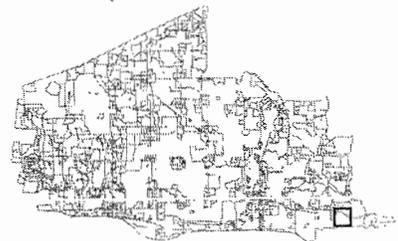
RECOMMENDATION:

Recommended for approval as submitted.



Item Submitted: REPLAT

Title: EAST PLANO ISLAMIC ADDITION
BLOCK A, LOT 1



Zoning: RESEARCH/TECHNOLOGY CENTER

○ 200' Notification Buffer



CITY OF PLANO
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

September 2, 2008

Agenda Item No. 7

Public Hearing - Preliminary Replat: West Park Preston Addition, Block A, Lot 1R

Applicant: Frost Bank

DESCRIPTION:

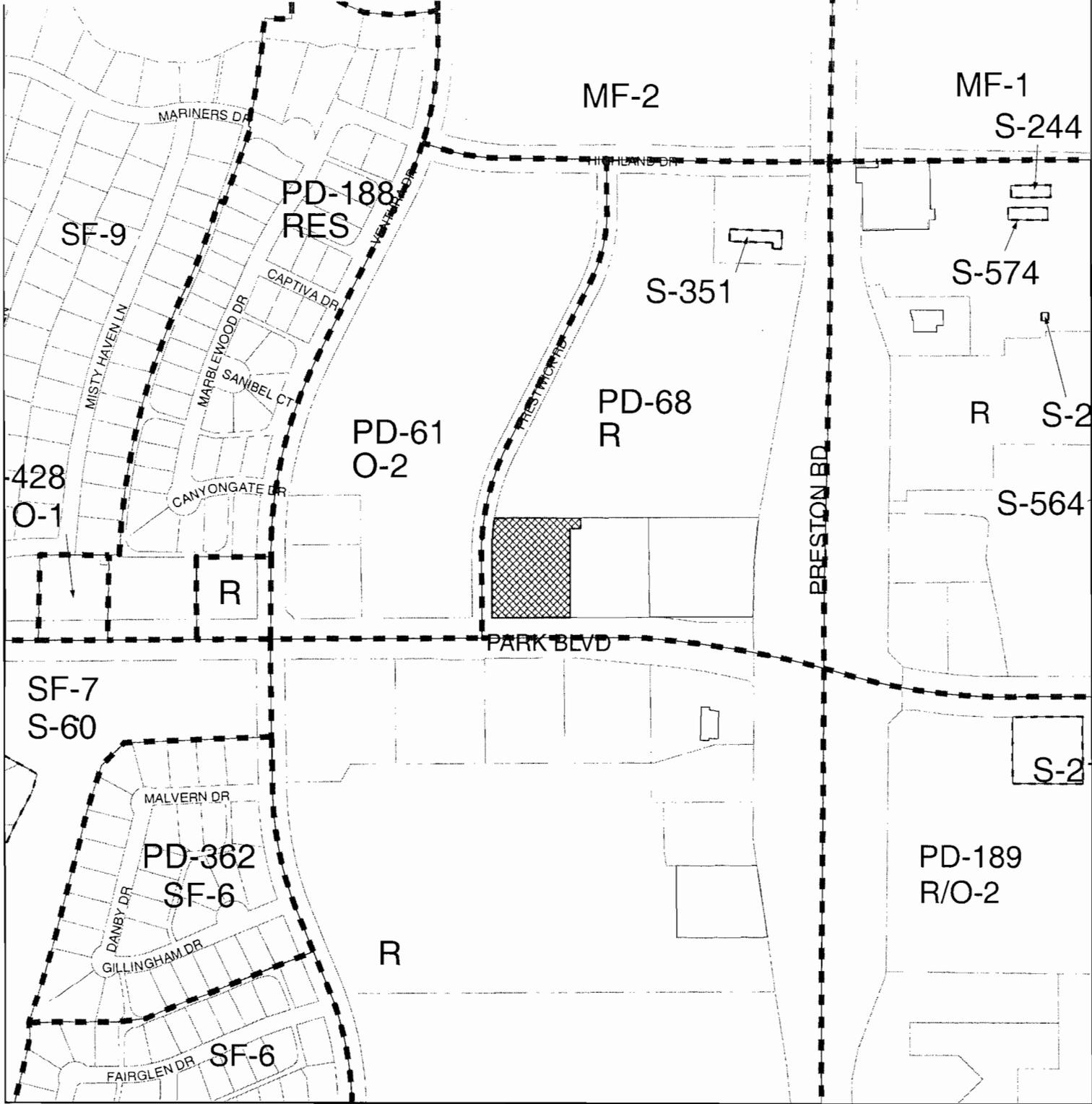
Bank on one lot on 1.6± acres located at the northeast corner of Park Boulevard and Prestwick Road. Zoned Planned Development-68-Retail. Neighborhood #42.

REMARKS:

The purpose of the preliminary replat is add and relocate easements.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

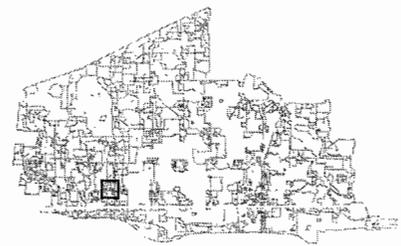
Recommended for approval subject to additions and/or alterations to the engineering plans as required by the Engineering Department.



Item Submitted: PRELIMINARY REPLAT

Title: WEST PARK PRESTON ADDITION
BLOCK A, LOT 1R

Zoning: PLANNED DEVELOPMENT-68-RETAIL/
PRESTON ROAD OVERLAY DISTRICT



○ 200' Notification Buffer



CITY OF PLANO
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

September 2, 2008

Agenda Item No. 8

Discussion and Direction: Mixed-Use Policy Statement

Applicant: City of Plano

Description:

Discussion and direction on the development of a mixed-use policy statement that will be adopted as part of the City of Plano Comprehensive Plan.

Background:

At previous meetings the Planning & Zoning Commission had an opportunity to visit several mixed-use sites in Plano and surrounding cities. They also had the opportunity, in a joint work session with the Plano City Council, to meet with three mixed-use developers to hear more about the benefits of mixed-use and some of the challenges unique to this type of project. Building on these discussions, this meeting will focus on defining what exactly is mixed-use (especially the critical elements of a mixed-use project). The Commission will also be asked to begin discussions about where this type of development is appropriate.

Some of the benefits to mixed-use that have been discussed require implementation of certain key design elements, without which the project may not be true "mixed-use." Information and questions for additional consideration are included below:

1. Are the uses integrated vertically and horizontally in a fine grain?
2. Does the arrangement of buildings, streets, and open space create public spaces?
3. Is there a grid of streets?
4. Is the development sufficiently compact so that people may travel among major uses without being tempted to move their car? Is the development walkable?
5. Do the physical arrangement and design of the buildings support the pedestrian environment? Are the sidewalks wide? Do they form a comprehensive network?

6. Does the design of the street space include street trees, light standards, benches, and other amenities to give the development a human scale?
7. How is parking handled? Is there garage parking? Is more than 50% of the parking in garages with the remaining surface parking located behind buildings and/or reserved for future development?
8. Are the uses varied but complementary/synergistic? For example, do the retail (nonresidential) parts of the development enhance the livability or the residential parts?
9. Are the buildings oriented towards the street?
10. Are buildings tightly connected or grouped?
11. Are the buildings flexible so that as demand changes, the uses can change too?
12. If the development is phased, is the first phase sufficient to stand on its own as a mixed-use development?
13. Density/Massing of buildings is critical to creating successful mixed-use projects. What percentage of the buildings are one story? What percentage is three to four stories?

With regard to location (i.e. where are mixed-use developments appropriate?), some considerations are:

1. Is the location suitable for each use (residential, office, retail, etc.), if they were to be considered alone, outside of a mixed-use setting?
2. Is the development a natural fit with the larger surrounding area? Are there opportunities for the project to connect with surrounding developments?
3. How would the project relate to/impact surrounding development (especially existing neighborhoods)? Are the juxtaposition of uses complementary (i.e. are residential areas buffered from more intensive uses)?

Two additional references from the Urban Land Institute are attached to provide additional information:

1. "Ten Principles for Developing Successful Town Centers"
2. "Higher-Density Development: Myth and Fact"

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff respectfully requests the Planning & Zoning Commission consider the attached information in preparation for further discussion at the work session about the characteristics of mixed-use development, especially those that distinguish it from multi-use and other types of development.

Higher-Density Development

MYTH AND FACT



Urban Land
Institute

Higher-Density Development

MYTH AND FACT



**Urban Land
Institute**

About NMHC—the National Multi Housing Council

NMHC is a national association representing the interests of the nation's larger and most prominent apartment firms. NMHC advocates on behalf of rental housing, conducts apartment-related research, encourages the exchange of strategic business information, and promotes the desirability of apartment living. One-third of Americans rent their housing, and 15 percent of all U.S. households live in an apartment home.

Doug Bibby, *President*

About Sierra Club

The Sierra Club's members are 700,000 of your friends and neighbors. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. The Club is America's oldest, largest, and most influential grass-roots environmental organization.

Larry Fahn, *President*

About AIA—the American Institute of Architects

Since 1857, the AIA has represented the professional interests of America's architects. As AIA members, more than 75,000 licensed architects, emerging professionals, and allied partners express their commitment to excellence in design and livability in our nation's buildings and communities. Members adhere to a code of ethics and professional conduct that assures the client, the public, and colleagues of an AIA-member architect's dedication to the highest standards in professional practice.

Douglas L. Steidl, *President*

About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

ULI—the Urban Land Institute is a nonprofit educational and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land to enhance the total environment. ULI sponsors educational programs and forums to encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences; initiates research that anticipates emerging land use trends and issues and proposes creative solutions based on that research; provides advisory services; and publishes a wide variety of materials to disseminate information on land use and development. Established in 1936, the Institute has more than 24,000 members and associates from more than 80 countries representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines.

Richard M. Rosan, *President*

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ULI Project Staff

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Urban Development

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Washington, D.C.

Debra Stein

President

GCA Strategies

San Francisco, California

Representatives of the partners who directed this work:

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Doug Bibby, *President*

Kimberly D. Duty, *Vice President of Communications*

Michael H. Tucker, *Director of Communications*

Sierra Club

Neha Bhatt, *Associate Washington Representative*

Challenge to Sprawl Campaign

Eric Olson, *Associate Washington Representative*

Challenge to Sprawl Campaign

AIA

David T. Downey, *Managing Director*

AIA Center for Communities by Design

ULI

Richard M. Haughey, *Director, Multifamily Development*

As this country continues to grow and change, communities are left to figure out where all these new people will live, work, and shop. New markets are emerging for real estate that offers a more convenient lifestyle than is offered by many low-density sprawling communities. New compact developments with a mix of uses and housing types throughout the country are being embraced as a popular alternative to sprawl. At the core of the success of these developments is density, which is the key to making these communities walkable and vibrant.

Unfortunately, in too many communities higher-density mixed-use development is difficult to construct because of zoning and building codes that favor low-density development with segregated uses and because of opposition from the community. This publication looks at several myths surrounding higher-density development and attempts to dispel them with facts to help dismantle the many barriers such developments face.

ULI is proud to have partnered with NMHC—the National Multi Housing Council, Sierra Club, and AIA—the American Institute of Architects on this publication. This convergence of interests highlights the importance each organization has placed on finding a new development pattern that better fits the needs of a growing and changing country.

ULI will continue to provide forums in which all stakeholders can explore and debate issues about growth and development patterns and how properly designed and incorporated density can be used to accommodate new growth. ULI will conduct research, produce well-balanced information, and identify best practices on issues relevant to growth and density. Through these efforts, ULI and its partners hope to play a role in planning a better development pattern for the future.

Harry H. Frampton III
Chair

Myth and Fact

America's changing population is creating demand for new types of homes, offices, and retail outlets. Better solutions are needed to the challenges created by changing demographics, dwindling natural areas, smog and public health issues, shrinking municipal budgets, and traffic congestion. Communities that answer these challenges will develop into great places to live.

America will add roughly 43 million new residents—that's 2.7 million new residents per year—between now and 2020.¹ America is not only growing but also undergoing dramatic demographic changes. The traditional two-parent household with children is now less than a quarter of the population and getting proportionally smaller. Single-parent households, single-person households, empty nesters, and couples without children make up the new majority of American households, and they have quite different real estate needs.² These groups are more likely to choose higher-density housing in mixed-density communities that offer vibrant neighborhoods over single-family houses far from the community core.

The fact is that continuing the sprawling, low-density haphazard development pattern of the past 40 years is unsustainable, financially and otherwise. It will exacerbate many of the problems sprawl has already created—dwindling natural areas and working farms, increasingly longer commutes, debilitating traffic congestion, and harmful smog and water pollution. Local officials now realize that paying for basic infrastructure—roadways and schools, libraries, fire, police, and sewer services—spread over large and sprawling distances is inefficient and expensive.

Most public leaders want to create vibrant, economically strong communities where citizens can enjoy a high quality of life in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner, but many are not sure how to achieve it. Planning for growth is a comprehensive and complicated process that requires leaders to employ a variety of tools to balance diverse community interests. Arguably, no tool is more important than increasing the density of existing and new communities, which includes support for infill development, the rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures, and denser new development. Indeed, well-designed and well-integrated higher-density development makes successful planning for growth possible.

Density refers not only to high-rise buildings. The definition of density depends on the context in which it is used. In this publication, *higher density* simply means new residential and commercial development at a density that is higher than what is typically found in the existing community. Thus, in a sprawling area with single-family detached houses on one-acre lots, single-family houses on one-fourth or one-eighth acre are considered higher density. In more densely populated areas with single-family houses on small lots, townhouses and apartments are considered higher-density development. For many suburban communities, the popular mixed-use town centers being developed around the country are considered higher-density development.

Most land use professionals and community leaders now agree that creating communities with a mix of densities, housing types, and uses could be the antidote to sprawl when implemented regionally. And across the country, the general public is becoming more informed and engaged in making the tough land use choices that need to be made while understanding the consequences of continuing to grow as we have in the past. Many have also come to appreciate the “place-making” benefits of density and the relationship between higher-density development and land preservation. Media coverage of the topic of growth and development has also evolved. Past media coverage of growth and development issues was often limited to the heated conflicts between developers and community residents. Many in the media are now presenting more thoughtful and balanced coverage, and several editorial boards support higher-density developments in their communities as an antidote to regional sprawl.

Yet despite the growing awareness of the complexity of the issue and growing support for higher-density development as an answer to sprawl, many still have questions and fears related to higher-density development. How will it change the neighborhood? Will it make traffic worse? What will happen to property values? And what about crime? Ample evidence—documented throughout this publication—suggests that well-designed higher-density development, properly integrated into an existing community, can become a significant community asset that adds to the quality of life and property values for existing residents while addressing the needs of a growing and changing population.

Many people’s perception of higher-density development does not mesh with the reality. Studies show that when surveyed about higher-density development, those interviewed hold a negative view. But when shown images of higher-density versus lower-density development, people often change their perceptions and prefer higher density.³ In a recent study by the National Association of Realtors® and Smart Growth America, six in ten prospective homebuyers, when asked to choose between two communities, chose the neighborhood that offered a shorter commute, sidewalks, and amenities like shops, restaurants, libraries, schools, and public transportation within walking distance. They preferred this option over the one with longer commutes and larger lots but limited options for walking.⁴ The 2001 American Housing Survey further reveals that respondents cited proximity to work more often than unit type as the leading factor in housing choice.⁵ Such contradictions point to widespread misconceptions about the nature of higher-density development and sprawl. Several of these misconceptions are so prevalent as to be considered myths.

To some degree, these myths are the result of memories people have of the very-high-density urban public housing projects of the 1960s and 1970s that have been subsequently deemed a failure. Somehow, the concept of density became associated with the negative imagery and social problems of depressed urban areas. The reality

is that complex interrelated factors such as the high concentration of poverty and poor educational and employment opportunities combined to doom the public housing projects. Even very-high-density housing can be practical, safe, and desirable. For example, the mixed-income apartments and condominiums or luxury high rises in New York and Chicago—some of the safest and most expensive housing in the country—prove that density does not equal an unsafe environment.

The purpose of this publication is to dispel the many myths surrounding higher-density development and to create a new understanding of density that goes beyond simplistic negative connotations that overestimate its impact and underestimate its value. Elected officials, concerned citizens, and community leaders can use this publication to support well-designed and well-planned density that creates great places and great communities that people love. With the anticipated population growth and continuing demographic and lifestyle changes, consensus is building that creating communities with a mix of densities, housing types, and uses will be both necessary and desirable.

Higher-Density Development: Myth and Fact is the sixth in a series of Urban Land Institute myth and fact booklets. The series is intended to clarify misconceptions surrounding growth and development. Other topics covered have included transportation, smart growth, urban infill housing, environment and development, and mixed-income housing.

Higher-Density Development: Myth and Fact examines widespread misconceptions related to higher-density development and seeks to dispel them with relevant facts and information. Although the benefits of higher-density development are often understated, so are the detrimental effects of low-density development. The advantages and drawbacks of higher-density development are compared throughout this publication with the alternative of low-density development. In the process, misconceptions regarding low-density development are also addressed.

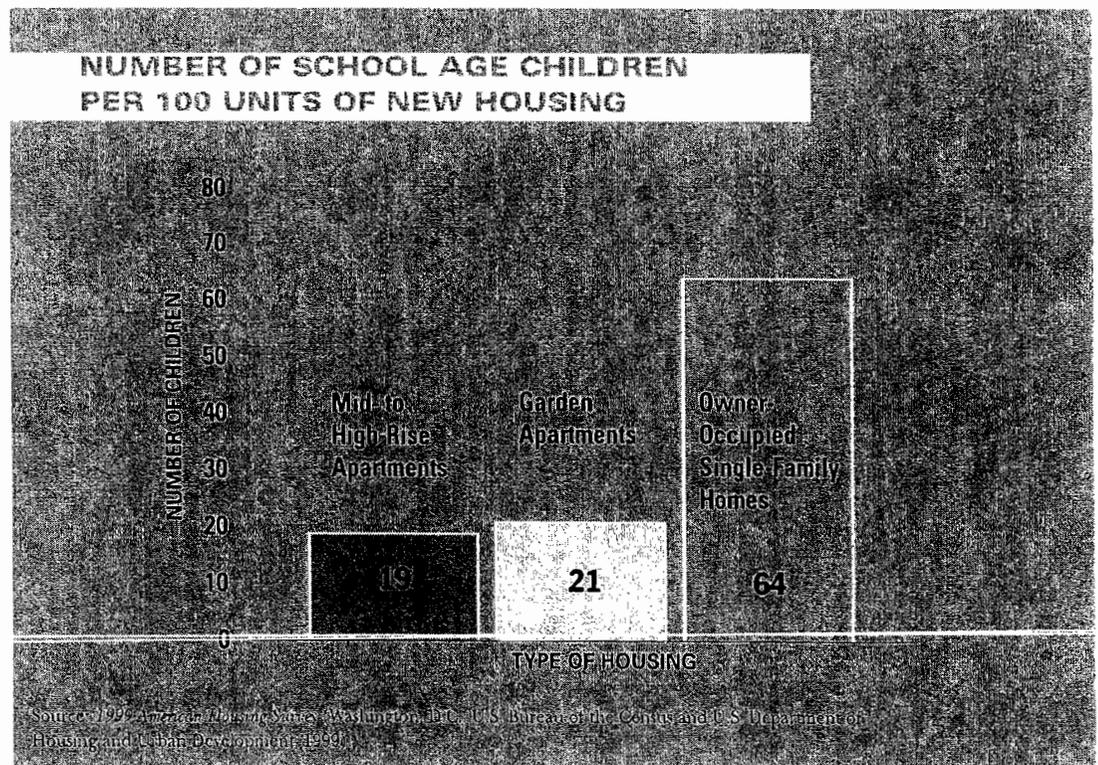
MYTH

Higher-density development overburdens public schools and other public services and requires more infrastructure support systems.

FACT

The nature of who lives in higher-density housing—fewer families with children—puts less demand on schools and other public services than low-density housing. Moreover, the compact nature of higher-density development requires less extensive infrastructure to support it.

Public officials across the country struggle to afford the infrastructure needed to support sprawling development. A recent study analyzing the costs of sprawl estimated that more than \$100 billion in infrastructure costs could be saved over 25 years by pursuing better planned and more compact forms of development.⁶ The issue has transcended political parties and ideologies and has become an issue of basic fiscal responsibility. California's Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has criticized "fiscally unsustainable sprawl,"⁷ while Michigan's Democratic Governor Jennifer Granholm has noted that sprawl "is hampering the ability of this state and its local governments to finance public facilities and service improvements."⁸



Progressive and conservative groups have identified sprawl as a real problem. Charter of the New Urbanism states that “placeless sprawl” is an “interrelated community building challenge.”⁹ Conservative groups have concluded that “sprawl is in fact a conservative issue” with “conservative solutions” and that “sprawl was in large part created through government intervention in the economy.”¹⁰

Indeed, numerous government policies over the last half century have led to and supported sprawl. Historically, federal spending for transportation has subsidized large-scale highway construction over other modes of transportation. Financing policies from the Federal Housing Administration have promoted suburban subdivisions across the nation. Large lot exclusionary zoning has forced the artificial separation of land uses, leading to large distances between employment centers, housing, and retail. But many government agencies now realize they cannot afford to continue providing the infrastructure and public services that sprawl demands.

Not only do local governments absorb much of the cost of more and more roadways, profoundly longer water and electrical lines, and much larger sewer systems to support sprawling development, they must also fund public services to the new residents who live farther and farther from the core community. These new residents need police and fire protection, schools, libraries, trash removal, and other services. Stretching all these basic services over ever-growing geographic areas places a great burden on local governments. For example, the Minneapolis/St. Paul region built 78 new schools in the suburbs between 1970 and 1990 while simultaneously closing 162 schools in good condition located within city limits.¹¹ Albuquerque, New Mexico, faces a school budget crisis as a result of the need to build expensive new schools in outlying areas while enrollment in existing close-in schools declines.

PROFILE



The Market Common Clarendon

Located on the site of a former parking lot and occupying roughly ten acres of land, the Market Common in Clarendon, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C., provides 300 Class A apartments, 87 townhouses, 100,000 square feet of office space, and 240,000 square feet of prime retail space. Located within walking distance of the Orange Line of Washington's extensive subway system, residents can leave their cars parked while they take public transit to work. They can also walk to a Whole Foods grocery store adjacent to the highly successful development. Prominent national retailers occupy the ground level of the building, and structured parking is provided. The compact development form of the Market Common promotes walking, biking, and using public transit over autos. The apartments are attractive to young professionals without children, lessening the impact on the county's

Located within walking distance of a Washington, D.C., Metro stop, the Market Common provides housing, offices, retail, and restaurants on a ten-acre site that was formerly a parking lot.

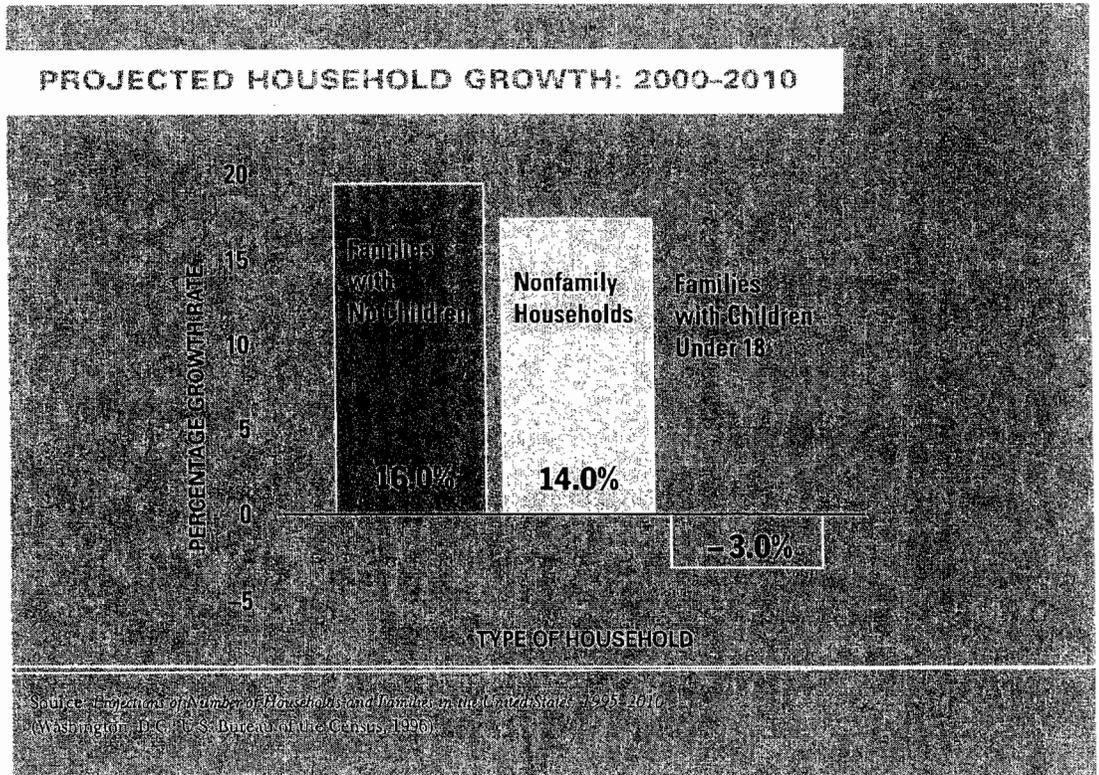
school system. The project is the result of a successful collaboration of McCaffery Interests, Arlington County officials, and citizens of the Clarendon neighborhood; it has spurred new retail, office, and residential construction on neighboring sites.

Unfortunately for local governments, a growing body of evidence shows that sprawling development often does not pay enough property tax to cover the services it requires. A study conducted for a suburban community outside Milwaukee found that public services for an average-price single-family house in that community cost more than twice as much as the property taxes paid by the homeowner.¹²

One reason for the disparity between property tax revenue and the cost of public services is expenditures for public schools. Low-density suburbs and exurban areas generally attract families with more school-age children. In fact, single-family developments average 64 children for every 100 units, compared with only 21 children for every 100 units of garden apartments and 19 children for every 100 units of mid- to high-rise apartments.¹³ The reason is that multifamily housing attracts predominantly childless couples, singles, and empty nesters.

And although apartment renters do not pay property tax directly, apartment owners do. Apartments are also usually taxed at a higher commercial real estate tax rate,¹⁴ so a typical mixed-use development with retail, office, and apartments may subsidize the schools and other public services required by residents of low-density housing in the same community. This phenomenon is further exacerbated because many multifamily developments and retail and office establishments pay for their own trash disposal, shuttle buses, and security.

Reducing the distance between homes, shops, and offices also reduces the cost of public infrastructure. According to one of many studies, “The public capital and operating costs for close-in, compact development [are] much lower than they [are] for fringe, scattered, linear, and satellite development.”¹⁵ And many of these studies do not take into account the advantages created by making public transit



more feasible as well as making delivery of basic services like mail delivery, trash collection, and police and fire protection more efficient.

Another emerging body of research suggests that higher-density development is an important component of economic development initiatives and helps attract new employers. “Information economy” is a term used to define the growing industries based on the economics of the Internet, information goods, and intellectual property. Workers in this field are known as “knowledge workers,” and many believe they are the future of the American economy. These workers are comfortable with the latest technology and, because their skills are transferable, choose their jobs based on the attributes of the town or city where they are located. They seek out vibrant, diverse urban centers that offer access to technology, other knowledge workers, and lifestyle.¹⁶

The economic development game has changed. Employers now follow the workers rather than the other way around. Therefore, communities that focus on providing a high quality of life with the energy and vitality created by urban centers will be much more likely to attract these highly prized, talented, and productive workers than communities of faceless sprawl. Companies that understand the appeal of these communities are making relocation decisions with these workers in mind. Studies have shown that increasing employment density increases labor productivity, generally by reducing commuting times.¹⁷

Thus, introducing higher-density projects into a community will actually increase that community’s revenue without significantly increasing the infrastructure and public service burdens. Blending apartments into low-density communities can help pay for schools without drastic increases in the number of students. Diversifying housing options and adding amenities like shops and offices close by will improve the quality of life and attract businesses and people that will strengthen the community’s economic stability. Increasing density provides a real economic boost to the community and helps pay for the infrastructure and public services that everybody needs.

PROFILE

Highlands’ Garden Village

Built on the site of the Elitch Gardens amusement park in Denver, Highlands’ Garden Village is a walkable, transit-linked community and a financially viable model for environmentally responsible infill development. New York-based developer Jonathan Rose & Companies developed single-family homes, townhouses, seniors’ and multifamily apartments, cohousing, offices, and retail space on the site. At the center, a historic theater and carousel from the original amusement park are being transformed



JONATHAN ROSE & COMPANIES

Highlands’ Garden Village reuses some structures from the amusement park previously located on the site. The compact development, combined with a variety of uses and housing types, uses public infrastructure more efficiently than low-density sprawling development.

into a community performing arts center and a walking labyrinth. Berkeley, California-based Calthorpe Associates designed a plan that put new homes on three sides of a square-shaped village and a commercial “main street” on the fourth. Restaurants, studios, and shops line the street with live/work townhouses and offices above, giving residents the opportunity to live, work, and shop in the same community. The proximity of amenities, location near downtown, and convenience of public bus lines encourage people to walk and reduce travel costs.

MYTH

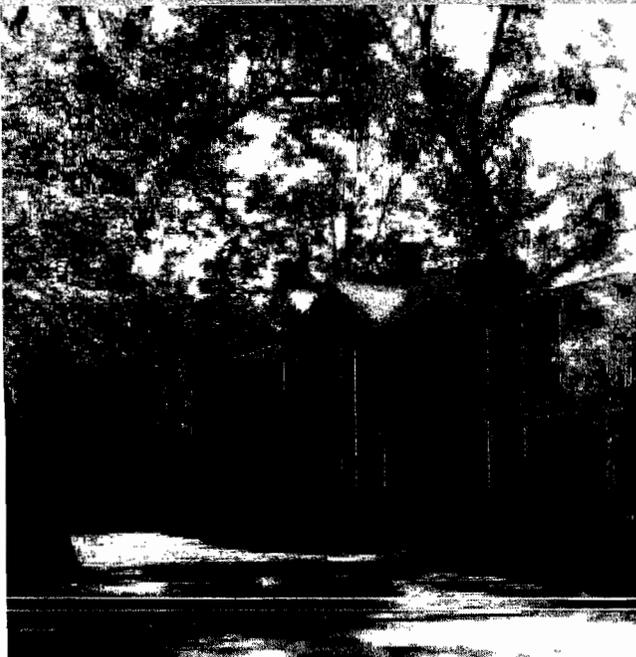
Higher-density developments lower property values in surrounding areas.

FACT

No discernible difference exists in the appreciation rate of properties located near higher-density development and those that are not. Some research even shows that higher-density development can increase property values.

The precise value of real estate is determined by many factors, and isolating the impact of one factor can be difficult. Although location and school district are the two most obvious determining factors of value, location within a community and size and condition of the house also affect value. Several studies have examined whether multifamily housing has any impact on the value of nearby single-family detached houses. These studies have shown either no impact or even a slightly positive impact on appreciation rates.

PROFILE



Haile Plantation

Haile Plantation is a Gainesville, Florida, icon. Although it is denser than surrounding communities, the values of homes in Haile Plantation are often higher than the values of homes in neighboring lower-density communities, because the traditional neighborhood design employed there makes Haile Plantation more desirable and valuable. Beginning with the master plan in 1979, Haile Plantation has been called one of the first new urbanist communities in the country. Developers Bob Rowe and Bob Kramer in conjunction with the Haile Plantation Corporation developed the 1,700-acre site to include more than 2,700 units, ranging from single-family homes to townhouses and garden apartments. The sense of community has only grown with the expansion of the development to include a town center, a village green, trails, civic uses, and offices. Indeed, it is density and diversity that together add value to this popular Florida community.

Homes in Haile Plantation sell for more than neighboring homes because prospective buyers view the traditional neighborhood design as a valuable and desirable amenity.

HAILE PLANTATION CORPORATION

For instance, one study by the National Association of Home Builders looked at data from the American Housing Survey, which is conducted every two years by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It found that between 1997 and 1999, the value of single-family houses within 300 feet of an apartment or condominium building went up 2.9 percent a year, slightly higher than the 2.7 percent rate for single-family homes without multifamily properties nearby.¹⁸

Another study, commissioned by the Family Housing Fund in Minnesota, studied affordable apartments in 12 Twin Cities neighborhoods and found “little or no evidence to support the claim that tax-credit family rental developments in [the] study eroded surrounding home values.”¹⁹ And a long-term study by Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies published in 2003 also confirms that apartments pose no threat to nearby single-family house values, based on U.S. Census data from 1970 to 2000.²⁰

Not only is there compelling evidence that increased density does not hurt property values of nearby neighbors: researchers at Virginia Tech University have concluded that over the long run, well-placed market-rate apartments with attractive design and landscaping actually increases the overall value of detached houses nearby.²¹ They cite three possible reasons. First, the new apartments could themselves be an indicator that an area’s economy is vibrant and growing. Second, multifamily housing may increase the pool of potential future homebuyers, creating more possible buyers for existing owners when they decide to sell their houses. Third, new multifamily housing, particularly as part of mixed-use development, often makes an area more attractive than nearby communities that have fewer housing and retail choices.²²

PROFILE

Echelon at Lakeside

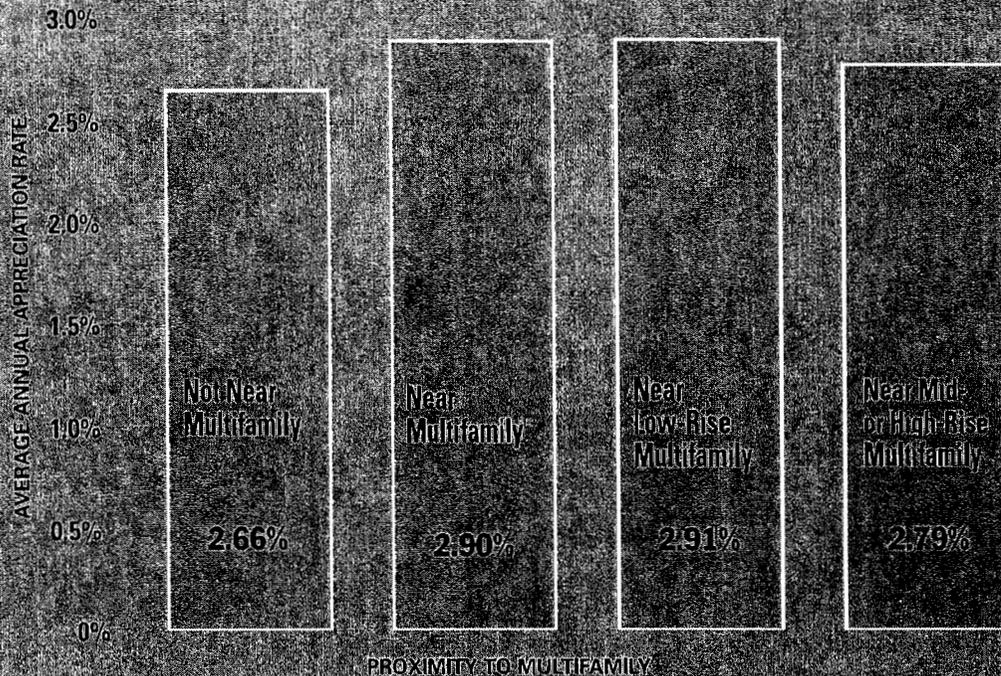
Echelon at Lakeside is the only multifamily development in an upscale, master-planned single-family suburban neighborhood of Lakeside on Preston in Plano, Texas, a suburb of Dallas. Florida-based developers Echelon Communities, LLC, overcame initial community opposition from area residents through high-quality innovative design. The award-winning architecture blends seamlessly with the surrounding neighborhood’s traditional style. Larger-than-normal floor plans, individual entries, and attached garages combine to mirror the grand



The award-winning apartments at Echelon at Lakeside were designed to blend with the neighboring luxury homes.

estates in the surrounding communities. Although street elevations make the buildings appear to be one single-family home, they actually house several multifamily units. Memphis-based architects Looney Ricks Kiss used five building types and three building styles. All units include high-quality interior finishes; community amenities include a resort-style pool, fitness facility, clubroom, business and conference center, and full-time concierge.

AVERAGE ANNUAL APPRECIATION FOR SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOMES BY NEARNESS TO MULTIFAMILY BUILDINGS



Source: NAHB computations based on data from the *American Housing Survey*, 1997 and 1999, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1997 and 1999.

Concerned citizens should use the entitlement process to demand high-quality development in their communities while understanding that density and adjacent property values are not inversely related. Higher-density real estate developers and investors in higher-density real estate need to appreciate the fact that most Americans' wealth is held in their home equity. Therefore, changes in property values can have very real consequences to existing property owners. Likewise, homeowners would benefit from knowing that developers make a substantial financial commitment when investing in new higher-density projects. This investment is an incentive to make the project successful, which can give the community leverage in working with the developer. Such interrelated and overlapping economic interests among these stakeholders make it all the more likely that a mutually beneficial agreement can be reached. Such an agreement can result in a project that enhances the existing community, ensures the appreciation of residents', developers', and the local government's financial interests, and addresses the needs of current and future residents of the community and region.

MYTH

Higher-density development creates more regional traffic congestion and parking problems than low-density development.

FACT

Higher-density development generates less traffic than low-density development per unit; it makes walking and public transit more feasible and creates opportunities for shared parking.

Most people assume that higher-density development generates more traffic than low-density development and that regional traffic will get worse with more compact development. In fact, the opposite is true. Although residents of low-density single-family communities tend to have two or more cars per household, residents of high-density apartments and condominiums tend to have only one car per household.²³ And according to one study using data from the National Personal Transportation Survey, doubling density decreases the vehicle miles traveled by 38 percent.²⁴

PROFILE

Mockingbird Station

The residents of Mockingbird Station in Dallas, Texas, are far less dependent on their cars, because they have a whole host of amenities at their doorstep. Dallas developer Ken Hughes partnered with Denver-based Simpson Housing Group to create the ten-acre pedestrian-oriented urban village, which includes 216 loft apartments, an eight-screen film center and cafe, more than 90 shops and restaurants, offices, an enclosed public plaza, and parking, all directly linked to the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) light-rail system. Mockingbird Station provides direct platform access to DART trains, which offer residents an eight-minute commute to Dallas's central business district and a single train connection to the Dallas Convention Center, Reunion Arena, and other downtown entertainment. The new village is also immediately adjacent to the campus of Southern Methodist University and within walking distance of the university's new stadium and sports center. RTKL created architecture reminiscent of historic train stations but with a modern twist to the materials and detailing. Although only limited driving is necessary, a parking garage is provided but placed out of sight and underground. The myriad materials, architectural styles, and amenities create a vibrant transit-oriented community.



Residents of Mockingbird Station can leave their cars in the garage and take an eight-minute train ride to downtown Dallas; they can also walk to shops, offices, and a movie theater.

The reason is that higher-density developments make for more walkable neighborhoods and bring together the concentration of population required to support public transportation. The result is that residents in higher-density housing make fewer and shorter auto trips than those living in low-density housing.²⁵ Condominium and townhouse residents average 5.6 trips per day and apartment dwellers 6.3 car trips per day, compared with the ten trips a day averaged by residents of low-density communities. (A trip is defined as any time a car leaves or returns to a home.)

Increasing density can significantly reduce dependency on cars, but those benefits are even greater when jobs and retail are incorporated with the housing. Such mixed-use neighborhoods make it easier for people to park their car in one place and accomplish several tasks, which not only reduces the number of car trips required but also reduces overall parking needs for the community. But if retail uses are to survive, they must be near households with disposable income. Having those households within walking distance of the shops builds in a market for the stores. One study indicates that in some markets, 25 to 35 percent of retail sales must come from housing close to shops for the shops to be successful.²⁶

P R O F I L E

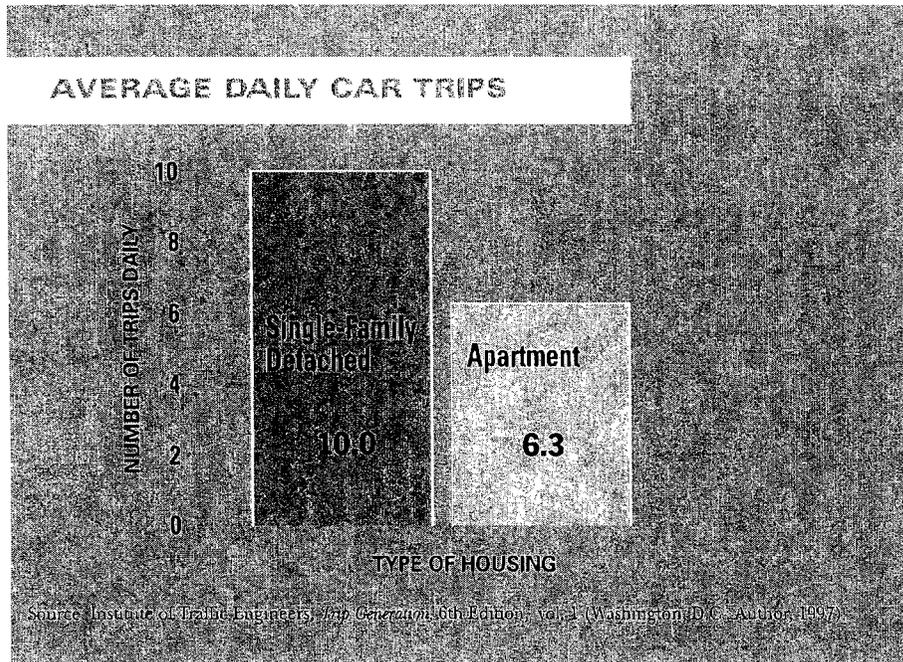
Southwest Station

The Southwest Metro Transit Commission is a small suburban bus system near Minneapolis that serves downtown Minneapolis and numerous other employment and recreation centers, including Minnesota Twins baseball games. The American Public Transportation Association calls it the "best small system in the country." In an effort to capitalize and expand on the success of the system, the commission has encouraged transit-oriented development at its bus stops. In Eden Prairie, Minnesota, the commission completed a bus depot and five-story parking garage on 22 acres of excess right-of-way. In 2001, it started selling land around the transit complex for retail and residential development. Restaurants, shops, and more than 250 apartments, condominiums, and townhouses soon followed. The new development generated revenue for the commission, new public transit riders, affordable convenient housing, and a suburban lifestyle with the amenities usually afforded only to city dwellers.



The Southwest Metro Transit Commission in suburban Minneapolis runs an award-winning bus system and has encouraged higher-density development around transit stops, like this one at Southwest Station in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

With a typical family now making more car trips for family, personal, social, and recreational reasons than for commuting to work,²⁷ reducing the number of noncommuting trips takes on greater importance in the battle to reduce traffic congestion and parking problems. A case study in Washington, D.C., found that workers in dense downtown Washington made 80 percent of their mid-day trips by foot while suburban workers made 67 percent of their mid-day trips by car.²⁸ Although a suburban office park would never reach the density levels of a downtown area, planners can still reduce the auto dependency of suburban office workers by using some of the same design techniques. Concentrating density around



suburban offices, allowing and encouraging retail and restaurants in and near the offices, and planning for pedestrian and bike access can all reduce the number of lunchtime car trips required by office workers.

Higher-density mixed-used developments also create efficiencies through shared parking. For example, office and residential uses require parking at almost exact opposite times. As residents leave for work, office workers return, and vice versa. In addition, structured parking becomes feasible only with higher-density developments.

Higher-density development also makes public transit more feasible. When a community that includes residences, shops, and offices reaches a certain threshold of density, public transit-shuttles, bus service, trams, or light rail becomes an option for residents. It is estimated that a minimum density of seven dwelling units per acre is needed to make local bus service feasible with an intermediate level of service.²⁹ Light rail needs a minimum density of nine dwelling units per acre to be feasible.³⁰ When a community can take advantage of these options and increase the transportation choices for residents, relief is greater as total car dependency is further broken. Such choices are impossible for low-density developments.

MYTH

Higher-density development leads to higher crime rates.

FACT

The crime rates at higher-density developments are not significantly different from those at lower-density developments.

People sometimes associate density with crime, even though numerous studies show that no relationship exists between the two. A study in Irving, Texas, using geographic information systems and crime statistics, found no link between crime and density. In fact, it found that single-family neighborhoods are “not all associated with lower crime rates.”³¹ Another study conducted by the University of Alaska found no relationship between housing density and crime in Anchorage.³²

PROFILE

Westminster Place

Although today Westminster Place is a thriving, safe community in midtown St. Louis, it was not always the case. The area, approximately 90 acres, was well known by the St. Louis police department for its high rate of violent crime, which led to the area's becoming blighted. McCormack Baron Salazar, a St. Louis-based developer, brought the community back through the addition of higher-density mixed-income housing comprising affordable and market-rate units. The master plan included for-sale and rental housing, garden apartments, townhouses, single-family homes, and even an assisted-living facility for seniors. A new community pool, a bustling retail center, and a magnet school are included as well. The new plan slowed traffic through the community, added landscaping and street and parking lot lighting, and new “eyes on the street,” making it more difficult for criminals to go unnoticed. The area blossomed into a place where people once again feel safe walking. The success of the community spurred the revitalization of surrounding areas.



Increasing the housing density, adding some market-rate housing, and developing a design that slowed traffic and added additional lighting changed Westminster Place from a crime-ridden neighborhood to a thriving, safe community.

PROFILE

East Village

East Village is a small urban revitalization project on the edge of downtown Minneapolis. Before the project was built, the neglected 2.9-acre site contained several deteriorating rental homes, old commercial buildings, and abandoned surface parking lots. The neighborhood wanted to improve the area and the image of one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, Elliot Park. The developers of the project, Central Community Housing Trust and East Village Housing Corporation, developed the new mixed-income housing and commercial community to encourage a sense of community and ownership. East Village now features community green space, pedestrian paths, and neighborhood businesses. Buildings surround the greenway that leads to Elliot Park, a city park with year-round activities and a community center. Brick, bay windows, and French balconies complement historic buildings in the area. In addition, all buildings have multiple entrances to encourage interaction among neighbors. An underground 350-space parking garage frees up space for landscaped areas. This once neglected area has won two awards for innovation and design and become an exceedingly successful vibrant and safe community.



CENTRAL COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST

The additional "eyes on the street" created by the development of East Village in Minneapolis has led to a safer vibrant community.

Arizona researchers found that when police data are analyzed per unit, apartments actually create less demand for police services than a comparable number of single-family houses. In Tempe, Arizona, a random sample of 1,000 calls for service showed that 35 percent originated from single-family houses and just 21 percent came from apartments. Similarly, a random sample of 600 calls for service in Phoenix, Arizona, found that an apartment unit's demand for police services was less than half of the demand created by a single-family house.³³

One reason for the misperception that crime and density are related could be that crime reports tend to characterize multifamily properties as a single "house" and may record every visit to an apartment community as happening at a single house. But a multifamily property with 250 units is more accurately defined as 250 houses. To truly compare crime rates between multifamily properties and single-family houses, the officer would have to count each household in the multifamily community as the equivalent of a separate single-family household. When they do so, many find what the previous studies prove: that crime rates between different housing types are comparable.

Higher-density developments can actually help reduce crime by increasing pedestrian activity and fostering a 24-hour community that puts more "eyes on the street"³⁴ at all times. Many residents say they chose higher-density housing specifically because they felt more secure there; they feel safer because there are more people coming and going, making it more difficult for criminals to act without being discovered. This factor could explain why a ULI study of different housing types in Greenwich, Connecticut, shows that higher-density housing is significantly less likely to be burglarized than single-family houses.³⁵ The relationships among design, management, and security became better understood in the past few decades with the publication of several seminal works, including *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention through Urban Design* by Oscar Newman³⁶ and *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in our Communities* by George Kelling and Catherine Coles.³⁷ Many new higher-density developments include better lighting plans and careful placement of buildings and landscaping to reduce opportunities for crime, contributing to a safer community.

With the emergence of better-quality designs, higher-density mixed-use development is an attractive and safe addition to a community, one that is increasingly attracting a professional constituency seeking safety features. In fact, the luxury segment is one of the fastest-growing components of the multifamily industry.³⁸

MYTH

Higher-density development is environmentally more destructive than lower-density development.

FACT

Low-density development increases air and water pollution and destroys natural areas by paving and urbanizing greater swaths of land.

Low-density sprawl takes an enormous toll on our air, water, and land. The United States is now losing a staggering 2 million acres of land a year to haphazard, sprawling development.³⁹ More than 50 percent of Americans live in places where the air is unhealthy to breathe,⁴⁰ and childhood asthma and other respiratory diseases are on the rise.⁴¹ Almost half the damage to our streams, lakes, and rivers is the result of polluted runoff from paved surfaces.⁴²

It is inefficient land use, not economic growth, that accounts for the rapid loss of open space and farms. Since 1994, housing lots larger than ten acres have accounted for 55 percent of the land developed.⁴³ This loss of land often causes unexpected economic challenges for rural communities, where farmland, forests, rangeland, and open space tend to be the economic drivers that attract businesses, residents, and tourists. Low-density sprawl compromises the resources that are the core of the community's economy and character. The majority of American homeowners think it is important to stop these trends. In fact, 76 percent of local ballot initiatives related to land conservation passed in November 2004, making \$2.4 billion in funding available for protection of parks and open space.⁴⁴ But purchasing land is only part of the solution and not always an option for financially strapped governments.

Higher-density development offers the best solution to managing growth and protecting clean air and clean water. Placing new development into already urbanized areas that are equipped with all the basic infrastructure like utility lines, police and fire protection, schools, and shops eliminates the financial and environmental costs of stretching those services farther and farther out from the core community. Compact urban design reduces driving and smog and preserves the natural areas that are assets of the community: watersheds, wetlands, working farms, open space, and wildlife corridors. It further minimizes impervious surface area, which causes erosion and polluted stormwater runoff. Two studies completed for the state of New Jersey confirm that compact development can achieve a 30 percent reduction in runoff and an 83 percent reduction in water consumption compared with conventional suburban development.⁴⁵

PROFILE

Prairie Crossing

The developers of Prairie Crossing, George and Vicky Ranney, saved \$1 million in infrastructure costs through environmentally sensitive design. The 677-acre conservation community is located in Grayslake, Illinois, 40 miles northwest of Chicago and one hour south of Milwaukee. The community features 350 acres of open space, including 160 acres of restored prairie, 158 acres of active farmland, 13 acres of wetlands, a 22-acre lake, a village green, and several neighborhood parks. Houses are sited to protect natural features such as hedgerows, native habitat, and wetlands. Designed with colors and architecture inspired by the landscape, every home has a view of open space and direct access to ten miles of on-site walking and biking trails. Wide sidewalks, deep front porches, and rear garages encourage neighbors to meet. The homes were built with U.S. Department of Energy-approved green building techniques. As a result, they are 50 percent more energy efficient than other homes in the Chicago area, and they sell for a 33 percent sales premium. Station Village is the last phase of Prairie Crossing. When complete, it will include residential, retail, and office space, all within walking distance of two commuter train stations. Residents can ride Metra's North Line to Chicago's Union Station or the Central Line to downtown Chicago and O'Hare Airport.

More than half the land at Prairie Crossing was preserved as open space, and homes were built with approved green building techniques.

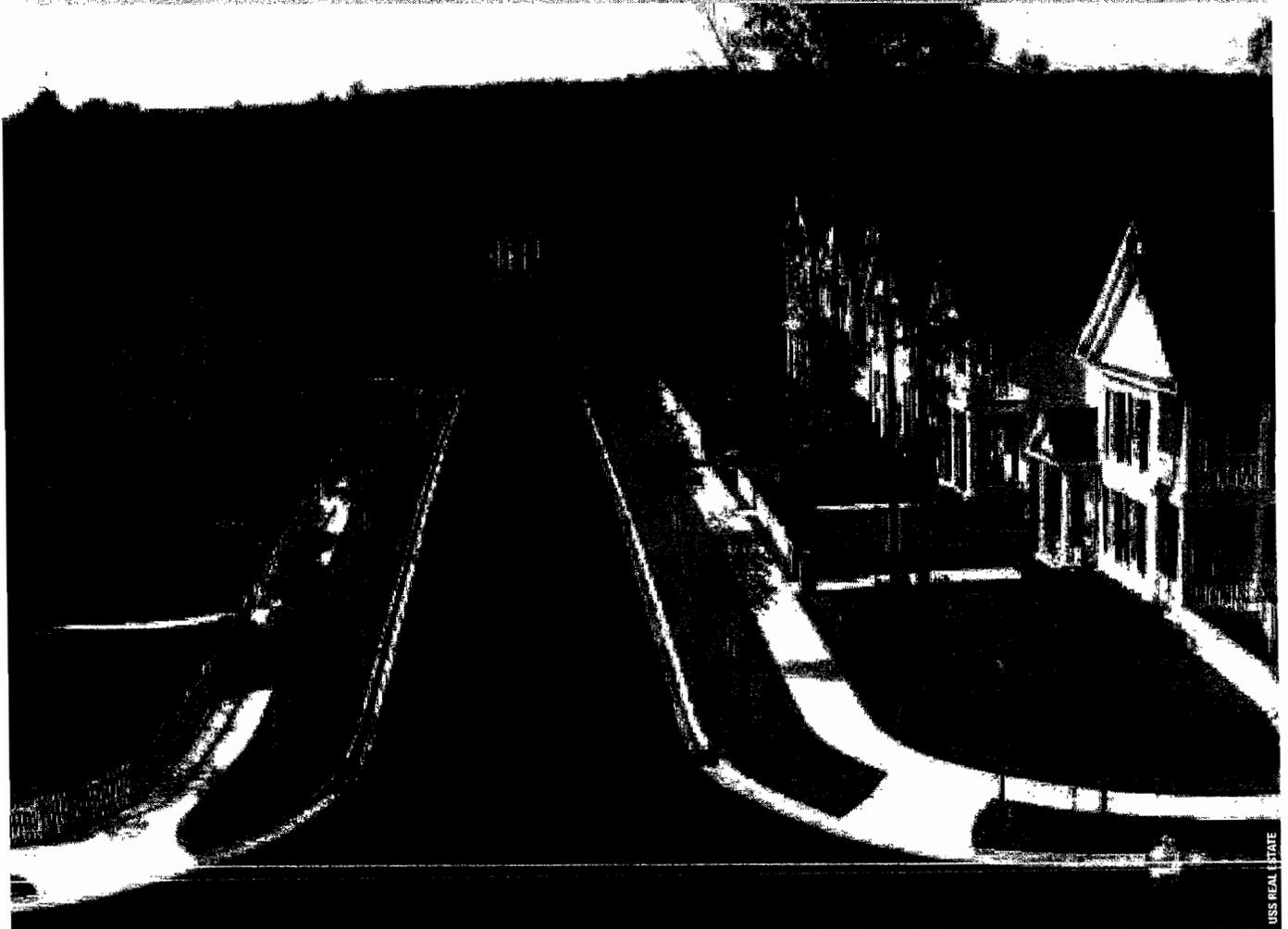


PROFILE

The Preserve

USS Real Estate originally held a 550-acre tract of land in Hoover, Alabama, but sold 250 acres to the city, intending to create the Moss Rock Nature Preserve. The 680 single-family homes, 50,000 square feet of retail, and 50,000 square feet of office space are concentrated on the remaining 311-acre site. Before development of the Preserve, Hoover was characterized by sprawling conventional development and lacked a town center. The Preserve's future town center is planned to include 34 live/work units, 14 retail units, and two restaurants; at the heart of the community is the village green, an impressive eight-acre park with a town hall, a fitness center, a junior olympic swimming pool, and a kiddie pool. Residents have access to 15 acres of parks and seven miles of trails that connect to award-winning Hoover schools and the newly created Moss Rock preserve.

Clustering development at the Preserve in Hoover, Alabama, enabled the creation of the 250-acre Moss Rock Nature Preserve.



USS REAL ESTATE

Many communities employ techniques such as infill and brownfield development to transform unused, abandoned lots into vibrant, revenue-generating components of the community. Some create direct incentives for higher-density development. The city of Austin, Texas, for example, created a program that rewards developers for locating projects in the city's existing neighborhoods and downtown. Others award points for a variety of attributes, such as transit access, the redevelopment of empty lots, and an increase in pedestrian facilities. By employing standards for factors like open space, dense development, and impact on water quality, communities can facilitate good urban design that preserves natural resources.

Although a well-designed higher-density community offers residents a higher-quality environment, poorly planned sprawl does the opposite. Because low-density sprawl gobbles up so much land through large-lot zoning, it ends up destroying the very thing most people moved there for in the first place—the natural areas and farmland. It forces people to drive longer distances, increasing regional air quality problems. The average American man spends 81 minutes behind the wheel every day, while women average 63 minutes. And surveys show that the time spent driving has been consistently increasing every year.⁴⁶ The national road network, currently at 4 million miles according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, is still growing at an alarming rate, mainly for the purpose of connecting new low-density suburbs back to core communities. Along with the water and air pollution, construction of these highways perpetuates the cycle of sprawl, fragments wildlife habitats, and dries up a community's financial coffers.

Increasing density not only improves air and water quality and protects open space but also redirects investments to our existing towns and cities. It can revitalize existing communities and create more walkable neighborhoods with access to public transit and hiking and biking trails. Pedestrian-friendly higher-density developments offer general health benefits as well. Mixed land uses give people the option to walk and bike to work, shops, restaurants, and entertainment. The convenience of compact communities may help fight diseases related to obesity.⁴⁷ Higher-density communities are vital to preserving a healthy environment and fostering healthy lifestyles.

MYTH

Higher-density development is unattractive and does not fit in a low-density community.

FACT

Attractive, well-designed, and well-maintained higher-density development attracts good residents and tenants and fits into existing communities.

Higher-density development comes in many forms. Some of the most attractive well-planned modern development is built at a high density. Across America, appealing higher-density mixed-use town centers have been wildly popular with the public. Lushly landscaped boulevards, fountains, and showcase architecture have created a sense of place in areas previously known only for faceless, uninteresting low-density development. The enduring appeal

PROFILE

Post Riverside

Atlanta is often called the poster child for suburban sprawl. However, it is also the home of Post Riverside, a revolutionary new mixed-use pedestrian-oriented community developed by Atlanta-based Post Properties, Inc., and located on the banks of the Chattahoochee River between Atlanta's bustling Buckhead and Vinings communities. As is the trend nationally, 65 percent of all vehicle trips in Atlanta are to run errands, not to commute to work. With offices, shops, and restaurants within walking distance of the apartments, Post Riverside residents depend on autos much less than their neighbors in lower-density areas. In addition, the community is connected to Atlanta's MARTA subway system and the Cobb County transit system. This award-winning 85-acre mixed-use development includes 25,000 square feet of retail space, 225,000 square feet of office space, and 535 apartments, all designed around a gracious town square. For many people, this amenity-rich, low-maintenance lifestyle better suits their needs than a traditional single-family home in a low-density neighborhood.



Post Riverside in Atlanta demonstrates that higher-density development can be attractive and successful in a community known for lower-density development.

and desirability of older and more gracious higher-density neighborhoods—Georgetown in Washington, D.C., Beacon Hill and Back Bay in Boston, and Lincoln Park in Chicago—attest to the fact that some of the more desirable neighborhoods in America historically have been of higher density than that found in typical outer suburbs.

This return to the design principles of the past is at the core of the new urbanist movement that took hold in the 1990s. The movement grew as many people came to miss the sense of community that was created by the mixed-density and mixed-use communities of the past. They realized that low-density subdivisions isolated their owners not only from pedestrian access to shops and offices but also from their neighbors. The growing sense of social alienation, highlighted in books like Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone*,⁴⁸ has led many back to the comfort of communities that are a reminder of the places where many of us grew up. These new communities combine the best design ideas of the past with the modern conveniences of today to provide residents with what has been missing from many sprawling areas—a sense of community.

Today's developers, architects, and planners know that to attract customers and to secure zoning approvals and community acceptance, they must produce attractive and innovative properties that complement their surroundings. Design professionals are driven to produce projects that meet users' demands, understand and respond to the context of a site, enhance its neighborhood, and are built to last.⁴⁹ In fact, attendance at a recent American Institute of Architects-sponsored conference on density far surpassed expectations, speaking to the interest among land use professionals in addressing the design issues associated with density.⁵⁰

It is plausible that the high level of citizens' opposition to density may be based on an outdated notion of what higher-density development looks like. A University of North Carolina study revealed that when given a choice between two attractively designed communities, one higher density and the other low density, the majority preferred the higher-density option.⁵¹ Other visual preference surveys confirm that there is an almost universal negative reaction to the visual appearance of commercial strip sprawl and an almost universal positive reaction to traditional town-like communities of the past, communities that almost invariably included a mix of densities and uses.⁵²

PROFILE

The Plaza at the Arboretum

This award-winning mixed-use project in Santa Monica, California, developed by California-based Legacy Partners, achieves a density of 97.5 dwelling units per acre.

The attractive seven-story building includes 10,000 square feet of retail space and 350 apartment units ranging from 612 to 1,555 square feet. The architecture firm Meeks and Partners used strong geometric forms to create a playful architectural character that fits nicely in the avant-garde Hollywood studio section of Santa Monica. The development includes a swimming pool, spa, fitness center, and clubhouse.



MEEKS AND PARTNERS, PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE HINDS

Higher-density developments like the Plaza at the Arboretum present opportunities to create outstanding award-winning architecture.

MYTH

No one in suburban areas wants higher-density development.

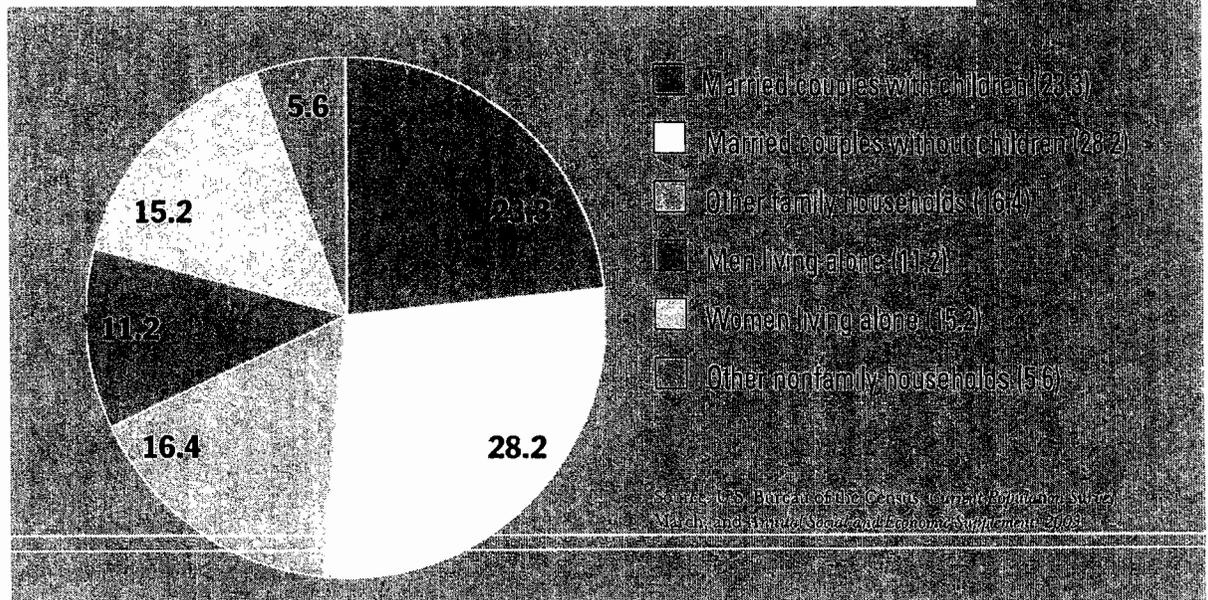
FACT

Our population is changing and becoming increasingly diverse. Many of these households now prefer higher-density housing, even in suburban locations.

When many of us think of the American Dream, we envision married couples with children living in single-family detached houses in the suburbs. The notion is that the only people who want to live in higher-density areas are those who cannot afford a traditional house with a back yard or who want to live in the middle of the city. Both perceptions are flawed.

This country's population is changing, and so are its real estate preferences. These lifestyle changes have significant implications for suburban development. For the first time, there are more single-person households (26.4 percent) than married-

HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE: 2003 (PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL)



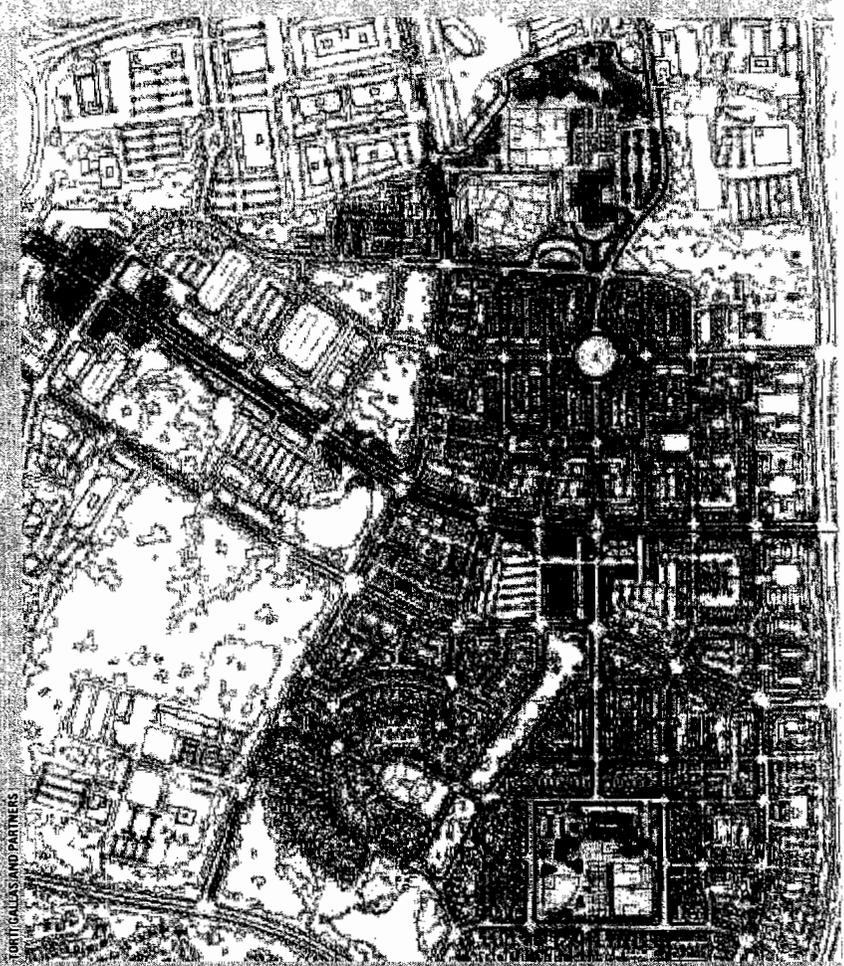
couple-with-children households (23.3 percent).⁵³ The groups growing the fastest, people in their mid-20s and empty nesters in their 50s, are the groups most likely to look for an alternative to low-density, single-family housing.⁵⁴

A growing number of Americans are redefining their American Dream. They are seeking a more convenient and vibrant lifestyle. And while some seek this lifestyle in cities, many others seek the same lifestyle in the suburbs. According to a 2002 study by the National Association of Home Builders, more than half the renters questioned said they wanted to live in the suburbs.⁵⁵ Moreover, a national survey of homebuyers' community preferences found that nearly three-quarters of all

PROFILE

King Farm

This 430-acre community is characterized by the historic architecture of the region but offers an assortment of modern conveniences as well. Developed by King Farm Associates, LLC, King Farm is located in Rockville, Maryland, five miles from the Washington, D.C. beltway, 15 miles from downtown D.C., and walking distance from the Shady Grove Metro station. The neighborhood was designed for pedestrians, but the King Farm shuttle makes getting around even easier. The shuttle runs a complimentary route between the King Farm Village Center, the Metro station, and the Irvington Center, a 90-acre commercial complex next to the Metro. In addition, two types of public bus service are available at King Farm. At the Village Center, 120,000 square feet of retail space is within walking distance from both residential and commercial development. The center also includes 47 loft apartments and a one-acre village green. Watkins Pond and Baileys Common are King Farm's two residential villages. They offer single-family homes, townhouses, condominiums, and luxury apartments intertwined with natural areas. The center of Watkins Pond is a 12-acre city park with tennis and basketball courts, a soccer and softball field, two playgrounds, several picnic areas, benches, and paths.



King Farm is a successful higher-density suburban community that integrates housing, retail shops, offices, and public transit.

PROFILE

Victoria Gardens

The city of Rancho Cucamonga, located roughly 60 miles east of Los Angeles in California's Inland Empire, has a rich agricultural history and, more recently, a history of low-density sprawl with no real city center. This situation is changing, however, with the opening of the first phases of a huge new mixed-use development known as Victoria Gardens. The development, designed by L.A.-based architects Alton + Porter, and being developed jointly by California-based developers Forest City California and the Lewis Investment Company, will create a vibrant higher-density downtown where none previously existed. Rapidly growing Rancho Cucamonga has been traditionally underserved by restaurants and entertainment options. The long-awaited addition of a "place" in the city has been well received by residents. The 147-acre development will eventually contain 1.3 million square feet of commercial and community space, including retail, entertainment, office, and civic uses with a cultural center and a library. Twenty acres of housing on-site will allow people to live within walking distance of all the amenities of Rancho Cucamonga's new downtown.

A higher-density downtown is emerging in sprawling Rancho Cucamonga at Victoria Gardens. Long-underserved residents now have a "place" to go for restaurants, retail, offices, and housing.



ALTON + PORTER ARCHITECTS

buyers prefer to live in a community where they can walk or bike to some destinations.⁵⁶ The 2001 American Housing Survey further reveals that respondents cited proximity to work more often than unit type as the leading factor in housing choice.⁵⁷ These surveys confirm that many people prefer the suburbs but want the amenities traditionally associated with cities, including living close to work.

With the continuing decentralization of cities and the rise of suburban communities with urban-like amenities, many people find that they can live and work in the suburbs with all the attributes of suburbia they desire without giving up walkability and convenience. A recent study confirms that in many regions, more office space is located in suburban locations than downtowns,⁵⁸ providing an opportunity for people to live near their jobs. Communities and developers that have recognized and responded to the dual trends of decentralized offices and a growing desire for a more convenient lifestyle have been rewarded. Well-placed mixed-use, higher-density developments in the suburbs are increasingly popular, creating a new sense of place.

Communities are being developed using the best concepts of traditional communities—smaller lots, a variety of housing types, front porches and sidewalks, shops and offices within walking distance, and public transit nearby. Communities like Celebration in Florida and King Farm in Maryland have been so popular with the homebuying public that past worries over whether the demand exists for them have been replaced by concerns about their rapid price appreciation, putting them out of the reach of all but the highest-income households. Today's real demographic and lifestyle changes are inspiring a return to traditional development styles that offer walkable, bikeable, and more dynamic communities that put residents closer to shops, offices, and parks.

MYTH

Higher-density housing is only for lower-income households.

FACT

People of all income groups choose higher-density housing.

Multifamily housing is not the housing of last resort for households unable to afford a single-family house. Condominiums, for instance, are often the most sought after and highly appreciating real estate in many urban markets. The luxury segment of the apartment market is also rapidly expanding. Most people are surprised to learn that 41 percent of renters say they rent by choice and not out of necessity, and households making more than \$50,000 a year have been the fastest-growing segment of the rental market for the past three years.⁵⁹ Multifamily housing throughout the world has historically been the housing of choice by the wealthiest individuals because of the access and convenience it provides. From Manhattan to Miami to San Francisco, higher-density housing has been prized for the amenity-rich lifestyle it can provide.

Higher-density development can be a viable housing choice for all income groups and people in all phases of their lives. Many financially secure baby boomers, who have seen their children leave the nest, have chosen to leave behind the yard maintenance and repairs required of a single-family house for the more carefree and convenient lifestyle multifamily housing provides. Interestingly, their children, the echo boomers, are entering the age where many will likely live in multifamily housing. Just starting careers, many are looking for the flexibility of apartment living to follow job opportunities. Their grandparents, likely on a fixed income, may also prefer or need to live in multifamily housing as physical limitations may have made living in a single-family house too challenging.

Providing balanced housing options to people of all income groups is important to a region's economic vitality. The availability of affordable multifamily housing helps attract and retain the workers needed to keep any economy thriving. In many American towns and cities, rapidly rising house prices are forcing working families to live farther away from their jobs. In fact, the lack of affordable housing is mentioned as the number one problem facing working families today.⁶⁰

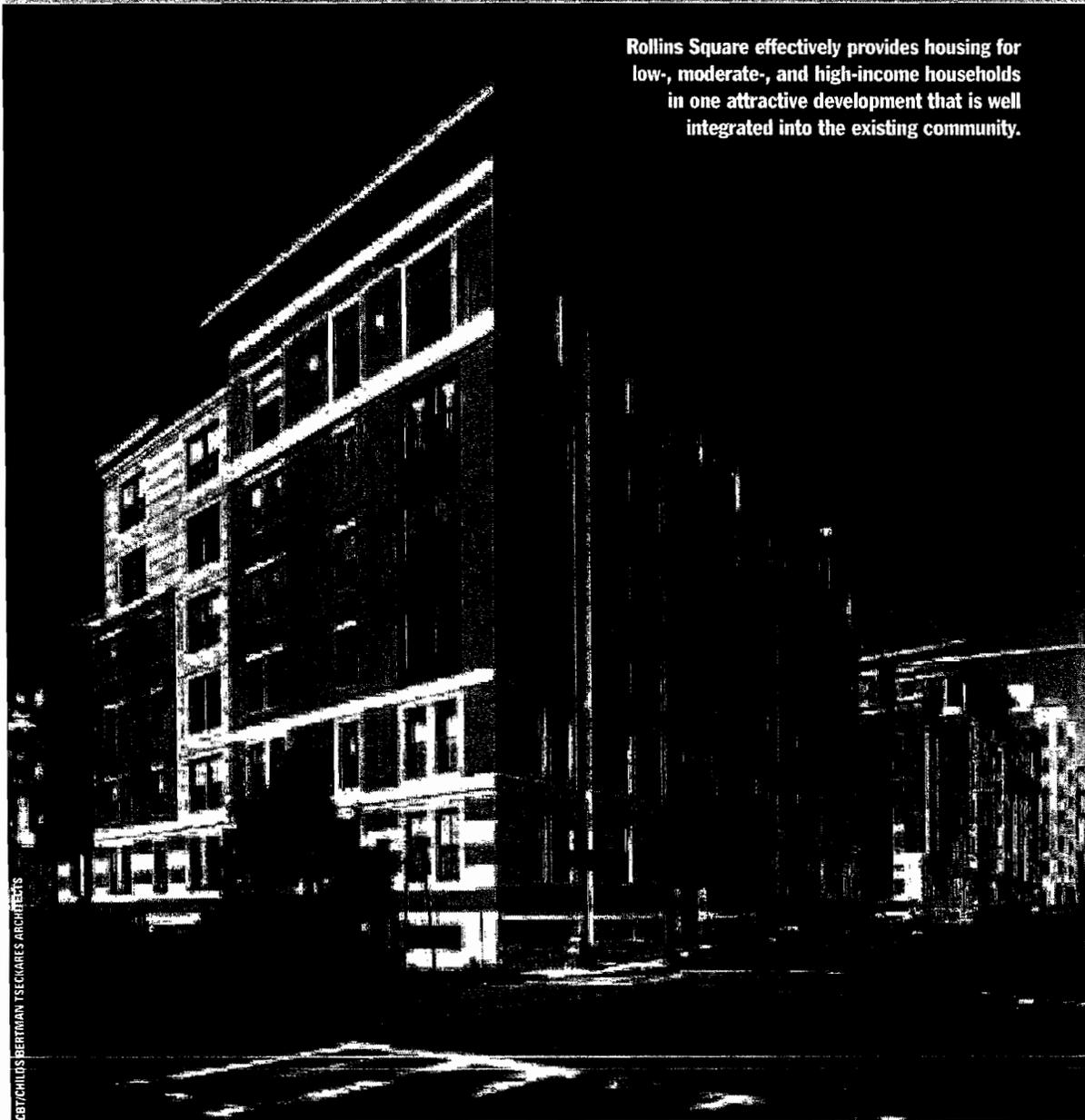
PROFILE

Rollins Square

Rollins Square, a mixed-use development in Boston's South End, is a truly mixed-income community that provides housing for a wide spectrum of people in all income brackets. Twenty percent of the overall units are reserved for people whose income is 30 to 60 percent of the Boston area median income (AMI), 40 percent are for-sale condominiums reserved for working households with incomes 80 to 120 percent of the AMI, and the remaining 40 percent are market-rate units sell-

ing for up to \$750,000. The residences occupy two city blocks and integrate seamlessly into the existing neighborhood. The varying heights and diverse exterior materials give the appearance that the development was constructed over time. Rollins Square was developed by the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, Inc., a nonprofit developer associated with the Archdiocese of Boston.

Rollins Square effectively provides housing for low-, moderate-, and high-income households in one attractive development that is well integrated into the existing community.



CB7/CHLOE BERTMAN TSECIANES ARCHITECTS

PROFILE

I'On

I'On is a 244-acre master-planned community along the deep-water marshes of Hobcraw Creek in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. Just six miles east of Charleston, the community features 700 single-family homes, community facilities, and a small-scale commercial area. Vince Graham, principal with the I'On Company, is developing six residential neighborhoods connected by narrow streets, pedestrian corridors, and community spaces. An I'On Guild member, one of 18 builders selected for experience, talent, and financial strength, builds each individual home. The architecture is inspired by classic Lowcountry style with large balconies, deep front porches, and tall windows on even taller homes. Homes now sell for \$685,000 to \$1.7 million. Community facilities include I'On Square, I'On Club, the Creek Club, and the Mount Pleasant Amphitheater. Residents also enjoy easy access to the Cooper and Wando rivers, the Charleston harbor, and the Atlantic Ocean. One neighborhood boat ramp and four community docks are available for crabbing and fishing. Two miles of walking trails are available for residents; a five-acre pond, the Rookery, is a protected nesting site for wading birds. In addition, the public and private schools in Mount Pleasant are some of the best in the area.



I'ON COMPANY

Some home prices in the well-planned higher-density community of I'On are approaching \$2 million. The traditional neighborhood design combined with the community amenities made possible by higher densities have made the community one of the most desirable in the Charleston area.

As the problem of affordability worsens, workers on the lower end of the salary scale may move to more affordable cities, leaving a labor shortage in their wake. Such shortages make a region less desirable as an employment center. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, access to a large and diverse labor pool is the most important factor in making corporate decisions on locations.⁶¹ Communities that do not provide housing for all income groups become less desirable corporate locations.

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Higher-Density Development Myth and Fact

Richard Haughey

No one likes sprawl and the traffic congestion it creates, yet proposals for increasing density in new and existing neighborhoods often are squashed by community fears of public housing, crime, and ugly high rises. *Higher-Density Development: Myth and Fact* dispels these negative connotations, by comparing the advantages and drawbacks of higher- and low-density development. The definition of higher-density development is relative to the community the development is in—it could be single-family homes on smaller lots, or townhouses and apartments in more populated areas. Eight widespread misconceptions about higher-density development are examined and dispelled with well-researched facts and examples of high-quality, compact developments.

Debunk these common myths about density:

- Higher-density development overburdens public schools and other public services and requires more infrastructure support systems.
- Higher-density developments lower property values in surrounding areas.
- Higher-density development creates more regional traffic congestion and parking problems than low-density development.
- Higher-density development leads to higher crime rates.

- Higher-density development is environmentally more destructive than lower-density development.
- Higher-density development is unattractive and does not fit in a low-density community.
- No one in suburban areas wants higher-density development.
- Higher-density housing is only for lower-income households.

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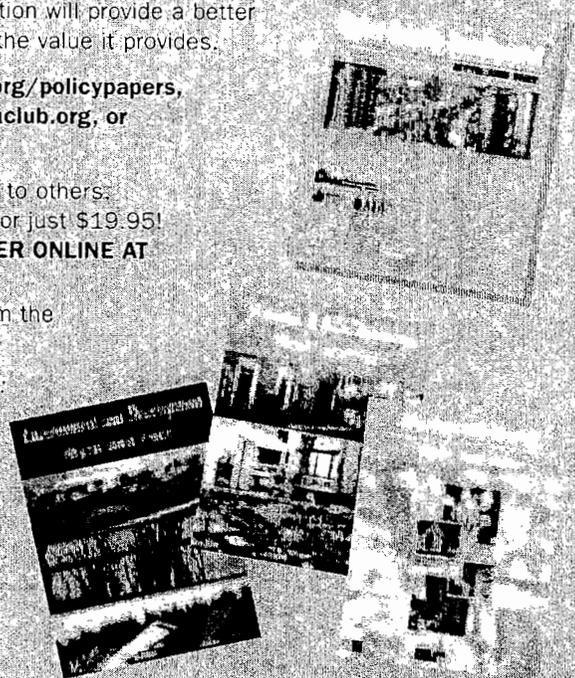
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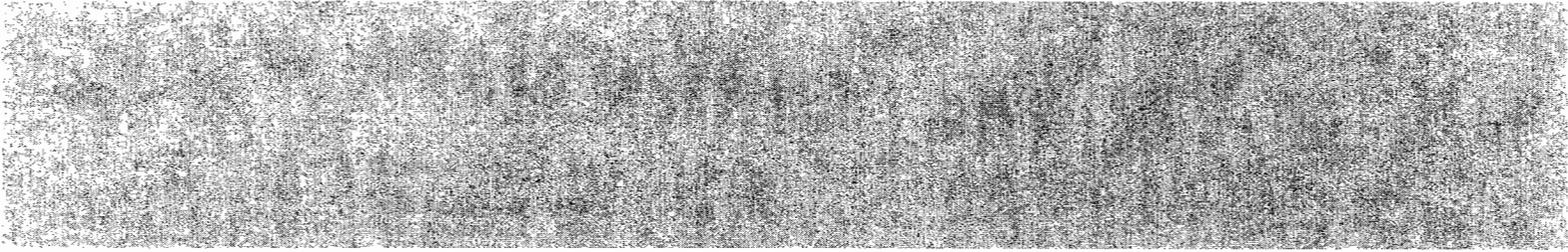
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- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and
- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

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Introduction

For more than half a century, suburbanization has been the dominant force in America's metropolitan growth and development. During this period the nation's population has shifted dramatically, so that today more Americans live in suburbs than anywhere else. In fact, two suburbs—Mesa, Arizona, and Arlington, Texas—are now among the 50 largest cities in America, and the next census will likely include more.

As suburban populations have soared, along with jobs and shopping opportunities, many suburbanites have happily chosen to live independent of the older cities that form the core of their metropolitan areas. Many never visit the city except for an occasional concert, sporting event, or night on the town. At the same time, suburbanites are increasingly aware of the growing shortcomings of their own communities. They do not like monumental traffic jams, deteriorating suburban strips, obso-

Victoria Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga, California, became an instant downtown for an exurban community that needed one.



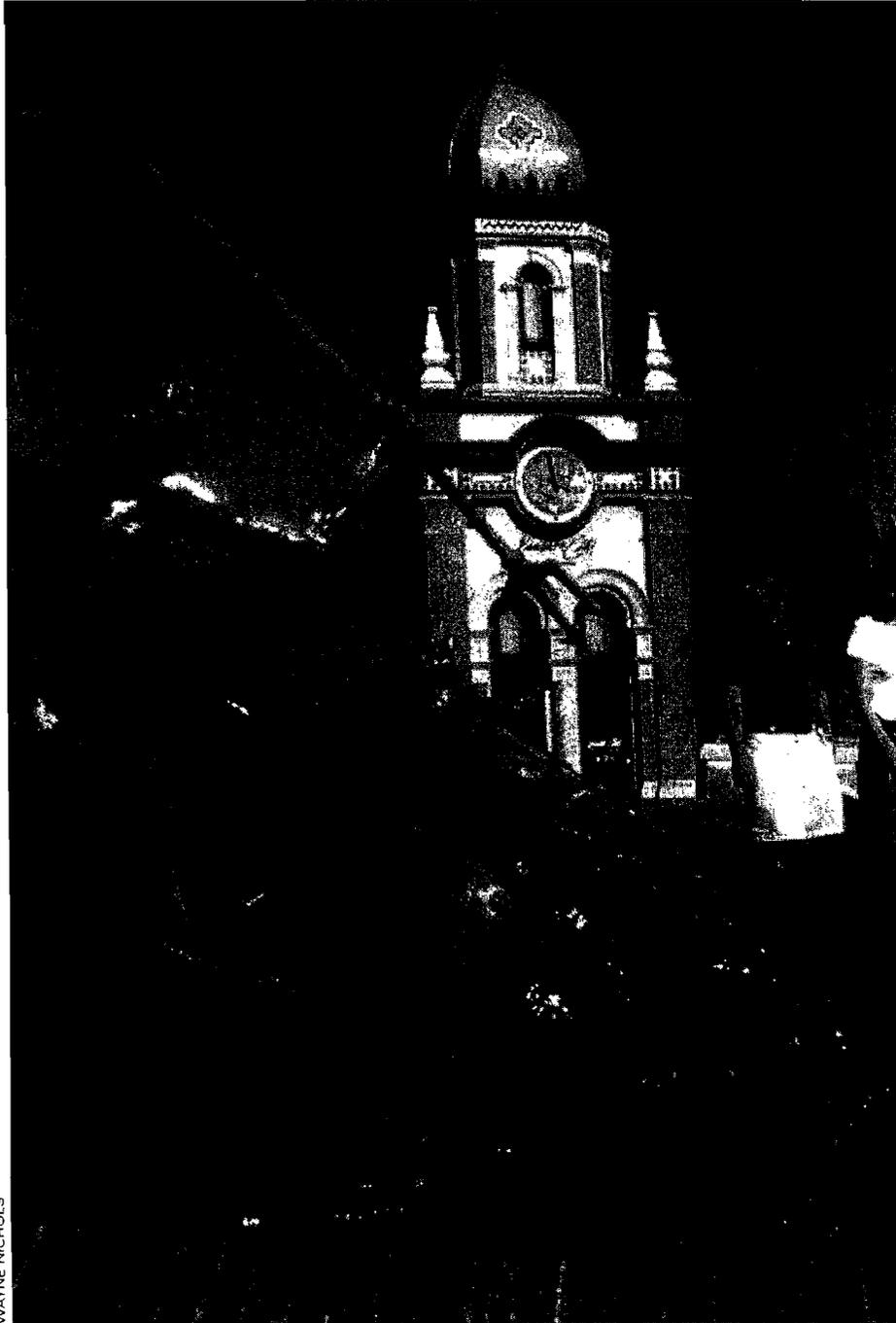
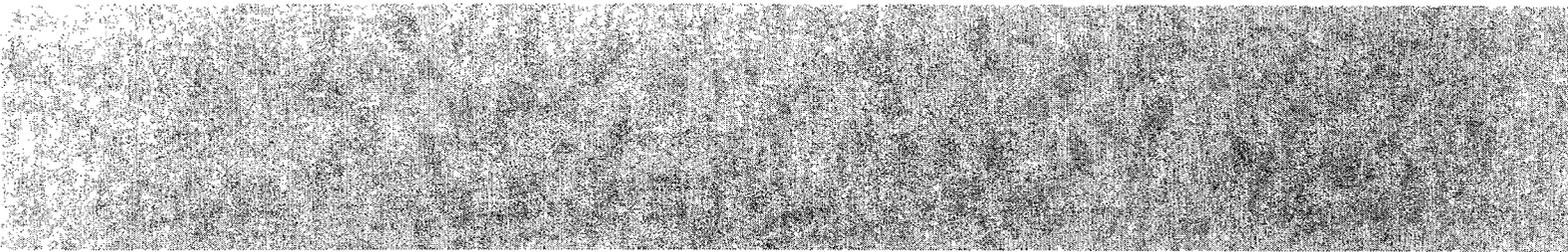


lete shopping malls, an aging monoculture of single-family homes, and environmental degradation. These problems are all evidence of the lack of a strong civic presence.

One consequence of the development patterns of the past 50 years is that there are few public places in suburbia where all segments of society can get together to interact, to celebrate, to stroll, to protest, to sit and watch the world go by, or just to enjoy day-to-day living. The reason: these types of places are typically found in and around downtowns, and downtowns were never part of the suburban dream. From the beginning, suburbs revolved around such private pleasures as backyard barbecues, football practice, country clubs, and stay-at-home moms. Downtowns were considered anachronisms at best. At worst, they were considered to be filled with crime, deterioration, poverty, and people to avoid. As a result, suburban downtowns never got built.

Shopping was also designed to be different in the suburbs. Gone were the street-front stores that were intimately connected with the life of the community in cities.

Construction began on the Reston Town Center in Reston, Virginia, in 1990. Today, it continues to grow.



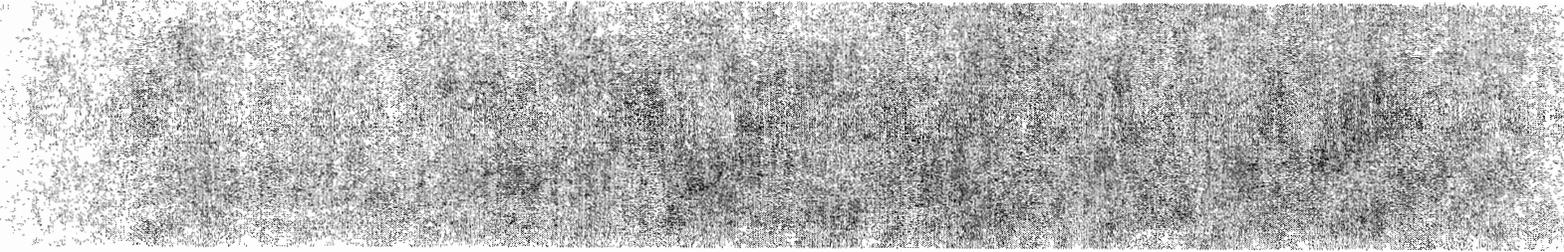
WAYNE NICHOLS

Designed in 1922 and built out over years, the iconic Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri, is the forerunner of today's generation of town center developments.

That eclectic mix of new and old, mom-and-pop stores, and personalized service was replaced by more standardized, no-hassle environments with predictable chain stores, mass market appeal, and plentiful parking in an impressive array of sophisticated shopping center types, formats, and environments. Gone too were opportunities to walk to the corner store, the movies, the library, the town square, or the local café, because land uses were designed to be separate. That made sense when industrial uses dominated cities, but it does not make sense today.

Seven factors are driving a sea change in suburban attitudes toward cities and downtowns:

1. The typical suburbanite has changed. No longer is suburbia dominated by white, middle-class couples with children. Today, the suburbs are as diverse as the cities they surround, in terms of race, culture, income, age, sexuality, and lifestyle. This shift suggests that different development solutions are needed to meet contemporary needs—such as a range of housing types to accommodate all lifestyles at different life-cycle stages.
2. The problems associated in past years with downtowns, especially crime, deterioration, and visual blight, have dissipated. Today, downtowns are cool again.
3. Relentless, low-density suburban development patterns that require a car to go anywhere are unsustainable, given the projected scale of suburban growth.

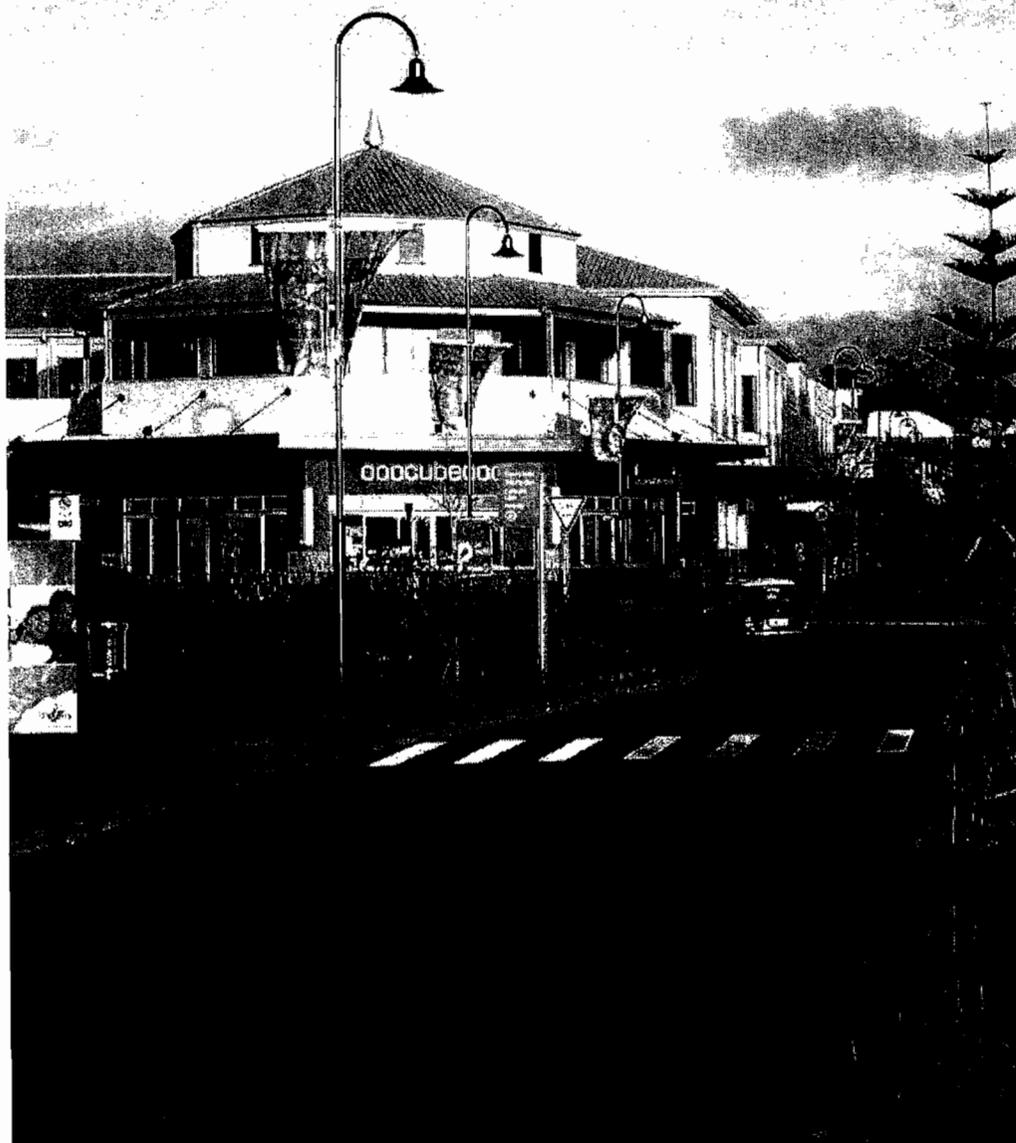
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4. There is a powerful desire in suburbia to recreate the sense of community and connectedness that was lost as metropolitan areas grew so quickly in the past few decades.
 5. Suburbanites, like all people, harbor a simple desire for more convenience in their busy lives.
 6. Smart growth movements are gaining popularity as voters begin to realize the hidden costs of current suburban development practices.
 7. Although suburbanites now actively seek a downtown environment, most do not want to live downtown. But that does not mean that they do not want the amenities of a sophisticated urban lifestyle.

As suburbs age and take on many of the characteristics of cities, they need to evolve as cities have evolved for millennia: creating walkable environments, broadening housing choices, offering mobility options, mixing land uses, selectively increasing densities, enhancing their civic and cultural presence, increasing diversity, and redeveloping obsolete and underused properties to provide more cosmopolitan environments and amenities. This is already beginning to happen. Downtowns, those places that many suburbanites have avoided for decades, are among the last missing pieces of the suburban development puzzle. Now being fit in place from coast to coast, they are called town centers.

What Is a Town Center?

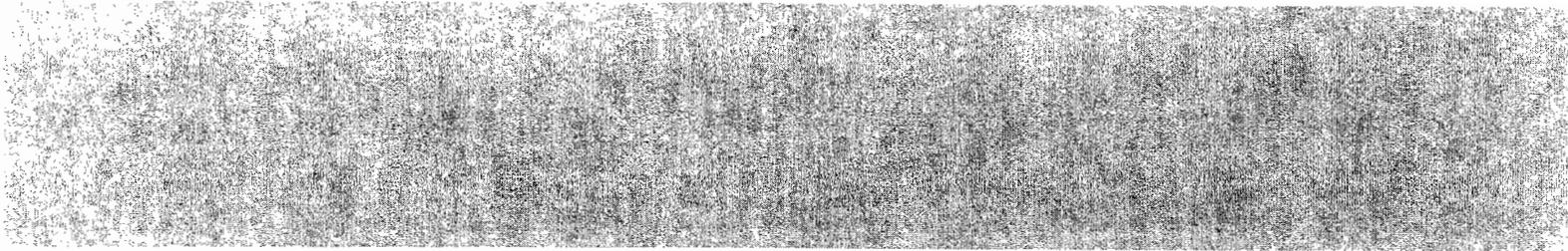
A town center is an enduring, walkable, and integrated open-air, multiuse development that is organized around a clearly identifiable and energized public realm where citizens can gather and strengthen their community bonds. It is anchored by retail, dining, and leisure uses, as well as by vertical or horizontal residential uses. At least one other type of development is included in a town center, such as office, hospitality, civic, and cultural uses. Over time, a town center should evolve into the densest, most compact, and most diverse part of a community, with strong connections to its surroundings.

Numerous obstacles can retard the natural evolution of suburbs into more livable and sustainable communities that include town centers with urban amenities: NIMBYism is at the forefront of actions to short-circuit suburban evolution. Assembling and developing land parcels that are suitable for town centers sometimes requires complex and sophisticated partnerships between the community and private landowners. Zoning and subdivision regulations must often be modernized. Mixing commercial, residential, civic, and cultural uses raises unusual development challenges and adds costs to the development process. And integrating contemporary,



large-format retail space and adequate parking into an urban context is difficult. But communities throughout the country are succeeding.

As part of its mission to examine cutting-edge issues and propose creative solutions for improving the quality of land use and development, the Urban Land Institute convened a smart growth workshop June 26–28, 2006, in Washington, D.C., to distill ten principles for developing successful suburban town centers. During three days of intensive study, a team of planning and development experts drawn from around the United States toured and studied three very different town centers in



Botany Town Centre in Auckland is New Zealand's largest retail development.

ALTOON & PORTER

northern Virginia: Market Common, Clarendon in Arlington; Fairfax Corner in Fairfax; and Reston Town Center in Reston.

The ULI teams were made up of leading town center developers, public planners, architects, economic consultants, and property advisers. They visited each site, reviewed information about them, and met as separate teams to set out their findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The teams then met jointly to debate, consolidate, and refine their conclusions. The lessons learned from these town centers can be applied wherever the public and private sectors are wrestling with the chal-

Mizner Park in Boca Raton, Florida, replaced a failed mall with a mix of uses surrounding a lush public park.



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allenges of creating sustainable town centers for their communities. Such town centers include those that are created from scratch on greenfield sites and those that are integrated with existing development through additions or redevelopment, regardless of whether they are under single or multiple ownership. This report presents the results of ULI's workshop, including a definition of town centers and ten principles for creating them.

Ten Principles for Developing Successful Town Centers

1 Create an Enduring and Memorable Public Realm

2 Respect Market Realities

3 Share the Risk, Share the Reward

4 Plan for Development and Financial Complexity

5 Integrate Multiple Uses

6 Balance Flexibility with a Long-Term Vision

7 Capture the Benefits That Density Offers

8 Connect to the Community

9 Invest for Sustainability

10 Commit to Intensive On-Site Management and Programming

Create an Enduring and Memorable Public Realm

Developers, urban designers, and public officials increasingly view the public realm as the single most important element in establishing the character and drawing power of a successful town center. Streets, plazas, walkways, civic buildings, and parking all play a part. A well-designed public realm functions as anchor, amenity, and defining element for a town center.

Create a Central Place for the Community

A successful public realm is one in which commerce, social interaction, and leisure time activities mix easily in an attractive, pedestrian-friendly, outdoor setting. People are drawn by the simple enjoyment of being there. If that enjoyment is to be felt, the public realm and public spaces must be well designed and programmed.

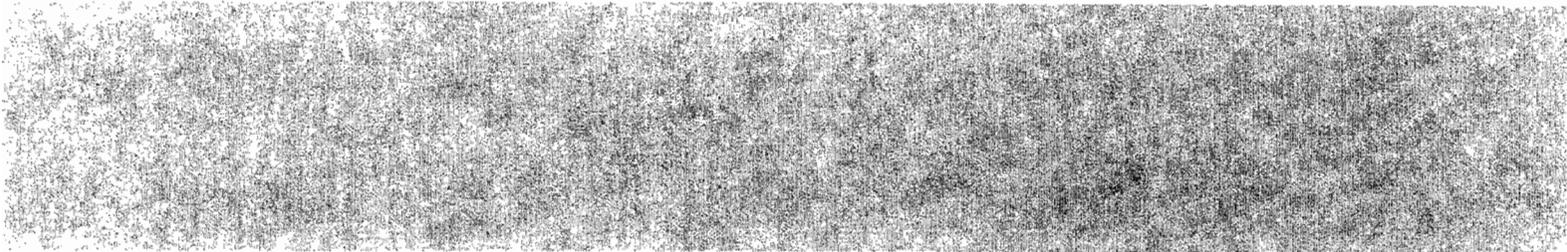
A well-conceived public realm has the following attributes:



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Mizner Park in Boca Raton, Florida, provides a dramatic public realm at night that helps extend the hours of shopping and dining.

- It is a compelling central space that people are attracted to for its placement, design, and surrounding uses. The space can be a street, a boulevard, a square, or a combination of all three with other urban design elements.
- Movement between uses is easy, and sight lines facilitate wayfinding and encourage exploration.
- Effective programs and events are used to animate the space, and the capacity of the management is adequate to ensure programming for the space.
- Open spaces are sized and shaped to allow events to be held in them. They provide stage areas and technical support where appropriate.
- The public realm is open to programs that are significant to the community, such as charity events, holiday events, and civic events. It becomes a true public place, taking on a life of its own. As a part of the community that goes beyond simple commerce or public relations, it ultimately becomes a place with a history. The public realm should allow for the integration of the people, the place, and the larger community.
- The public realm is inclusive and brings together all the different segments of the community that may wish to visit or use the public spaces.
- An experience is created and delivered that the market values and that generates premiums for the residences and offices in the town center.
- The public realm is integrated with adjacent uses that significantly enliven the public space, such as bookstores, libraries, public buildings, cultural facilities,



restaurants, and general retail. Each of these uses has its own vocabulary for meeting the street and interacting with the public space that must be carefully considered in the urban design plan.

- ✦ Busy and fragmented contemporary life is balanced with comfort and convenience—the public realm is a place that restores the soul.
- ✦ Highly visible and easily accessed, the public realm is well connected to roads, transit, and parking infrastructure.
- ✦ Whether publicly or privately owned, the public realm has a strong civic identity and feels like a public space. Freedom of speech and political expression, hallmarks and traditions of historic town centers, are respected. The town center project therefore has a competitive edge over other conventional projects.
- ✦ Public and private responsibilities are clearly defined. For example, the streets might be public to the curb and include eight feet of the sidewalk; the remaining ten feet of the sidewalk might be private (where restaurants and stores can have a presence). Thus, the public sector has a role in day-to-day operations but private expression and flexibility are encouraged as well.
- ✦ The big idea is to create a place that is the place to be—to make the place as authentic as possible, a place that will have lasting identity.

Define the Public Realm with Streets, Open Space, and People Places

The key design elements for a town center are walkability, good circulation, connectivity, and parking. A good town center plan has a street framework and design that creates harmony among buildings and open space, the automobile and the pedestrian, work and leisure, and commercial and residential uses. It is critical to create a framework that elevates the pedestrian experience through great public spaces, good urban design, well-designed parking schemes, wayfinding strategies, and effective management plans.

A well-designed public realm includes several features:

- ✦ A well-conceived street and block pattern and network: A sound pattern and an effective street and open-space plan allow flexibility and adaptability that permit the public realm to evolve, change, and grow over time.
- ✦ Well-defined and arranged streets, sidewalks, plazas, squares, parks, promenades, courtyards, walkways connecting to parking facilities and surrounding areas, enclosed public spaces, public and civic buildings, cultural facilities, and parking facilities: These elements reinforce one another and work together to create gather-



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Cultural activities such as this chamber ensemble concert held at Mizner Park, in Boca Raton, Florida, help create memories that bring people back.

ing spaces and sidewalk areas where retail and leisure meet. The creation of compelling “outdoor rooms” and gathering places should be a highlight of the plan.

- A hierarchy and guidelines for street spaces and uses, including the width of streets and sidewalks, the heights of buildings, and the quality and level of landscape elements: Streets should be neither too wide nor too narrow, and this scaling will vary from street to street within the town center and with the scale and nature of the project.
- Sidewalks that are sized according to their intended use and place in the overall scheme: Wide sidewalks are planned where restaurants and al fresco dining will be concentrated. Narrower sidewalks are planned on less intensively used streets. Pedestrian walkways from parking structures and surrounding areas are clearly linked to the signature space.

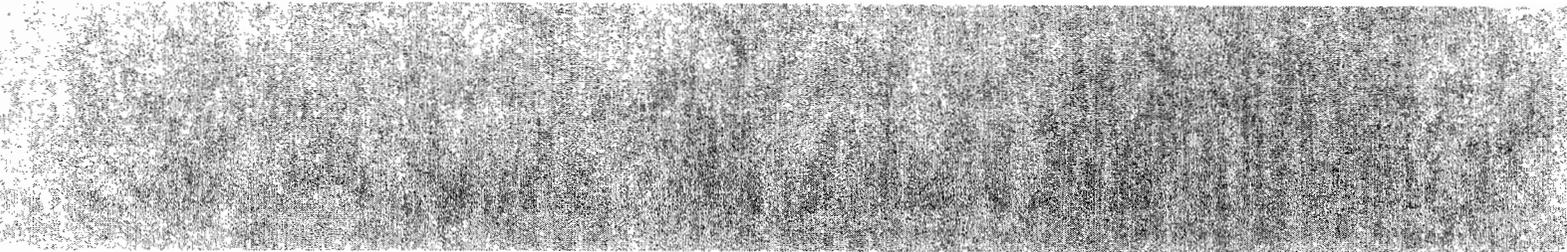


GREGG LOGAN RCLCO

Suwanee Town Center in Suwanee, Georgia, draws a crowd that enjoys its interactive fountain.

- A scale that is comfortable for pedestrians: The buildings engage the street through fenestration, materials, awnings, and store signage and lighting. Storefront designs avoid banality and allow for differentiation, so each store can brand itself strongly. Pedestrian-scaled signage is big enough for drive-by traffic to see but not obtrusively large.
- On-street parking animates the streets with slow-moving vehicles, provides a protective wall of cars for pedestrians, and delivers convenient parking. Two-lane streets with two-way traffic and street parking on both sides work fine. Alternatively, central parks or narrow boulevards can be used to divide traffic into one-way loop routes on either side of the park or boulevard, with parking on one or both sides of each street, as was done at Mizner Park in Boca Raton, Florida; Market Common, Clarendon in Arlington, Virginia; Birkdale Village in Huntersville, North Carolina; Southlake Town Square in Southlake, Texas; and Santana Row in San Jose, California.

- Lighting for people, not cars: Storefront lighting is particularly effective in creating an attractive nighttime public realm, including both ground-level and upper-level windows and signage. Intense light is detrimental to an attractive atmosphere, and too little light makes the space seem unsafe.
- Landscaping and art are essential ingredients in place making. Tree canopies are important defining elements in the public realm and provide shade in outdoor shopping environments. Water features, seating, landscaping features, street furniture, and signage all play important roles in defining the public realm. Public art creates unique places.



Urban design is coordinated so that the public realm emerges as each phase is built. For example, both sides of a street should be developed at the same time when possible, and signature public spaces should be surrounded by buildings as soon as possible. Public spaces without surrounding buildings and uses often look like vacant lots.

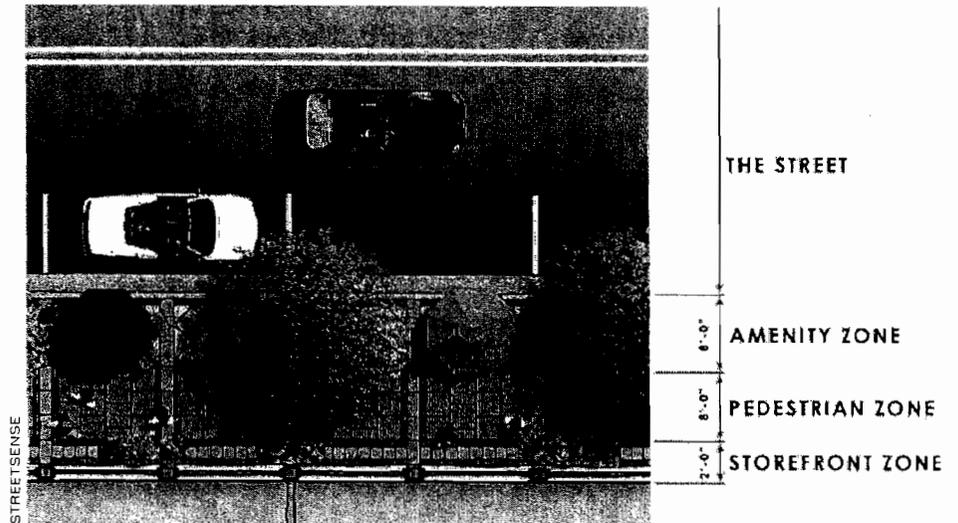
Shape and Surround the Public Realm with Fine Buildings

Although the public realm is largely the space between buildings, that realm and space is very much affected and defined by the buildings that surround and shape the space. Thus, development of the designs for these buildings should involve careful consideration of the impact on the public realm. These buildings should be fine buildings but not necessarily iconic architecture. Buildings and open space must be carefully integrated and mutually supportive.

One-story buildings, generally, do not effectively shape an attractive realm. Two-, three-, and four-story buildings are ideal because they are tall enough to define the space but not overwhelm it. Taller buildings can work as well, although higher buildings will block sunlight and this can detract from the public realm. The larger the public realm spaces, the larger the buildings that can effectively surround them.

The quality of materials and architecture visible from a public space shape and provide character to that space. Materials with lasting qualities and local appeal can establish authenticity; without such materials, the place may not be viewed as authentic or timeless. Buildings that face onto the signature public spaces must have a sense of permanence that makes a statement about the authenticity of the town center.

Historic buildings should be included where possible because they add value. The restored church at the heart of CityPlace in West Palm Beach, Florida, is a prime example. Iconic buildings can be elements in place making but are not essential. Buildings should reflect authenticity, genuineness, and honest design, and respect the local context. They can be eclectic, offer a variety of styles, provide for intimacy and serendipity, and provide an element of surprise and possibly even grandeur. Architectural variety allows the town center to look as if it has been developed over time, which greatly contributes to the feeling of a place that is authentic.



An enduring, memorable public realm is characterized by a pleasant and walkable environment where pedestrians can window-shop while others dine al fresco.

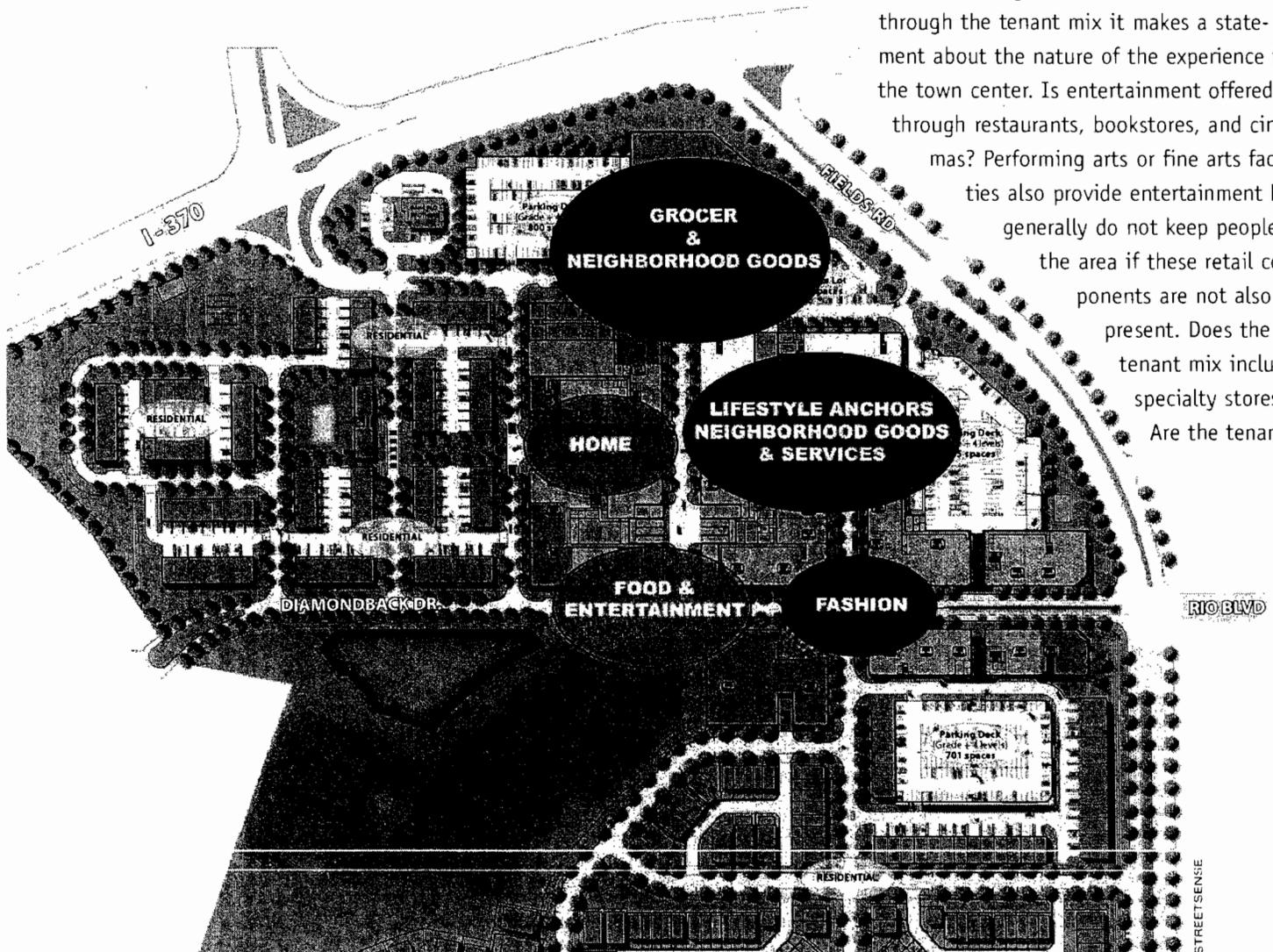
Respect Market Realities

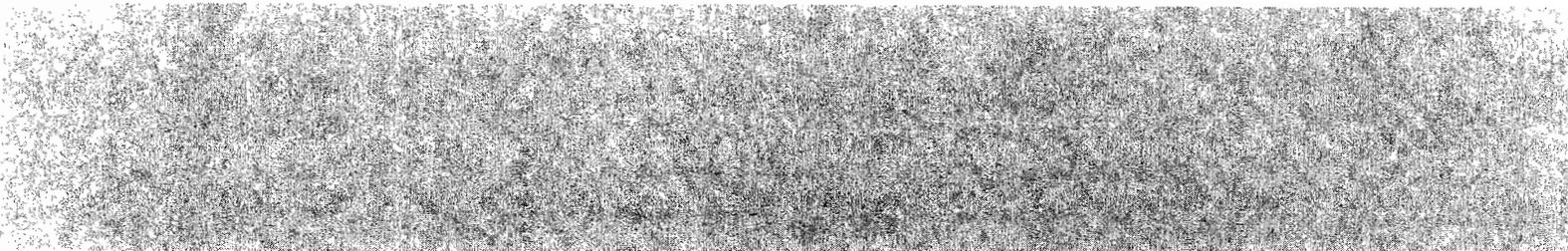
A thriving town center is well tuned to the level and nature of the market that supports it. Understanding the market entails understanding not only population counts and income levels but also growth, competition, access, and aspirations. Each planned component in a town center should be evaluated separately to determine its basic strengths and the scope of its potential. But then all components must be evaluated together to determine their compatibility and the mix that works best for each component while offering an integrated, lasting environment. The goal is to provide a town center that is greater than the sum of its parts.

A merchandising plan considers the retail mix for target markets and the necessary balance of demographic and lifestyle groups.

In a mixed-use setting, retail uses drive residential and office uses. The retail component sets the tone of the general environment in two ways, through the tenant

mix and through the nature of retail. First, through the tenant mix it makes a statement about the nature of the experience in the town center. Is entertainment offered through restaurants, bookstores, and cinemas? Performing arts or fine arts facilities also provide entertainment but generally do not keep people in the area if these retail components are not also present. Does the tenant mix include specialty stores? Are the tenants





Washingtonian Center, in Gaithersburg, Maryland, was one of the first town centers to mix big-box discount stores with full-price and neighborhood convenience stores in a pedestrian environment.

upscale, middle-of-the road, or discount stores? Each provides different levels of browsing appeal, convenience, and customer traffic. Is there a supermarket? Supermarkets provide a convenience for nearby existing and future neighborhoods, and the type of supermarket—upscale or mainstream—is often one of the determinants of ambiance.

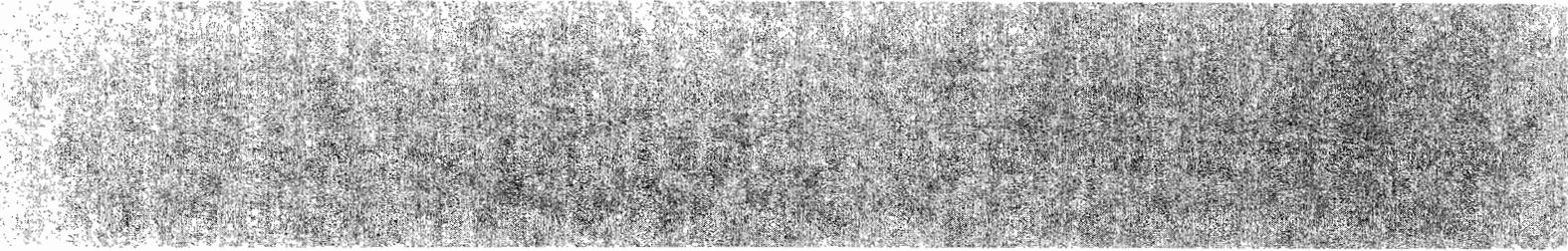
Second, through the very nature of retail—trips to a variety of retail spaces by hundreds or thousands of customers per day, almost all on street level—a high level of pedestrian activity is sustained. Although office workers and residents generate additional pedestrian activity, they do not provide the ongoing volume of activity generated by the retail component. Further, proximity to stores and restaurants is a selling point for residential units and office space in town centers, whereas on-site residential and office activity is a small factor in most stores' locational decisions.

A retail market analysis answers two “big picture” questions:

- ❖ What type of retail project can be supported by the market? Types include traditional neighborhood or community centers, more upscale centers commonly referred to as “lifestyle centers,” power centers, regional and super regional centers, or hybrids consisting of elements of any or all of these. Hybrids are becoming increasingly common.



High-density residential provides a good market base for retail at Atlantic Station, in Atlanta, Georgia.



Zona Rosa, in Kansas City, Missouri, creates a focus for a low-density suburban market.

■ What size could the retail component be? Size refers to built space and can range from less than 100,000 square feet to more than 1 million square feet.

A retail market analysis follows six basic steps:

- Determine the spending patterns of the surrounding population—where people shop, how much they spend.
- Document the type, size, and location of existing and planned competitive retail facilities and districts, both nearby and in the region.
- Identify the likely new trade area on the basis of the analyses of those spending patterns and competing facilities.
- Calculate total buying power in the trade area and the amount expected to be captured by the new project.

■ Translate captured buying power into supportable square footage.

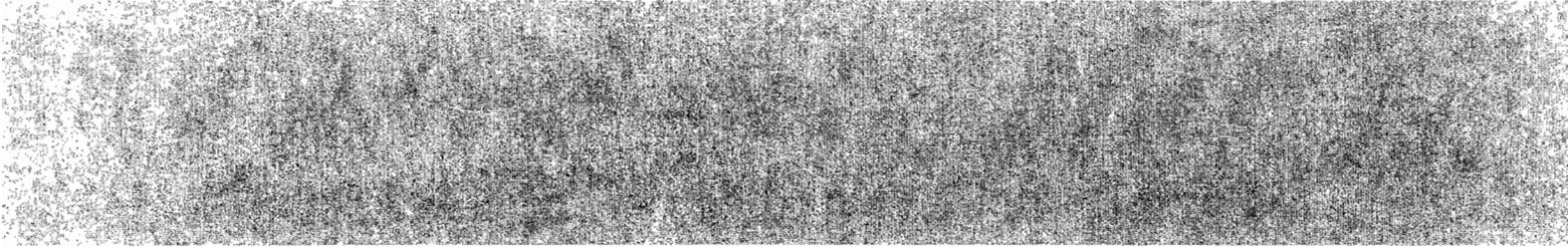
■ Conduct a site and traffic analysis to ensure that the projected development can be accommodated.

Office activity in a town center can range from second-story office space above retail to a freestanding class A high rise. An office market analysis evaluates existing

The market in Boca Raton, Florida, expects amenities such as valet parking at Mizner Park.



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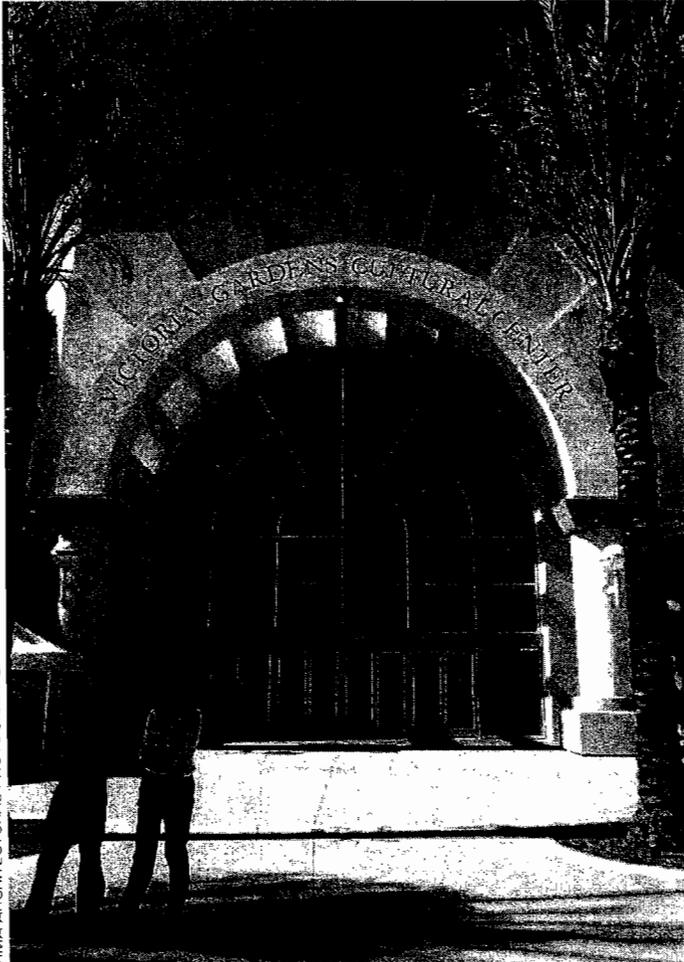
ERHARD PFEIFFER PHOTOGRAPHER

office space in the region, including tenant types, building age, building size, and concentrations and occupancy rates, as well as planned developments, transportation improvements, and industry trends.

Residential units in a town center can include apartments over retail, loft units, apartment or condominium buildings, townhomes, and live/work units. Residential market analysis always looks at population growth projections and at market segments of the population that may be at a point in their life cycles when density and convenience are most attractive. Such segments include young professionals and empty nesters.

Victoria Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga, California, provides many retail environments to serve different shopping needs.

Share the Risk, Share the Reward



Civic uses can grow out of public/private partnerships and add to the liveliness and diversity of the town center, as at Victoria Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga, California.

Developing well-designed, successful town centers sometimes requires merging public and private interests and resources so that by sharing the risks, the rewards can also be shared. The conventional process of development is confrontational—an arm-wrestling contest between the local government and the developer to see which will get the best of the other from the process. Developing a collaborative partnership arrangement can avoid this zero-sum game and produce outcomes that benefit all partners.

Public/private partnerships can be beneficial for a number of reasons:

- Local governments can no longer bear the full burden of the costs for required public infrastructure and facilities. Private sector partners can share the costs.
- Neither private nor public interests are served by lengthy delays in the entitlement process. Public sector officials can facilitate the review and approval process.
- Planning and zoning controls are often either inadequate or too inflexible to ensure the desired public or private outcomes. The public and private sectors can work together to see that the process is less important than the desired outcome.
- The citizens of the community must be engaged and their views heard. Public and private partners can bring unique skills and resources to the process and together nourish a supportive consensus within the community.

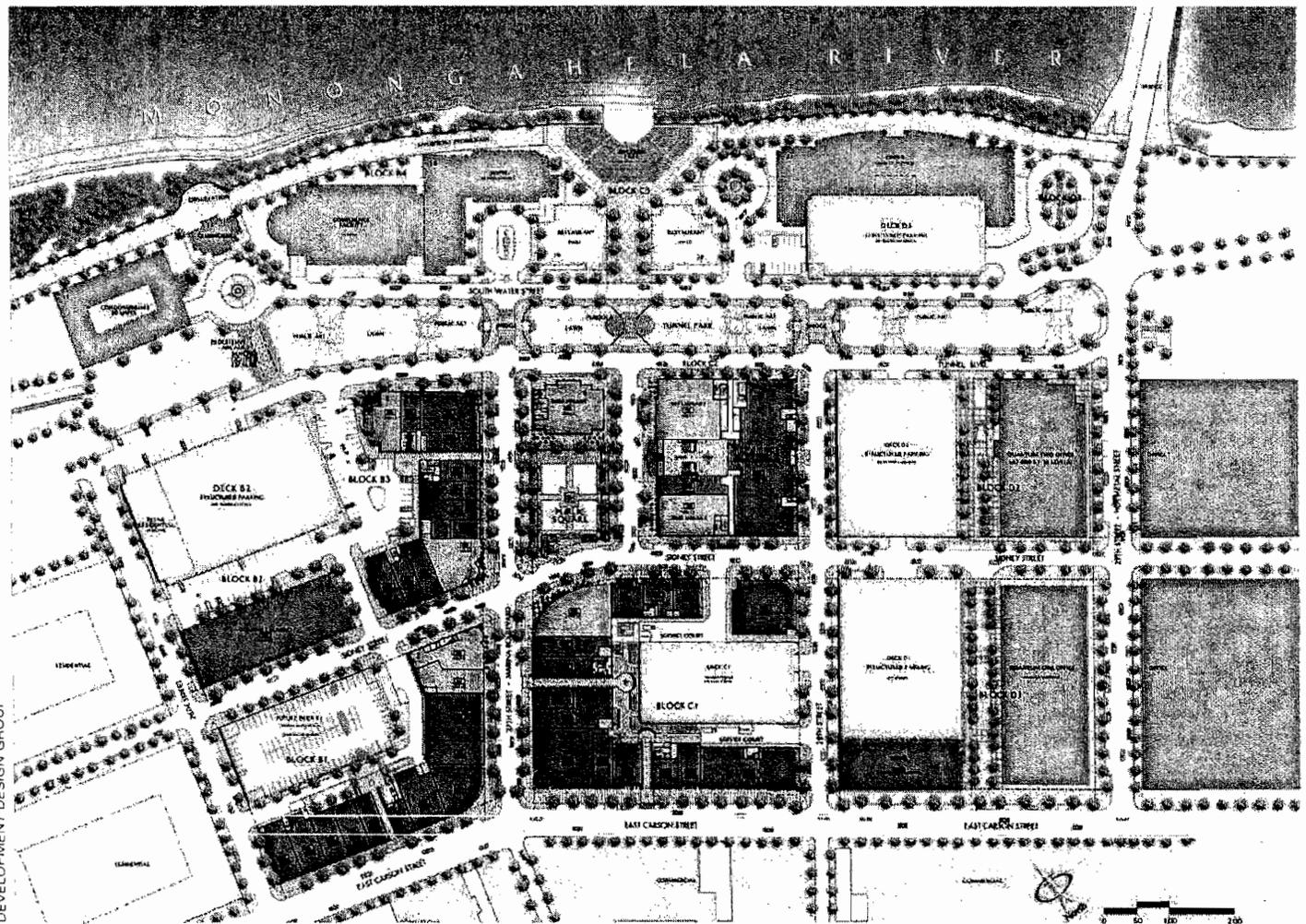
Today, public/private partnerships are seen as creative alliances formed between a government entity and private developers to achieve a common purpose. Other stakeholders, such as nonprofit associations, have joined these partnerships. Citizens and neighborhood groups also have a stake in the process.

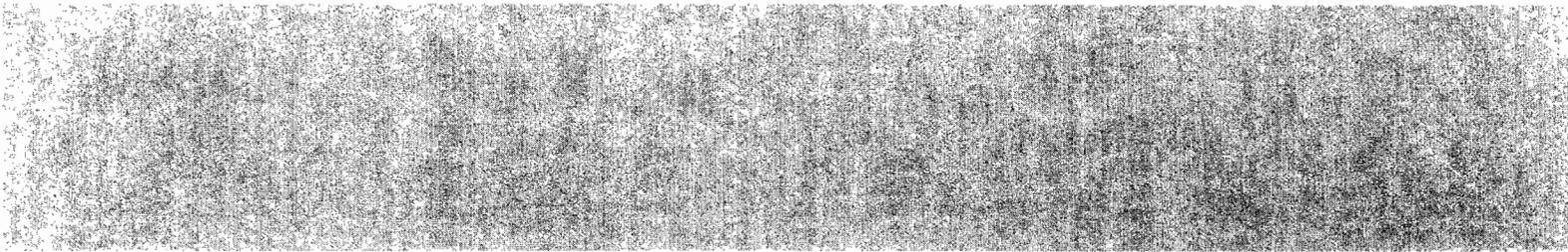
Although each such partnership is unique in its local implementation, most share development phases that are bounded by similar legal and political limits. In the first phase—conceptualization and initiation—stakeholders are surveyed for their opinions of the vision for the town center and the surrounding community and partners are identified. In the second phase, entities document the partnership and begin to define project elements, roles and responsibilities, risks and rewards, and decision-making and implementation processes. The partners negotiate the deal and

reach agreement on all relevant terms. In the third phase, the partnership attempts to obtain support from all stakeholders, including civic groups, local government, and project team members. Project financing begins and tenant commitments are secured. In the fourth phase, the partnership begins construction, leasing and occupancy, and property and asset management. The process is repetitive and can continue beyond the final phase, when partners manage properties or initiate new projects.

A partnership is a process, not a product. Successful navigation through the process results in net benefits for all parties. The public sector can leverage and maximize public assets and increase control over the development process to create a vibrant built environment. Private sector entities can receive more support throughout the development process and have more certainty about approvals, timing, and acceptable and profitable outcomes.

SouthSide Works, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is the product of a public/private partnership to redevelop the site of an old steel plant on the Monongahela River and reconnect the community to the waterfront.





Public events help integrate the town center into the fabric of the community, as at Suwanee Town Center, in Suwanee, Georgia.



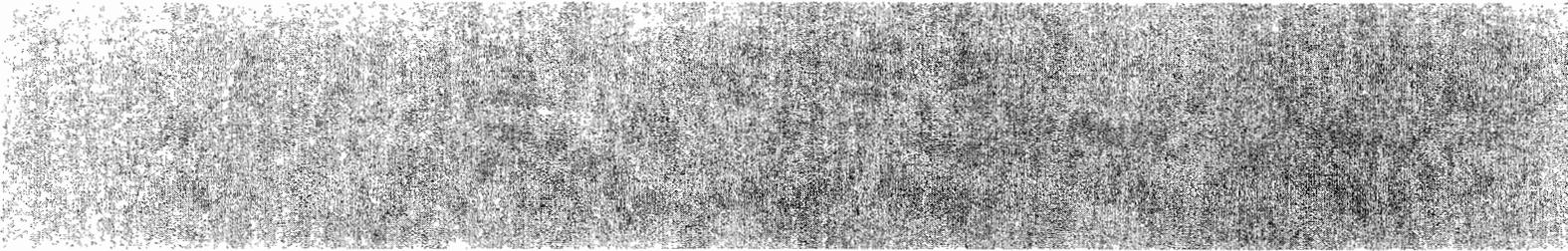
Risks

Public/private partnerships can encounter various types of risk:

- Market risk: Will the projected demand for space be realized?
- Construction risk: Will the project meet the budget and the schedule?
- Ownership risk: Will all the hazards of owning and operating a development, such as tenant leasing, be overcome?
- Interest-rate risk: Will the interest rate increase?
- Performance risk: Will the project achieve the public purpose for which government justified its participation?

Rewards

The most obvious rewards for the public are the net economic and fiscal benefits—jobs, infrastructure, taxes, fees, increases in the community's wealth and tax base—that can be produced by joint action to overcome obstacles. Less tangible is the message that the community is on the move, that it is progressive in advancing the welfare of its residents. Public officials also enjoy gratification and recognition for



their work. Meanwhile, the public benefits from enhanced community amenities, a greater sense of identity, and increased economic development.

The benefits to the private developer are perhaps the most obvious and readily measured, because a deal must be profitable after paying all costs associated with the investment of time and resources. In addition to the nonfinancial returns to ego and self-esteem that are produced by a successful project, developers have reputations to build and protect if they are to participate in other deals and continue to prosper.

Although the risks and rewards of a particular public/private partnership may be more easily measured in the private sector, the public concerns are no less important. A disciplined accounting of expected rewards and risks, or benefits and costs, goes a long way toward demonstrating to key stakeholders and the general public alike that a deal is worth doing. The public must know that all relevant factors of the deal are being considered—that risks are being carefully defined and evaluated and steps are being taken to offset or mitigate them. Clearly, the objective of this accounting should be to show that the ultimate outcome of the partnership will be positive for both the public and the private partners as a result of their respective investments and risk taking. If an accounting of risks and rewards fails to show such a positive outcome, good reason exists to reconsider the undertaking.

**Also available from ULI:
Ten Principles for
Successful Public/
Private Partnerships**

By partnering and sharing the risks and rewards, public officials and developers are completing urban renewal projects such as mixed-use space, affordable housing, and convention centers that might have been impossible using more traditional methods. This publication presents principles to help all parties navigate the development process and get the job done, whether for a single project or a long-term plan. Examples and case studies highlight best practices.

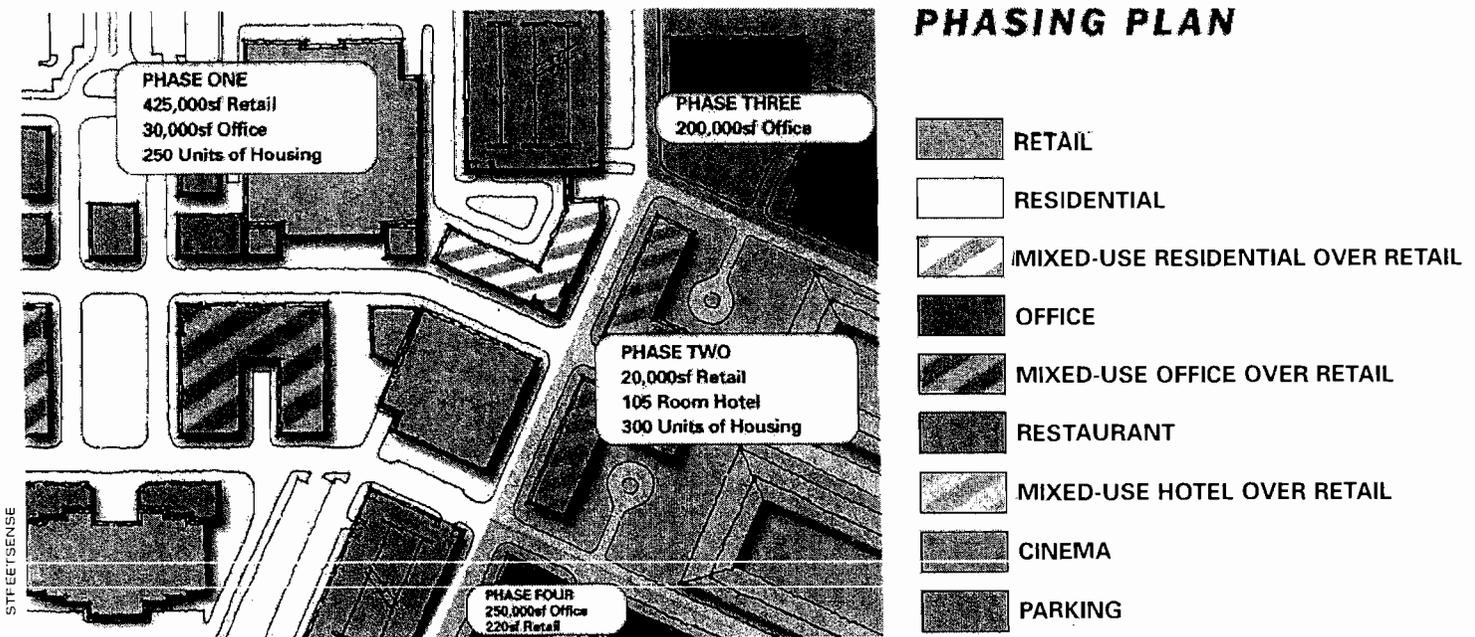


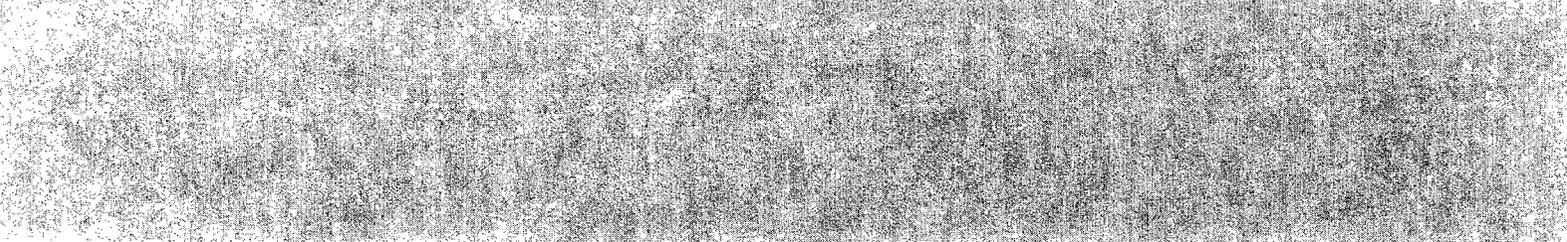
Plan for Development and Financial Complexity

Financing and ownership issues in town centers involve numerous levels of complexity beyond those that occur in most single-use projects. This complexity typically includes one or more of the following aspects:

- Large overall project size with large capital requirements;
- A number of uses that may be financed separately and have distinct financing requirements and market cycles;
- Phasing strategies that may require separate financing for each phase;
- Several owners or equity sources of capital, including unusual ownership structures or multiple ownership structures;
- Management issues that affect ownership, including covenants, maintenance and management agreements, condominium uses, and the like;
- Lenders who evince a lack of understanding or interest;
- Longer predevelopment periods, requiring high levels of upfront, at-risk equity;
- Longer construction and overall development time frame, exposing the project to greater market and financial risk;
- Higher overall risk, requiring higher returns to compensate;

The ambitious scale of planned town centers often requires phasing development projects in line with market demand. Phasing may require different financing strategies because early phases are riskier and later phases will be enhanced by the ongoing success and synergies of completed projects.



- 
- Higher development costs per square foot, including higher legal costs, design fees, and construction costs, and larger contingencies; and
 - Public financing opportunities and challenges.

Use a Well-Organized, Well-Capitalized Approach with Resilience and Vision

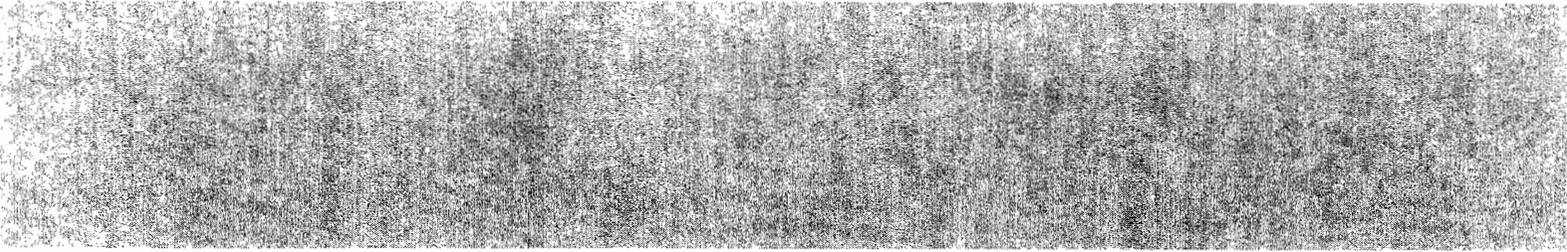
To address these issues, developers of town centers must be experienced, well organized, and very well capitalized. Town center developments are typically taken on by private developers that have a strong vision and the staying power to see developments through to completion. Developers must have a long-term outlook and be ready to embark on a long process, staying with the project well into the operating period. They will need to develop a financial plan and structure that includes substantial upfront, at-risk equity to get the project through a long approval and predevelopment process—a process that may well end in a no-go decision, resulting in the loss of a lot of money.

Developers and their financial partners need to stay with the development well into the operating period because it may take some time to achieve the initial vision and to attain stabilized operations and income, especially when phasing is involved. Profits on town centers are often made in the latter years of the holding period, when the project is fully built out and performance is fully optimized. Success also requires implementing and fine-tuning an effective management plan. The management plan is essential to establishing solid operating performance over a period of years and to achieving the final vision. A long-term view and patient capital are essential ingredients.

Financial analysis must recognize the many ways in which mixed uses will affect construction costs, projected revenues, and operations. Although mixed uses will likely lead to higher revenues and greater profits, they also entail higher costs and greater risks. All these factors must be reflected in the financial planning process.

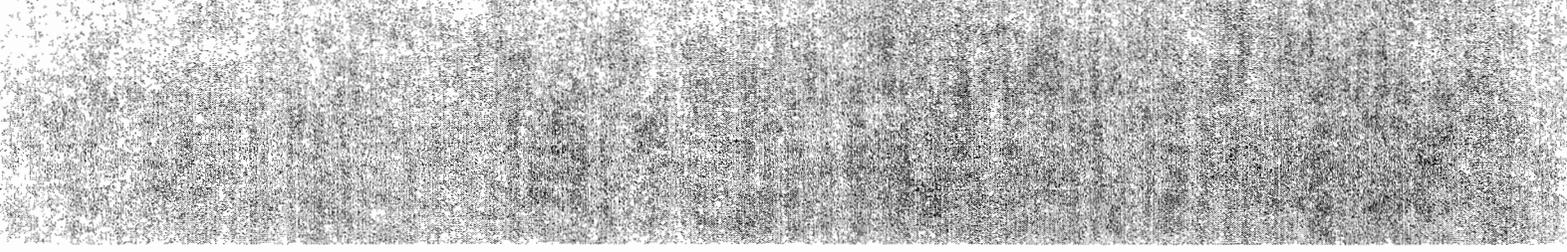
Attract Financing and Work with Multiple Sources

Financing for town centers frequently involves equity from numerous equity capital sources, which may participate in the whole deal or just portions of it. Financing may involve multiple owners and equity sources for each element of the project. Legally defining where each ownership interest begins and ends is a unique and critical step in town center projects. Maintenance and management responsibilities for common area elements must be carefully spelled out in ownership and management agreements. Considerable time and effort must be spent on ownership and legal issues up front.



The development of Market Common, Clarendon in Arlington, Virginia, involved a complex arrangement and integration of different types of housing and retail uses around an energized public square.

Significant time and effort will also be required to arrange and obtain debt financing. Multiple-use projects require lenders who recognize and understand the various uses in the project, how they are operated, and how they fit and work together. The lender must be willing to finance something different, something that does not fall into standard single-use categories. This is a difficult stretch for many lenders; thus the developer needs to spend time finding the right lender. Even then, a certain amount of time must be spent on educating the lender about the unique aspects of mixed-use development; public sector partners can often be helpful in this process.



Another approach is to arrange separate financing for each use, but this entails arranging numerous deals, which is in itself challenging. Finding a lender who understands the vision is important, and using multiple lenders may be necessary. Using multiple lenders can work for projects in which components are separately owned. For example, there could be different lenders for residential, retail, office, hotel, and other uses. Whatever lender approach is used, the plan must not be compromised to satisfy the lender.

Capitalize on Public Financing Opportunities

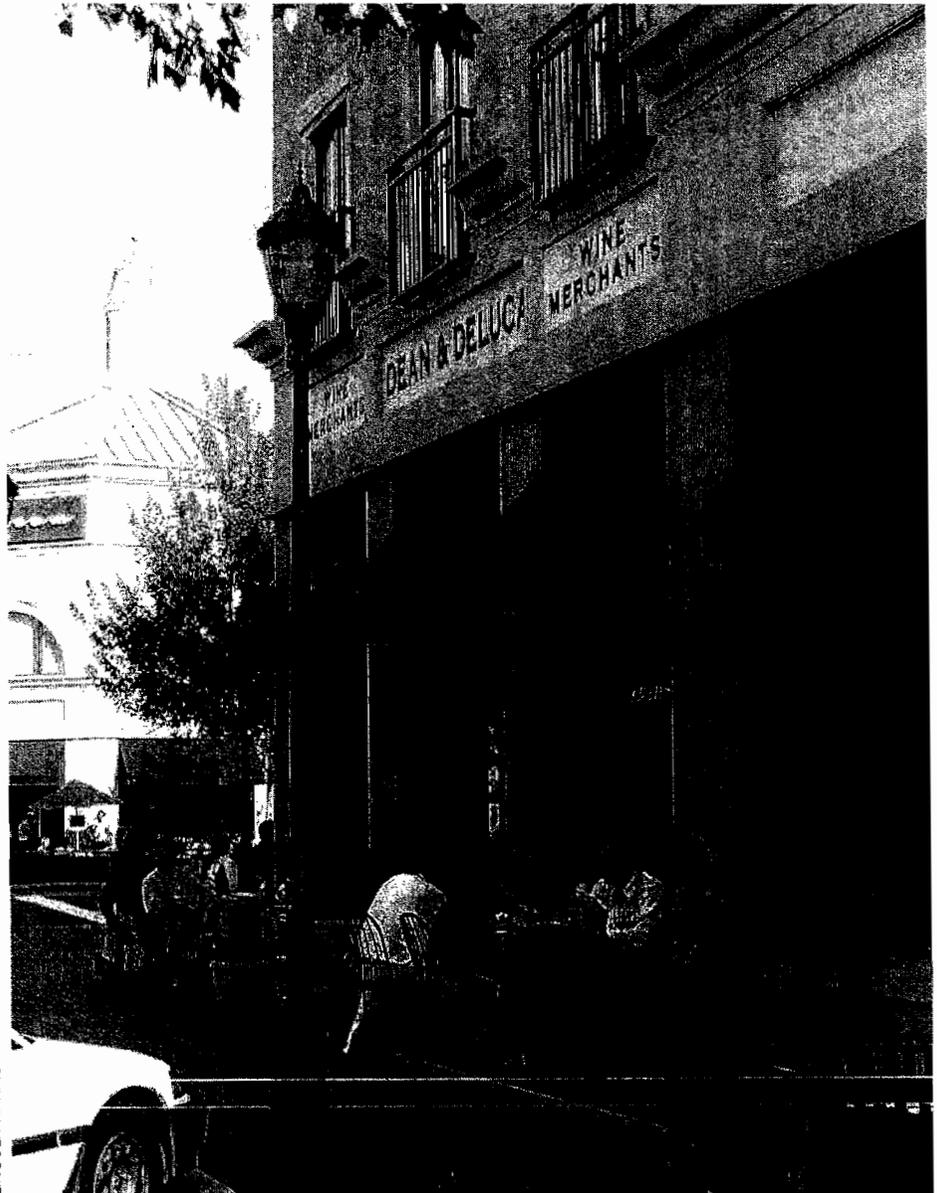
Town center deals often involve public financing, which can provide much-needed funding but comes with strings attached that may slow the process and increase its complexity. Municipal bonds and tax increment financing are often used to finance infrastructure improvements, parking garages, city halls or other public facilities, and other elements of a town center. Tax credits and many other public financing sources may be available. Putting together a solid public/private partnership can greatly enhance the viability and success of a town center project. It is important to look for ways to involve the public.

5 Integrate Multiple Uses

A mixture of uses is one of the most important qualities defining a town center. Historically, centers of towns or villages have contained a variety of uses that serve the broader community. The “work, live, shop” concept was integral to these centers: uses such as markets, civic buildings, offices, hotels, and urban parks created a vibrant environment that was active during the day and the evening.

Developing a mixture of uses in a new town center or trying to introduce new uses to an existing center is not without challenges. Each use, while bringing potential

Phillips Place in Charlotte, North Carolina, has both mixed-use and multiuse components in a town center environment.



LINCOLN HARRIS

benefits and synergies to the center, has different constraints and issues affecting its development. For instance, retail, residential, and office uses have different rates of absorption. Retail uses require a critical mass and prefer to open all at once. Residential and office uses, by contrast, have smaller and more defined rates of absorption and require longer time frames to develop. These inherent differences can hinder vertical integration, result in delay, and add cost to the development. A potential solution is to consider multiple uses instead of mixed uses.

Multiuse developments contain multiple uses; however, they are not completely integrated like mixed-use developments. In a multiuse scheme, for example, retail and residential uses are located within walking distance of one another but not within the same building. This development paradigm eliminates the complications that are often associated with the phasing and construction of traditional mixed-use projects. Multiuse development allows the entire critical mass of retail to be brought online at one time, without having to be concerned with residential or office phasing.

Parking can either add value to or adversely affect a town center. Retail, residential, and office uses have similar demands for parking, whether they are in a single-use development or a mixed-use town center. While a small amount of parking can be offset in a shared environment, the savings is not substantial and large numbers of cars still must be accommodated in order for the commercial uses to be successful.

Integrating parking in a town center requires consideration of the following key issues:

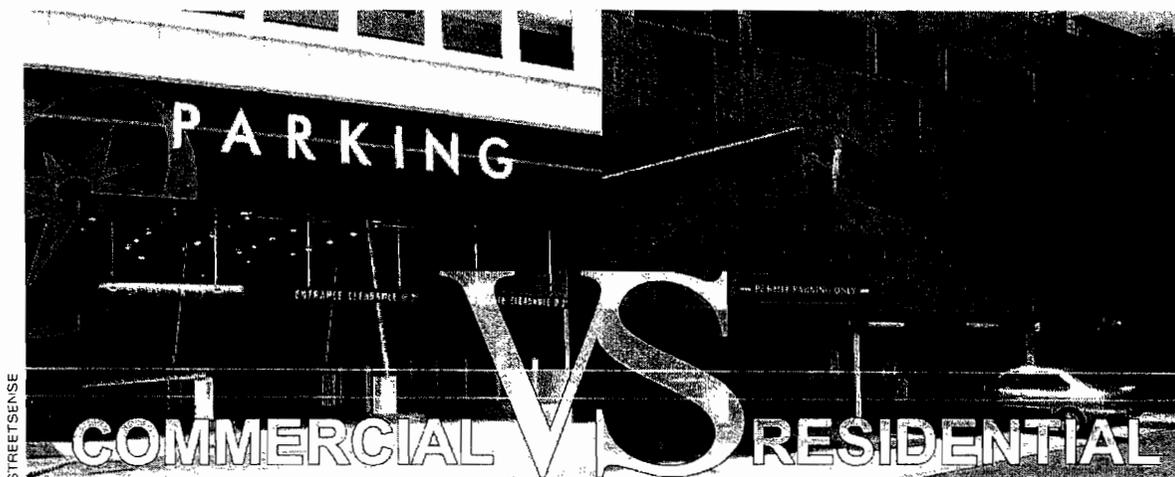
- Typically, commercial and retail parking is more intensive than residential parking.
- Retail and office patrons prefer large fields of parking that are public and open, with great visibility.

Key Supporting Land Uses

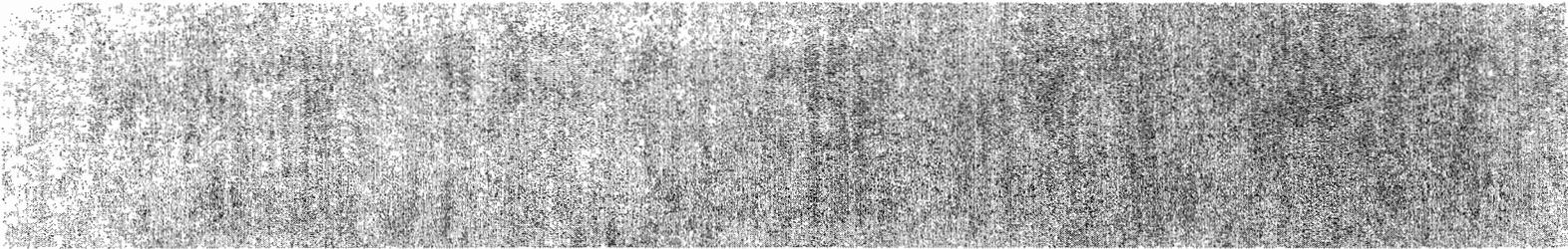
Residential and office uses are two of the most critical uses for a town center because they

- Create synergy with retail use, including restaurants (a special subcategory of retail use);
- Add to sidewalk and street traffic—retail loves crowds;
- Contribute to a more complete experience of a neighborhood environment, in the eye of the user; and
- Complement and feed other uses and users: for example, civic buildings and hospitality facilities.

Retail and office patrons prefer open, public parking with great visibility. Residents prefer secure, private parking located close to their units.



STREETSENSE



Santana Row, a mixed-use town center in San Jose, California, integrates housing above the stores.



- Residential patrons prefer secure, private parking arrangements located close to their units.
- Much as in single-use developments, parking needs to be well distributed and balanced to meet parking needs throughout the town center.
- Factoring in the reality and scale of parking demand can make designing for an urban experience difficult.

First and foremost, town centers are place-based developments. A sense of place functions as an anchor and helps distinguish a town center from a typical single-use development. The integration of multiple uses with a multilayered system of streets, sidewalks, paths, alleys, and parks helps create a memorable environment for both the pedestrian and the patron arriving by car. Close attention must be paid to all these elements in order for a center to be successful.

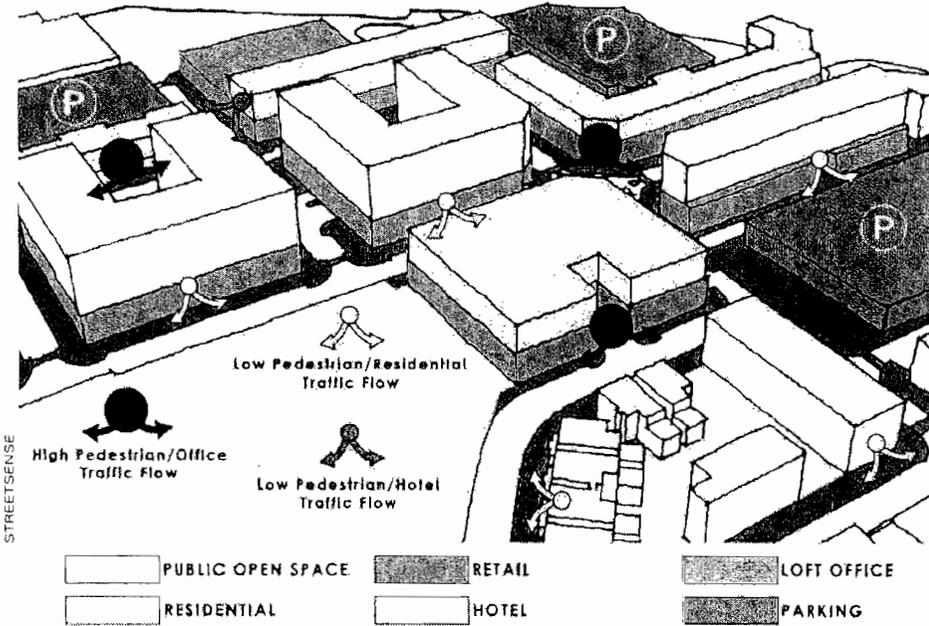
Integrating uses helps moderate the balance between vehicular traffic and pedestrian flow by creating different traffic peaks throughout the day and week. For example, residential uses help keep the retail uses and the sidewalks busy in the evenings, while office uses help generate activity in the center during the day. Having multiple uses or mixed uses is not as important as having a diverse range of uses.

Mixed uses are integrated vertically and horizontally. Multiuses are located within walking distance of each other and can be integrated horizontally, but the uses do not share buildings.

Town centers must be more than a brand name. They must connect with people at an emotional level and be perceived by the community as belonging to it. The integration of multiple uses creates the diverse urban character that people identify with and enjoy. A mixed-use town center supports an environment that allows for a



DAYTIME PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC FLOW

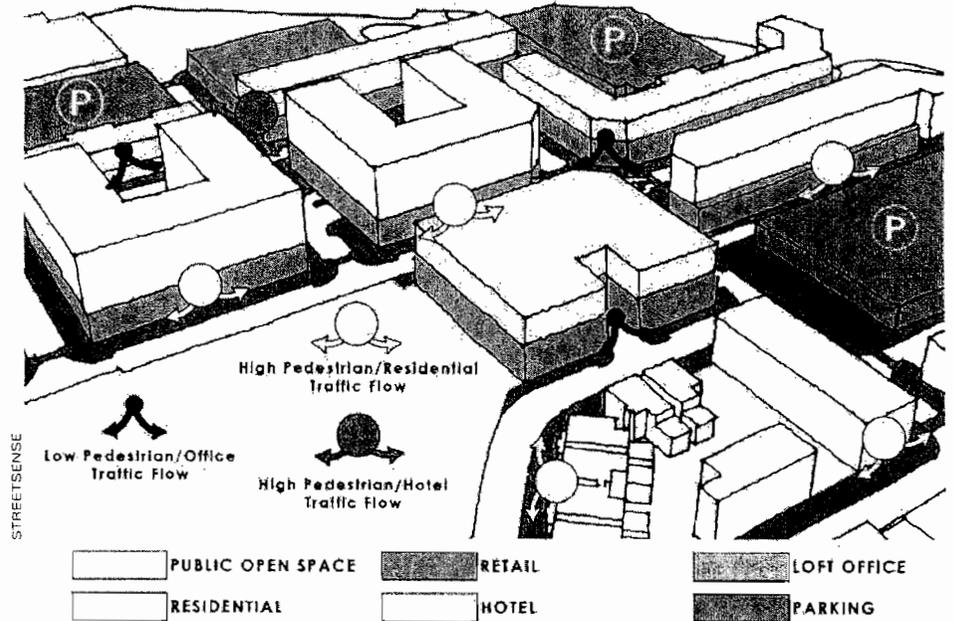


Residential uses help keep the retail uses and sidewalks busy in the evenings, while offices help generate activity in the center during the day.

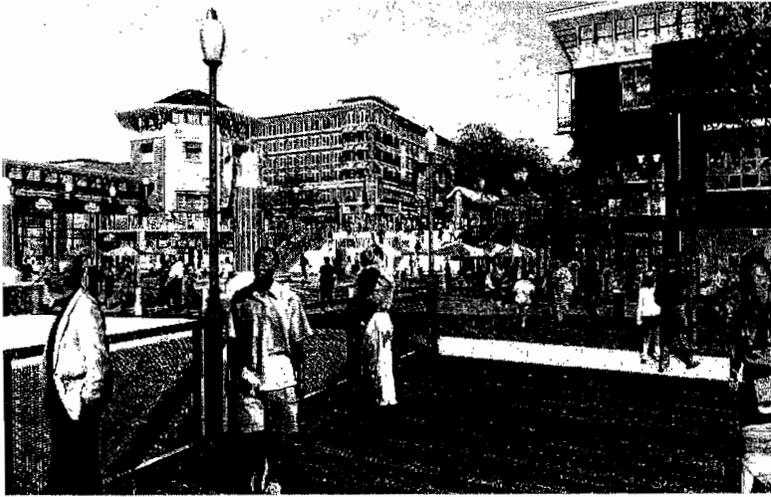
variety of activities, including working, living, shopping, entertainment, and leisure. The combination of residential, office, retail, and civic uses forms a neighborhood or district environment that will appeal to the public and be sustained by it.

Although integrating a mix of uses comes with complications in terms of cost, financing, phasing, and parking, the result can be a development with a perceived value that exceeds the sum of its parts. When executed properly, a town center is a lasting development that holds its value and becomes an enduring asset to a community.

EVENING PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC FLOW



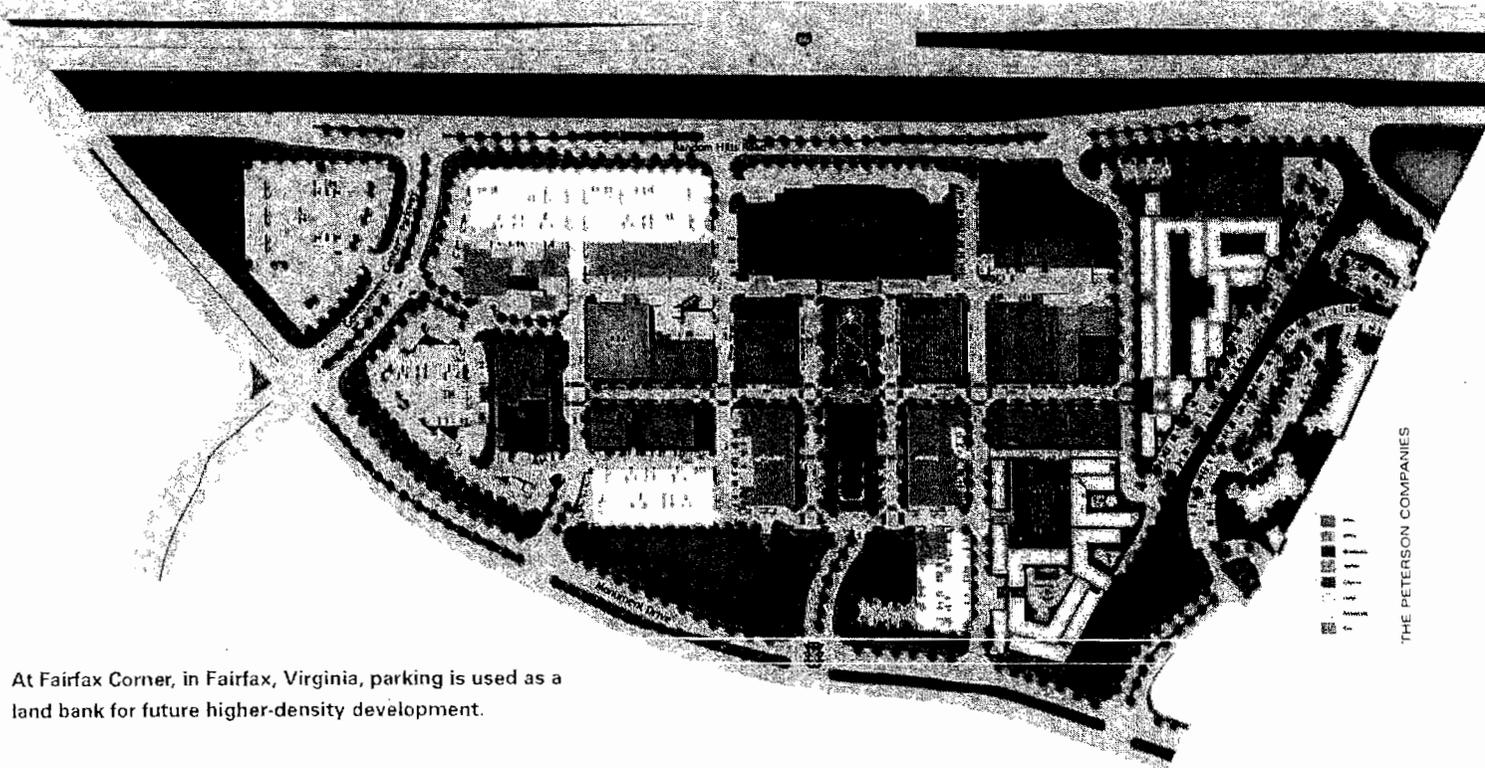
Balance Flexibility with Long-Term Vision



National Harbor, in Prince George's County, Maryland, is planned as a dramatically scaled mixed-use town center that will be a major destination for residents of the Washington, D.C., area as well as for tourists and conventioners. Future phases, developed in line with growing demand, will track the long-term vision for the site.

Long-term vision is the framework, and flexibility is a tool for implementing it—together, they provide the basis for planning at the outset, decisions during development, and adjustments at maturity.

Historically, town centers have grown and changed organically. Creating a new town center requires analogous flexibility over the course of development as markets shift, consumer preferences change, and relationships among uses mature. Given the uncertainty of the future, a basic flexibility can be incorporated by designating mixed-use zoning that allows for density and use to shift within a project. Further flexibility can be ensured through phased development. Each completed phase is assessed for its success as a town center component, as well as its economic success. Even the efficacy of the street grid should be reviewed. Subsequent phases should be planned to respond to changes, refine and build on successes, and correct any weaknesses.



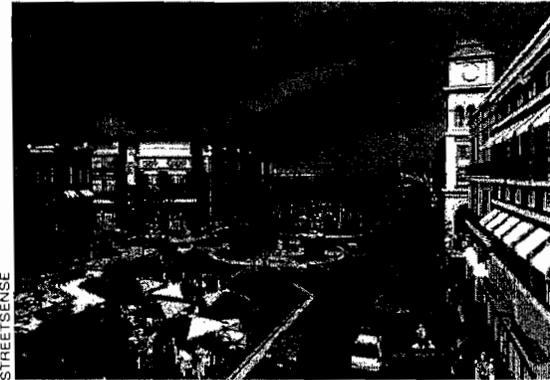
At Fairfax Corner, in Fairfax, Virginia, parking is used as a land bank for future higher-density development.

Phasing, while providing flexibility, should not be interpreted as a series of incomplete increments. The first phase should be a viable project in itself, able to thrive commercially and establish the area as a growing town center. Each subsequent phase should merge with the existing environment to sustain viability and growth.

Considerations of building design, block size, and infrastructure location also support future flexibility. Large floor plates and attention to fenestration may allow for adaptive use of buildings, providing the basic requirements for retail, office, and residential uses. Large block sizes not only allow for these adaptable floor plates but also allow for complete redevelopment into an entirely new use, should that become appropriate in the future. Placing infrastructure around the outer edges of a surface parking lot so that later construction of a garage does not require reconfiguration also enables flexibility.

These components of flexibility are essential but must be approached in the context of a long-term vision. Adjustments in size, density, mix, and location of uses must maintain the integrity of the town center concept and support the development of the community's core. Basic concepts such as the public realm, human scale, street grids, and overall quality cannot be compromised. The notion that a town center is built for the future, to endure beyond any of its current tenants and uses, is the vision that guides the development process.

Where parcels are developed over time by different developers or eventually sold, this long-term vision is of paramount importance. It requires a master planner—a keeper of the flame—to maintain the integrity and quality of the plan over time. Where ownership is more diverse, the master planner may be the jurisdiction in which the town center is located, supported by a vocal community and property owners invested in the town center. The role of the community is particularly noteworthy because a successful town center is the true heart of the community. Its success depends on the community's continued relationship with the town center. Looking forward with both a long-term vision and flexibility is key to developing and sustaining a vibrant town center.

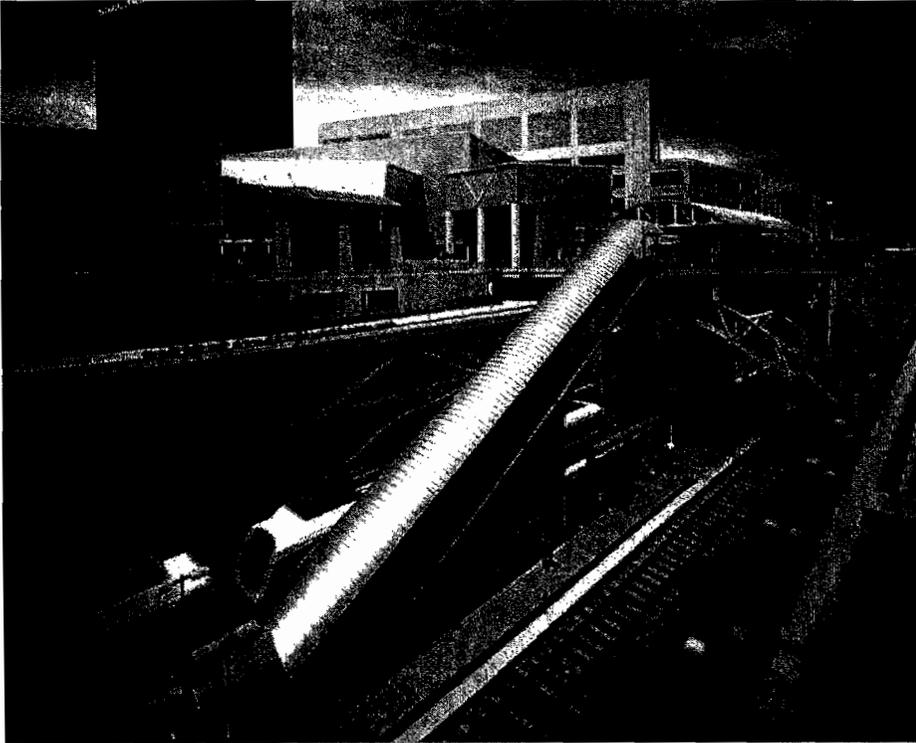


Crocker Park in Westlake, Ohio, will be a 12-block town center upon completion. Its vision is to include large residential neighborhoods and office development linked to the retail uses that are already operating.

Crocker Park in Westlake, Ohio. While long-term development plans should be flexible, planning and design must adhere to the long-term vision of superior quality.



Capture the Benefits That Density Offers



Mockingbird Station in Dallas, Texas. Density and transit are mutually supportive in town center environments.

Easton Town Center in Columbus, Ohio. High density means more amenities, more liveliness, more synergies between development components and more choices for the public.

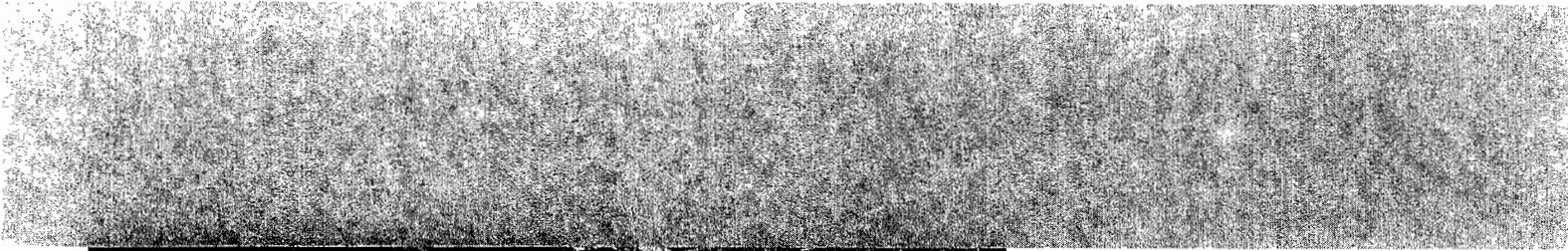


The development of an appealing, vibrant town center requires a well-designed mix of uses at a density high enough to achieve a critical mass of people on the street. A truly successful town center will be the most densely developed and lively part of the community.

Designing a dense town center requires the introduction of pedestrian-friendly spaces. In contrast to the automobile's domination of conventional low-density development, higher density makes the human scale possible. Imagine a densely developed, mixed-use center where people can easily walk along broad sidewalks lining attractive storefronts and safely cross narrow streets as they move within the development. Now picture a conventional strip center set behind a large

parking field and next to a wide highway. The former invites people to get out of their cars and stay, perhaps walking from shopping to dining and on to other activities. The latter dissipates the energy of the center by encouraging car-based "laser" shopping—park the car, buy the item, get back in the car, and leave.

All the same, adequate convenient parking is essential to the success of retail developments and necessary for office and residential uses as well. Cars are the most important part of our transportation system and people rely on their cars to get to stores, to get to work, and to get home. Accordingly, an efficient, well-designed parking system must be planned at the beginning. It is especially important that parking be shared among uses. Thus, parking that is used by office workers during the day can be used by residents or theatergoers at night. Well-managed, convenient, and visible parking facilities contribute greatly to a town center's appeal and incentive for use. It is important to remember, however, that one of the primary benefits of a dense town center is to keep automobiles in their place—supporting, not dominating. If cars and parking dominate the town center, it will not achieve the overall livability and pedestrian friendliness that make the town center concept work.



The development of the Market Common, Clarendon in Arlington, Virginia, included enveloping this mixed-use development with townhouses that increased density and shielded the surrounding neighborhood from back views of the shopping center.

The size of a town center and the amount of parking needed are based on the size of the target market. Is the town center appealing to a regional market, a community market, or perhaps just a neighborhood market? The bigger the market is, the higher the density threshold for the project. In any case, the goal is to build to the threshold of density that is necessary to attain a critical mass for that town center. For town centers that are already built, achieving this goal means reworking the master plan to allow for more dense development.

Density increases opportunities for public transit and also for cross-shopping, keeping the whole center thriving by creating synergy among its various uses. In a development with shorter distances between the stores, restaurants, residential spaces, and offices, residents or office workers can easily become consumers. This kind of dense, mixed-use setting is very well suited to incorporating public transit access points, thus further increasing the appeal of the center and promoting walking.

Perhaps the most important fact is that denser development facilitates the creation of a sense of place. A place that is filled with people who have many places to go and things to do is full of energy. What is a town center without the liveliness that people bring to it? There is a direct correlation between that liveliness and high density. This makes high density a key element in achieving a town center development that feels authentic.

How Higher Density Creates Great Places to Live

- Higher density helps create walkable neighborhoods.
- Higher density supports housing choice and affordability.
- Higher density helps expand transportation choices.
- Higher density supports community fiscal health.
- Higher density helps improve security.
- Higher density helps protect the environment.

8 Connect to the Community

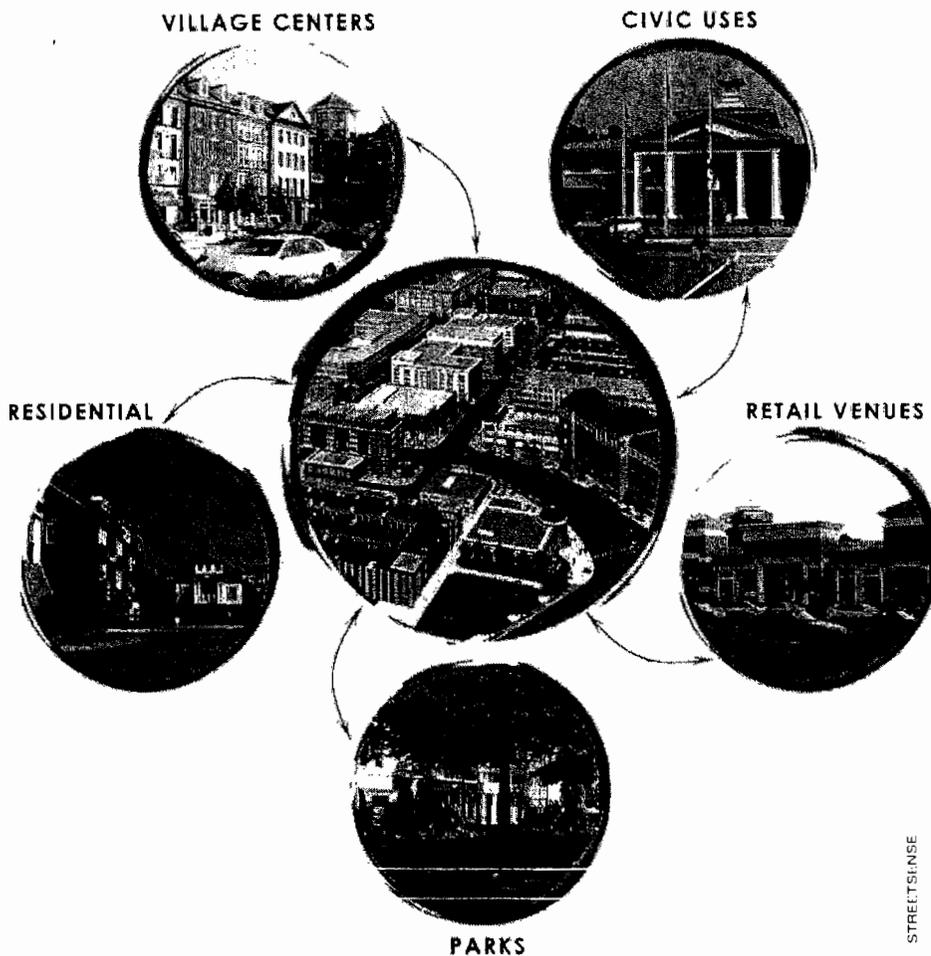
One of the defining characteristics of town center developments is that they are very public and have strong connections with the surrounding community. The fact that patrons look on town centers as public centers, not as managed shopping centers or private commercial developments, is an important distinction. Strong connections to surrounding neighborhoods, commercial areas, and park systems help reinforce the view that the town center is accessible to all users. A sense of ownership and belonging separates and characterizes town centers from traditional and lifestyle-based centers.

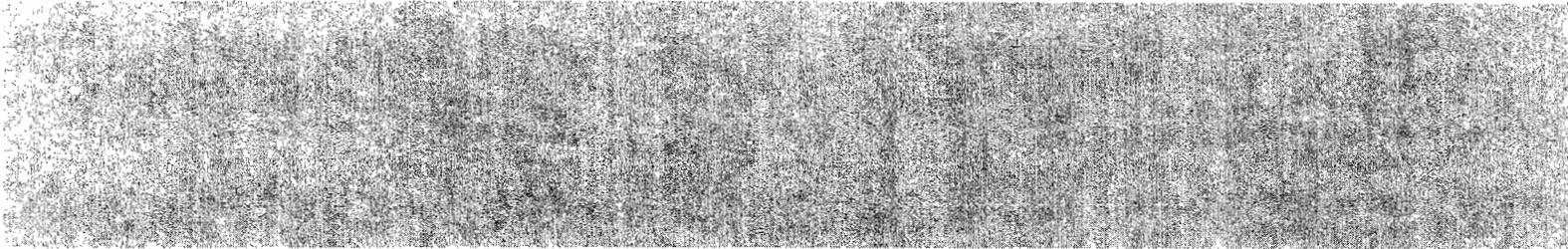
Connectivity to a town center occurs at a variety of levels. The most obvious connection is through a well-designed series of roads at the arterial, collector, and local scales. Town centers, like other regional or semiregional destinations, can generate a high volume of vehicular traffic. Designing roads that are adequate to handle and distribute the traffic that feeds these centers is very similar to designing roads in

Connectivity requires an understanding of the complex interrelationships among planned uses, roads, pedestrian ways, transit, open space, and the surrounding neighborhoods.

conventional projects, until the roads diminish to a local capacity and the interface with pedestrian traffic intensifies. Town centers require an effective balance between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Sidewalks, walkways, and bike trails are also key components that feed into and connect a town center to surrounding neighborhoods and other communities.

Town center developments typically have a retail and commercial component that is place based. High volumes of pedestrian traffic and a great sidewalk experience are critical to the success of these uses. The sidewalk environment should not be overlooked as an element that can fascinate and amuse pedestrians. Given enough width, sidewalks offer opportunities to accommodate small parks, fountains, cafés, and resting areas. Along with clear sight lines into the adjacent retail spaces,





Connectivity must include accessibility; Victoria Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga, California.

these components can make a sidewalk extremely effective in supporting a sense of place and expanding the experience of someone walking through the development.

Designing a great sidewalk requires consideration of five points:

- Sidewalks need to be activated by being next to occupied retail space, residential stoops, and well-maintained lobbies for office and other compatible uses.
- Sidewalks need to be occupied, with people always there throughout the day and evening.
- Sidewalks need to be well maintained and free of litter. Having an involved community presence is important in this respect.
- Sidewalks need to impart a sense of permanence. They should be lined by mature trees, high-quality landscaping, and high-quality materials.
- Sidewalks need to be retail-friendly, safe, secure, and comfortable. These characteristics are achieved by making streets easy to cross (with on-street parking) and by providing inventive signage and few sidewalk distractions.

A multilayered approach to infrastructure and walkway systems needs to be considered. Although the car is still the primary mode of transportation to and from town center developments, public transit, bike paths, and trails can reach out to adjacent areas and provide natural means of access. The success of these alternative modes depends on how well they can be integrated into the primary road system.

Open space can also be an important component linking a town center to a broader park system. This is particularly the case with suburban town centers, where land areas and more generous open-space requirements create opportunities for connection to larger parks.

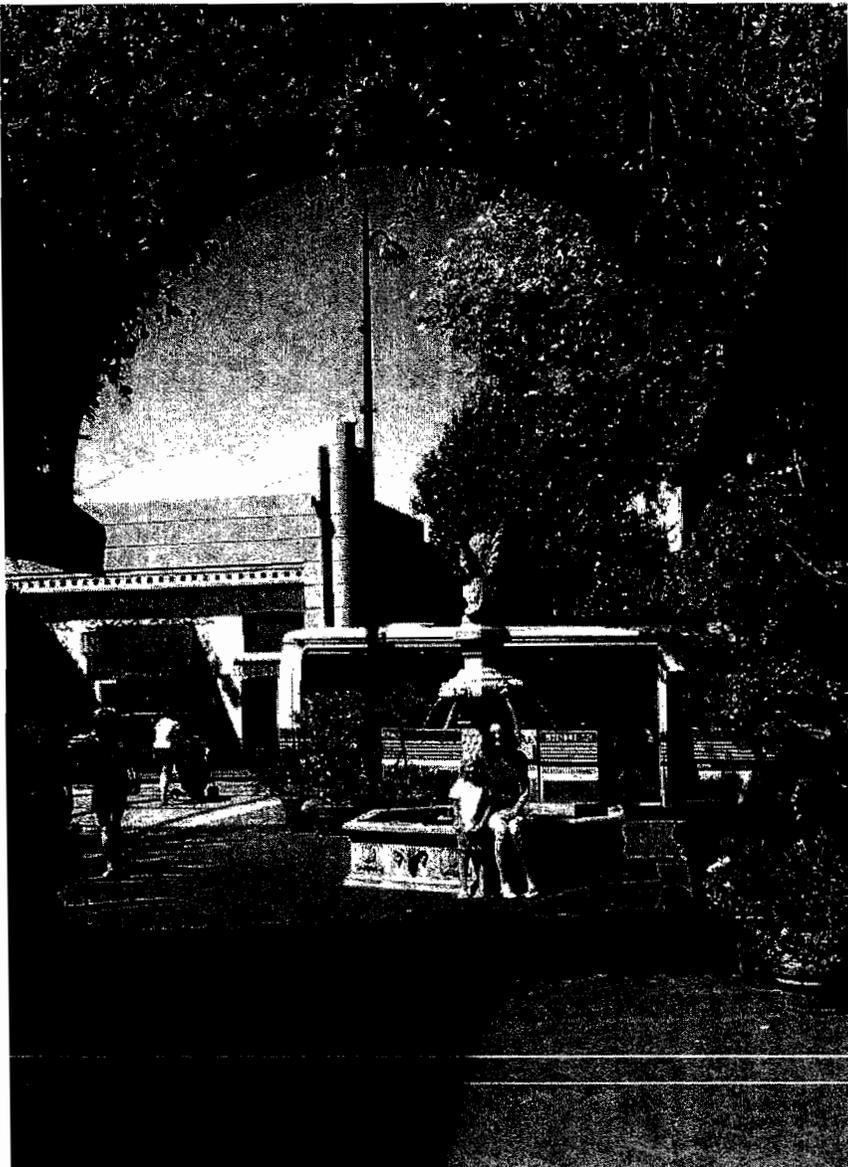
Connectivity enhances transportation choices—driving, walking, and transit—and enhances the desirability and marketability of the town center; Broadway Plaza in Walnut Creek, California.

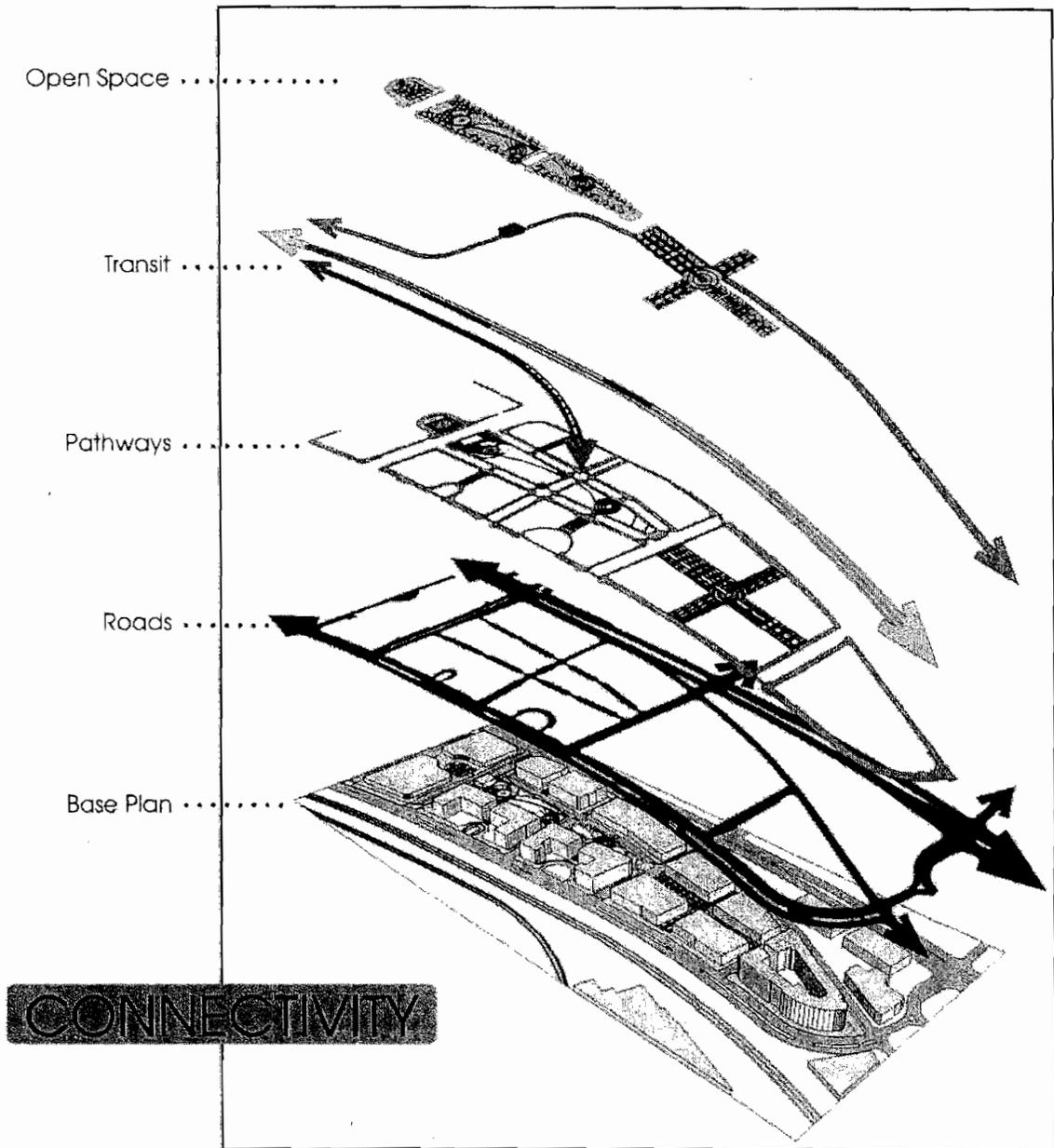
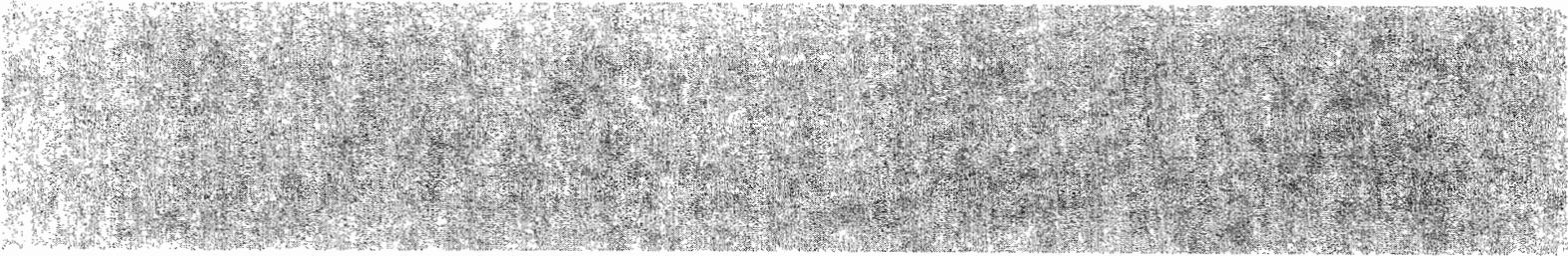
Apart from the physical aspects of connectivity, another very important type of connection occurs at the emotional level. Successful town centers have strong bonds of ownership with surrounding neighborhoods and communities. They are perceived as real places that have qualities that are unique to them and their region. Mizner

Park, as an example, has an architecture that reflects the Spanish Mediterranean characteristics of the region, while Country Club Place has a different, specific expression that relates to the Kansas City suburban context of the 1930s. It is the uniqueness and specifically the character of these centers that makes them special and connects them to the community.

Another area that is often overlooked with respect to connectivity is the retail merchandising strategy. Regional content can apply to more than architecture or physical design. Some of the most successful town centers have a great number of local and national merchants. Good local tenants have roots in the community and are typically keyed into local trends and preferences. This is particularly true of restaurants and food-related tenants, which have a strong sense of local tastes and put a lot of effort into creating places that are unique to their personalities.

Developing successful town centers is a very complicated process with many issues to consider. A system of roads and walkways that provide easy access to the center from the surrounding community is one of the most important elements to get right. Commercial uses, such as retail spaces, offices, and hotels, require high levels of traffic and visibility to thrive. Similarly, the place-based nature of a





town center creates strong emotional connections with the surrounding community. A sense of uniqueness and specificity are characteristics that separate a town center from other developments or centers. Reinforcing connections at the physical and emotional levels strengthens the position of the center in the market and helps ensure its continued long-term viability.

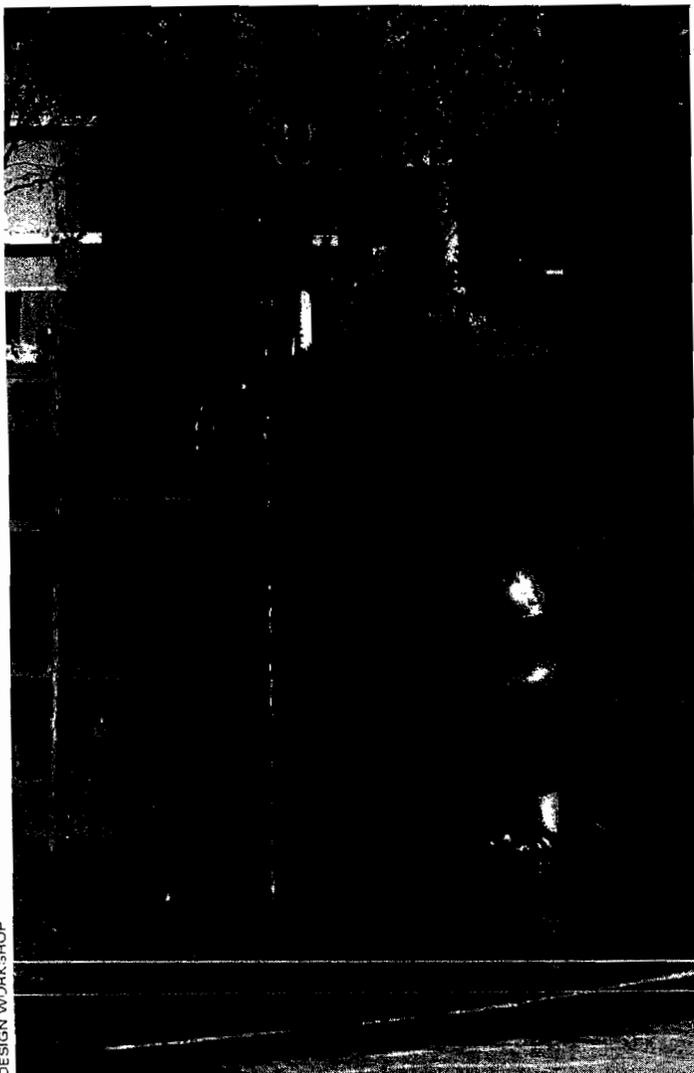
Invest for Sustainability

Sustainability is not just a buzzword that stands for the use of green products and protection of the environment. Sustainable design uses a holistic approach that includes economic and social as well as environmental considerations. The goal of sustainable development is to be environmentally responsible and physically enduring while performing well over the long term. This kind of success requires adaptability and good economic and commercial performance. It also means having a strong and adaptable social fabric that makes people want to be in that place and return to it often.

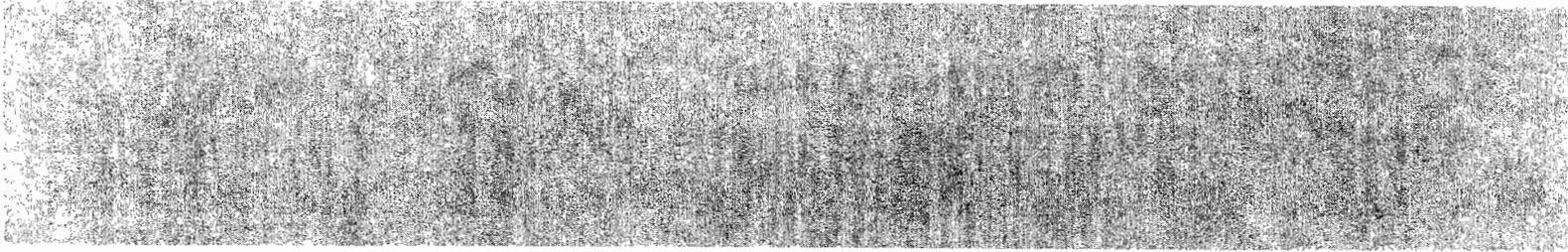
One way to view the sustainability of any development is to observe how enduring and memorable it is; whether it is based on a long-term vision that is market based and flexible; whether it is planned and financed for adaptability to its complex setting; and whether it is well connected and well integrated with the surrounding community. Each of these characteristics is recognizable as reflecting some of the principles that are the subject of this book (2 Respect Market Realities; 4 Plan for Development and Financial Complexity; 6 Balance Flexibility with a Long-Term Vision; 8 Connect to the Community). They may each be examined in more detail in that context, but integrating all the principles wisely will achieve the framework for sustainability.

Good sustainable development of town centers often takes place on infill sites, but when it does occur in a rural or greenfield setting it is especially important that it be designed well. Infill sites reduce infrastructure costs, offer transportation alternatives, and restore or enhance local economic and social vitality. Regardless of the location, the project must be well connected to the surrounding environment (streets, parks, and trails) and to places where people can access public transit. Planning for sustainability means thinking beyond the car to incorporate other transportation choices such as walking, cycling, car sharing, trains, and buses. Public transportation that can facilitate independence at all stages of life and all income levels and provide easy access to quality-of-life amenities is important to every community.

The enduring nature of sustainable development means that environmental considerations play an important role. The conventional practice in development is to engineer solutions to environmental problems—if it is too hot, more energy will



DESIGN WORKSHOP



For success over the long haul, investing in the public realm is as important as investing in store spaces; Broadway Plaza in Walnut Creek, California.

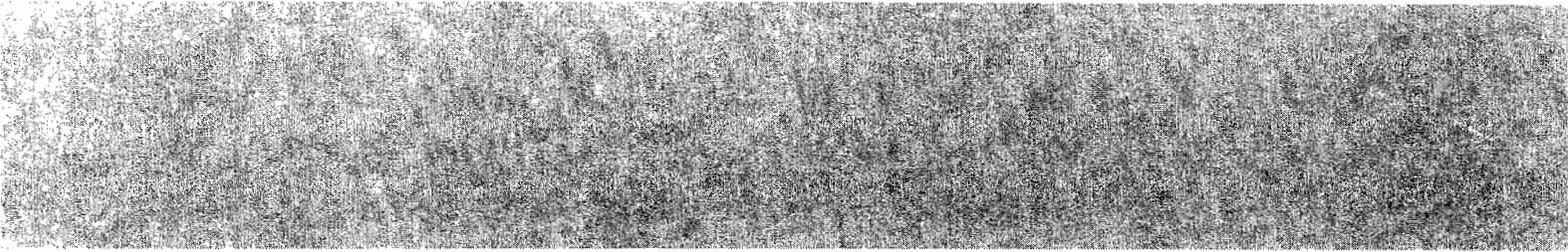
cool it off; if it is too wet, a bigger pipe will carry the water away; if the landscaping is stressed, give it more water.

Before engineered solutions became the vogue, however, solutions to these issues existed—solutions that we seem to have forgotten in the interim. Among them:

- ☒ Factor the local climate into the design.
- ☒ Plan for water conservation and recycling.
- ☒ Optimize the efficiency of systems.

Factor Local Climate into the Design

Climate should be used as a design determinant. Climate is an important part of what makes a place unique. Vernacular building designs often reflect local climatic conditions. They should take advantage of building orientation, prevailing winds, and tree cover for cooling. The effect of the sun's rays should be managed to enhance or limit heating.

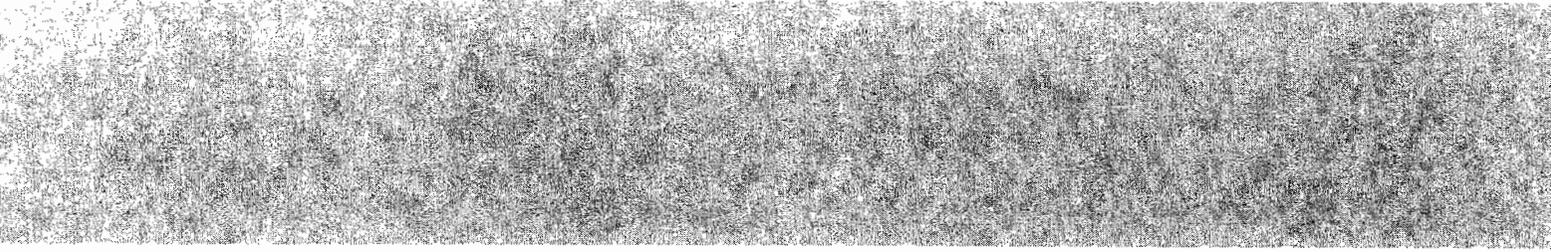


DESIGN WORKSHOP

The high level of amenities, landscaping, and attention to every detail creates a memorable destination that people will enjoy visiting and revisiting at Kierland Commons in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Plan for Water Conservation and Recycling

A variety of practices can be designed into a project to help conserve water. Water-conserving plumbing fixtures and faucets are some of the more obvious ones. Such practices as using graywater and rooftop rainwater-harvesting systems to recycle water and using natural drainage systems and pervious paving to recharge aquifers are becoming more common. Landscaping with native plants and drought-tolerant plants adapted to local climate and moisture conditions reduces the need for intensive irrigation.



Optimize the Efficiency of Systems

Energy efficiency should be built into a project to minimize or eliminate the use of nonrenewable energy sources. The incorporation of passive solar and natural cooling principles enhances energy efficiency. High-efficiency heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems as well as lighting, appliance, and plumbing systems reduce energy consumption, diminish waste, and avoid pollution from the use of fossil fuels. The efficient use of lumber creates a tighter building envelope. The thoughtful integration of design, materials, and systems makes a project more comfortable, healthier, and potentially less expensive.

Other techniques can be used to prevent environmental impacts: designing to reduce dependence on the automobile, using resource-efficient materials, reducing the quantity of materials used, designing for durability and adaptability, protecting local ecosystems, conserving water, ensuring the health of indoor environments, and avoiding construction waste.

Sustainability requires having a flexible approach and thinking in the long term. Sustainability is the glue that binds financing, planning, zoning, designing, marketing, and building and creates quality of life and a sense of community. Planning for sustainability does not stop at buildout. A strong, long-term strategy addresses:

- Continuing programming and amenities;
- Ensuring continued environmental responsibility;
- Securing a mix of uses;
- Maintaining high-quality design, particularly in architecture;
- Upholding maintenance plans (building, site, community, and infrastructure); and
- Financing for long-term management and care.

The “people experience” is the key. People want the true benefits of community and the quality of life it produces. It is also important to be adaptable, allowing land uses to change over time.

Another, perhaps simpler, way to view sustainable development is as high-quality development. A high-quality town center is sustainable when it promotes economic vitality, fosters environmental integrity, and encourages a lasting sense of community. Sustainable development promotes health, conserves energy and natural resources, is well connected to the community, and is economically successful.

Commit to Intensive On-Site Management and Programming

A town center is more than a real estate development. It is designed to be the heart and soul of a community and, as such, it functions as a public as well as a private place. Residents and visitors to a town center are invited 24 hours a day, which means that management must be more intensive and ongoing than at a shopping center or other type of commercial development. Because a town center will be the densest, most diverse, and most active place in a community, management will likely be more complex and expensive, and it will definitely need to be more sophisticated.

Managing a town center is, in some ways, like operating a small city, and many of the functions that a local government performs in a real downtown must be performed by the private managers of a town center. The scale of these functions will be proportional to the intensity and mix of uses in the center and will need to be attuned to the needs of the different users. Operation and maintenance standards of the buildings and the public realm will need to be higher than in a city, as will security costs, since a town center competes directly with other nearby private developments, especially shopping centers. Potential conflicts must be understood in advance and avoided. For example, trash pickups must be arranged so as not to dis-

Management and programming for town centers are more complex and intensive than for conventional shopping centers; Easton Town Center, Columbus, Ohio.



turb residents or shoppers, and garbage rooms must be air conditioned so noxious smells do not waft through the tree-lined streets or up to residents' windows. Management also includes such mundane but critical tasks as maintaining bathrooms that are spotless, fountains that work flawlessly, sidewalks and streets that are in top repair and litter free, flowers that are blooming, and a tree canopy that is mature, trimmed, and healthy.

Management efforts, while intensive, should be unobtrusive, sensitive, and discreet. Too many security guards, too much overt control, and too many rules will make the center feel unnatural and uncomfortable. Management will need to be more politically astute than in a typical real estate development, since different segments of the public undoubtedly will take ownership of the center as strong community bonds are established and nurtured. This situation will require a constant interface with the public since it becomes, in essence, a partner in the ongoing operation of the town center.

Continuous programming of activities and events in the public spaces is a significant aspect of town center management. Such programming will ensure that visitors' experiences are memorable and pleasant. Management must remember that people



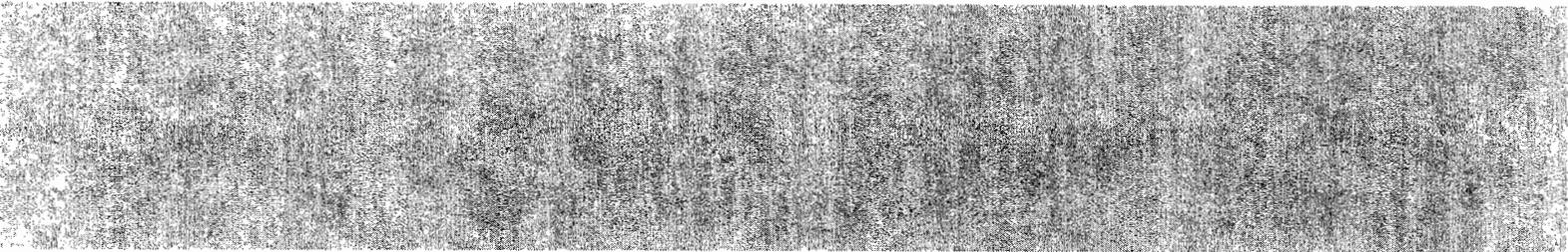
As the public realm is open 24 hours a day, the level of quality and attention to detail must be first-rate; Mizner Park, Boca Raton, Florida.



who are at the town center are not just customers or consumers, but also residents or other citizens who may not be there to buy anything at all but simply to experience community life. Planned events should include ongoing activities such as concerts and farmers markets, as well as such community-defining events as 4th of July fireworks displays. Unplanned events such as political rallies or community protests are also important because they deepen the center's connections to the community, but they need to be carefully coordinated with the day-to-day operations of the center to avoid needless conflict.

Marketing also plays a role in ensuring a town center's long-term competitiveness, and significant opportunities exist for cross-marketing the center's various uses. Management should help coordinate these efforts to take advantage of the synergies they offer. A preferred customer card for residents is one example. A parking management program that includes valet parking, shared parking among the users of the town center, frequent monitoring of parking availability and conditions, and maintenance of high standards at parking entrances and in garages also helps market the center as a desirable and enjoyable place to come to.

The managers of a town center are its long-term champions, the keepers of the flame, and the ones who ensure continuity and uphold standards as the center



matures. Economic, social, and political conditions change, and the managers' role includes ensuring that the town center remains competitive in the broadest sense. This is true whether the town center evolves under single or multiple ownership.

Managers carry out this role in numerous ways, first, by leasing to the right mix of tenants and ensuring that the mix evolves as customer preferences and retail trends change. Second, they should ensure that all development adheres to the town center's master plan and vision as it matures. Third, they should draw up and enforce a set of covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs) that clearly articulate the development standards and rules within the town center. The ideal master plan and accompanying CC&Rs should be drafted in ways that encourage flexibility, innovation, and change within a framework of high standards and compatibility with the founding vision of the town center.