

CNU IX Speaker

Award Winning Town Design Strategies

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CNU IX: From Neighborhood to Region

Notes from his presentation on 6/9/01:

Washington Township is a community of 20 sq. mi. and a population of 10,000. Our annual budget is approximately \$7,000,000. Over the past 15 years Washington has lead a proactive effort to position the Township for Smart Growth development. This has involved not only a public sector effort to position a neo traditional Town Center for development, but to integrate it into the planning and development of the 20 sq. mi. environs. This integration is viewed to be an important aspect of the planning effort to ensure that the Town Center does not become a dangling urban fragment. As such, we believe that Washington Township is a unique model for other communities to follow.

With respect to the neo traditional Town Center, the Township has done the following:

- We have taken on the mantle of being ultimately responsible for the Center's design.
- We have undertaken the responsibility of obtaining County and State permits.
- We have been able to bring commitments of approximately \$15,000,000 of public money to the project.
- The Township performed preliminary engineering to set all street locations and drainage systems.

We have learned that process of positioning the project means more than providing typical two dimensional zoning codes tied to typical zoning maps such as the one on the screen.

Slide 2 Rather we have found that it is best to base all our planning on establishing a strong vision based on a strong concept.

- § The concept is one of developing a walkable community with a porous system of vehicular and pedestrian connections to both surrounding neighborhoods, schools and parks and to larger regional venues.
- § Also important to the concept is the notion of open space preservation and the provision of green infrastructure as the contextual organizing element between and among developments.
- § The actual area designated as Town Center consists of approximately 450 acres of development area with multiple property owners and 450 acres of proposed greenbelt. To date approximately _ of the greenbelt has been publicly acquired.

Slide 3

Slide 4 Upon completion the Center will include:

- Approximately 1,000 housing units with approximately 25% TH, 25% duplex, 40% SED and 10% apt. flats.
- 22 public parks and gardens

- Approximately 300,000 s.f. of retail and office space in two and three story buildings along a traditional Main Street.
- Conversion of an existing three-lane State highway into a traditional two-lane Main Street with on-street parking and wide sidewalks.
- Conversion of an existing two-lane County road into a Town Center road with on-street parking.

To implement the plan, in 1997 the Town adopted both a Master Plan element and an ordinance. The combined document covers:

- A. The mandatory location of all streets and alleys.
- Slide 5 B. Site plan standards governing setbacks and lot coverage.
- Slide 6 C. Use standards governing permitted locations for each house type and commercial type. For example, here we see where village type single-family houses may be located.
- Slide 7 D. Permitted duplex locations are depicted in this slide. You will note an overlap.
- Slide 8 E. To promote market flexibility, but to guarantee a minimum desired mixture of house types – max/min standards for each.
- Slide 9 Architectural standards govern all aspects of the architecture.
- Slide 10 In 1999 the Township also created an Open Space Design Standards Master Plan for the 22 parks and gardens.

The intent of the document was several fold.

- A. It was to ensure that a cohesive system of walking experiences extended throughout a project consisting of multiple developers.
- B. It was to create a sense of discreet neighborhood character.
- C. It was to create a document from which to measure future public improvement decisions.
- D. Finally, it was important that all the public space (parks, plazas, streets) be designed from the vantage point of the public – we did not want them to be remnants or often thoughts, but valued added amenities.

The result is this exquisite plan.

- Slide 11 Place de Vouge
- Slide 12 Perspective example
- Slide 13 Comprehensive garden district example.
- Slide 14 Street edge and street furniture vocabulary

- Slide 15 Each street was analyzed for its appropriate tree specie and related to the intended special architecture.
- Slide 16 Street trees are predetermined to encourage unique “street identity”.
- Slide 17 Similarly sidewalks and curb materials were varied among streets to promote character and diversity.
- Slide 18 Because of multiple property owners, urban design studies had to be done of the commercial district.
- To analyze for intended urban character.
- Slide 19 To analyze parking capability to ensure that we could attain the intended two- and three- story buildings.
Edge transition issues.
- Slide 20 Finally, all this work on parks would mean nothing and we could not sell it to either the developers or the Township Committee if we did not know how much it cost \$\$\$.
- Slide 21 The hoped for result of the garden plan is as follows.
- Slide 22 The garden planning lead us to macro scale where we are trying to master the integration of the Center into the environs through greenbelts and park systems.
- This plan represents both a Master Plan and a status plan of our goal to preserve 6000 acres.
- Slide 23 Since we have had so much fun with Town Center, one of our Master Plan tools for preservation is to create a series of hamlets using TDR.
- Slide 24 Town Center is under construction.
- 68 homes
- Slide 25 30,000 sq. ft. office
- 72 bed assisted care
- Slide 26 1st of two lakes
- Slide 27 Adaptive reuse of Robbinsville