Selling Mixed Use in a Low Density Suburban Community
The Burr Ridge Experience
**Burr Ridge Demographics:**

- Population: 10,408 (Y2K)
- Projected Maximum Population: @16,000
- Median Annual Household Income: $129,507 (Y2K)
- Residential Density: 1 to 2 Units Per Acre (1999)
- Daytime Population: @10,000 (2005)
The Burr Ridge Corporate Park:

- Office Park with Ancillary Retail Services – 1982
- Movie Theaters Rejected - 1996
- TIF – 1998-2001
- LifeTime Fitness - 2001
- Marriott Hotel and Convention Center - 2003
1999 Burr Ridge Comprehensive Plan:

- Burr Ridge Corporate Park Sub-Area Plan:
  - Recommended Continued Pursuit of Corporate Park as a suburban office park
  - Ancillary retail and restaurant to service office park and community
  - Proposed Remodeling of Existing Shopping Center as a Town Center – no reference to residential mixed use
The Burr Ridge Village Center Planning Process

Or; Selling Mixed Use in a Low Density Suburban Community
The Burr Ridge Village Center Planning Process

Or; Selling Building Consensus for Mixed Use in a Low Density Suburban Community
Community Reaction to Opus North Corporation 2004 Development Proposal:

- **Initial Staff Reaction**
  - Expanded Scope of 1999 Town Center Concept
  - Will only Benefit Community if Mixed Use Concept is Expanded

- **Initial Community Reaction**
  - Pedestrian Oriented Town Center Concept Embraced by Community
  - Many Objections to Inclusion of Multiple-Family Residential
Planning Challenges/Opportunities:

1. Re-Assess “1999” Vision for Community and Corporate Park
2. Conduct Concurrent Long Range Planning and Development Review Processes
3. Introduce New Land Uses and Land Use Concepts
4. Build Consensus Among Diverse Viewpoints
Highlights of The Burr Ridge Planning Process:

- Cultivate Expertise  Enlightened Decision Making
- Planning Team         “All the pieces are in place”
- Concurrency            Seeing the Forest AND the Trees
- Site Visits            Seeing is Believing
- Plan Review            “It’s the Plan, Stupid!”
- Comparative Analysis  “What’s in it for us?”
Cultivate Expertise...Enlightened Decision-Making

- Includes:
  - Yourself
  - Other Village Staff
  - Plan Commission
  - Board of Trustees

- Before and during planning process
- Written Materials
Planning Team...”All the pieces are in place...”

- Consultants / Network
  - Thompson Dyke & Associates (TD & A)
  - Gibbs Planning Group
  - S.B. Friedman and Company
  - Gewalt Hamilton and Associates
  - Village Engineering Staff
  - Village Planning Staff
  - Developer
  - Planning Colleagues
Concurrency...Seeing the Forest AND the Trees

- Amendment to the Burr Ridge Corporate Park Sub-Area Plan – 1999 Burr Ridge Comprehensive Plan

- Development Review Process including: Rezoning and Planned Unit Development
Site Visits...Seeing is Believing

- Site Visits
  - The Glen Town Center
    Glenview, Illinois
  - Easton Town Center
    Columbus, Ohio
  - Traditional Downtowns – e.g. Oak Park, Illinois; Hinsdale, Illinois
- Assemble Data from Site Visits
  - Photographs
  - Plans
  - Measurements
Plan Review...”It’s the Plan, Stupid”

- Have a Good Project/Plan
- Have a Good Project/Plan
- Have a Good Project/Plan
Distinguishing Village Districts:

- Single-Family Residential Districts
- Employment Districts
- Village Center

A mixed use district where people play, live, and work and which is easily identified as unique within the community and is a primary community gathering place.
Purpose of Identifying Village Districts:

- Comprehensive Plan should identify these different types of districts and their role in the larger community;

- Zoning within each type of district is distinguished from zoning in other types of district;

- There is only one Village Center.
Comparative Analysis... “What’s in it for us?”

- Methodology
  - Conduct Planning Studies
  - Identify Alternatives
  - Comparative Analysis of Planning Alternatives
Comparative Analysis - Identify Alternatives:

- **Status Quo;** Continued vision as office park with ancillary commercial uses;

- **Suburban Business and Shopping District;** Revise current vision to expand amount of retail within business park;

- **Mixed Use Village Center;** New vision that seeks to create an identifiable Village Center with offices, retail, and residential uses.
Comparative Analysis - Criteria:

- Traffic
- Cost/Benefit Analysis - Revenues and Services
- Design and Architecture
- Socioeconomic
- Community Character
- Feasibility
Comparative Analysis - Traffic:

- Methodology - Traffic Studies
- Conclusions:
  - With planned improvements, streets and intersections will have sufficient capacity for any of the three vision scenarios.
  - Status Quo will create highest peak demand as offices impact weekday peak hour traffic.
  - No significant traffic impact differences between Suburban Business and Shopping District and Mixed Use Village Center.
Comparative Analysis – Revenues and Services:

- Methodology – Cost Benefit Studies
- Conclusions:
  - Status Quo offers stability but little opportunity for tax base growth or expansion of Village services.
  - Neutral Cost/Benefit Ratio for Status Quo.
  - No significant revenue and service differences between Suburban Business and Shopping District and Mixed Use Village Center.
  - Positive Cost/Benefit Ratio for Suburban Business and Shopping District and for Mixed Use Village Center.
  - Addition of Residential as per Village Center scenario does not significantly impact cost/benefit ratio.
Comparative Analysis - Design and Architecture:

- Methodology – Visual Preference Survey

Bob Ahlberg, AICP

TD & A

Examples of Town Center Development – Single Use Retail and Mixed Use Retail
Comparative Analysis - Design and Architecture:

- **Conclusions:**
  - Status Quo provides quality buildings but limited site design and limited public spaces.
  - One Story buildings and limited demand for public and transitional spaces limit design and architectural quality in Business and Shopping District.
  - Mixed Use Village Center provides greatest opportunity for significant architectural quality and site design amenities.
“One characteristic considered crucial to creating good public gathering places is enclosure.”

“...a sense of enclosure depends heavily on the proportional relationship between the size of the open space and the height of the surrounding buildings...the ratio of height to width found in the best plazas ranges from 1:1 to 1:3.”

“...this is not an antiquarian standard but one based on the unchanging nature of human scale...based...on the relationship between the proportions of urban spaces and the angles at which people standing within the plaza typically look at buildings.”
“Buildings also do much more than house people and shops; they establish the design vocabulary of places and the visual rhythm of streetscapes. Architectural elements that contribute to the overall sense of place include:

- Height (both of buildings and individual floors);
- Scale and massing;
- The extent to which buildings are attached or detached from one another;
- The spacing between buildings and the street;
- The proportion of windows, bays, doorways, porches, and other features;
- Architectural style;
- Materials, finishes, and textures;
- A number of other elements...”
Comparative Analysis - Socioeconomic:

- Methodology – Market Studies; Property Tax Analysis; Development History; Planning Studies
New Workplace Environments:

“Both for companies that would otherwise be isolated in office and technology parks, and for “new economy” workers who are tired of the “virtual world” of computers, e-mail, and telecommuting and eager for face to face contact – town centers and mixed use environments offer an appealing alternative.”

Place Making in Suburbia

Urban Land, October 2000
Demographics and Housing Demand - Typical High-End Condo Profile

- **Unit Characteristics**
  - 1,500 - 2,000 SF
  - $200 - $300 per SF
  - $300,000 - $600,000 per Unit

- **Estimated Annual Household Earnings**
  - Minimum $120,000 to $240,000 or Higher
    - (39% of Village HH Earned Less Than $100,000 in 1999)
  - Move Up Or Move Down
  - Buyers Could Earn Less

- **Buyers**
  - Young Professionals
  - Empty Nesters
Comparative Analysis - Socioeconomic:

- **Conclusions:**
  - Status Quo maintains existing social and economic conditions.
  - Status Quo may not be sustainable due to property tax issues.
  - Business and Shopping District will provide additional commercial services.
  - Mixed Use Village Center will provide additional commercial services.
  - Mixed Use Village Center also provides opportunities for more significant and higher quality public gathering spaces.
  - Mixed Use Village Center more competitive than single-use shopping center.
Creating Places for a Changing America: ... broader implications of America’s changing demographics:

- Change from mass market standards to niche market differentiation.
- Change from unplanned suburbs to planned master communities.
- Change from suburban anonymity and individualism to yearning for community.
- Change from contemporary to neo-traditional styling.
- Change from strip-commercial suburban sprawl to compact highly defined town centers.
Place Making; Developing Town Centers, Main Streets and Urban Villages
Charles C. Bohl, Urban Land Institute, 2002

Evolving Retail Realms:

“The challenge for the planners, designers, and developers of main streets and town centers is to create places that are more than simple reconfigurations of conventional retail projects…

“Main street is not two strip centers face-to-face; the developers of these kinds of centers require a city-building mentality…”
Comparative Analysis - Community Character

- Methodology – Planning Studies and Burr Ridge Comprehensive Plan; Architectural Review

- Conclusions:
  - Status Quo maintains existing character.
  - Business and Shopping District provides limited opportunity to enhance public places or to create an interesting community gathering place.
  - Business and Shopping District does not accommodate the creation of unique architectural places.
  - Business and Shopping District limits creation of unique character for socialization, especially during non-peak hours.
  - Mixed Use Village Center offers greatest opportunity to create a community character that is physically identifiable and is attractive as a public meeting place.
Comparative Analysis - Feasibility

- Methodology – Market Studies, Property Tax Analysis, Planning Studies, Development History

- Conclusions:
  - Status Quo may not be sustainable due to property taxes, office market, and continued pressure for alternative uses.
  - Suburban Shopping and Business District - Retail market study indicates that retail is a feasible option.
  - Mixed Use Village Center - Retail and residential market studies indicates that both are feasible.
  - Proposed mixed use town center project pending before the Village indicates commitment by the development industry.
Summary - Criteria Employed:

- Traffic
- Cost/Benefit Analysis - Revenues and Services
- Design and Architecture
- Socioeconomic
- Community Character
- Feasibility
“Residential development... is a key ingredient in the long-term success of any town center. ... town center residences can provide an instant customer base for shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Housing also creates pedestrian activity day and night, which add vitality to a town center.”

“... housing is an essential ingredient that distinguishes town centers from simple shopping centers...

... multi-family housing should be included early in town center projects to establish a human presence and a minimum level of everyday activity on the street.

... (residents) quickly assume ownership of the public realm; watching over streets, parking areas, and public spaces; noting any shortcomings in the appearance and maintenance of shops and infrastructure; and taking part in the life of the town center simply by carrying out their daily routines.”
Closing Summary - Critical Ingredients for a Village Center;

- Mixed use – including residential;
  - Improves Design and Architecture; in particular, the creation of public spaces
  - Improves Vitality; human interaction
  - Improves Competitiveness and Economic Position of Village Center
- Building height and mass;
- Creation of public spaces.
What did we learn?

**Planning Process:**
- The “textbook planning process” works.
- Critical to identify and address key issues early and often.

**Planning Team:**
- Broad based and inclusive planning team is critical; i.e. staff, consultants, variety of expertise
- Planning process must be a collaborative effort with developer, consultants, staff, etc.
- Determine members roles on planning team early
- Leadership from Village staff is critical but…
- Advocacy from staff is preferred but may not be practical
What did we learn?

Concurrency - Long Range and Current Planning:
- Long range planning may be enhanced by current plan review process.
- Long range planning may be better in two step process; 1) create a broad vision concurrent with plan review process and 2) do additional sub-area planning later

Plan Review:
- A good plan will carry the day.
- A single-use district can be converted to mixed use – at least at the planning stages.
- It is important to distinguish mixed use or downtown zoning from other land use districts.
Consensus Building:

- Continuing education is important when introducing new land use concepts.
- Real life examples are the most effective tool for converting skeptics.
- Staff as advocate may work best but must be determined case by case – be careful.
- Consensus building requires a diversity of approaches; everyone learns and listens differently.
The Burr Ridge Village Center Planning Process:

Building Consensus for Mixed Use...

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