Town Centers in the Southeast Region

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What is a Town Center?

- Walkable
- Open-Air, Multi-Use Development
- Organized Around an Important Focal Point
- Vertically and Horizontally Integrated
- Contains Higher Densities
- In Addition to Retail and Restaurants, Includes Offices, Hotel, Residential, Civic or Cultural Uses

- Study towns that work in your area, such as Wayne, Bryn Mawr

- Look for elements common to your Area – architecture, colors, materials

- Mix uses such as retail, office, residential, and hotel uses

- Such combinations are what make town centers different from shopping centers or mixed use developments.

Use of plazas, landscaped areas, sidewalks and detailed architectural features to create "special places".

Public places for interaction

Encourage high quality architecture through design guidelines.

Little Architectural Character in Sprawl Development. No Sense of Community

No ability to stroll, people watch, shop, live and work

Issues for Planners

Demographic Changes – More singles & divorced, and varied cultures and lifestyles. More diverse suburbs. Convenience important.

Past development patterns are unsustainable – drive everywhere, segregated uses.

Understand Design. Don't try to legislate everything. Flexibility needed. Avoid monolithic, boring designs. Consider multiple architectural firms. Be careful with strict architectural guidelines. Different facades are OK.

Don't be afraid of density.

- Creates more walkable areas

- Supports housing choices

- Makes mass transit more likely

- Improves security

- Reduces sprawl and protects environment

- More density = more amenities, more liveliness, more synergies between development components, plus more choices for public.

Local Examples

Suburban Square, Ardmore

Valley Square, Warrington

Main Street, Voorhees, NJ

Exton at Main Street, Exton

Garden State, Cherry Hill, NJ

Worthington Town Center, Malvern

Providence Town Center, Collegeville

Village at Valley Forge, King of Prussia

Ellis Preserve, Newtown Square

Franklin Mint, Middletown

Suburban Square-Ardmore, PA
Timeless Design, Circa 1930

Make It Interesting & Safe for the Pedestrian
Suburban Square, Ardmore, PA

Landscaping & Lighting Critical to Success
Valley Square, Warrington, PA

Public Spaces - Meeting Area
Valley Square, Warrington, PA

Second Story Uses can be Challenging
Valley Square, Warrington, PA

Vertical Integration.
Architectural Details – Materials, Styles
The Greene, Beavercreek, Ohio

Taller Buildings
Create Public Spaces
The Greene, Beavercreek, Ohio

Outdoor Dining Whenever Possible
The Greene, Beavercreek, Ohio

National Retailers are Prevalent
The Greene, Beavercreek, Ohio

Allow for Varying Heights.
Insist on Bollards, Crosswalks, Street Furniture etc.
Pay Attention to Details.
On-Street Parking – Crocker Park, Ohio

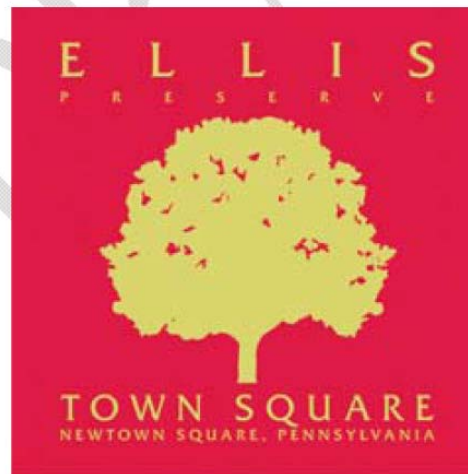# Public Spaces, Uses for Different Age Groups
Crocker Park, Ohio

Ellis Preserve , Newtown Square, PA

Ellis Preserve
Town Center

DESIGN GUIDELINES

December 24, 2007
Revised to March 14, 2008

E L L I S
PRESERVE

TOWN SQUARE
NEWTOWN SQUARE, PENNSYLVANIA

Pay Attention to the Streets and Dimensions

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E.L.L.I.S
TOWN SQUARE

Typical Street Cross Section
Ellis Preserve Town Square
NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP, DELAWARE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

PROJECT #: 04-012
DATE: 06/04/08 (br)
REV.:

SHEET:

Street Cross
Section

Building 18	Sidewalk	Parking Lane	Drive Lane	Drive Lane	Parking Lane	Sidewalk	Building 8
	23'-3"	8'	10'	10'	8'	11'-3"	

D. CROWD

Section Thru Proposed North Street Between Buildings 8 and 18

Landscaping Softens Impacts of Density

Be Careful with Streetscapes above Parking
Edwards Town Center, Edwards, CO

Make Sure Your Parking Works
Parking Combination of Residential and Commercial Uses
Edwards Town Center, Edwards, CO

Town Centers

The Entitlement Process

Wendi Kapustin, AICP

Existing Zoning

Usually does not Permit Town Center Development

Suburban zoning generally segregates land uses

Suburban zoning discourages more urban forms of development

If permitted, the regulations usually don't work

- There is no one-size fits all Town Center development
- Design standards to ensure quality and aesthetics are necessarily site-specific

Zoning Map Excerpt
Example of Typical Zoning Pattern

Town Center Regulations Should Not Be Developed in a Vacuum

The lack of zoning actually provides the opportunity for a developer to work cooperatively with the municipality

Provides the opportunity to develop site-specific regulations geared to a particular property and particular development

Generally leads to a better final result and a higher quality development

Different Ways to Proceed

Municipality prepares Ordinance with developer involvement

Enables the municipality to retain control of the process and to facilitate community involvement

May lead to a less creative result with a lot of competing interests.

Developer prepared Ordinance

- Enables the developer to prepare Ordinance and design standards based on actual plan
- Enables the Township to review and act upon Ordinance in relation to to actual plan

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Real World Scenarios

In many cases, municipalities are not willing to consider town center zoning unless it is in relation to less attractive options presented

Good plan (town center plan) v. bad plan (by right plan)

Sometimes the easiest way to allow for town center development is through settlement of existing litigation

Town Centers

Fiscal Impacts

Erik Hetzel, AICP, LEED AP

Fiscal Impacts of Town Centers

2 sides of the fiscal impact equation:

Revenues	*Costs*

▪ ***Direct:***
  ▪ Taxes
  ▪ Fees
▪ ***Indirect:***
  ▪ Job growth
  ▪ Consumer spending
	▪ Public Safety
	▪ Public Works
	▪ General Gov't Functions

Fiscal Impacts of Town Centers

Mixed-Use = a mixed impact profile

Residential uses

Commercial, civic uses

Fiscal Impacts of Town Centers

Unique benefits, predictable challenges

- Many opportunities to generate public revenue
- Growth catalyst
- Easy to plan for increased service needs
- Private sector is an important stakeholder