Town Centers in the Southeast Region

Dennis F. Glackin, AICP, PP
Glackin Thomas Panzak, Inc.

Stephen M. Spaeder, President
BPG Development

Wendi Kapustin, AICP
Kaplin Stewart Meloff Reiter & Stein

Erik Hetzel, AICP, LEED AP
Glackin Thomas Panzak, Inc.
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
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
Pay Attention to the Streets and Dimensions

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 actual plan
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.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Public Safety</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Taxes</td>
<td><strong>Public Works</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fees</td>
<td><strong>General Gov’t Functions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Job growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consumer spending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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