What Does It Take To Create A Town Center?

Context, Design, and Process

The Prince Frederick Master Plan Update
Background and Overview

A Brief History of Town Centers in Calvert County
Background and Overview

The Town Center concept adopted in the 1983 County Comprehensive Plan and implemented in the 1984 County Zoning after 4 years of intense public review.
Background and Overview

Adopted Master Plans & Zoning Ordinances for each of the County’s seven Town Centers
Background and Overview

Adoption of Master Plans & Zoning Ordinances:

Solomons – 1986, updated 2009
Dunkirk – 1987
Prince Frederick – 1989/ Zoning Ordinance 1992
Huntingtown – 1993
St. Leonard – 1995
Owings – 2000
Lusby – 2002
Background and Overview

History of the Prince Frederick Master Plan & Zoning Ordinance

- Public workshop held in 1987
- Master Plan adopted in 1989
- Design Competition in 1990
- Design concepts incorporated in Zoning Ordinance in 1992
Background and Overview

• The Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan are now more than 20 years old

• This series is in preparation for the update
Background and Overview
Background and Overview

Master Plan Update will include specific design and programming for:

• the former middle school
• The former Armory
• Northern Corridor lands up to hospital and new school sites
Background and Overview

• Both the update and site design will be conducted during a Charrette –

• A public visioning and design process

• Charrettes will be described in detail during the final seminar of this series
Background and Overview

Tonight is the first in a series of five seminars:

1. *Past, Present, and Future: The Ingredients of Town Centers*
2. Mixing and Arranging the Ingredients: *The Menu of Town Center Design*
3. Current Trends: *Retrofitting for Sustainability*
4. Implications for Prince Frederick: *Markets, Demographics, and the New Trajectory of Town Centers*
5. Charrette Overview and Visual Preference Survey
Introduction

We have been building towns for 5,000 years – we know how to do it!
Introduction

Only two models for building community:
1. The Walkable Neighborhood
2. The Auto-dependent Suburb
Introduction

• For the first 5,000 years, we built ONLY the walkable neighborhood

• For the past 65 years, we have built almost exclusively the auto-dependent suburb
Introduction

The housing/mortgage crisis of 2008 – a watershed moment
Introduction

Real estate is slowly coming back...

but the market is asking for something dramatically different
Introduction

What did the market want before the mortgage/housing collapse?
Conventional Development Patterns
Separation of Land Uses
Wide Streets
Large Single Family Residential Lots
Parking Arrangements
Random Open Space
The Result of This Pattern...
40% of Americans Cannot Drive
Changes in Markets and Planning

This pattern no longer meets our needs or desires
What is the pattern of *NEW* development?
The Elements of Traditional Town Centers

- Alternative to conventional development
- Based on traditional methods
- Takes into account contemporary desires and needs (*housing styles, cars*)
- 14 Elements
1. Walkable Size

- Sized for a 5-minute walk
- ¼ to 1/3 mile from center to edge
- Clearly defined centers and edges
IN THE TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD IT IS A FIVE MINUTE WALK FROM THE EDGE TO THE CENTER.

IN SUBURBAN SPRAWL THERE IS NO CENTER, EDGE, OR WALKING ORIENTATION.
2. Mixed Uses

• Bring together variety of activities
• Retail
• Entertainment
• Office
• Civic amenities
• Serve all people, incomes, ages
3. Variety of Housing Types

Provide Choice for Everyone

- Various Styles
- All Price Points
- All Stages of Life

- Create a community meeting everyone’s needs
• Single Family
  - Large lot
  - Small lot
• Townhouse
• Duplex
• Apartment
• Condominium
• Outbuildings
• Live/ Work
4. Street Network

• Offer Choices and Connections

• Not always a grid of straight streets
IN THE TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD PEDESTRIANS AND CARS SHARE A VARIETY OF ROUTES.

SUBURBAN SPRAWL IS CHARACTERIZED BY ITS CONVENIENCE FOR THE CAR AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PEDESTRIAN.
5. Reduced Street Dimensions
Fire and Rescue Response
# 2011 US Public Safety Data

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<th>Residential Fires</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Injuries</th>
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<td>371,700</td>
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*Source:* National Fire Protection Association  
http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/PDF/Homesfactsheet.pdf

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<td>5,338,000</td>
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*Source:* National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
6. Village Green/ Town Square

- Community focal point
- Appropriate mix of civic and commercial activities
- Public events, celebrations
7. Parking Arrangements

- On-street allowed to create a buffer for sidewalk pedestrians
- Shared parking
- Most parking to the rear of buildings
8. Alleys and Lanes

- Provide secondary property access
- Locate parking garages here
- Place utilities here to keep front streetscape attractive and walkable
9. Sidewalks and Pedestrian Paths

- Emphasize pedestrian walkability
- Access for children and the elderly
- Long block (over 500 ft) have shortcuts
- Vary widths according to need
- Connect to paths and trails
10. Shallow Setbacks (Build- to Line)

• Bring buildings within 20’ or less of sidewalk

• Create the sense of an “outdoor room”

• Height to width ratio of no more than 5-1
11. Outbuildings

- Secondary Structures on a Lot
- Located to the rear, often at an Alley
- Allows for off-street parking, storage, home office, workshop, or rental apartment
12. Porches

- Provide Shelter and Shade
- Create space for sociable transition from the public street to the private home
13. Building Types

- Designed to adapt from one use to another, as the market dictates
- “Live Work Units”
- Emphasis on local historical style.
14. Open Space Types

- To meet a variety of Civic/ recreational needs
- More formal at center of community
- Less formal at edge of community
What is the Purpose of Open Space?
Plaza
Square
Park or Green
Pocket Park
Playgrounds and Tot Lots
Pets Need Parks Too
Greenways and Corridors
Preserved Buffer
Community Gardens and Agriculture
Questions to Consider for Next Week…

• How do all these Elements come together to form a Town Center?

• How do the Elements and the Town Center fit into a regional perspective?
Questions and Discussion

• Next Topic:
  Mixing and Arranging the Ingredients:
  *The Menu of Town Center Design*

• Time:
  - 12 noon, Monday 6th May
  - 7 pm, Tuesday 7th May

• Location: Prince Frederick Public Library