

# Plan Implementation and Development Review

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# Smart Growth

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency identifies the following ten basic principles of Smart Growth developments:
  - 1. Mix land uses
  - 2. Take advantage of compact building design
  - 3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices

# Smart Growth

- 4. Create walkable neighborhoods
- 5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- 6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- 7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- 8. Provide a variety of transportation choices

# Smart Growth

- 9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- 10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

# Comprehensive Plan

- Land Use Plan
- Urban Design Plan
  - Architectural Design
  - Streetscape
- Transportation Plan
  - Major Thoroughfare Plan
  - Hike and Bike Plan
- Parks and Open Space Plan

# Development Patterns (Suburban)

1. Residential single-family, low density.
2. Curvilinear streets, Maj. thoroughfares, collectors and cul-de-sacs
3. Strip commercial development along major thoroughfares, large lots for parking.
4. Euclidian Zoning: use by right, separation of uses.

# Development Patterns (Suburban)

- Adjoining neighborhoods may not connect with each other.
- Residential streets empty to collectors and they to major thoroughfares.
- Automobiles rule: pedestrians, bicyclists beware.

# Development Patterns (Suburban)

- Limited opportunity for contact with neighbors.
- Uses are separated, by type and density within type.
- Commercial buildings are setback from thoroughfares and have large parking lots in front.
- Commercial buildings are striped along major thoroughfares.
- Automobiles rule: pedestrians, bicyclists beware.

# Development Patterns (New Urban)

- New Urban pattern grew from a desire to return to a form of development common in Europe as well as early U.S.
- This form of development also termed “Neo-Traditional” and TND (Traditional Neighborhood Development or Design) creates walkable town centers and neighborhoods with rectilinear streets and houses with porches that invite communication between neighbors.

# New Urban

- New Urban (NU) development has a mixed use downtown core within walking distance of community residents.
- The core include commercial and retail establishments, offices, public buildings and spaces, and residential uses.

# New Urban

- The street pattern is rectilinear and parking is allowed on street, elevated or behind buildings.
- NU seeks to establish a sense of community by the mix of uses and by making streets more pedestrian friendly with wider sidewalks and landscaping between the sidewalk and street.

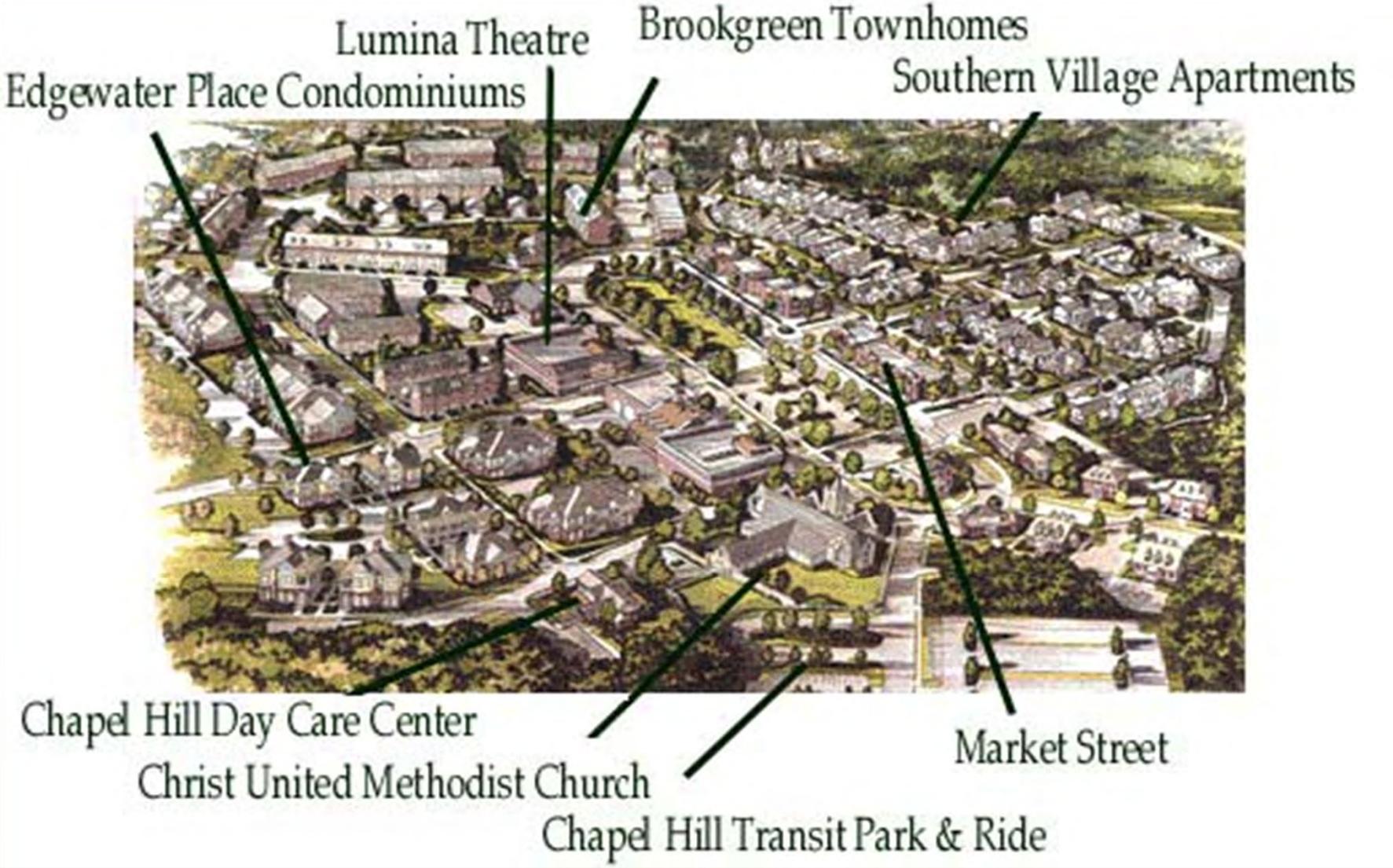
# New Urban

- Building fronts have minimal or no setbacks.
- Outdoor seating for restaurants is encouraged.
- Although they may be suburban in location, NU development is not suburban in character.

# New Urbanism in Colleyville, TX and Celebration, Florida



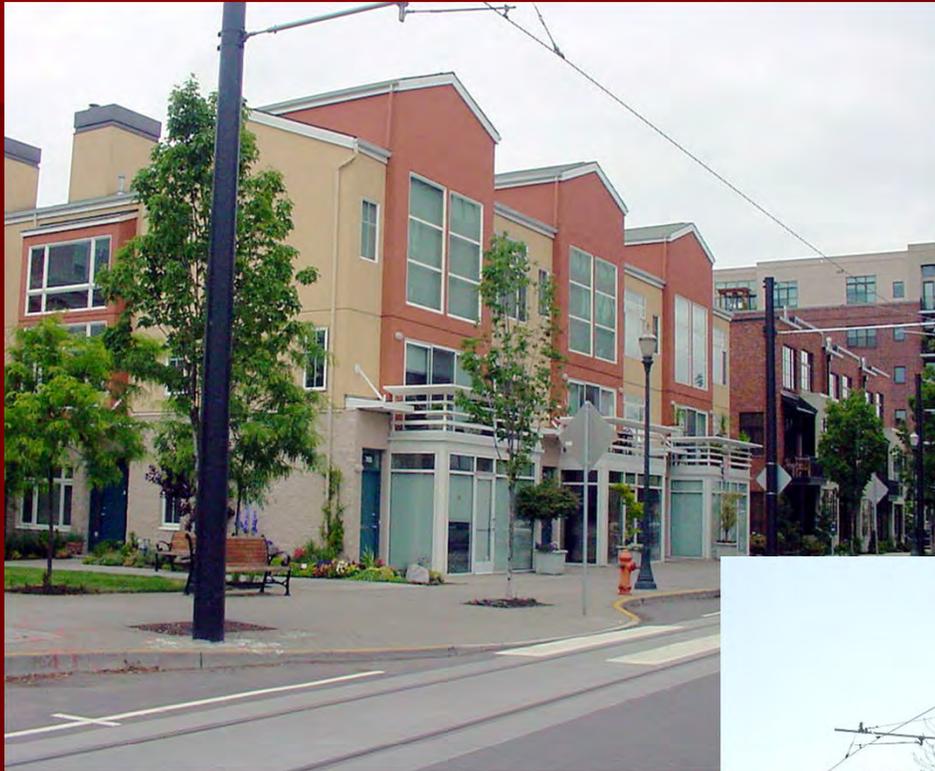
# New Urbanism Plan for Chapel Hill, NC



# Live/Work Units



# Live/Work Units















# New Urban Town Square in Southlake, Texas

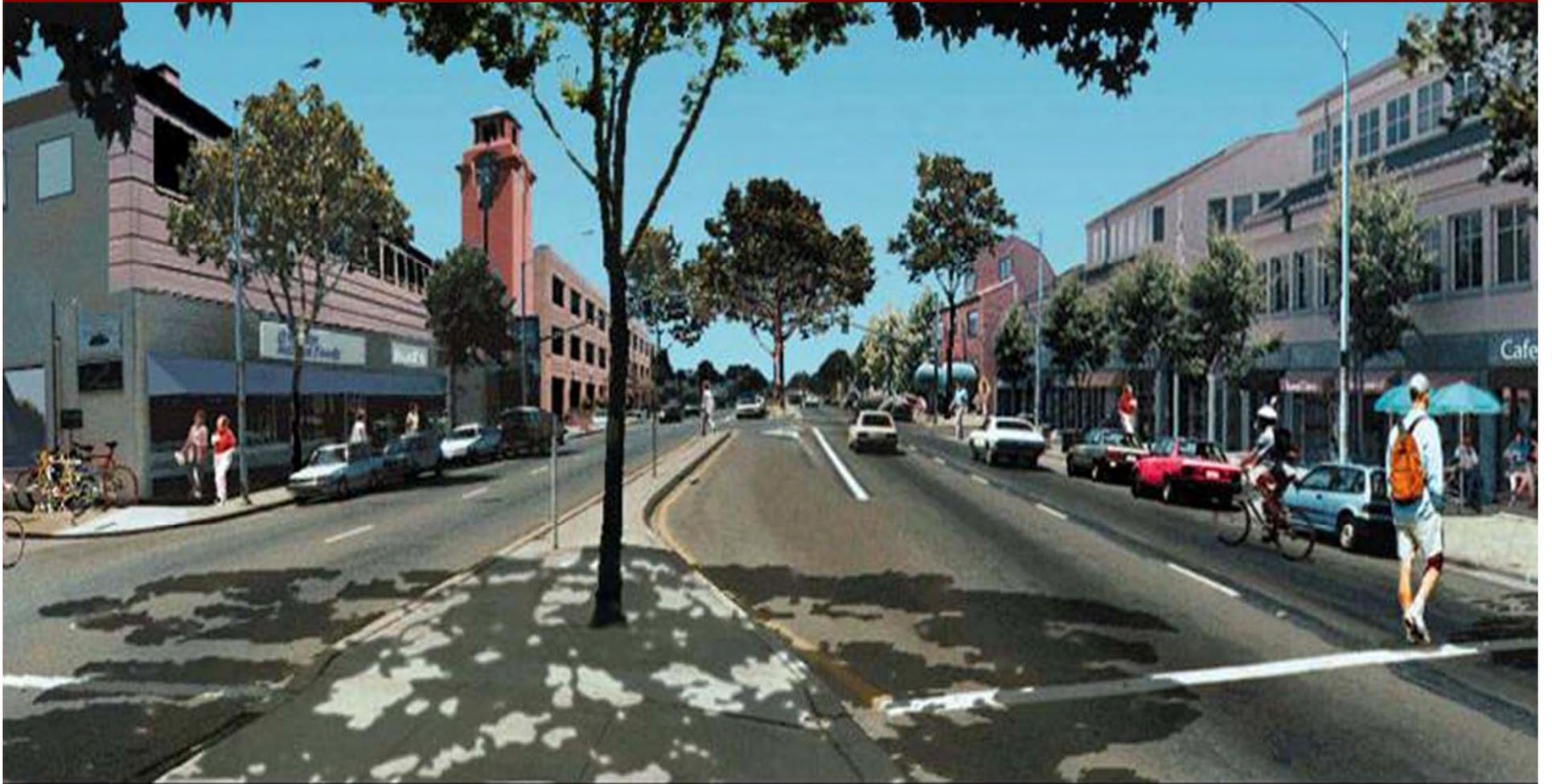


# Seaside, Florida



























# Development Patterns (Form Based Codes or FBC)

- FBC: a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code.
- FBC: addresses the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks.

# The Five Main Elements of FBC

- 1. Regulating Plan. A plan or map of the regulated area designating the locations where different building form standards apply.
- 2. Public Standards. Specifies elements in the public realm: sidewalk, travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees and furniture, etc.

# The Five Main Elements of FBC

- 3. Building Standards. Regulations controlling the features, configurations, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm.
- 4. Administration. clearly defined and streamlined application and project review process.
- 5. Definitions. glossary to ensure the precise use of technical terms.

# Form Based Codes

- FBC may be implemented in an entire city or in a part of a city by adoption of a planned development district.
- Miami is the only major city that has adopted the FBC city wide.

# Form Based Codes

- Other cities that have adopted it include Nashville, Buffalo, Dallas, Ft. Worth, Denver, Albuquerque, El Paso, Memphis, Baltimore, Tulsa, Portland, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Diego, Austin, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Jacksonville, Calgary, Abu Dhabi, Dammam.
- A handout was provided about the pitfalls of FBC

# Transit Oriented Developments (TOD's)

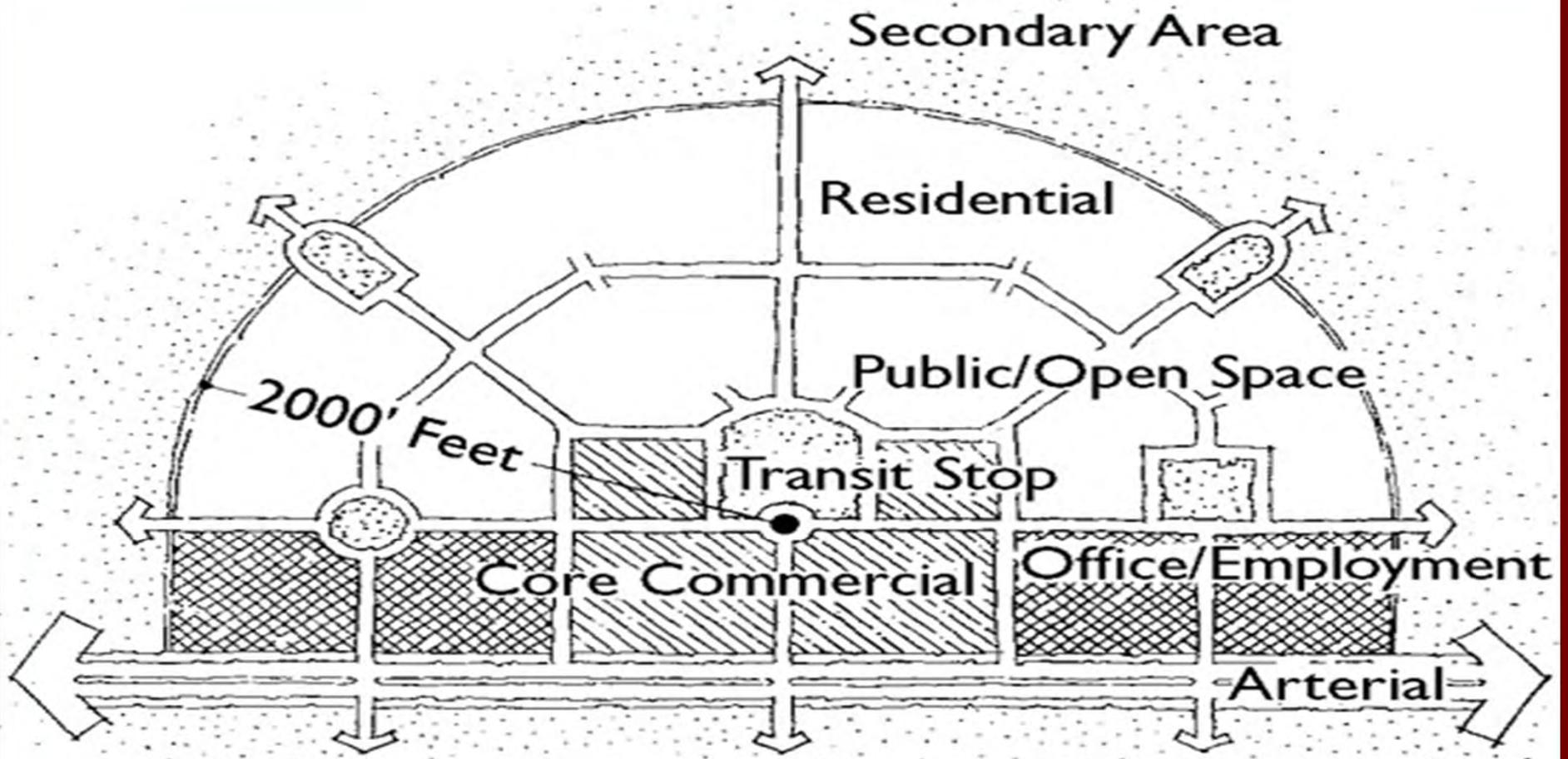
- Mixed Uses
  - Higher Density Residential Development
  - Retail Commercial Development
  - Offices Uses
- Development Adjacent to Transit Stop
- Uses Allow Easy Walking Distance to Transit Station
- Parking on Perimeter of Development

# Transit Mode Selection

- Commuter rail
- Automated Guideway
- Light rail
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Heavy Rail



# Transit Oriented Developments



# TOD Strategies

- Convenient connections to surrounding areas and other transit
- Walkable station areas
- Variety of shops, housing, services and employment

# Transit Oriented Development



# Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan

- Zoning Ordinance
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Infrastructure Ordinance
- Building, Fire and Nuisance Codes
- Capital Improvement Program
- Community Development Block Grants
- Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ)

# Zoning Ordinance

- Traditional Use by Right Districts
- Separation of Uses by type and density.
- Flexible zoning districts: Planned Development Districts, Specific Uses.
- Conditional use permits.
- Form based codes may be developed under a planned development district (formally known as a planned unit development).

# Zoning Ordinance

- Zoning is a police power used to protect public health, safety and welfare: City of Euclid v. Amber Realty U.S. 1926 and Lombardo v. City of Dallas 1934.
- Zoning situates land uses to achieve compatibility and serviceability.
- Ten day written notice to property owners within 200' prior to P&ZC hearing and 15 day newspaper notice before CC hearing.
- 3/4 supermajority of CC required to change zoning if protest is submitted either by owners of land being changed or 20 % of those within 200 feet.



# Zoning Ordinance

- Zoning regulates land uses
  - 1.Type and location of use
  - 2.Building bulk, height, setbacks
  - 3.Lot area and dimensions
  - 4.Landscaping (type and amount)
  - 5.Outdoor storage

# Zoning Ordinance

6. Parking

7. Signage

8. Non-conforming uses

9. Fencing and screening

10. Specific Use Permits

11. Special districts

Historic districts

Overlay districts

Planned development districts

# Signage

# Signs and the Law

- Reed v. Town of Gilbert 2015 the United States Supreme Court ruled 9-0, regulations that categorize signs based on the type of information they convey (e.g. temporary, political and ideological) and then apply different standards to each category are content-based regulations of speech and are not allowed under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

# Signs and the Law

- When reviewing a governmental regulation the Scotus applies various “tests” for constitutionality.
- When a regulation is challenged for its free speech content, the court applies the “strict scrutiny” test.
- That means the regulation must be for a compelling governmental interest and the regulation must be narrowly tailored to serve the governmental interest. The town did not do so in this case.

# Signs and the Law

- Scotus said "The town cannot claim that placing strict limits on temporary directional signs is necessary to beautify the town when other types of signs create the same problem. Nor has it shown that temporary directional signs pose a greater threat to public safety than ideological or political signs."

# Signs and the Law

- The regulation of outdoor advertising is a reasonable and proper exercise of the police power.
- The promotion of highway safety and improvement of highway beautification are constitutionally permissible objectives under this police power.

# Signs and the Law

- The City is entitled to a presumption of validity unless its terms represent a clear abuse of municipal discretion, bearing no substantial relationship to the public health, safety, morals, or general welfare
- Sign ordinances should be clear but do not have to be cast in “mathematically precise terms”.
- Ordinances must give fair warning of the forbidden conduct, in light of common understanding and practices

# Sign Ordinance

- Prohibit billboards and all off-premise signs.
- Limit area, height and number of on premise signs.
- Require uniformity of wall signage.
- Include an exceptions and exemptions section.
- Require a permit for all signs.
- Extend sign regulations to ETJ.
- Adopt a good definition of a sign: Any attention getting device.





SEP 17 2001



Gasoline Self Serve

REGULAR UNLEADED 1.45  $\frac{9}{10}$

PLUS UNLEADED 1.55  $\frac{9}{10}$

SUPREME UNLEADED 1.65  $\frac{9}{10}$

Chevron



Fast Pay 2420

SEP 20 2001



SEP 17 2001

# Wall Signage



# Landscaping

# Landscape Ordinance

- Require tree islands in parking lots to visually break up the expanse of paving without losing parking spaces.
- Use tall growing landscape materials to provide interest along walls of long building walls.
- Create landscape strips along property lines and establish the average widths of such (20'-30').
- Create landscaped islands at the end of parking rows.
- Screen cart corrals with landscaping.

# Landscape Ordinance

- Specify a percent of the site after building footprint that must be landscaped.
- Identify acceptable species of shrubs and trees.
- State the size plants must be at installation.
- Require irrigation systems, encourage xerophytic systems and require dead plants to be replaced.

# Landscape Ordinance

- Require street trees to create a canopy over the street. Root barriers and irrigation systems should be considered.
- Require trees in the median of arterials.
- Trees under power poles should be low growing species.
- Protect trees on private property of a certain circumference and quality.

# Landscaping





SEP 20 2001



# Screening and Buffering

# Screening/Buffering Ordinance

- Rear/side landscaped areas may be wider if used to buffer residential from commercial uses.
- Plant trees in the required strips to screen uses and shrubs along streets to screen parked cars.
- Require masonry walls between uses of different intensity with specified height (8'-10'+).

# Screening/Buffering Ordinance

- Screen outdoor storage and service (loading) areas with landscaping, fencing or wing walls.
- Screen utility cabinets, phone/signal controllers, dumpsters, etc. with masonry walls and/or landscaping.
- Screen cart corrals in shopping center parking lots and next to buildings.
- Screen Mechanical Equipment on ground(plants) or roof (parapets)







FIRE LANE

18 10:36 AM





18 10:29 AM



18 10:08 AM



18 10:21 AM

FIRE



18 10:22 AM













# Architectural Standards

# Architectural Standards

- Missouri City is next to First Colony and its deed restricted architectural standards.
- Identified key structures that were worth emulating in different areas of the city and identified in an urban design plan.
- Created overlay zones 1000' ft. along all major thoroughfares and amended the zoning ordinance specifying styles, materials, colors.



# How to Adopt Architectural Standards

- Hire an architect, consulting attorney and an experienced planner to help draft rules and to consult on projects
- Look at what other cities have in the way of standards.
- Missouri City has fairly extensive standards and applies them to non-residential structures, condominium and apartments.

# Architectural Standards

- Consider building materials such as Brick, Stone, Cast Stone.
- Consider a percentage of the building (minus window and doors) to be covered by a preferred building material.
- Allow concrete hollow block on the rear of buildings if painted (to match required primary material) and out of view.

# Architectural Standards

- Prohibit bright, glossy and primary colors. Specify color schemes and allow corporate colors on buildings but severely limit.
- Require exposed roofs 6 to 12 inches run to rise and to be standing seam metal or slate or if flat to have a parapet wall as a decoration and high enough to screen mechanical equipment.

# Architectural Standards

- Require articulation of long walls including tall plant materials along the wall.
- Accessory buildings should match the main structure in materials and form.
- Prohibit exterior corrugated metal for walls and roofs, exterior neon lighting and accent lighting to highlight walls and roofs.
- Wall signs for shopping centers should have uniform colors for their signs, e.g. all white.





# Home Depot: Prototypic Design



# Home Depot: Non-Prototypic Design















SEP 17 2001



SEP 17 2001



SEP 17 2001



SEP 17 2001

# Chevron Prototypic Design



# Chevron Non-Prototypic Design









SEP 17 2001





AUG 2 2001



# Shurgard Storage: Prototypic Design



# Shurgard Storage: Non-Prototypic Design



SHURGARD  
STORAGE CENTER  
Controlled Moving Supplies

SHURGARD

MAY 18 2001

# Streetscape

# Streetscape

- Pedestrian access and safety
- Landscaping
- Bicycle access and safety
- Slow autos, provide parking.
- Sidewalks: walking, sitting, dining.
- Lighting and shade
- Building location and fenestration.
- "Complete Streets"





The Miracle Mile -- Chicago, Illinois



# Town Square Southlake, Texas



# Board of Adjustment

- Hears appeals of an order, decision, requirement or determination of an administrative official in the enforcement of the zoning ordinance.
- Special exceptions and variances from the terms of the zoning ordinance.
- Standards for approval:
  1. The variance is not contrary to the public interest;

# Board of Adjustment

2. Due to special conditions, a literal enforcement of the ordinance would result in unnecessary hardship. A financial hardship will not be sufficient to qualify as an unnecessary hardship adequate for a variance request;
3. The spirit of the ordinance must be observed; and
4. Substantial justice must be done.

# Board of Adjustment

- A variance should be given to allow a use not permitted in a district.
- A stricter standard for approval: A variance to the terms of the zoning ordinance may be granted if that there is a unique physical feature or characteristic of the property that when the laws of the City are applied an unusual or undue hardship results.

# Access Management

# Principles of Access Management

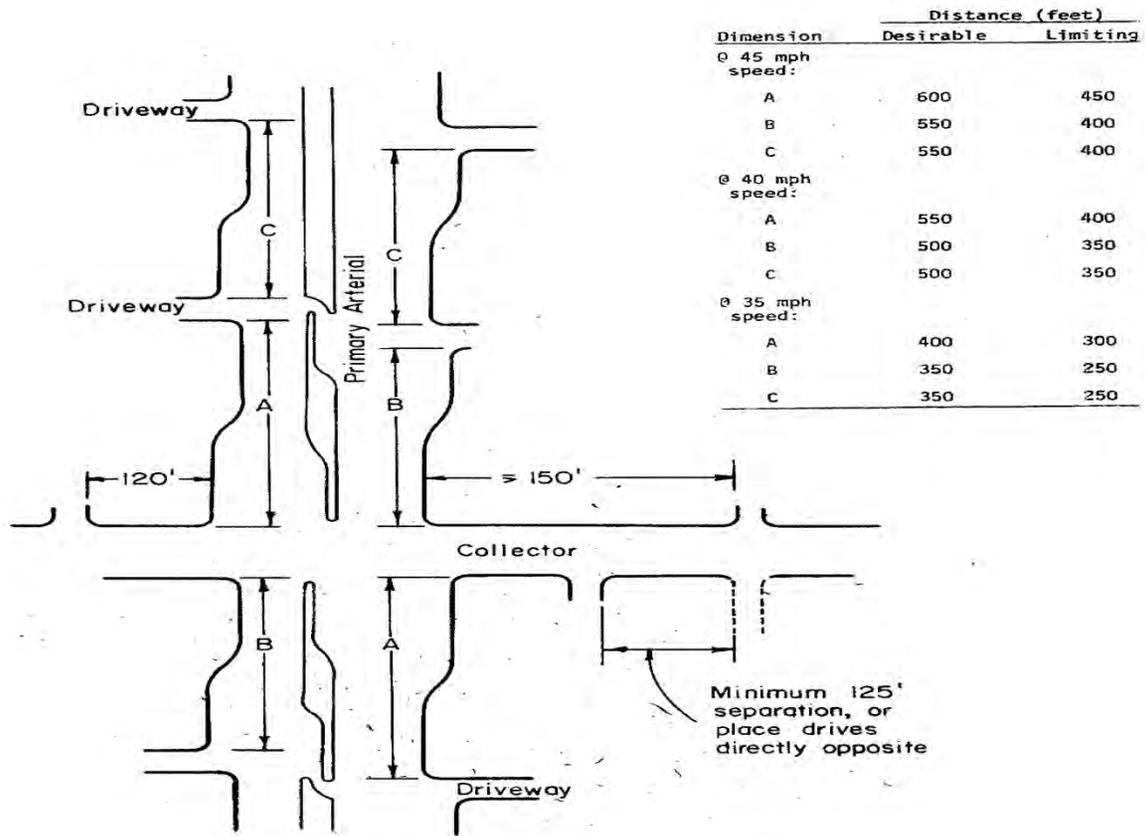
- Fewer intersections spaced farther apart (including driveways) result in:
  1. Fewer points of traffic conflict.
  2. Less of an impact on speed differential.
  3. Opportunity for deceleration/acceleration lanes.

# Principles of Access Management

- The use of medians:
  1. Increases the opportunity for landscaping.
  2. Reduces the number of left turns and prevents the overlapping of left turn lanes possible with continuous left turn lanes.
  3. Provides for opposing driveways to align.

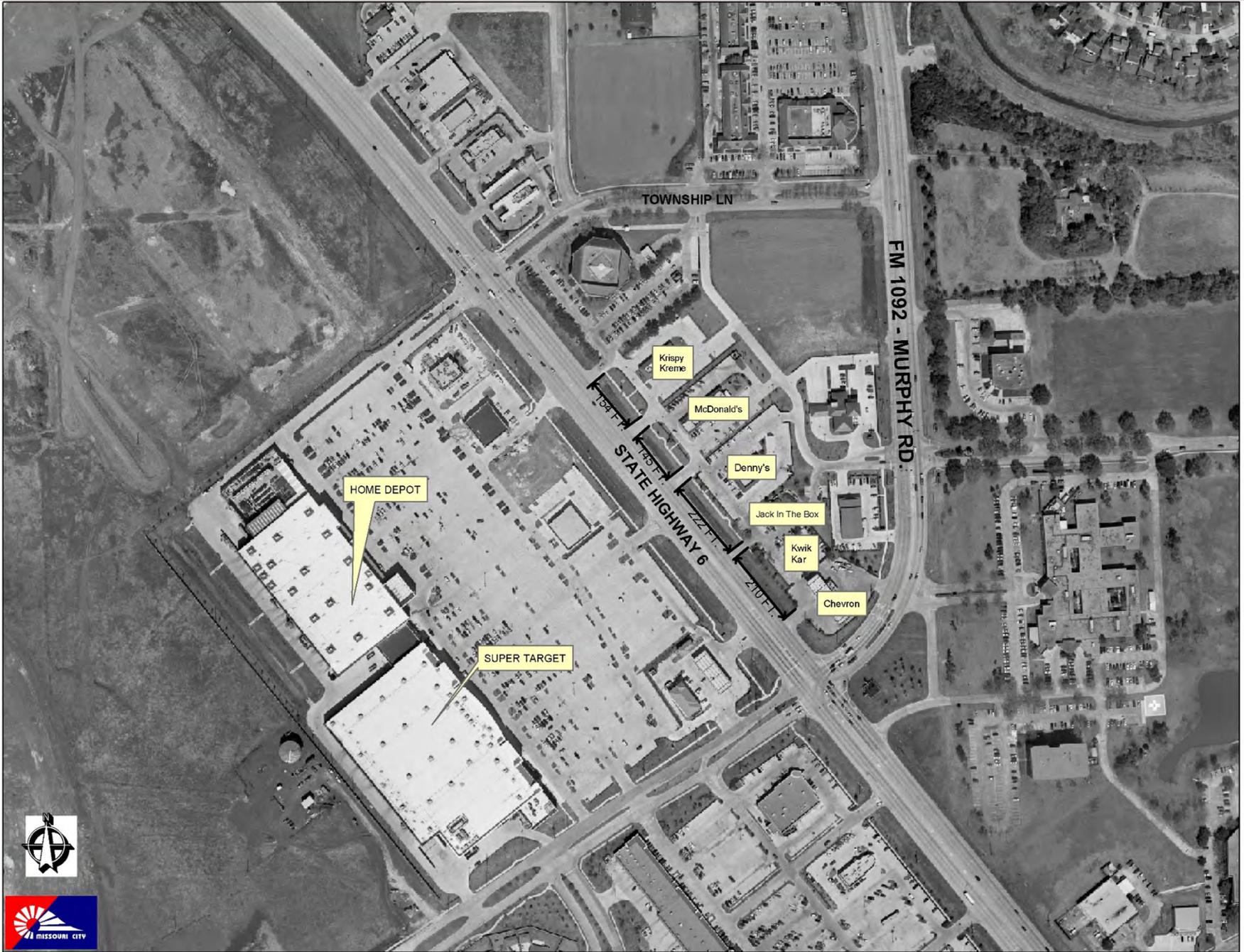
# Principles of Access Management

- The use of shared parking and access, and cross access easements reduces the use of street or highway travel lanes to access adjoining property.
- Improves safety and results in increased customer access and reduces costs for businesses.



SOURCE: Adapted from Ref. (7), V.G. Stover, "Guidelines for Spacing of Unsignalized Access to Urban Arterial Streets".

**SUGGESTED CORNER CLEARANCE AND UNSIGNALIZED ACCESS SPACING  
FIGURE 6-15**



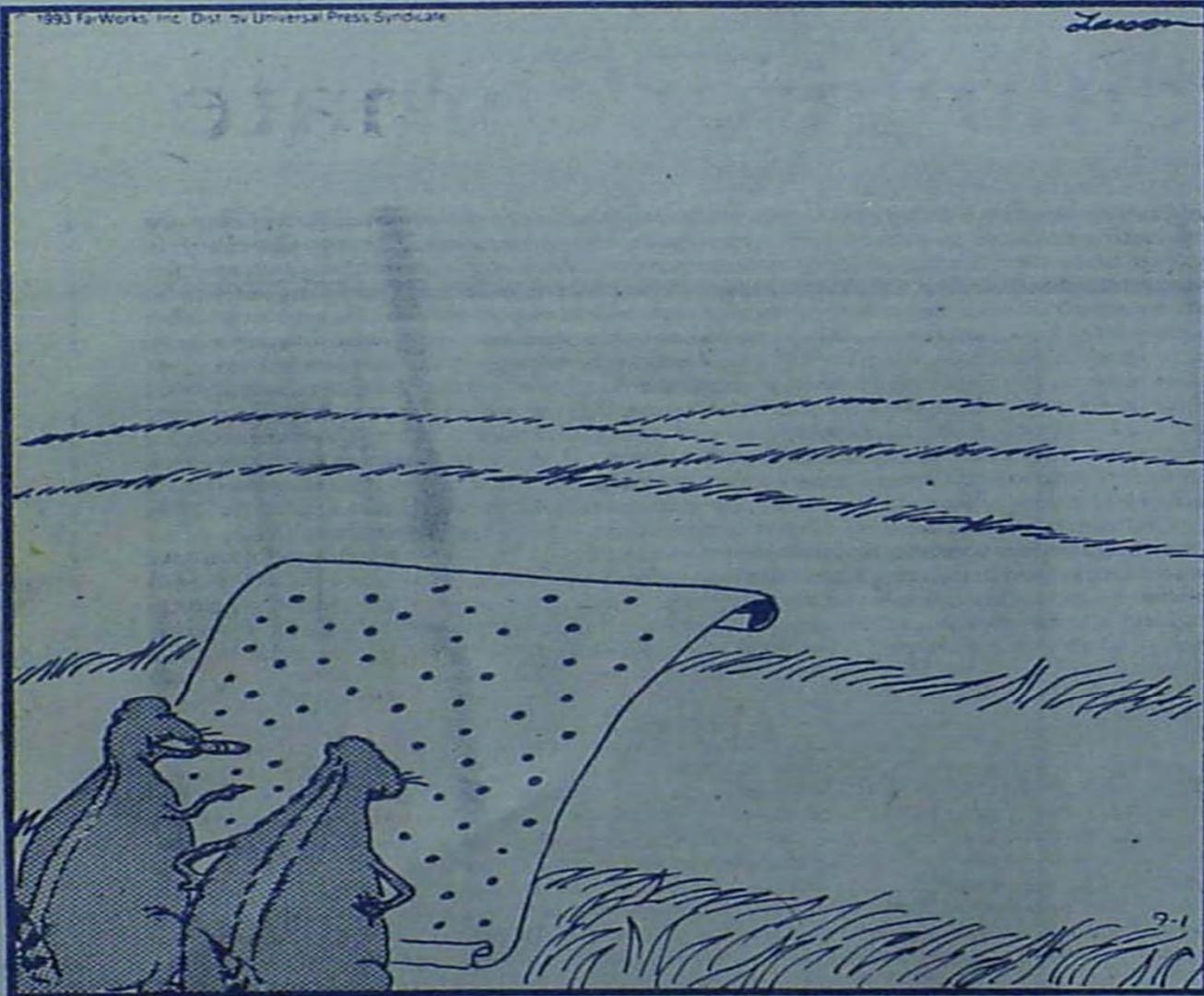
# Subdivision Ordinance

# The Far Side

by Gary Larson

© 1993 FarWorks, Inc. Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate

Larson



**Prairie dog developers**

# Subdivision Ordinance

- Defined. Subdivision shall also include the resubdivision and replatting of land or lots which are part of a previously recorded subdivision.
- An "addition" is a subdivision as defined in this section.
- The term "subdivision" shall also include the division of land, whether by plat, by metes and bounds description, for sale or lease and when appropriate to the context, shall relate to the process of subdividing or to the land subdivided.

# Why Regulate Subdivisions?

- To enable the sale or transfer of lots, and the recording thereof, by plat reference rather than by the less efficient metes and bounds property descriptions;

- To ensure that streets, utilities, schools, parks, open space, and other public facilities are adequate to serve the needs of those who will occupy and/or use the tract; and,

- To prevent harm to persons and/or damage to land or property both within and outside the tract.

# How do Cities Regulate Subdivisions?

- Section 212 of the Local Government Code enables cities to require landowners to receive approval of a plat prior to the development or division for sale or lease of private property.
- Q. What is a Plat? A. It is a document prepared by a developer or landowner and submitted for approval by the city of the surveyed layout of lots, streets, parkland, open spaces and utilities and which includes notes dedicating rights of way and public easements to the public.

# How do Cities Regulate Subdivisions?

- Plats must be consistent with the zoning ordinance (lot sizes, setbacks, etc).
- Prior to construction, plans must be submitted and to be approved must conform to the cities' construction standards.

# Types of Plats

- Minor plat
- Municipal determination
- Replat
- Residential replat
- Amending plat
- Vacating plat
- Development plat (212.045)

# Subdivision Controls

- Rights of way dedication
- Utilities extension or provision
- Parks, schools, services
- Impact fees
- Development agreements

O.R.

# SIENNA VILLAGE OF WATERS LAKE SECTION SEVEN-A

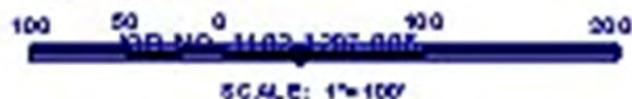
A SUBDIVISION OF 14.343 ACRES LOCATED IN THE  
THOMAS BARNETT LEAGUE, A-7 AND THE DAVID  
FITZGERALD LEAGUE, A-25 AND ALSO BEING OUT OF THE  
AFG JOHNSON DEVELOPMENT, L.L.C. 1558.274 ACRES KNOWN AS  
TRACT ONE RECORDED IN FILE NO. 9640265 OF THE OFFICIAL RECORDS OF  
FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS

17 LOTS

3 RESERVES

2 BLOCKS

SEPTEMBER 17, 1999



OWNER:

## AFG JOHNSON DEVELOPMENT, L.L.C.

W. DOUGLAS GOFF, GENERAL MANAGER

3777 SIENNA PARKWAY MISSOURI CITY, TEXAS 77459 PH. (281) 778-7777

ENGINEER:

LJA Engineering & Surveying, Inc.



2029 Highway 818  
Suite 600  
Houston, Texas 77058-2029

Phone 713-535-5200  
Fax 713-535-5205

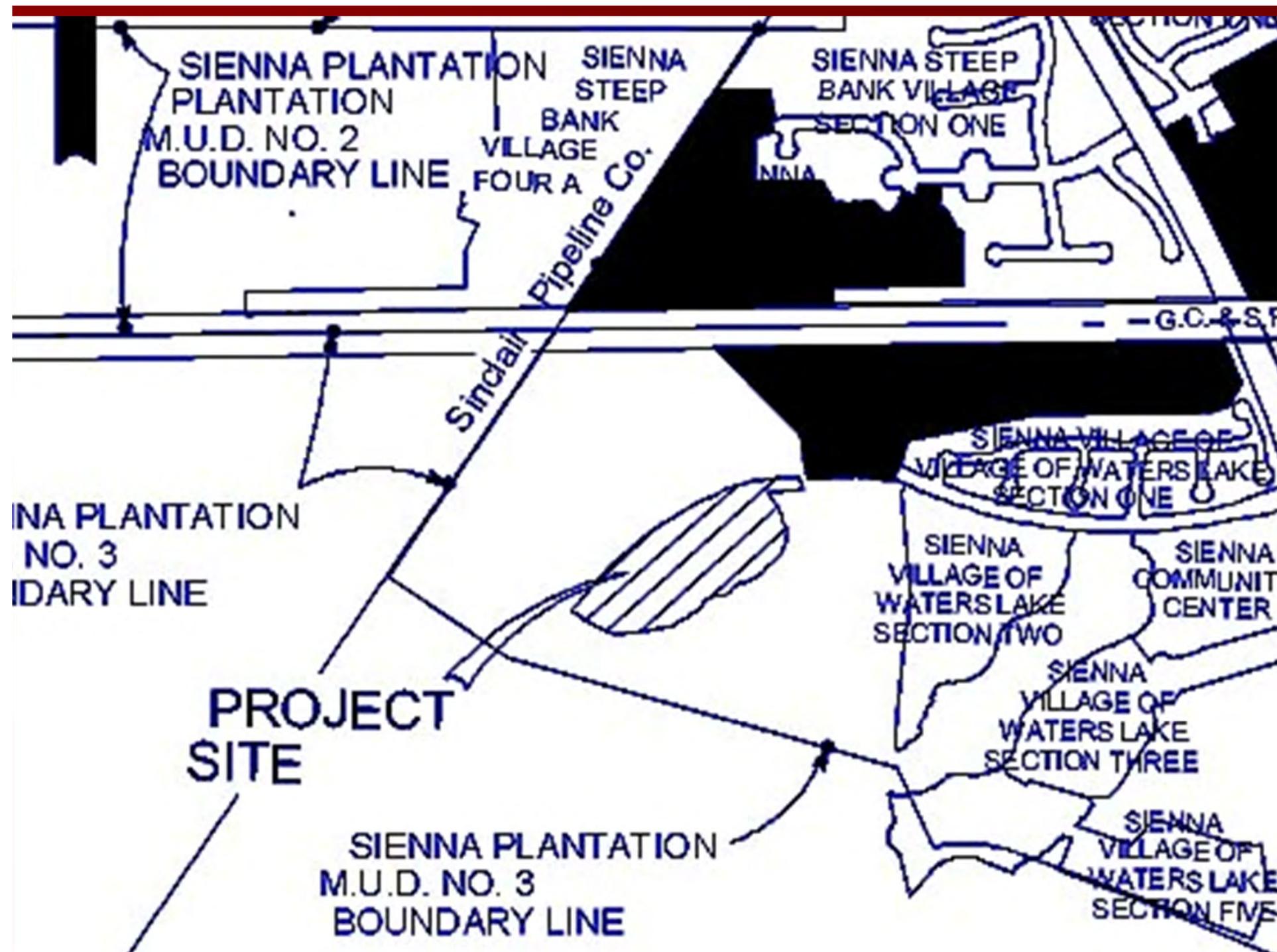
JESSE T. POULSON,

REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR,  
TEXAS REGISTRATION NO. 1891

JERROLD L. GRAHAM JR.,

REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER,  
TEXAS REGISTRATION NO. 86490





~~USE OF THE PUBLIC FOR PUBLIC UTILITY PURPOSES, FOREVER, UNOBSTRUCTED AERIAL EASEMENTS, THE AERIAL EASEMENTS SHALL EXTEND HORIZONTALLY AN ADDITIONAL ELEVEN FEET, SIX INCHES (11' 6") FOR TEN FEET (10' 0") PERIMETER GROUND EASEMENTS OR SEVEN FEET, SIX INCHES (7' 6") FOR FOURTEEN FEET (14' 0") PERIMETER GROUND EASEMENTS OR FIVE FEET, SIX INCHES (5' 6") FOR SIXTEEN FEET (16' 0") PERIMETER GROUND EASEMENTS, FROM A PLANE SIXTEEN FEET (16' 0") ABOVE GROUND LEVEL UPWARD, LOCATED ADJACENT TO AND ADJOINING SAID PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENTS THAT ARE DESIGNATED WITH AERIAL EASEMENTS (U.E. & A.E.) AS INDICATED AND DEPICTED HEREON, WHEREBY THE AERIAL EASEMENTS TOTAL TWENTY-ONE FEET, SIX INCHES (21' 6") IN WIDTH.~~

~~FURTHER, OWNERS HAVE DEDICATED AND BY THESE PRESENTS DO DEDICATE TO THE USE OF THE PUBLIC FOR PUBLIC UTILITY PURPOSES, FOREVER, UNOBSTRUCTED AERIAL EASEMENTS, THE AERIAL EASEMENTS SHALL EXTEND HORIZONTALLY AN ADDITIONAL TEN FEET (10' 0") FOR TEN FEET (10' 0") BACK-TO-BACK GROUND EASEMENTS OR EIGHT FEET (8' 0") FOR FOURTEEN FEET (14' 0") BACK-TO-BACK GROUND EASEMENTS OR SEVEN FEET (7' 0") FOR SIXTEEN FEET (16' 0") BACK-TO-BACK GROUND EASEMENTS, FROM A PLANE SIXTEEN FEET (16' 0") ABOVE GROUND LEVEL UPWARD, LOCATED ADJACENT TO BOTH SIDES AND ADJOINING SAID PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENTS THAT ARE DESIGNATED WITH AERIAL EASEMENTS (U.E. & A.E.) AS INDICATED AND DEPICTED HEREON, WHEREBY THE AERIAL EASEMENTS TOTAL THIRTY FEET (30' 0") IN WIDTH.~~

FURTHER, OWNERS DO HEREBY DECLARE THAT ALL PARCELS OF LAND DESIGNATED AS LOTS ON THIS PLAT ARE INTENDED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNITS THEREON AND SHALL BE RESTRICTED FOR SAME UNDER THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SUCH RESTRICTIONS FILED SEPARATELY.

FURTHER, OWNERS DO HEREBY COVENANT AND AGREE THAT ALL OF THE PROPERTY WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THIS PLAT SHALL BE RESTRICTED TO PREVENT THE DRAINAGE

FURTHER, OWNERS DO HEREBY DEDICATE TO THE PUBLIC A STRIP OF LAND TWENTY (20) FEET WIDE ON EACH SIDE OF THE CENTERLINE OF ANY AND ALL BAYOUS, CREEKS, GULLIES, RAVINES, DRAWS, SLOUGHS, OR OTHER NATURAL DRAINAGE COURSES LOCATED IN SAID PLAT AS EASEMENTS FOR DRAINAGE PURPOSES, FORT BEND COUNTY OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO ENTER UPON SAID EASEMENT AT ANY AND ALL TIMES FOR THE PURPOSES OF CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF DRAINAGE FACILITIES AND STRUCTURES.

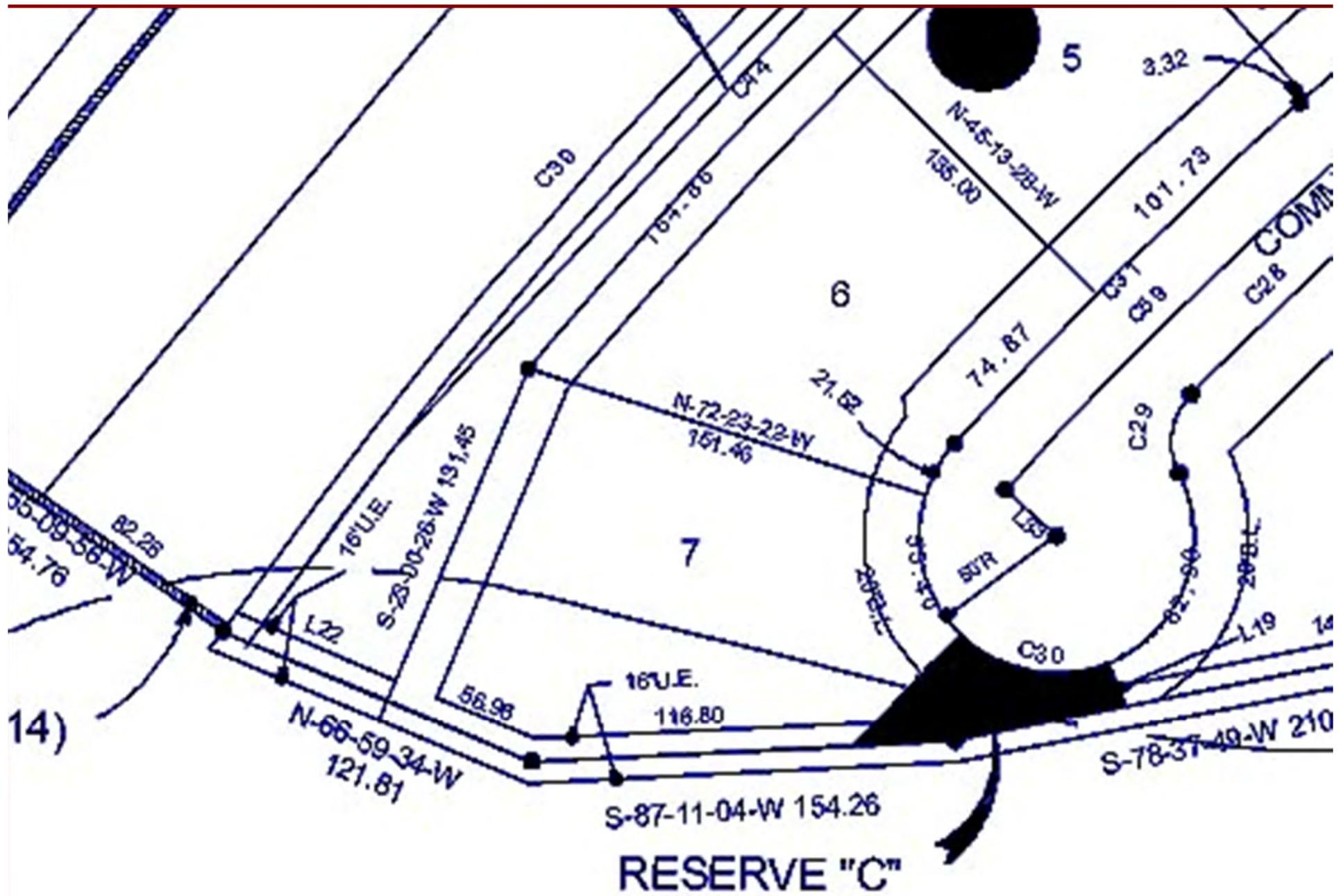
FURTHER, OWNERS DO HEREBY COVENANT AND AGREE THAT ALL OF THE PROPERTY WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THIS SUBMISSION AND ADJACENT TO ANY DRAINAGE EASEMENT, DITCH, GULLY, CREEK OR NATURAL DRAINAGE WAY SHALL HEREBY BE RESTRICTED TO KEEP SUCH DRAINAGE WAYS AND EASEMENTS CLEAR OF FENCES, BUILDINGS, EXCESSIVE VEGETATION AND OTHER OBSTRUCTIONS TO THE OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF THE DRAINAGE FACILITY, AND THAT SUCH ABUTTING PROPERTY SHALL NOT BE PERMITTED TO DRAIN DIRECTLY INTO THIS EASEMENT EXCEPT BY MEANS OF AN APPROVED DRAINAGE STRUCTURE.

FURTHER, OWNERS DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT WE ARE THE OWNERS OF ALL PROPERTY IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE BOUNDARIES OF THE ABOVE AND FOREGOING PLAT OF SIENNA VILLAGE OF WATERS LAKE SECTION SEVEN - A WHERE BUILDING SETBACK LINES OR PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENTS ARE TO BE ESTABLISHED OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE ABOVE AND FOREGOING PLAT AND DO HEREBY MAKE AND ESTABLISH ALL BUILDING SETBACK LINES AND DEDICATE TO THE USE OF THE PUBLIC FOREVER ALL PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENTS SHOWN IN SAID ADJACENT ACREAGE.

WE FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE DEDICATIONS AND/OR EXACTIONS MADE HEREIN ARE PROPORTIONAL TO THE IMPACT OF THE SUBMISSION UPON THE PUBLIC SERVICES REQUIRED IN ORDER THAT THE DEVELOPMENT WILL COMPORT WITH THE PRESENT AND FUTURE GROWTH NEEDS OF THE CITY: WE, OUR SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS HEREBY WAIVE ANY CLAIM, DAMAGE, OR CAUSE OF ACTION THAT WE MAY HAVE AS A RESULT OF THE DEDICATION OR EXACTIONS MADE HEREIN.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, AFG JOHNSON DEVELOPMENT, L.L.C., HAS CAUSED THESE PRESENTS TO BE SIGNED BY W. DOUGLAS GOFF, ITS GENERAL MANAGER, THEREUNTO AUTHORIZED, ATTESTED BY ITS SECRETARY, JEAN FARLEY AND ITS COMMON SEAL HEREUNTO AFFIXED THIS        DAY OF        , 1999.



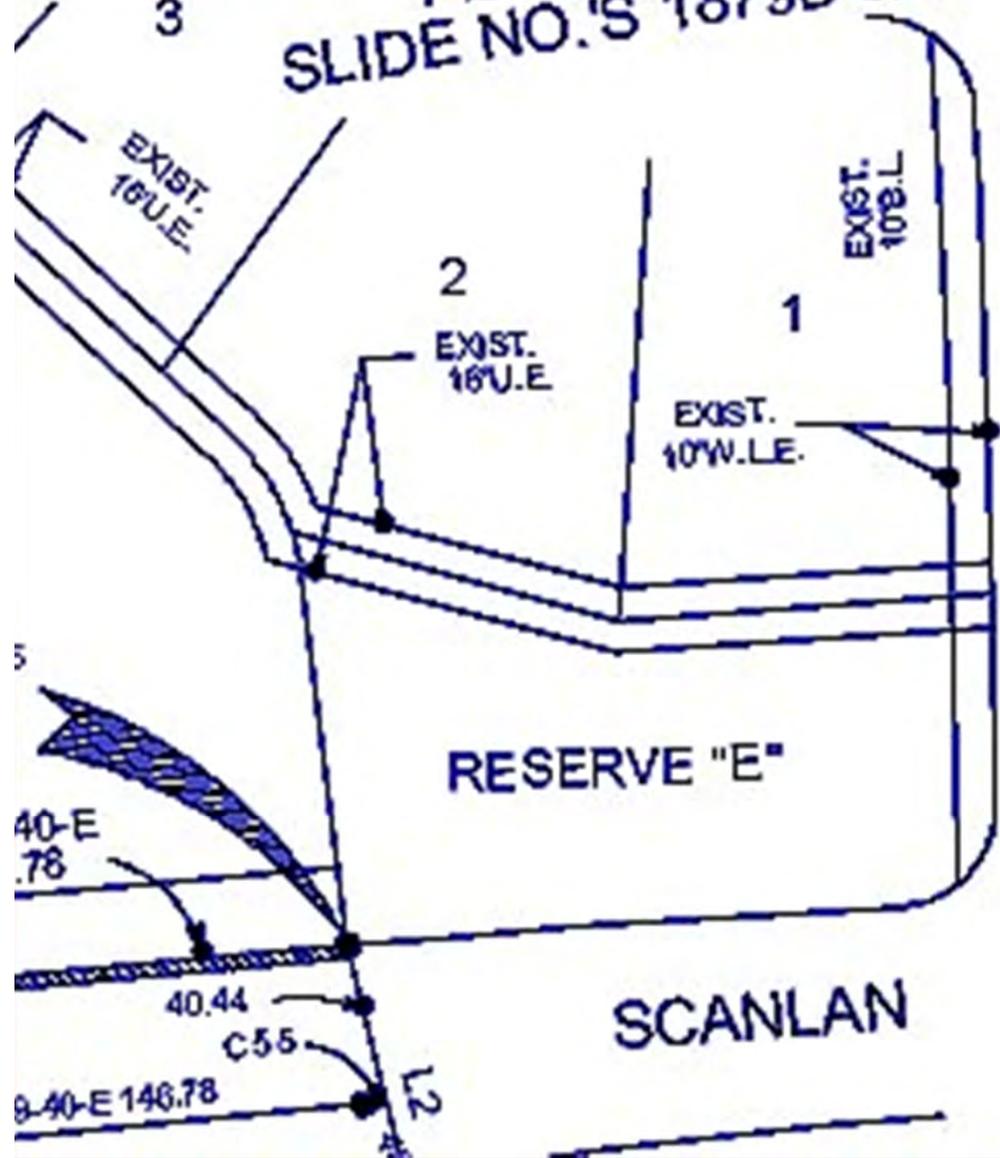






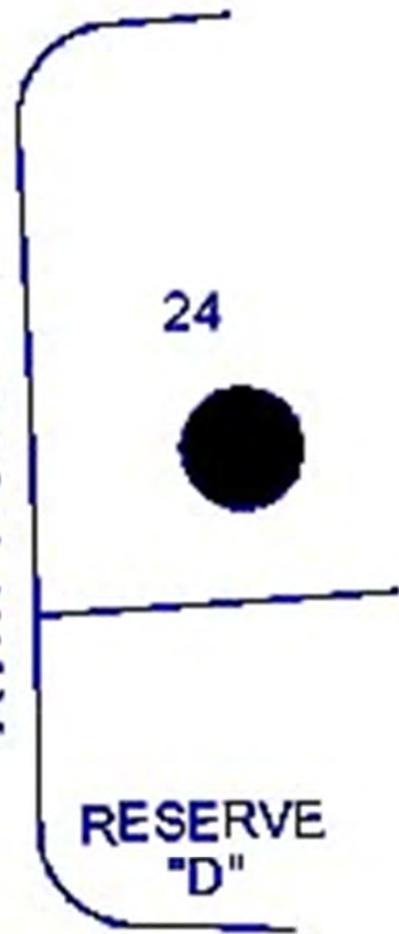


SIENNA VILLAGE  
WATERS LAKE SECTION 4  
F.B.C.P.R.  
SLIDE NO.'S 1879B & 1880A



(80' R.O.W.)

BARRINGTON WAY



TRACE

# Development Review

# Customer Service

# What does Customer Service have to do with Development Review?

Q: Who are your customers?

A: Developers, professional and citizen builders.

# Customer Service

- Create a culture of good customer service.
- Require that employees apply the Golden Rule to all interactions with customers. Tell them when dealing with a customer to answer the question “How would you like to be treated in this case?”
- Discuss good customer service at staff meetings and provide videos to illustrate.
- Supervisors must regularly monitor the permit desk for performance.

# Customer Service

- Encourage minimum use of voice mail and require same day call back for voice mail messages.
- Train Receptionists/Permit Clerks on greeting customers and how to handle angry customers.
- Provide comfortable seating, a work surface and coffee for customers.
- Teach permit clerks to call for assistance when customers are having to wait.

# Customer Service

- Create an automated phone service for builders to call in inspections.
- Use Twitter and Facebook to communicate with developers and builders.
- Have a quarterly luncheon for builders.
- Create a webpage that contains all information related to the development process: maps, ordinances, schedules, etc.
- Develop a system for processing applications.

# Develop a System to Process Plat and Zoning Applications

- The number of meetings that are to be held each month should be stated in the subdivision ordinance and the by-laws of the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- In a high growth community due to the number of applications two meetings a month may be impractical.
- Required notice periods for hearings of zoning changes before P&ZC and CC may dictate number of regular meeting dates.

# Application Process Considerations

- Number of staff members (planners and administrative people available).
- Amount of time needed to review applications.
- Average number of applications (plats and rezoning requests) received in a month.

# Provide Information to Applicants

- Develop on-line forms for submitting (uploading) rezoning and subdivision platting applications and require digital plat and rezoning maps compatible with and capable of being patched into the cities' GIS system.

# Achieving an effective Application Process

- Form a development review committee: director of planning, engineer, director of public works, building official, fire marshal and EDC to meet with applicants.
- The director of planning should chair the meeting.
- Request that applicant bring all consultants (engineers, architects, etc.) to the meeting that will work on the project

# Achieving an Effective Application Process

- Require all applicants attend a pre-submittal meeting of staff prior to submittal so that all information may be provided that is necessary for the submission of a successful application.
- Create a form that can be filled out and submitted by the developer prior to the meeting to identify where in the city he/she wants to development and what use is planned.

# Achieving a Friendly Application Process

- Provide coffee or cold drinks for the meeting.
- An administrative assistant should be present to take notes that are published after the meeting and circulated to attendees and others who are interested (city manager, council members and commissioners).
- Consider video taping each meeting.

# Ad hoc comments from a Professional City Planner

- Hire a city planner and or a city planning consultant.
- Create a Planning Department with a director and include an engineer on the staff of the planning department

# More Comments

- Realize that the planner you hire can only do so much. With enough staff it is possible to accomplish a comprehensive plan in house but if the current planning load (plats, rezonings) is significant then it may be necessary to hire a planning consultanting firm.

# More Comments

- Planners are professionals and trained to serve you and the citizens of the city.
- Deal with staff problems in private through the city manager or mayor (praise in public, criticize in private).
- Don't identify us with your opponents if we tried to implement policies you subsequently were elected to change. We serve whomever is in office and try to accomplish whatever elected officials direct us to accomplish.

# More Comments

- Because we are professionals planners are part of a nationwide community of professionals that adhere to “best practices” and a code of ethics.
- Planners believe that a large part of our job is to provide information to elected and appointed officials as well as citizens on the latest professional practices from around the country so that good decisions can be made.

# Comments

- “Hear from the Public” is listening to the public not “Debate the Public”.
- Set reasonable time limits for public comments (3-5 minutes per person maximum).

# Ex parte

- Ex parte defined.
  1. On or from one side or party only.
  2. From a one-sided or partisan point of view.

## Ex parte Communications with Developers

- If you feel obligated to meet with a developer in private:

- Never make a commitment that you will support or vote to approve the project.

- The best response: "I am in favor of quality development and your proposal sounds interesting but it has to be analyzed by staff and go through the legal public hearing process before I will make a decision."

# Professional Organizations

- Planners belong to the American Planning Association (APA) which has state chapters and regional sections. The Houston Section is made up of planners in cities in Harris and surrounding counties.
- Attend APA sponsored or approved seminars on planning and require your planning commissioners to be involved and active in the National, State and regional association.

# Professional Organizations

- If possible hire planners that are certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).
- This certification means that the person you are hiring has been pre-qualified to perform based on education and experience and has passed a rigorous exam on the different elements of planning theory and practice.
- AICP members in order to keep their certifications are required to attend continuing education seminars and lectures.

# Professional Organizations

- The Houston Section of APA has regular educational seminars and luncheons with top professionals making presentations on topics of interest to the planning community. Go to [txplanning.org](http://txplanning.org) for the latest information on future events and activities in Houston and the State of Texas.