

CAMIROS

#34

CONSULTANTS IN PLANNING, ZONING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



Placed-based zoning can create well-crafted environments.

IN THIS ISSUE...

- Placemaking Through Zoning 1
- On the Drawing Board 3
- Archer-Halsted Pattern Book 4
- Zoning for Sustainable Energy 5
- Good Planning Guides Stimulus Spending 5
- Staff News 6

PLACEMAKING THROUGH ZONING

For many of us, zoning means protecting the quality of life for residents and minimizing the adverse impacts of one property upon another. The original intent of zoning was, in part to do just that. Times have changed since zoning was first introduced in the early years of the 20th Century. Yet we seem to be stuck focusing on the techniques of zoning, rather than working to achieve better ends through development regulations.

Lately, the vogue has been to focus on the form-giving elements of zoning. But not everyone finds this approach favorable. Some planners are cautious about form-based zoning because they see it as too doctrinaire, too formulaic, too complex, or too dependent upon the designer's interpretation of generally stated values. Other planners are contemptuous of what is often called Euclidian zon-

ing because it has resulted in land use separation that, in hindsight, they now see as undesirable.

Looking Beyond Zoning's Limitations

There is a move toward refocusing zoning as a community response to the broader planning vision. Zoning has evolved to include a mix of use-based, performance and form-based zoning in a manner that directly links land use, urban design and quality of life policies. But, why are we doing this, and where are we headed?

Underlying such thinking is the goal of building desirable and sustainable *places* where people find comfort in the settings we create and find those settings efficient to build, manage, and maintain. A sense of place is more

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

than the form of the place; it is the function and level of activity that occurs there. Whether intended or not, the act of zoning can help to create or destroy the physical aspects of one's sense of place, because it is through zoning that a city regulates the way these placemaking elements come together. Consider the types of places found in any town: a town center, a neighborhood, a commercial highway, an industrial park. Thoughtful use of zoning can help to establish the character of each of these areas to reflect the scale of development, pattern of property ownership, function and modes of travel. But to do that, one must understand the type of environment to be created.

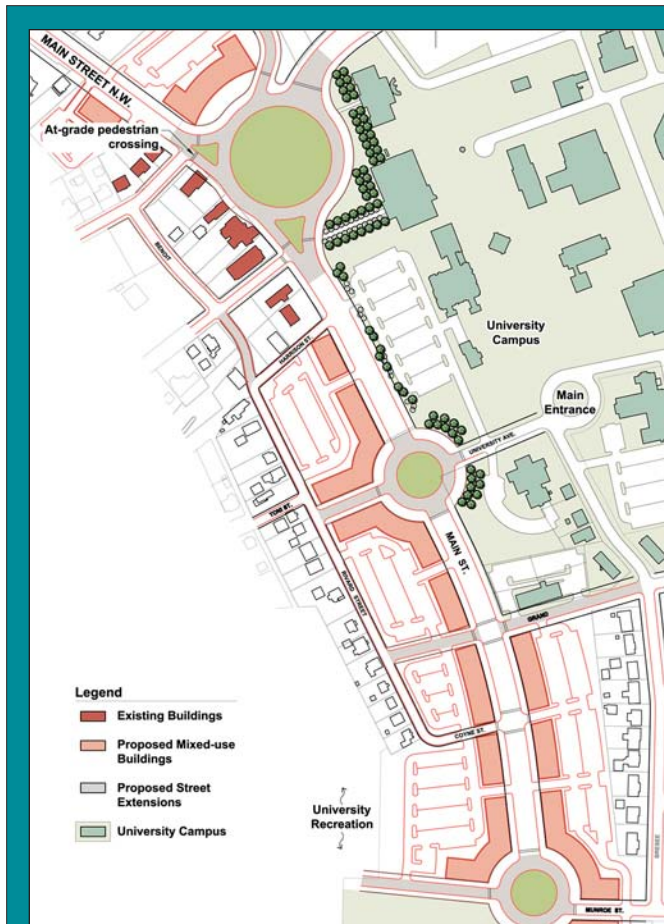
Placemaking reinforces those aspects of a neighborhood or district that make it distinctive and functionally unique. Thus, placemaking must incorporate the identity of an area, its cultural values, uses, levels of activities and physical scale and forms, into the pattern of development within that area.

Zoning Is Only As Good As The Quality Of The Vision

We should not lose sight of the fact that zoning is a purpose driven activity. Zoning as placemaking cannot be completed in a vacuum. Rather, it must be preceded by clear policy directions established by a community plan that is tempered by a clear understanding of the community values and development realities that affect the kind of places to be created. There are three sustainability principles which are critical to the development of place-based zoning in a community.

1. To support *social systems* within the community which embrace shared values by
 - providing a transparent and equitable process of planning and change,
 - maximizing social interaction within the cultural context, and
 - protecting and enhancing community quality of life.

(continued on page 4)



Bourbonnais Conceptual Plan



Olivet Nazarene University campus building

Camiros is currently working with the **Village of Bourbonnais, Illinois, and Olivet Nazarene University** to prepare an improvement plan for the downtown area. The University has acquired a significant amount

of property within the downtown area with the intent of fostering a “college town” atmosphere. Camiros has prepared Concept Plans that combine traffic calming roundabouts with new mixed-use development, pedestrian improvements and a streetscape design motif that reinforces Bourbonnais’ French heritage.

KEEP IN TOUCH...

To receive our monthly E-Newsletter, please send us your current e-mail address:

e-newsletter@camiros.com

ON THE DRAWING BOARD...

The fruits of a combined master planning and zoning program for **New Orleans, Louisiana**, are starting to appear. Working on an extremely fast track, the City of New Orleans has tasked Camiros to prepare a new zoning ordinance. Broad concepts for the structure and approaches to be utilized have recently been presented and incorporate a range of form-based, performance and Euclidian approaches to assure that continuing rebuilding efforts complement the historic structure of the City, yet accommodate contemporary needs. The ordinance is being designed to directly implement the emerging master plan which, following a recent City Charter amendment, will have “the force of law.”

Permission granted under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.2



New Orleans Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance



Proposed Deerfield Site Plan

Camiros recently completed open space and plaza plans for the **Deerfield, Illinois**, Village Center that emphasizes the community’s commitment to sustainability, and serves as an entrance to the civic center of downtown. This design emphasizes the use of sustainable techniques including sculptural wind turbines, porous surfaces, permeable pavers, rain gardens, bioretention, rain water harvesting and native landscaping. Construction is slated for the Fall of 2009.

The Village of **Palatine, Illinois**, has recently selected Camiros to prepare a new comprehensive plan for this major northwest Chicago area suburb. Key aspects of the plan include addressing a number of very complex land use and urban design issues in the Village’s commercial and mixed use corridors, and to formulate an approach to integrate a large number of PUDs with various lot sizes, street widths and deed restrictions with the larger pattern of development in the community.

The City of **Baltimore, Maryland**, has retained a team lead by Camiros to prepare a new zoning ordinance to implement the direction of its recently adopted Smart Growth Strategic Plan. This update of the City’s 38 year-old ordinance will modernize the structure of the code, establish new districts to address waterfront protection, neighborhood commercial design, integrated TOD plans, and bioscience activities while maintaining the City’s historic character. The code will utilize a variety of zoning techniques including form-based, use-based and performance-based elements.



Baltimore Skyline

2. To support *economic systems* within the community which provide resilience by
 - integrating changing market needs into flexible development forms,
 - providing a diversity of economic opportunities consistent with the market, and
 - meeting local needs by using local resources efficiently.

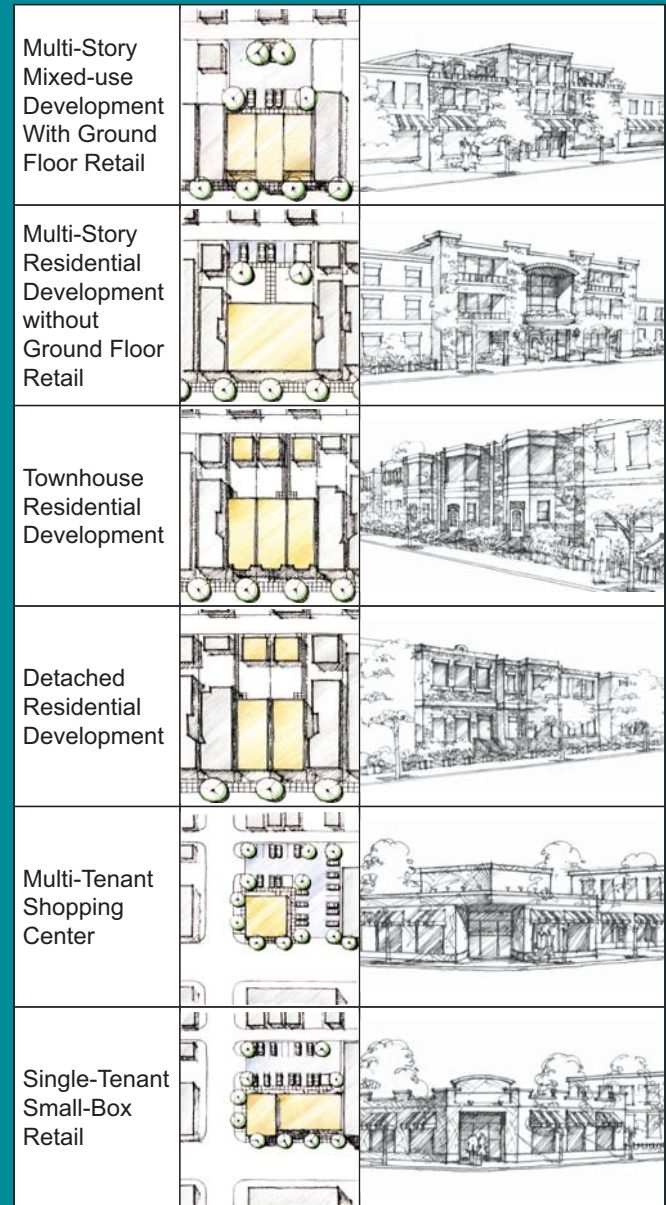
3. To support *environmental systems* which support green infrastructure by
 - minimizing its impact on current and future environmental resources,
 - minimizing land and transportation requirements, and
 - maximizing the integration of the underlying ecology.

All of these factors must inform the zoning process. A proper combination results in a desirable, functional and comfortable environment for work, home or play. The key is that a city's development policy must be clear enough to provide a basis for such zoning. In essence, the identification of the desired place characteristics should emanate from the community's planning policies and related strategies.

Work now in progress in New Orleans illustrates this relationship. At present, the City is preparing a new Master Plan intended to inform the structure of a new zoning ordinance. We believe that the hinge between these two elements is defining the community's neighborhoods and districts in terms of their place-making characteristics. The degree to which the plan identifies different characteristics of the residential neighborhoods and commercial districts will provide the basis for the use, form and performance criteria used to implement the character of each district. In this manner, zoning serves to implement a broad base of plan and design policies. It is more than creating regulations to limit adverse impacts; it is creating regulations to attain a desired pattern of development, which will help to provide the quality of life desired by the community's residents and businesses.

(continued on page 5)

ARCHER-HALSTED PATTERN BOOK



Camiros has recently completed work for the City of Chicago to prepare a pattern book to guide development within the Archer Avenue & Halsted Street area. The goal is to preserve the neighborhood character and to strengthen the vitality of its commercial nodes. Guidelines responsive to local historic character were developed as a tool to implement corridor-wide development principles and context specific design regulations. The end product articulates the vision for the area and provides City staff with a tool for assessing development proposals.

(continued on page 5)

If we approach zoning from this broader viewpoint we no longer have to be troubled as to the specific approach we are taking. Rather, we can focus our efforts on identifying the types of places we want to create and determine how our zoning regulations can achieve the desired result. It may not be easy, since it requires careful understanding of community values, strong insights into the elements that underlie the desired community places and the ability to clearly articulate the kind of development we wish to achieve in various sectors of our communities. But, if we approach zoning from this perspective, we will have clear reasons for the regulations that we do craft. Only then can we be confident that our zoning regulations, will really help to achieve the goals of good city development.

Zoning for Sustainable Energy

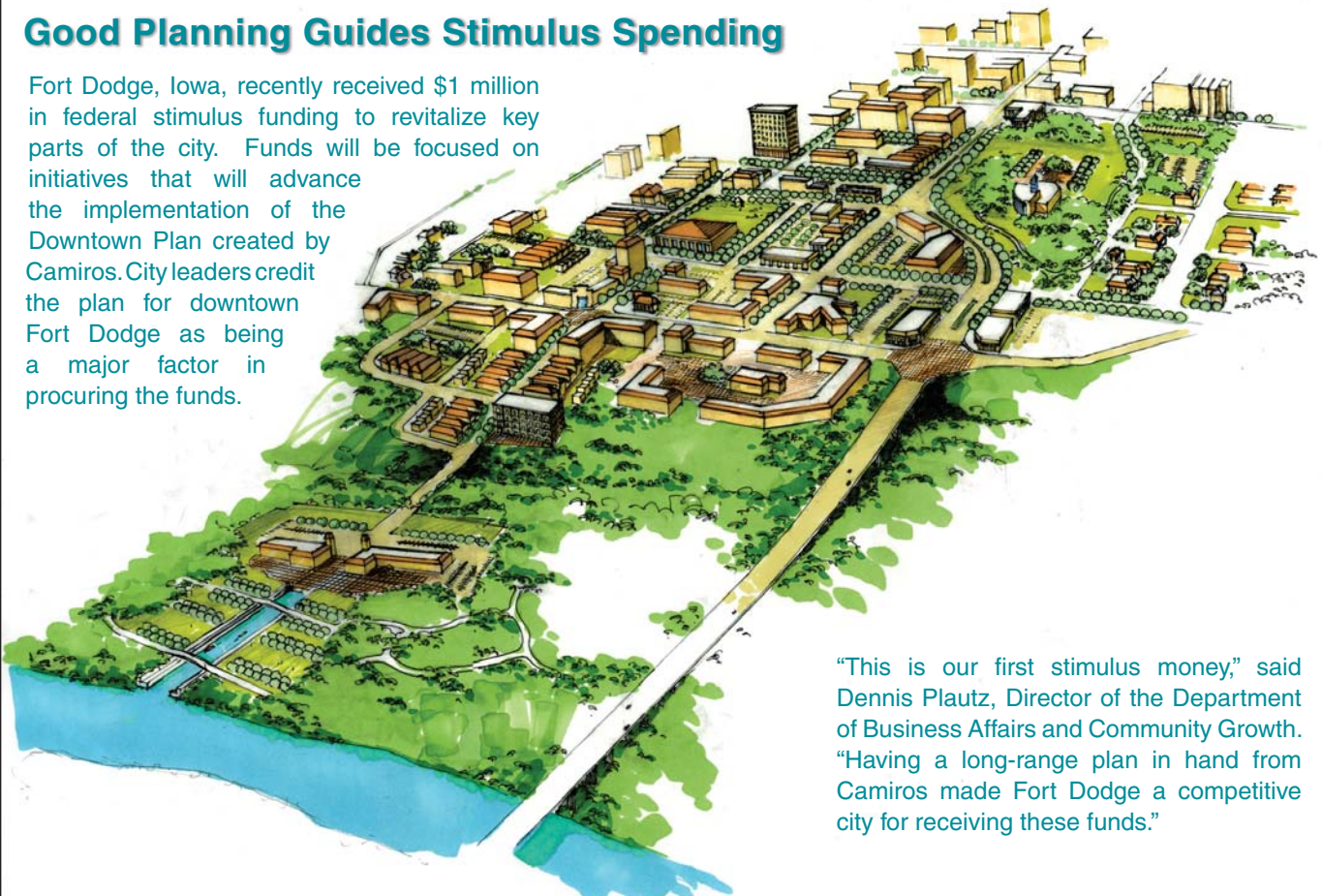


Wind energy appears to have great promise as one answer to the search to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Camiros is currently integrating this sustainable energy source into

community zoning ordinances, especially through smaller community-friendly facilities. The firm is also assisting developers of large scale commercial wind farms in the Midwest. For example, Camiros is currently preparing a series of economic impact analyses as part of the entitlement process for Horizon Wind Energy, LLC's 22,000 acre wind energy farm in north central Illinois. This study looks at the wind farm's impact on tax revenue, job production and the overall effects on the economy.

Good Planning Guides Stimulus Spending

Fort Dodge, Iowa, recently received \$1 million in federal stimulus funding to revitalize key parts of the city. Funds will be focused on initiatives that will advance the implementation of the Downtown Plan created by Camiros. City leaders credit the plan for downtown Fort Dodge as being a major factor in procuring the funds.



"This is our first stimulus money," said Dennis Plautz, Director of the Department of Business Affairs and Community Growth. "Having a long-range plan in hand from Camiros made Fort Dodge a competitive city for receiving these funds."

STAFF NEWS



Camiros welcomes new Associate, **Jake Seid!** Jake has served in the Planning Department for the City of Highland Park, Illinois, and received his

Masters in Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Jake will assist the firm's zoning practice and provide land use analysis using GIS. He will be taking his AICP examination in Fall 2009.

Camiros Principal **Les Pollock**, was recently elected as the President of Lambda Alpha International. LAI is an honorary society of over 2,500 individuals with 22 chapters worldwide. Members are among the leading practitioners and academics in the land economics fields of architecture, planning, law, development finance, appraisal, real estate development and research.

Recently announced! Associate, **Nikolas Davis**, will be organizing a Field Session titled The Greening of Chicago: Sustainable Practices for the 2009 ASLA Annual Meeting in September. This Session will highlight Mayor, Richard M. Daley's challenge for Chicago to become the "greenest" city in the nation.

Senior Associate, Arista Strungys, has published an article in APA's Zoning Practice Newsletter titled The Five Steps to a Hybrid Code. This article describes Camiros' work with the Village to create a hybrid zoning ordinance that incorporates traditional zoning controls with innovative form-based controls. A copy of this article can be found: <http://www.planning.org/zoningpractice/2008/pdf/may.pdf>.



Chicago celebrates the 100th anniversary of the 1909 Burnham Plan of Chicago. As part of this celebration, Principal **Jack Swenson**, has directed the preparation of a book of essays, to be published by Lambda Alpha International. This book includes 15 critics of the utility of the Plan, providing both retrospective and prospective views of the plan.

Camiros gives back to the community! Design Studio Manager, **Dena Hicks**, is currently serving as the coordinator for Photography at KIPP, a youth photography program in the Lawndale community. More information about this program and other volunteer opportunities can be found through Chicago Cares at: www.chicagocares.org.



Postage