

International Builders' Show

Where's the Land?



Presented by:
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Associates

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—————→ a few minutes of “in the trenches”
perspective on finding land

—————→ it all starts with the land!!!

Where to find property

Keeping an ear to the ground!



- ◆ **Community involvement:**
 - Personal relationships – “network!”
 - Organizational – Local Builders Association
 - a Realtor that's also “connected” – can also make more “anonymous” inquiries
- ◆ **Community officials**
- ◆ **Direct outreach to targeted landowners**

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1. Find someone in your organization to get involved in the community:
 - school / sports activity
 - lions, rotary & civil clubs
 - be a chamber of commerce member
 - get involved
 - gain trust
2. Peer vs. Competitor!
 - Land may not be right for a certain builder's use – may be what you want.
3. In an Open & Communicative Community!
 - Officials are in touch with landowners.
4. Mailings:
 - May piss off people.
 - But if 1 in 50 leads to a purchase – may be worth it.

Cardillo example



Involve a good development team - as early in the process as possible

- ◆ **Planners / Engineers and other professionals have a vested interest too:**
 - if they can help find property, they can help themselves with a job!
 - Aggressive professionals know their communities and their markets.



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Don't overlook their resources

Too often:

- purchase (first)
- shop services (second)
- find out the land has design challenges (too late!)

Use a good team's resources - early - while looking!

- Find a firm familiar with the regulatory and approval procedures.
- They can help with "heads up" aspects of research, but may also help you with seeing possibilities on different looking land.

Be careful:

Engineers (municipal) w/o enough work:

- looking at parcels.
- trying to "sell" them to clients to get work!

Planners / Engineers may have an “intellectual investment”

- ◆ This is an industry of change – land unsuitable just a couple of years ago may be today’s ideal site.
- ◆ Site investigations may be buried in the files, just waiting for the right project to come along.



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We are Pack Rats!

- Files of old site investigations that were not right for what the client was looking for in the past may fit different market needs, now.
- Combination of tight land, changing markets and changing community goals often make sites look better (sometimes worse).

Example –

Parcel – infill with lots of neighbor “character of the area” issues.

Now the “old” home is in disrepair, land is unmanaged and neighbors want something done.

View Environmental Constraints as Assets



- ◆ Land prices may take environmental limitations into account.
- ◆ Start to view “unusable areas” as design features.
- ◆ Potential to maintain overall density through clustering techniques.

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- Living in fear of the environmental shoe to drop.
- Land owners with an 80's perspective of land prices are starting to find out they can't get the same price for wetlands as “developable” land (slow realization).
- But – as an industry, we are getting better at selling our problems as amenities.
- With clustering – you can often get close to the density you want, but need to be careful about what market you are selling to.

New Opportunities

- ◆ **Brownfields – Can they be retrofitted into viable and fundable residential projects?**
- ◆ **Retrofit commercial / retail dormant sites:**



- significant obstacles have often already been addressed - traffic, drainage, ground cover.
- tax incentives for adaptive re-use are starting to appear.

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Very strong emerging mixed use markets.

- Will often be met by infill and retrofit:

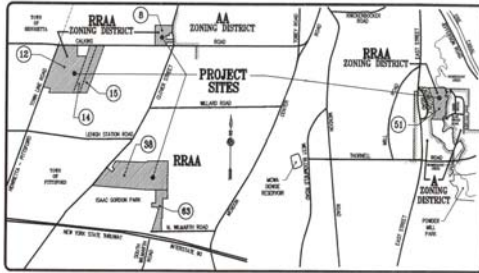
Think about your market and look in different locations!

In retrofitting a project:

- You may be doing the community a huge favor taking down a long empty big box, and providing a unique housing need.
- It's likely most of the difficult issues have been dealt with on the existing facility. You may likely be proposing lesser impacts.
- Just maybe! - the development process might be streamlined to help (land) costs.

New Opportunities (cont.)

- package smaller parcels, even if they are non-contiguous - utilize enabled planning and design techniques (TDR, Incentive Zoning).
- community priority parcels (i.e. "Greenprint" properties).



- purchase for negotiation use with above density transfer techniques.

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Packaging of parcels:

- Not necessary adjacent or contiguous land.
- Many areas are intimidated by the administration of a TDR program. Put some of the intent can be put in local codes.
- Courts have eliminated what many of us know as Contract Zoning – i.e. let's make a deal.

Incentive zoning – NYS enabling legislation:

- Legalized contract zoning!

Green parcels that community wants – but no \$ to purchase:

- Would be tough on a development proposal.
- Consider being a hero and buying it to be used in density bartering on other parcels with the right enabling legislation / zoning.

You've found a site – it's time to do your homework!

- ◆ **Using more high tech sources:**

- allow you to do more confidential investigations.
- this is the same information available to NIMBY's – so be aware of it anyway and utilize it for property research.



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If you are utilizing cyber space resources you should be:

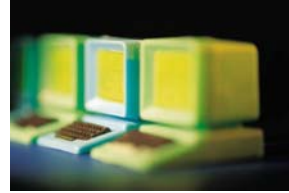
- You can get an extensive amount of information before raising flags that a developer is “snooping around.”
- The sophistication of available information is increasing at a very fast pace.

Sources of Information

- ◆ **Geographic Information System Databases**
- ◆ **Tax mapping**
- ◆ **Aerial photos**
- ◆ **USGS topography**
- ◆ **Floodplain mapping**
- ◆ **Wetland / Environmental constraints**
- ◆ **Code info:**
 - municipal codes may be on the net, allowing confidential research.



Useful links



◆ National Information:

- Geography network
 - www.geographynetwork.com/index.html
- USGS National Mapping
 - www.mapping.usgs.gov/partners/viewonline.html
- National wetlands inventory
 - www.nwi.fws.gov/
- General code municipal codification
 - www.generalcode.com
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (flood maps)
 - www.fema.gov/maps.shtm

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Useful links (cont.)

- ◆ **New York State specific sites:**

- NYSDEC
 - www.dec.state.ny.us/
- NYS Office for Technology
 - www.nysgis.state.ny.us/
- Land Data tax info
 - www.ny-propdata.com
- NYS Association of Towns
 - www.nytowns.org
- BME Associates
 - www.bmepec.com



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