



Versailles Center, as it exists today, does not impart a positive impression of Versailles. A plain strip center of underutilized commercial buildings and parking lots, it nevertheless occupies a vitally important parcel. Versailles Center has an opportunity to be a tremendously positive feature of Woodford County. As one enters Versailles from the north and the east, Versailles Center is the first prominent feature that is visible from the road. By redeveloping its physical details, incorporating urban design principles, the owners can create a built form here that is both lucrative and reflects positively on Versailles.



A view down a mixed use street. The buildings contain a variety of uses that will support a wide variety of lifestyles.

Building Responsibly Keeps the Bluegrass Green

It is highly unlikely, given the current strip center condition of Versailles Center, that it will ever return to being a green space or farmland. Years ago, Woodford County leadership saw fit to permit commercial development to spread to this location astride the highway; now the task falls to the new generation of property owners and leaders here to redo it in a more lasting, contributive way. If this "Uptown" is rebuilt responsibly, within the Bluegrass building traditions of real neighborhoods, it will feature:

-A mix of jobs, housing and daily needs within walking distance of each other - This offers one an opportunity to live, work and get daily needs within the same area without relying so much upon car trips. This intermingling of uses will reduce the number of trips on the regional road network.

-A framework of walkable streets and buildings that can evolve - The particular uses of each new structure will probably change over time, but only if the buildings and streets are built to last and built to adapt.

-A model for more compact growth Highly livable neighborhoods can be built on far less land than recent subdivisions, and this is the only way to aesthetically and profitably accommodate growth while preserving the rural character of the Bluegrass region. Uptown could illustrate to the development industry how compact growth works.

A Complete New Neighborhood

Versailles, like many cities in the Bluegrass, is growing. After a long period of declining occupancy and vacant stores at Versailles Center, there is now new pressure to redevelop this hodgepodge of a shopping strip. Yet, it is an understatement to say there has been controversy about proposed redevelopment here. Many citizens of Woodford are determined that, when the next wave of changes take place here, the mistakes of the past should not be repeated.

Some of the controversy about Versailles Center has been about competition with downtown. While it is inevitable that there will be competition between the two, this competition does not mean that one will 'beat' the other. Each area will succeed by capitalizing on its unique characteristics: Downtown will be a destination because of the civic uses and historic buildings. Uptown would be able to support national chains and/or entertainment establishments. Downtown will be able to support a market for local products in a setting that is full of historic character. Uptown will have advantages, but will never be able to replicate the historic feel of Main Street.

This new 'Uptown' will inevitably grow. The solution is for all new growth, both Downtown and Uptown, to be built in a responsible way, with a solid urban form of blocks, streets, and greens that include a mix of uses within walking distance of each other. Growing in a compact way helps preserve the open spaces surrounding the town, and both Downtown and Uptown are prime candidates for accommodating this kind of growth. In addition, offering a balance of jobs and housing within the same walkable area will help moderate the negative impacts of sprawl within the region and offset the growing reliance on roads.

The new Uptown, if built properly, can be a complete neighborhood, with a mix of uses and building types that provide a variety of places to live and work. Towards the intersection of Lexington Street and the US 60 Bypass, at the heart of the new uptown, there should be multi-story buildings

Build Towards the Plan

with retail, offices, and restaurants. Further away from the intersection and Lexington Street, the character of the streets should change; these streets will be quieter, lined with apartment buildings, attached rowhouses, and even some single-family homes on fairly small lots. Some of the rowhouses can be flexible “live-work” units that are ideal for telecommuters, home-based businesses, and startups. Development of Uptown can unfold in phases:

Getting the Details Right

The Master Plan illustrates what can occur through several decades of thoughtful growth. In the beginning, the first few streets will not appear perfect or complete. The main thing is to follow the plan; keep in mind the vision the community created and adhere to it. Build the network of streets, and orient the buildings towards the streets. Construct high-quality buildings that will last. The accompanying new Woodford code will assist in regulating the details.

A network of connected streets and blocks.

An existing retail building is given a new shopfront facade and fits into the network of streets.

The frontage road encourages a healthy retail environment. It provides a travel lane for motorists to feel comfortable enough to park on-street.

On-street parking and wide sidewalks create a comfortable retail environment. Shopfront buildings with windows and doors create an interesting street-- encouraging lingering, shopping and dining.

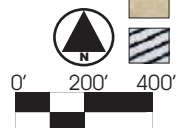
Detention is provided in the frontage road swale.

Additional parking spaces are provided behind buildings.

Frontage Road connects to more than one entrance.

Median with Trees.

- Civic Buildings
- Existing Buildings
- Proposed Buildings



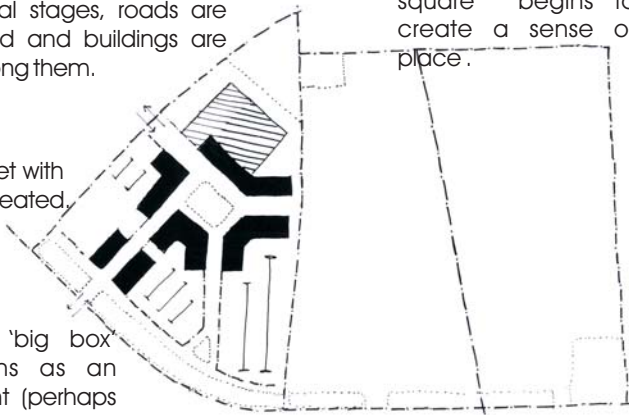
1. Build for the long term. Learn from the past and build with a longer time horizon. In the last few decades, many buildings were built under the assumption that the

A

In the initial stages, roads are constructed and buildings are fronted along them.

A mixed-use shopfront street with sidewalks is created.

The original 'big box' store remains as an anchor tenant (perhaps a movie theater), but liner buildings are added along at least one side.



The addition of a square begins to create a sense of place.

A frontage road with street trees is constructed along the perimeter of the site.

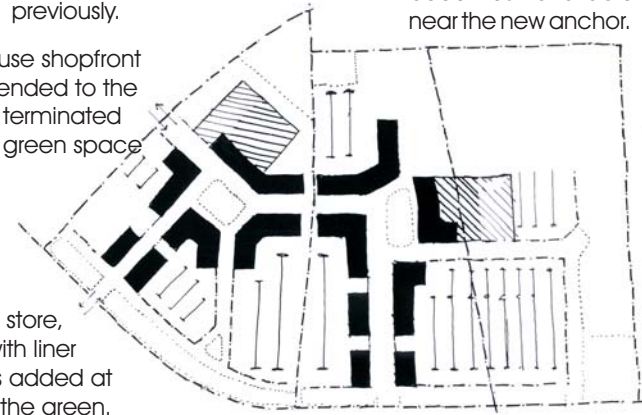
B

More stores begin to line the streets added previously.

A site for a hotel becomes available near the new anchor.

The mixed-use shopfront street is extended to the east and is terminated by another green space or plaza.

An anchor store, wrapped with liner buildings, is added at the end of the green.



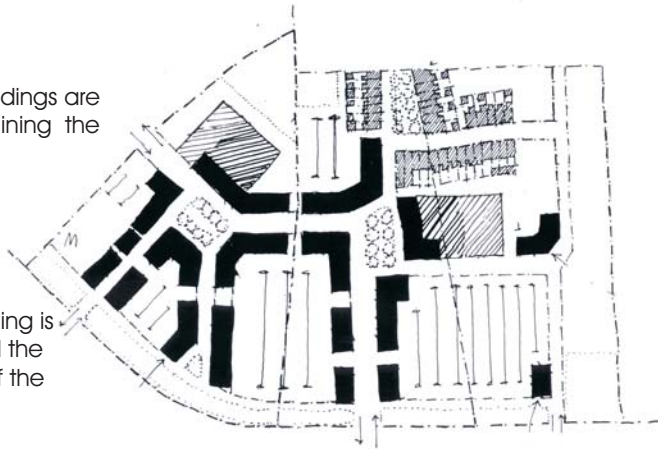
'Visibility corridors' ensure that buildings can be initially seen from the roadway.

Surface parking remains, but is

C

Residential buildings are added further lining the streets.

An office building is added toward the eastern end of the property.



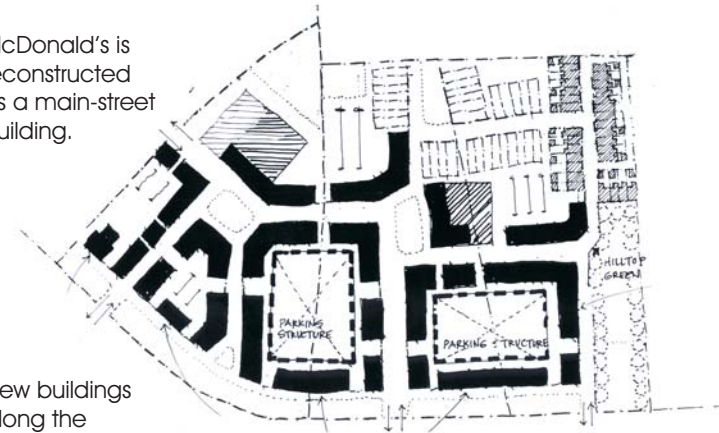
Prominent buildings along the frontage road occupy the landmark locations.

D

Surface parking replaced with parking

McDonald's is reconstructed as a main-street building.

New buildings along the frontage road have high visibility.



More residential uses are added.

developer would get a return on his or her investment within a time span of ten to fifteen years and would then desert the property. Create developments with a longer time horizon, with buildings that can be adapted and reused. There are a variety of financing mechanisms that can stimulate longer term development (i.e. city issued bonds, tax increment financing, special loans). Without these incentives or options, development will be forced into short term standards.

2. Build multi-story mixed-use buildings. In commercial areas, build multi-story buildings that will have a greater positive impact than a one-story building. Successful streets depend on the sense of spatial enclosure that is created when certain proportional relationships are achieved between the width of the street space and the height of the buildings on either side. Multi-story buildings can also adapt better to the changing market than large, single-story, single-use buildings because of the potential tenant mix. A multi-story building could easily hold one or more different tenants as each one could be located on a different floor, or one tenant on all floors. Also, there are only a few types of businesses that can take advantage of a large warehouse type building (i.e. Businesses that need lots of space). Land will also be conserved when buildings take up a smaller amount of land and are built taller than one story.

3. Add a frontage road that parallels the bypass. Design the new street to be pedestrian- and retail-friendly, with wide sidewalks, landscaping, and on-street parking. The median between the bypass and the frontage road should be designed as a generous linear park, with shade trees lining the streets.

4. Create a variety of building types and sizes. Add buildings in a variety of types and sizes, configured for incremental growth. The variety (including civic buildings, mixed-use shopfront buildings, apartment buildings, attached rowhouses, and single-family detached houses) will help create a stronger sense of place, a balance of places to live and work, and diverse prices. Variety adapts well to economic changes. This is in contrast to the idea of building one humongous building for

lease to a single tenant, the real estate equivalent of putting all your eggs in one basket which might “go dark” in only a few years, bringing down everything else with it.

5. Build real streets. Streets are to be defined by buildings, with doors and windows that face the public right of-way. Parking lots should be located behind buildings. Provide on-street parallel parking adjacent to the sidewalk. Design the streets for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

6. Build safe streets. Streets with narrow travel lanes and wide, gracious sidewalks are safest. Narrow travel lanes will calm traffic. Travel lanes 10 feet wide in commercial areas, and travel lanes 9 feet wide on the less-used residential streets, are appropriate.

-On-street parking lanes should be 7 feet wide.

-Sidewalks on commercial streets should be 12 to 15 feet wide. Sidewalks on residential streets can be 5 to 6 feet wide. (The proposed Woodford code will provide specifics on the design of street cross-sections.)

7. Manage parking. Create a variety of parking options that foster both pedestrian and vehicular access. Parking should be located behind buildings, with on-street parking next to the sidewalk. Locate parking behind buildings. Insist that the varied uses (retail, entertainment, civic, office, housing) share their parking supply efficiently. As Uptown is built out, a shift to structured parking will allow for the better use of valuable land. These practices will reduce the amount of land consumed needlessly for parking.



An entrance to Uptown, looking north from Lexington Street.

