

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT THE VILLAGE

Q. How will the community benefit from it?

A. The Village will benefit the Grand Rapids Township community in many ways, just as our project in Rochester Hills has benefited that community. In fact, Rochester Hills Mayor Pat Somerville said this about that project in her State of the City address:

“One might ask me why this new and innovative project is so important to this community. My first response is that it is an exciting place to be and it does provide this City with a “downtown”. It establishes a standard of excellence that reflects most favorably on us as a community that cares about quality of life.”

As it relates specifically to Grand Rapids Township, the Village will provide for:

A sense of place. The Village will bring to Grand Rapids Township a Town Center and American Main Street as a community gathering place for shopping and civic interaction. Shoppers and area residents will be attracted to the simplicity of access provided by the street plan, demonstrating a special convergence of convenience and quality, which would extend to a broad range of fashion retail merchants, distinct dining concepts, specialty goods and community events.

Distinctive retail. The Village will distinguish itself from any other shopping in the area, including any existing retail malls, by the caliber of its merchants, its residential component, and by its pedestrian-friendly, condensed street-like setting. This design embodies the desirable experience of the traditional small downtown, while providing the equal in parking, access and convenience of any modern shopping center or environment. This “best of the old” and “best of the new” will cater to the shopping and lifestyle preferences of consumers in the extended Grand Rapids Township trade area.

A real village square for Grand Rapids Township. The goal is to provide Grand Rapids Township with a unique place, which will provide for their shopping, dining, entertainment and social pleasure for years to come. Additionally, consistent with the Town Center concept, the development team recognizes the importance of the physical connection to the adjacent residential community and other nearby commercial or public activities. In all, the Village will further serve as a desirable model for commercial development in the Township, and Grand Rapids in general.

Economic opportunity. Increased tax revenue, local construction revenue, ongoing maintenance revenue, and employment opportunities for area residents in an exciting, prestigious environment.

Q. How does a project like this differ from a strip mall or regional shopping center?

A. The two are distinctly different. On a basic level, the village square concept combines the convenience of a strip mall with the upscale shopping options found usually only in regional shopping centers.

In addition, the mixed-use nature of this project, with its blend of retail and residential uses, creates a

unique environment. The multi-family residential component serves as a buffer between the retail uses and the existing homes that border the site.

The environment itself will resemble a traditional central business district. Each storefront will be completely unique, from its construction materials to its roofline. The project will also feature a main avenue that is lushly landscaped and bounded by storefronts on either side. Imagine an older, thriving Main Street district - then add convenient parking and national retailers. That is what The Village will be.

The development will address retailing from a slightly different perspective. There will be a greater emphasis on Village Square activities, with the center designed to serve as a community gathering place. With this in mind, we will plan to bring in lifestyle retailers and focus on events in the town square - attracting shoppers and browsers alike.

Q. How will this project differ from Celebration Village?

A. Each project has its place and they will complement each other by serving the differing needs of the customer. Celebration Village is an entertainment-driven center, with office, the movie theater and related food and service tenants. The Village will be a world apart from that. Yes, there will be stores and restaurants that people visit when they have a specific need. However, those stores will consist of over 50 of today's most innovative and dynamic retailers and eateries, and each will offer parking right in front of their door. Additionally, these shops and restaurants will be presented in a beautiful environment, bordered by attractive residential condominiums. It will serve as a destination that invites residents to visit and enjoy the surroundings, regardless of whether they have a shopping need.

Q. Has this type of project been developed elsewhere?

A. Centers such as this have been extremely successful in other parts of the country. Examples include Legacy Village in Beachwood, Ohio, Easton Town Center in Columbus, Ohio and the one we opened in Rochester Hills, Michigan in 2002, which has exceeded our expectations and has been warmly received by the community. There has not yet been a development of this kind in West Michigan and we strongly believe that West Michigan residents and shoppers will embrace this project.

Q. How will this affect area traffic?

A. The traffic patterns for shopping differ significantly from workday traffic patterns. Traffic for The Village will be primarily later evening and weekend, with daytime traffic commencing with the center opening later in the morning and the late day shopping occurring after rush hour during the early evening.



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Q. How will the project affect my property values?

A. Historically, projects of this nature have driven the values of surrounding residential properties higher. This was definitely the case in Rochester Hills. In fact, housing values for the homes in closest proximity to The Village of Rochester Hills have risen faster than the average for the community as a whole since the project opened in 2001. The reason is that people want to live close to places that define their communities. We fully expect this to be the case with The Village.

Q. What about ongoing maintenance of the facility. What will it look like in a few years?

A. We will remain committed to ensuring that The Village remains a community jewel, one that each and every resident of Grand Rapids Township is proud to call its own. Lush beautiful landscaping and lawn care, prompt snow removal and experienced security, to ensure that established rules and regulations are being followed, will be and remain our top priority. We anticipate duplicating the landscaping awards we have received for our Rochester Hills project with The Village. ■



THE
VILLAGE

GRAND RAPIDS TOWNSHIP,
MICHIGAN

Robert B. Aikens
& Associates, LLC

BDR, Inc.



WELCOME HOME

AN INTRODUCTION TO GRAND RAPIDS TOWNSHIP'S NEW VILLAGE SQUARE

An ideal location and strong consumer demographics in West Michigan's most prosperous community.

With the shopping options available to consumers today, it is no wonder that what was once viewed as an enjoyable activity has become a solitary and purely pragmatic task. Regional malls are often imposing and inconvenient, while strip centers are staid and uninspired—both boring and unimaginative. Traditional downtown districts pose parking difficulties and feature limited merchandise offerings.

Unwilling to accept the doomsayers' predictions that leisure shopping is a thing of the past, developers across the country have introduced a new concept in shopping centers. The “Village Square” combines the best of the downtown and regional mall shopping experiences—presenting the nation's leading merchants in a setting that is reminiscent of traditional downtowns. While this concept has been enthusiastically welcomed in other parts of the country, a “true” Village Square concept has not yet been proposed for West Michigan. Until now.

The Village, a mixed-use project planned for Grand Rapids Township, will be the first in West Michigan to utilize the Village Square concept. Featuring the best of both residential and retail uses, in a cohesive, manageable size, and presented in a beautiful environment featuring lush landscaping and tree-lined roads, The Village will serve as a destination for the entire community of Grand Rapids Township—a place for people to live, work and play.

“The Village will create a community-based anchor for Grand Rapids Township and the surrounding community,” explains Kevin Einfeld, President of Grand Rapids-based development firm BDR, Inc., who is partnering with Birmingham, Michigan-based real estate development firm Robert B. Aikens & Associates to make this project a reality. “The walkability of the center, from artistic landscaping to park benches and fountains, creates a park-like atmosphere. The Village is designed for the entire community, not just shoppers.

“A portion of the 60-acre mixed use residential and retail development will be devoted to open green space. This residential component will create a one-of-a-kind environment for West Michigan, making the project more than just a place to visit but a home for many as well.”

The center's layout and landscaping will invite pedestrians to stroll from place to place. The main avenue will be lined on either side with wide sidewalks and illuminated with village-style street lamps. Retailers on both sides of the street will create the illusion of having entered a small town unto itself. Space will be provided to create plazas for art shows and other community events that have traditionally been held in a town square setting. Lush landscaping and sculpted foun-

tains will abound along the boulevard and side roads. Curbside, parallel parking along all roads in the Village Square will allow for convenient parking without an endless sea of asphalt. Condominiums that border the site will share a beautiful view of and close proximity to this bustling town square.

“The Village will be an entirely new shopping experience for many West Michigan consumers—combining the appeal of a traditional main street, with the shopping and dining options found in a typical mall,” explains Bruce Aikens, President of Robert B. Aikens & Associates. “This type of development is designed to create a sense of community, a gathering place for family and neighbors.

“There is a strong emphasis on dining and entertainment, while the town square consistently hosts events that draw the community together and provide family entertainment. From themed celebrations to concert series, the town square fills the void felt by suburbanites as they've migrated farther from traditional downtowns.”

The emphasis on lifestyle will be evident in the tenant mix. The developer has been in discussion with a number of trend-setting national retailers, bookstores and restaurants, each of whom has expressed interest in The Village.

While Aikens and BDR have focused on attracting leading retailers to the center, the companies have also compiled a team of experts to ensure that this project's quality is unrivaled in the state. Ann Arbor-based engineering firm Atwell-Hicks, Farmington Hills-based architecture firm Wah Yee Associates, Northville-based landscape architecture firm Grissim, Metz, Andriese Associates, and Bloomfield Hills-based design firm Peterhans, Rea + Roman, LLC, round out the award-winning team that will work to make this project one-of-a-kind in West Michigan.



WHAT DO PEOPLE IN ROCHESTER HILLS THINK ABOUT THEIR VILLAGE?

“The Village of Rochester Hills opened in late September of 2002 to a great deal of fanfare, press, and national attention. We were the ‘talk’ of the national retailers conference held later that year and have been visited by city officials from as far away as University Place, Washington.”

PAT SOMERVILLE
Mayor, City of Rochester Hills

“As a realtor, having this unique shopping venue has turned out to be a strong selling point. The Village has actually enhanced the selling price of homes. The design of the center, with the best line up of stores, and all of the community activities, just adds another dimension to the overall quality of life in the Rochester Hills area.”

JOHN R. KERSTEN
President, Century 21 Town & Country

“The Village provides us with a beautiful, safe shopping environment that is within walking distance from our neighborhood. We wonder how we ever lived without this beautiful, dynamic area of our small city!”

KAREN FISHER
Rochester Hills resident

“The Village of Rochester Hills has become a valuable resource for Rochester Community Schools. From showcasing our talented students throughout the year, to providing fund-raising opportunities for our student activity groups, to creating after-school jobs for our young people, the Village has proven to be a good neighbor.”

DEBRA HARTMAN
Interim Comm. Supervisor,
Rochester Community Schools Foundation

“I believe that the Village of Rochester Hills has been a wonderful enhancement to the community. It is beautifully designed, it is always beautifully maintained, parking is ample (and never a long walk from the car to the shops), and it has offered some great shopping and dining alternatives.”

NANCY RITTER
Local Realtor & Rochester Hills resident

“Since the Village of Rochester Hills opened in 2002, it has added to the quality of life of the area. As a venue, The Village adds strength to the region, providing shopping, dining and an unhurried atmosphere in which to stroll the tree-lined streets. The management team behind the Village of Rochester Hills is comprised of community-minded professionals, who are actively involved and engaged with the area communities.”

SHERI L. HEINEY
Executive Director,
Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce

“Our community has embraced the ‘Village’ as their downtown. What the developer told us he was going to build is exactly what was delivered and more.”

ED ANZEK
Planning Director, City of Rochester Hills

“The key to creating a true Village Square is the ambiance,” explains Aikens. “We want to ensure that this project is creatively designed and effectively implemented. Our team will design and build a center that shoppers and residents alike will enjoy and be proud to call their own.”

The center is scheduled to begin construction in 2006, and will be fully complete by Fall 2007. Some stores will open before completion of the entire project, providing a glimpse of what is to come for shoppers. ■



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