

**ULI PLACE MAKING CONFERENCE**

**TOWN CENTERS FOR  
MPC'S, TND'S, AND RESORTS:  
WHEN, WHERE AND WHY**

**PRESENTATION**

**BY**

**IAN F. THOMAS**

**CHAIRMAN**

**THOMAS CONSULTANTS INC.**

**SEPTEMBER 9, 2002**

Good afternoon,

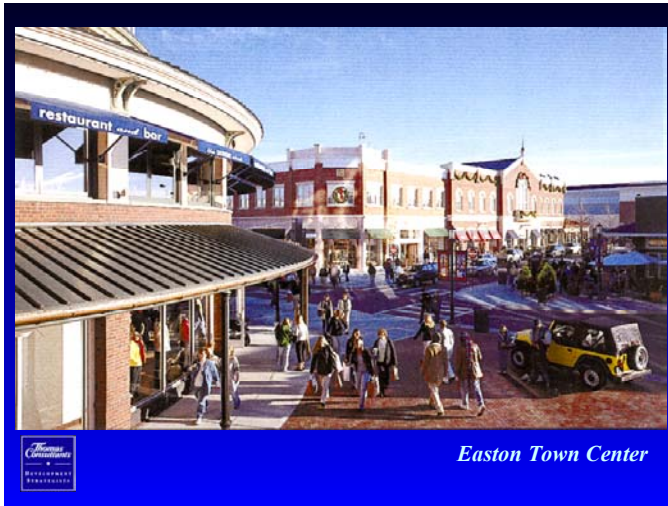
I am not here to talk about the so-called great places and their commensurate characteristics. These intangibles are well documented.

I want to talk about creating modern day social gathering, meeting places which because of their energy and vitality make them great places. After all, it is people that create places.

The common thread of these projects is that they are all retail based.

Consider flagship projects like:

**SLIDE: EASTON TOWN CENTER IN COLUMBUS**



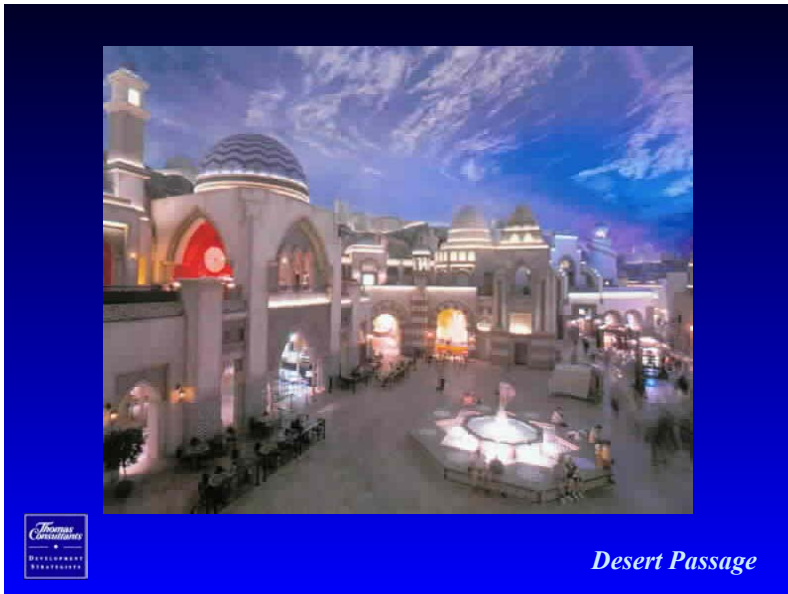
*Easton Town Center*

**SLIDE: CALABASAS IN LOS ANGELES**



*Commons at Calabasas*

**SLIDE: DESERT PASSAGE IN LAS VEGAS**



**SLIDE: CITY PLACE IN WEST PALM BEACH**



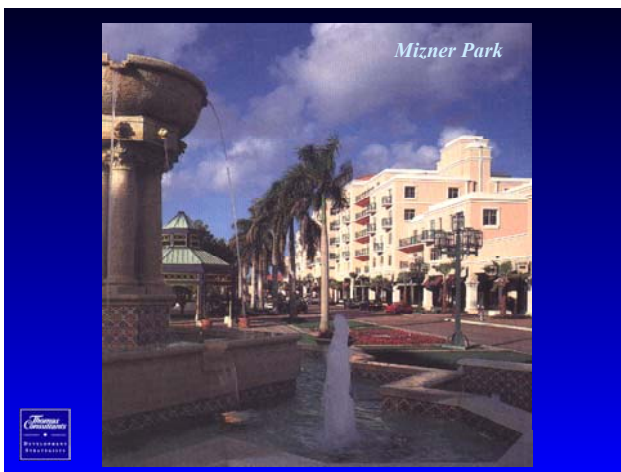
In every case they are town center projects.

What distinguishes these projects from others is their adherence to the bottom line but balanced with a strong dose of aesthetic value.

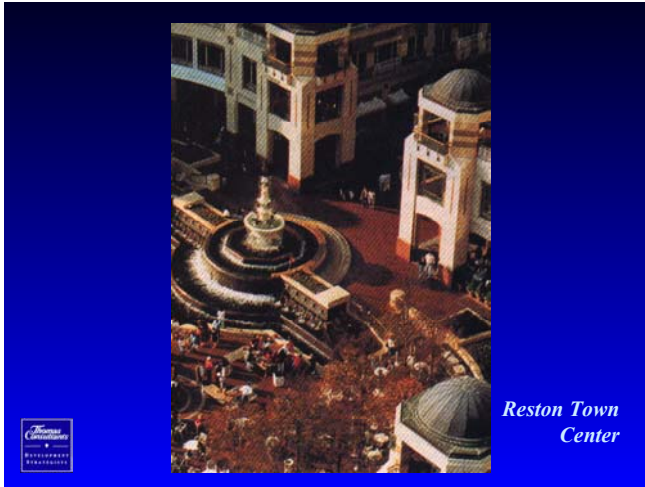
**SLIDE: RODEO TWO, BEVERLY HILLS**



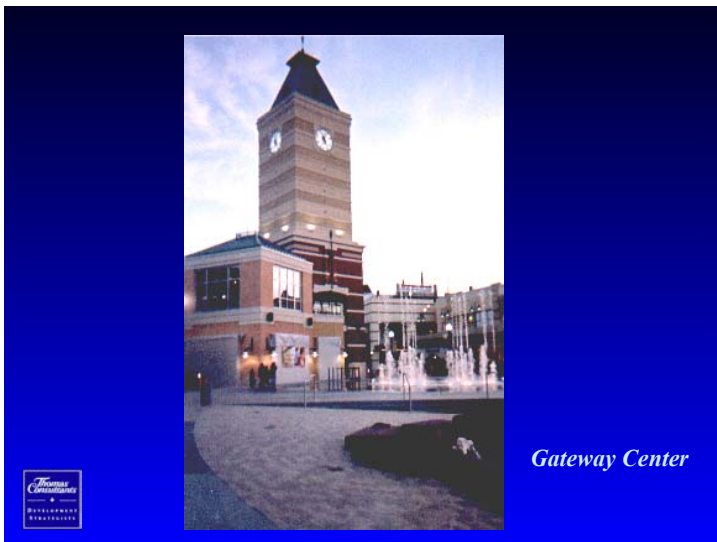
**SLIDE: MIZNER PARK, BOCCA RATON**



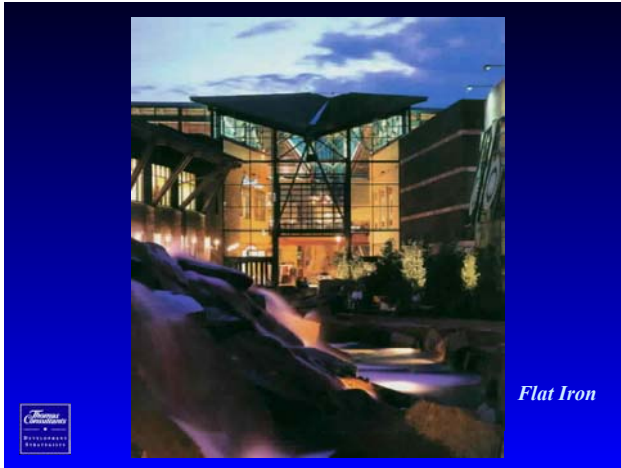
**SLIDE: RESTON TOWN CENTER**



**SLIDE: GATEWAY, SALT LAKE CITY**



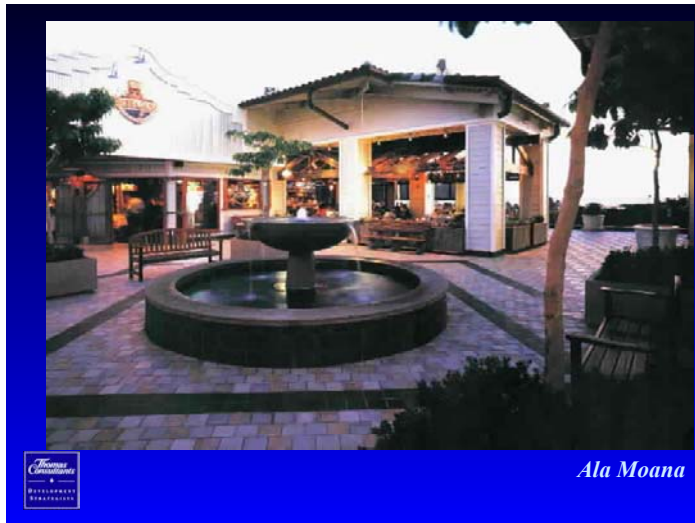
**SLIDE: FLAT IRON, DENVER**



**SLIDE: MALL OF GEORGIA, ATLANTA**



## SLIDE: ALA MOANA, HONOLULU



Are these projects not the new hearts of the communities they serve?

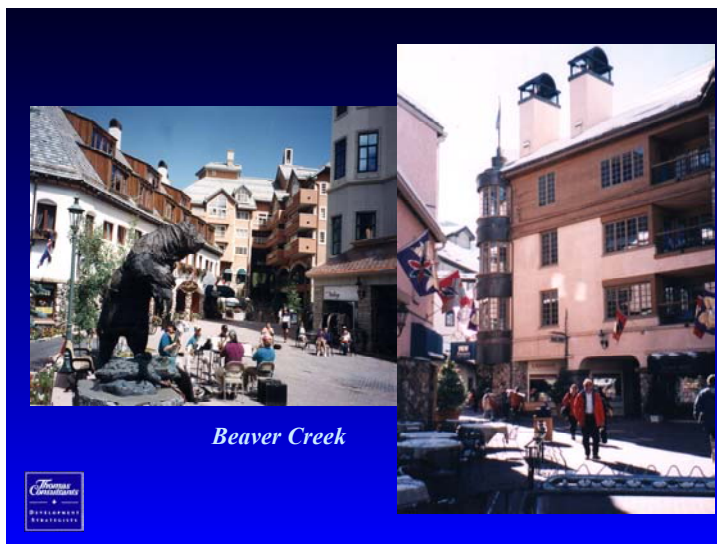
While flagships they may be, one fact remains that people are becoming increasingly bored with the task of shopping at home. When people go on vacation which incidentally is becoming more frequent with shorter holidays – what is the biggest pastime? – shopping!

This may sound anomalous but it is a reality that is benefiting resort development immeasurably.

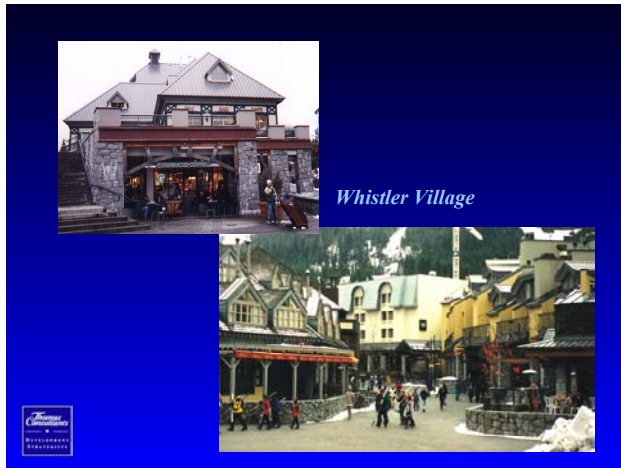
In fact, shopping has become a huge influencing factor where people choose to vacation. Just consider resort communities like Carmel, Santa Fe, Scottsdale and Aspen.

Today developers and retailers alike are recognizing the windfalls that can be achieved by creating a town center in new resort communities

### **SLIDE: BEAVER CREEK**



## SLIDE: WHISTLER



It is interesting to note that this same resort philosophy is being applied in more urban environments – more about this later.

These resort pioneers are recognizing you must have sustained year round activity. In so doing, they have clustered as many layers of activity into a single village environment –

- Hotels
- Condominiums
- Time-Share
- Fractional Ownership
- Spas
- Professional Offices
- Conference Centres

All designed around a main street retail town center. Such buildings create a sense of place. I certainly agree with Winston Churchill’s comment – “We shape our buildings thereafter they shape us”. The trick is to get the armature right from the onset.

## **WHY IS THE RESORT VILLAGE TREND EMERGING**

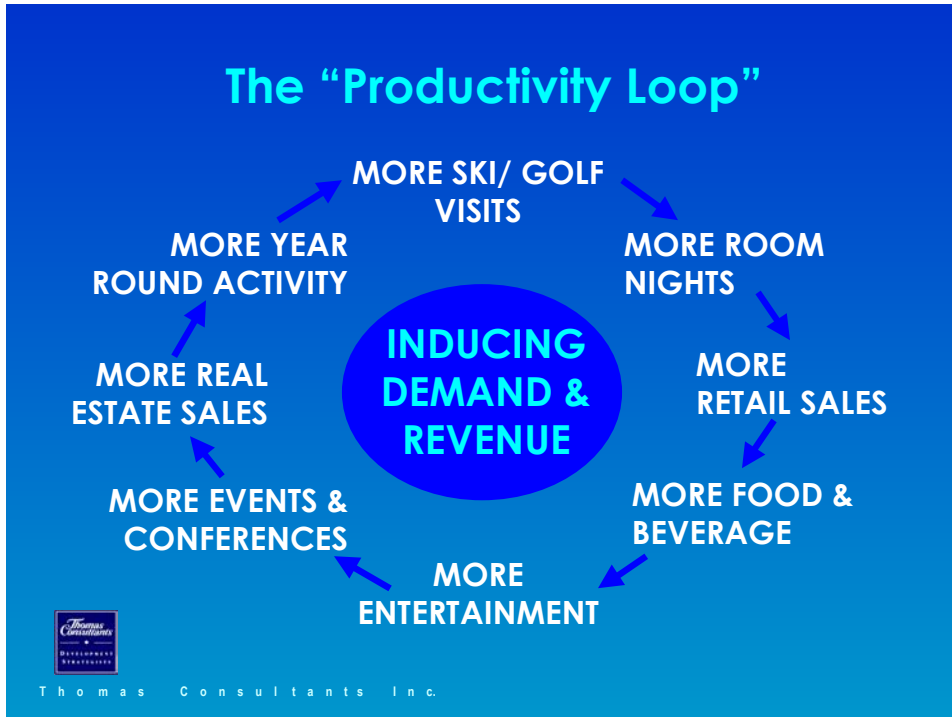
- Demographic shifts - growth of 50 to 64 yrs. This is the population segment most likely to purchase a second or retirement home.

- Changing lifestyle choices - “the desire to live in the mountains, near the ocean or by golf”.
- A good place to invest in real estate - that you and your family can enjoy.
- Fractional ownership has made investment in resorts to be accessible for a much broader market.

**THERE ARE POSITIVE REASONS FOR THINKING ABOUT BUILDING A RESORT VILLAGE, NAMELY:**

- Creating various revenue streams to offset risk & stimulate financial leverage.
- Boosting the price-point of residential real estate.
- Accelerating market absorption of residential real estate.
- Boosting accommodation occupancy rates and room rates.
- Strengthening year-round destination appeal.
- Strengthening participation in paid core recreation amenities (e.g. golf, skiing). We refer to this as the Productivity Loop.

**SLIDE: PRODUCTIVITY LOOP**



The success of these resorts is evidenced by the pricing structures achieved in resorts like Vail, Aspen and Whistler –

- Residential – up to \$1,500 per sq.ft.
- Hotel Rooms – up to \$1,000 per night
- Retail – sales up to \$700 per sq.ft.

The next **SLIDE** demonstrates how well retail in resorts performs as compared to more traditional retail venues.

## RETAIL PERFORMANCE

- Las Vegas Tourist Malls **\$1,200 psf/yr.**  
(Forum Shops, Via Bellaggio, Venetian Canal)
- Airport Terminal Retail **\$1,200 psf/yr.**  
(Vancouver, Pittsburgh, JFK, O'Hare)
- Established Resort Villages **\$500 to \$700 psf/yr.**  
(Vail, Beaver Creek, Whistler, Banff)
- Newer Outlet Centers - **\$650 to \$800 psf/yr.**
- Entertainment Centers - **\$400 to \$600 psf/yr.**  
(Pointe Orlando, CityWalk Hollywood)
- Regional Malls - **\$250 to \$350 psf/yr.**
- Strip/Power Centers - **\$200 to \$250 psf/yr.**



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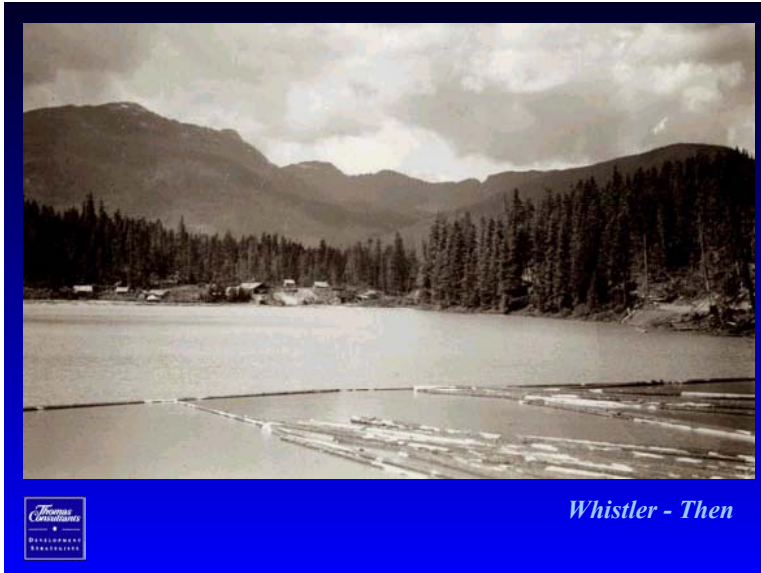
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Given such success particularly of “instant” alpine resorts like Vail, Beaver Creek and Whistler, many ask why is it so when they lack the history and main street charm of former mining towns like Aspen, Park City, Steamboat & Telluride?

Well, let me cite a personal experience – in the late 1970’s when the Whistler Town Center was being planned, ironically with Vail Associates, I was part of that process. The retail village was seen to be the centerpiece – yet no-one was living there, no hotels, just a great mountain. I said retail follows demand and for good retail it can’t be seasonal. So from day one, we brainstormed how demand could be induced and year round.

## SLIDE: WHISTLER THEN



In 20 years from a former gravel pit, the Whistler Town Center is regarded as the top resort in North America. It hosts 800,000 sq.ft. of retail, 10,000 condominiums, 2,000 seat convention center which is expanding, 5,000 hotel rooms including Fairmont, Westin, Sheraton and Four Seasons under construction –

## **SLIDE: NEW FOUR SEASONS HOTEL**



Most particularly, it generates as much business in summer as winter - something originally thought impossible.

So, how could an instant Town Center be developed?

A master plan was prepared and divided into 13 parcels which were then put out for public tender, 79 bids were received. Key to the process were that densities, building type and style and timing were agreed upon upfront meaning that developers had to

build within a certain time-frame. Within 2 years you had a village.

There is another massive \$6 billion project in Melbourne called Docklands which is being developed exactly that same way.

It is interesting to note the same philosophy that applies to an alpine resort is now being applied to warm weather resorts e.g. Intrawest have just opened the village Baytowne Wharf as an integral component of their San Destin Resort in Florida.

**SLIDE: BAYTOWNE WHARF OPENING (3 SLIDES)**

**1. LAYOUT**



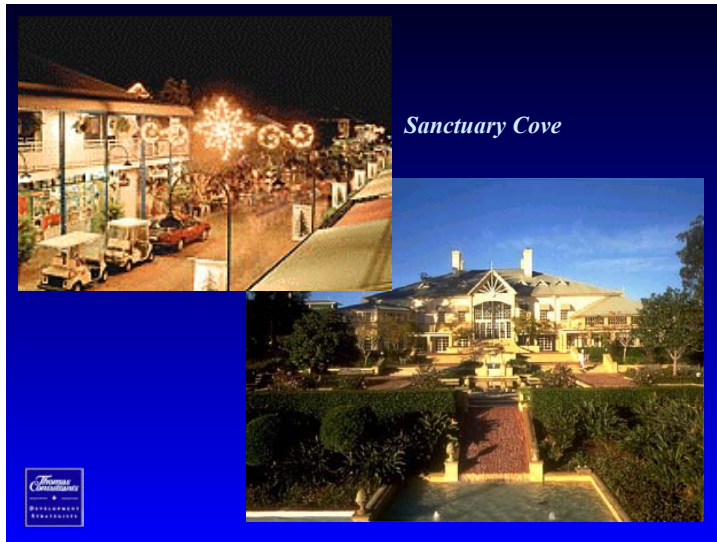
## 2. RENDERING



## 3. OPENING



## SLIDE: SANCTUARY COVE



I adopted the same philosophy in Australia with Sanctuary Cove and the 110,000 sq.ft., 35 store retail village where the Whistler Town Center team were retained to plan and develop this world renowned 1,200 acre resort.

If you think about it, the same principles that have emerged for resort town centers are proving to be exactly the same philosophy for the New Urbanist projects presently being developed. I maintain there are 7 basic principles;

- 1. The heart and soul of a community is the village – the gathering and meeting place, the community town square. When people are connected to a place emotionally and culturally, they are more apt to patronize and care for it.**
- 2. The backbone of the village is the retail core.**
- 3. Retail is the glue that binds together all the separate mixed-use elements – residential, hotel, office and conference into a seamless experience, thereby creating the place making dynamic.**
- 4. Retail demand has to be induced. People don't go to a resort or New Urbanism project with a shopping list of what they want to buy. It is creating a multiplicity of reasons for people to visit that rounds out the appeal and creates the sense of place.**

# SLIDE: INDUCING DEMAND (2 SLIDES)



- 5. Restaurants, bars and cafes anchor the village comprising 30 – 50 % of total retail floor space.**  
People stay longer in public spaces when food and drinks are available. Restaurants or seating areas with outdoor tables enliven the atmosphere and provide opportunities for people to dine alfresco.

## **TYPICAL RETAIL MIX**

- 35% Food & Beverage
- 30% Retail
- 15% Entertainment & Recreation
- 12% Convenience & Grocery
- 8% Services

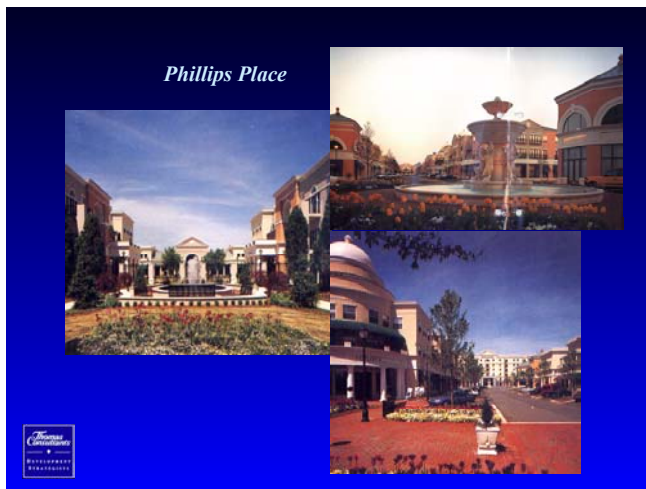
6. The activity cycle goes 24 hours a day - because of the vertical, mixed-use nature of the town center with retail at grade and residential/hotels above, it always is seen to be busy – again, people are attracted to busy, active places.
7. The village must provide something for every member of the family and to be democratically accessible. Crowd inducing attractions like rock climbing walls, trapeze centers, mini-golf, skateboard parks and in winter skating rinks, can be programmed.

With street entertainment – buskers, musicians, mimics...isn't this what Jim Rouse did 25 years ago with Fanevil Hall to induce traffic and get people to linger longer? What is old is new again.

What has led to the success of “instant” resort retail villages like Beaver Creek and Whistler?

I believe it is exactly the same as the New Urbanist communities today of a

- **SLIDE:** Phillips Place



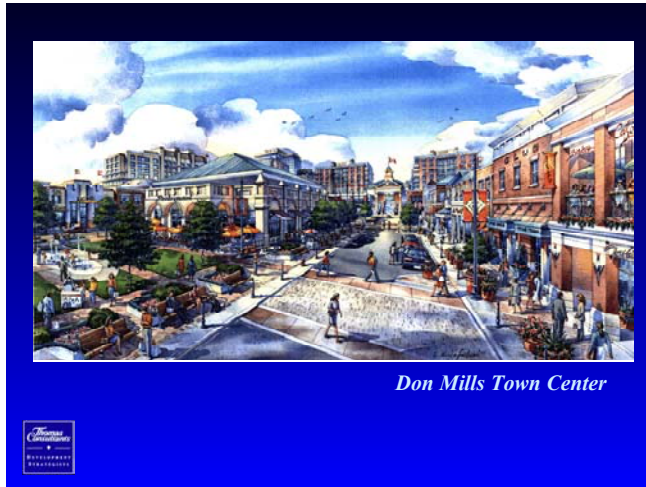
- **SLIDE:** Paseo Colorado



- **SLIDE:** Market Common at Clarendon

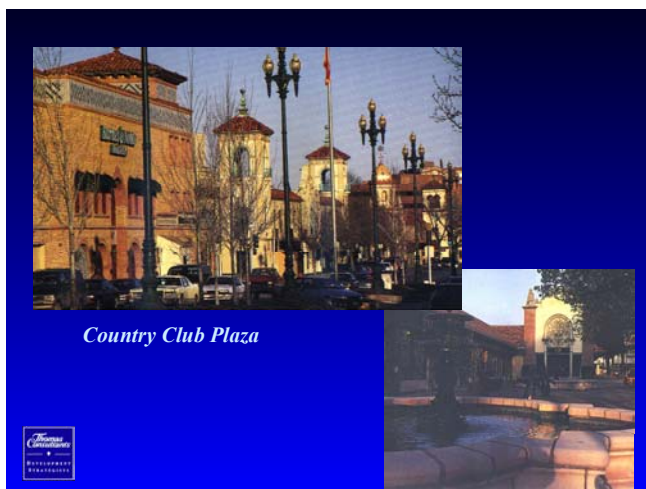


- **SLIDE:** Don Mills Town Center



And this is not the same philosophy of a Country Club Plaza 70 year ago.

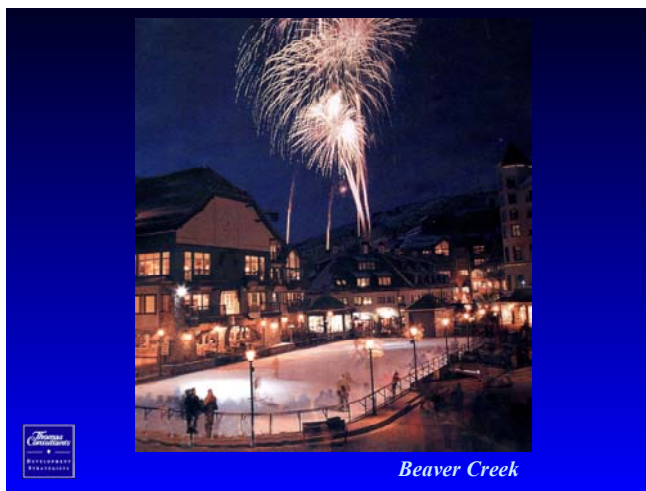
## **SLIDE: COUNTRY CLUB**



The answer in every instance is that these villages are all about creating a memorable leisure, entertainment and shopping experience.

Today's villages embrace a common theme and character, telling a story that celebrates a sense of place

### **SLIDE: BEAVER CREEK SKATING RINK**



## **SLIDE: CALABASAS LANDSCAPING**



And offer an area for congregation and socialization 24 hours a day in a diverse mix of vertical uses.

## **SLIDE: TREMBLANT RETAIL & RESIDENTIAL**



## SLIDE: CITY PLACE - RESIDENTIAL



The historic Main-street approach to retailing is designed at a pedestrian scale.

## SLIDE: VALENCIA TOWN CENTER



A minimum of 100,000 sq.ft. of retail is needed to create effectively the necessary critical mass of tenant selection and diversity. You can see this in the summary chart of the evolving resort villages where all are over 100,000 sq.ft. As an example, look how the resort village of Kierland Commons is unfolding in Scottsdale.

**THE NEW WAVE OF  
EVOLVING RESORT RETAIL VILLAGES**

<b>RESORT VILLAGE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>SIZE (Est. Sq. Ft.)</b>
<b>Northstar Village</b>	<b>Lake Tahoe</b>	<b>200,000</b>
<b>Squaw Valley USA</b>	<b>Lake Tahoe</b>	<b>120,000</b>
<b>Heavenly</b>	<b>Lake Tahoe</b>	<b>180,000</b>
<b>Snowmass</b>	<b>Aspen</b>	<b>180,000</b>
<b>Killington</b>	<b>Vermont</b>	<b>220,000</b>
<b>The Canyons</b>	<b>Park City</b>	<b>130,000</b>
<b>Sandestin</b>	<b>Florida</b>	<b>120,000</b>
<b>DC Ranch</b>	<b>Scottsdale</b>	<b>300,000</b>
<b>Kierland Commons</b>	<b>Scottsdale</b>	<b>400,000</b>
<b>Montelego Golf Resort</b>	<b>Las Vegas</b>	<b>110,000</b>

## SLIDE: KIERLAND COMMONS



In closing, may I ask a question. What country immediately springs to mind for its obsession with Place Making? No doubt you would say Italy.

Now even modern day Italy is embracing what I have been talking about today of creating modern, memorable, Place-Making projects.

In ancient and intoxicating Tuscany and specifically San Gimignano which has been always so inspiring,

their village has been re-invented into a Main-Street shopping experience



I rest my case.

The ocean, the mountains, or countryside may be the excuse, but the resort retail village – the town center – will be the attraction.