PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Old Merrillville consisted of a small population composed mainly of white steelworkers commuting to work, causing population and economic growth to take longer due to very little self-supportive business.

This is followed by a mass migration of housing out of the Gary vicinity, soon followed by a large business withdrawal, resulting in a broader economic base/larger population for Merrillville, but social-cultural progress falls behind (lack of community facilities, and no social-economic racial mixing in the housing market).

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase in public/social facilities, integrated within residential and commercial interests in a natural, non self-conscious way to:

1) Appease people's fear of change;

2) Naturally bring together alike interests of different social/economic groups;

3) Provide housing that does not rush racial integration for those not ready, but still exposes them to the people that are, showing the virtues as well as setbacks of sharing mixed backgrounds and lifestyles; thus establishing Merrillville as a model of social/economic development for the deteriorating border cities to follow.
Obviously, for the sake of time and practicality, I cannot generate design solutions over such a broad area. However, I can choose a project which by its very nature will successfully make a breakthrough, eventually leading up to a positive integration of the various facets which make up a city. For these reasons I will choose housing in coordination with the existing comprehensive plan as well as variations of my own.

The site I choose is relatively near the defunct proposed medium density 3000 dwelling/7500 person site on the southcentral portion of town. The site offers excellent location in relation to existing/proposed business, recreation, school, and other community facilities. Instead of the proposed 3000 dwellings, I propose fewer units (2000 units/5000 persons—average 2.5 persons per unit) to be spread out over 200 acres of land; 10 units per acre on the average.

Also included in the proposal will be an adjacent linear park which will have direct ties with the existing/proposed commercial office core, local business, perimeter single family residential, school, and related athletic facilities. Therefore the site will be planned to take into consideration existing proposals, current realities, and suggestions of my own.

Construction of the housing will take place in five year increments; in coordination with the development of the commercial core which will support a good many of these people, and will end with the projected 1995 Merrillville population of 100,000.

First five years: (1980-1985) 800 units@2000 persons
Second five years: (1985-1990) 800 units@2000 persons
Last five years: (1990-1995) 400 units@1000 persons
Surrounding Proximity Influences
SURROUNDING PROXIMITY INFLUENCES

philosophy- The concept behind the organization of the southwest corner of Merrillville is to provide a series of community facilities which act as a buffer area between the expanding commercial core and the residential interests. These community interests are comprised of:

1) civic/municipal activities
2) mental health/medical research facilities
3) senior/junior high schools
4) athletic facilities
5) public library
6) religious center
7) local business
8) private farm estates/agriculture
9) housing interests.

These interests are directly linked with a linear park system acting as a buffer/pedestrian thoroughfare which ties as well as separates when necessary these various interests to create a diverse, rich environment which will naturally bring people closer.
A) Transportation network

The southwest corner of Merrillville offers an excellent transportation network which consists basically of a perimeter major highway and arterial system which completely encircles the area. Off these major roads stem secondary arterials and collectors which efficiently link the various community, commercial, and housing interests of the area, never focusing too large an auto flow at any particular point along the network.

B) Community facilities

The community facilities are intermittently spread out within the buffer area in relation to proposed/existing interests and have direct ties with residential areas, major auto networks, and the linear park.

C) Commercial interests

The commercial interests are divided into three categories:

1) The commercial core which is located to the east of the buffer zone and is comprised of professional office and retail interests;

2) Local business, which is composed of corner drugstores, small shopping centers, and supermarkets which are scattered along the perimeter of the buffer zone to serve local residential interests;

3) Highway strip development, which is located on the northern boundary of the zone (U.S. 30) and is comprised of restaurants, auto dealers, and other random businesses which cater solely to the automobile as a means of arrival.
D) Residential interests

The vast majority of residential land makes up the west boundary of the buffer zone, with intermittent housing to the north and south. It is the south development from which my own housing development penetrates from; continuing the southerly to northerly construction sequence of homes.

E) Private farms/agriculture

There are several farm estates which currently exist in the area and will continue to do so, acting as buffer strips and visual breaks between different interests; as well as insuring that property values will not deteriorate. (exclusive pieces of land within an urban framework help insure stability to the surrounding area).

F) Linear park system

The linear park system is a centrally located spine which contains wooded natural areas, more developed parkland, two retention lakes and a pedestrian network to link residential interests with the many community interests the area offers. The outer perimeter urban network leads into the park at various points and provides a safe thoroughfare for both pedestrian and motorist.
Housing/Site Study
PHASE I

PHASE II

5 UNIT - 2 EFFICIENCY, 2 ONE BEDROOM, 1 TWO BEDROOM
1ST PHASE 6 BUILDINGS
2ND PHASE 6 BUILDINGS

15 UNIT - 10 TWO BEDROOM, 5 THREE BEDROOM
1ST PHASE 5 BUILDINGS
2ND PHASE 4 BUILDINGS

15 UNIT - 4 EFFICIENCY, 5 ONE BEDROOM, 6 TWO BEDROOM
1ST PHASE 7 BUILDINGS
2ND PHASE 6 BUILDINGS

RANDOM UNIT DENSITY
1ST PHASE 6 BUILDINGS
2ND PHASE 7 BUILDINGS

1ST PHASE 365 UNITS
2ND PHASE 380 UNITS
785 UNITS / .812 ACRES

SCHEMATIC
SITE PLAN - UNIT BUILDING KEY

15 30 60 150 300 375 750
HOUSING/SITE STUDY

Philosophy- The overall site arrangement is of different immediate living environments (clusters), arranged to accentuate each other, creating an overall impression of a diverse housing settlement in which everyone has equal availability to site amenities.

Housing type breakdown

1) 15 unit (10) 2 bedroom, (5) 3 bedroom
Immediate living environment responds to basically alike interest groups: established couples of moderate means.

2) 5 unit (2) efficiency, (2) 1 bedroom, (1) 2 bedroom
Immediate living atmosphere responds to a more open mixing of singles and married couples of moderate/affluent means in a less inhibiting social atmosphere (smaller groups are more easily able to live diverse lifestyles with less sacrifice to each other).

3) 15 unit (1) efficiency, (5) 1 bedroom, (6) 2 bedroom
Immediate living environment responds basically to alike interest groups: younger, less established singles and couples of moderate means.

4) Fluxuating density- Immediate living atmosphere responds to more affluent tastes and pocketbooks over a wider age and lifestyle bracket, yet containing areas and facilities to accomodate pairings of similar interest groups and separation of unsimilar when necessary. Overall ratio of this housing is high (450%) due to diverse amenities site and surrounding area offers (uncrowded density/rich land usage is currently better financially justified for the affluent).
15 unit (10) 2 bedroom, (5) 3 bedroom @ 9 locations

5 unit (2) efficiency, (2) 1 bedroom, (I) I bedroom
@ 144 locations

15 unit (h) efficiency, (5) 1 bedroom, (6) 2 bedroom
@ 13 locations

(90) 2 bedroom
(45) 3 bedroom
135 units

(28) efficiency
(28) 1 bedroom
(14) 2 bedroom
70 units

(52) efficiency
(65) 1 bedroom
(78) 2 bedroom
195 units

Fluctuating density

(90) 1 bedroom
(210) 2 bedroom
(65) 3 bedroom
365 units
80 studios/10% of total units of which 0% are deluxe.

183 1 bedroom/25% of total units of which 50% are deluxe.

392 2 bedroom/50% of total units of which 20% are deluxe.

30% intermediate.

110 3 bedroom/15% of total units of which 70% are deluxe.

Therefore: 765 units, situated on 81.2 acres of land, with an overall density of approximately 10 units/acre; 48% deluxe.
One person by himself:

1.0 persons per unit@ 160 units (160 persons@ 9% of population)

A) 80 efficiency
B) 40 1 bedroom units (standard)
C) 40 1 bedroom units (deluxe)

Married couple - no children and/or two persons rooming together:

2.0 persons per unit@ 283 units (566 persons@ 31% of population)

A) 53 1 bedroom units (standard)
B) 50 1 bedroom units (deluxe)
C) 90 2 bedroom units (standard)
D) 60 2 bedroom units (intermediate)
E) 30 2 bedroom units (deluxe)

Married couple - two children or more:

4.0 or more persons per unit@ 100 units (400 persons@ 23% of population)

A) 30 3 bedroom units (standard)
B) 70 3 bedroom units (deluxe)
Married couple - one child and/or three persons rooming together:

3-0 persons per unit @ 222 units (666 persons @ 37% of population)
A) 106 2 bedroom units (standard)
B) 66 2 bedroom units (intermediate)
C) 40 2 bedroom units (deluxe)
D) 10 3 bedroom units (standard)

Therefore: single persons

1 person on his own: 160 units/160 persons or 9% of population
2 singles living together: 180 units/360 persons or 20% of population
3 singles living together: 10 units/30 persons or 1.5% of population
Total singles: 350 units/550 persons or 30.5% of population

Couples starting out

2 persons married: 103 units/206 persons or 10% of population
3 persons; couple and one child: 212 units/636 persons or 33% of population
Total couples starting out: 295 units/802 persons or 43% of population

Established couples

4 persons or more; couple and 2-3 children: 100 units/400 persons or 26.5% of population
Through a careful study of the town of Merrillville, I was able to arrive at a project which at this period in Merrillville's growth is most beneficial to insuring positive future directions for the town. The specific housing project and accompanying adjacent planning suggestions will help insure self-sufficient economic stability for the town through a coordinated effort of business, community, and residential interests. This effort will help guarantee Merrillville's future as an urban center that works, and not a city composed of perimeter industry that people merely commute to and then depart at 5:00, as many of the bordering cities are fastly becoming.

As much as I would like to develop the entire 1st phase/765 units and its various clusters completely, time and practicality are against me. For these reasons at this point I have chosen to again narrow the scope of the project down to the detailed development of the 15 unit cluster (4 efficiency, 5 one bedroom units, 6 two bedroom units). Its size is still large enough where a wide range of intricate social phenomena take place, and yet still retains a personal scale to insure private/individual criteria.
Through a careful study of the town of Merrillville, I was able to arrive at a project which at this period in Merrillville's growth is most beneficial to insuring positive future directions for the town. The specific housing project and accompanying adjacent planning suggestions will help insure self-sufficient economic stability for the town through a coordinated effort of business, community, and residential interests. This effort will help guarantee Merrillville's future as an urban center that works, and not a city composed of perimeter industry that people merely commute to and then depart at 5:00, as many of the bordering cities are fastly becoming.

As much as I would like to develop the entire 1st phase/765 units and its various clusters completely, time and practicality are against me. For these reasons at this point I have chosen to again narrow the scope of the project down to the detailed development of the 15 unit cluster (1 efficiency, 5 one bedroom units, 6 two bedroom units). Its size is still large enough where a wide range of intricate social phenomena take place, and yet still retains a personal scale to insure private/individual criteria.
15 unit Cluster
Unit cluster - concept:

A group of apartments which uses its size and organization to provide a sense of belonging/equal amenities on the group scale, yet still intimate enough to give the sense of individuality/privacy on the individual unit level.
Basically the apartment cluster is zoned into two major areas:

1) Private zone - faces the street side and enforces the idea of privacy/security from outsiders; consists of private spatially contained outdoor gathering areas, separate visitor/occupant parking areas with distinct visitor/occupant access paths to apartments.

Overall impression is one of interest/privacy/complexity through the integration of clearly defined parking/circulation for occupants and visitors, intimate gathering areas, overall massing/scale changes of apartments, and landscaping; the combination creating a unique living environment.

2) Social zone - located on the blind side from the street and is spatially the opposite of private side. All apartments open up equally through a series of unit terraces and offers more open vistas, extensive landscaping, and a centrally located gathering area. Its character and openness offers a sense of belonging for the residents and encourages group contact

Entry into the apartments occurs on this side of the cluster with clearly defined stairwells which are shared by pairs of apartments. Stairwells lead into a shared open terrace from which access into private unit terraces and then actual units is possible. Overall organization enhances adjacent neighbor contact, overall cluster group participation, and privacy within the unit itself.
Unit Development
Concept

Apartment is divided into two zones: 1) Public; containing flexible living/dining with kitchen and bath off to side but visibly/spatially noticable with through the space circulation.

2) Private zone; containing bedrooms and private bath with a centrally located circulation corridor spatially/visibly noticable from the public side of home.
Public zone decisions:

Basically a large room in character and scale. Emphasis on continuation of ceiling/outer wall flow into space for nice sense of enclosure with interesting breaks (window depths, entry, skylighting, etc.) with flow ending/blending into an articulated central corridor leading to private zone.

Terrace serves as interphase between inside/outside of apartment, and through careful usage of fenestration will serve to increase appearance of size of living/dining and will offer interesting views. Entry into apartment off terrace will be articulated yet blend into flow space will have.

Private zone decisions:

Bedrooms and baths separated from public zone with separate accesses off of central corridor, which is dropped in level from public zone. Special attention will be given to corridor as interphase between zones.

Overall comment: The various individual elements/materials/spaces will create a logical/aesthetic flow which will be pleasing through its very nature.