New Baden Design Charette

A Report on the Activities, Discussions and Recommendations Developed through the Design Charette process
The Village of New Baden Illinois
March 27, 2010

Written By: Anne Marie Kinerk, AIA LEED AP

Anne Marie Kinerk & Associates, LLC
annemarie@amkinerk-architect.com

The New Baden Design Charette was held through the support of a “JumpStart the Conversation” grant provided by Aging in Place, an initiative of Partners for Livable Communities and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, along with support from the MetLife Foundation

Note: Comments in red are comments of the report author.
Introduction

The Village of New Baden, Illinois is located just east of Interstate 64 at Exit 27 on Highway 161. It is a viable community with just over 3,000 residents. The Village has a mayor and a Board of Trustees, a Village Administrator and a Village Clerk and many life-long residents who are committed to keeping their community livable by and affordable to, senior residents.

The community is fairly compact, covering approximately 1,000 acres, with approximately 40% of the land area vacant or undeveloped. It straddles the Clinton/St Clair County line. Most of the older development is located in Clinton County with more recent expansion closer to the Interstate 64 interchange. The community’s only grocery store recently relocated closer to the Interstate, about ½ mile from the center of town.

In 2005 the Village adopted a Comprehensive Plan, which detailed community goals with respect to quality of life, housing, public services, transportation, public facilities and economic development, based upon input from the Planning Task Force. Several Comprehensive Plan recommendations addressed issues surrounding the ability of long term residents to stay in the community as their needs changed. In 2008, the community addressed these concerns in more detail utilizing the Building Livable Communities Community Assessment Tool with the support of Joy Paeth and the Area Agency on Aging of Southwestern Illinois and followed up with a Long Term Strategic Plan report developed by the Senior Task Force.

Key issues identified through the assessment and strategic plan are:

- There is not enough affordable and usable housing for seniors in the community.
  - Available rental housing is not accessible to people with mobility limitations.
  - Existing for-sale housing too large for many senior households.
  - The locations available for the development of senior housing are farther away from the services seniors need on a daily basis.
  - There are limited housing options for seniors who need some help with daily tasks.

- Senior services are spread out or unavailable.
  - Information about senior services not available in one easy to access location.
  - The available services to seniors are in various locations, not easily accessed by seniors in the community.

- Existing New Baden services and businesses are difficult for seniors to use.
  - Many businesses are not accessible to people with mobility limitations.
  - Essential daily service and activity locations are spread out and difficult for people to get to without driving.
  - Pedestrian routes through the Village are not safe for people with mobility and visual limitations.

- State Route 161, which is the main thoroughfare through the Village is busy, difficult to cross and difficult to travel along.
The Village is interested in providing expanding opportunities for seniors and life-long residents to stay in their community and to be provided with additional resources for aging in place comfortably and with as much independence as possible. With this goal in mind, the Area Agency on Aging of Southwestern Illinois, Joy Paeth, Executive Director, applied for a JumpStart the Conversation grant from the Aging in Place Initiative, which is an initiative of Partners for Livable Communities and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging with funding from the MetLife Foundation. The grant request was to conduct a Community Design Charette to investigate design solutions to address the key issues identified as affecting the ability of long term residents to stay in the New Baden community as their needs changed.

A community design charette is one where volunteer designers work with volunteers from the community to address one or more identified problems with design solutions or ideas. Charettes (pronounced shar - ets) serve as a way for a group of people to quickly generate visual solutions to problems identified by the community that, when successful, provide the participants with ideas on paper that can be used to generate interest and enthusiasm for projects in the community. In addition, the charette report can be used by the community to pursue funding opportunities as it provides a good visual concept to illustrate the funding request.

The New Baden Community Design Charette was held on Saturday, March 27, 2010. Community members, especially those who represented groups that work with seniors in housing, community services and daily living activities, came together with volunteer designers, developers and service providers to brainstorm and generate design ideas to address three main problems identified by the organizing committee.

- Generate ideas for infill housing solutions that can accommodate seniors within the existing neighborhoods close to current community activities.

- Modify the existing Civic Center site and building to incorporate senior-centered activities.

- Make recommendations for making transportation along and across Hanover Street (Highway 161) more easily managed (crossings, walking, parking, rest areas) by seniors.
Twenty-five participants joined in to work on the three problems.

- Fr Gene Neff, Pastor of St George Church in New Baden
- Gordon Hoechler, member of the organizing committee/community resident
- Nancy Rodney, Rosemann and Associates, P.C.
- Samatha Smugala, community resident
- Rob Wagstaff, Rosemann and Associates, P.C.
- Florence Herenstein, community resident
- Renee Meinhardt, Parks and Recreation Department, Village of New Baden
- Christy Picard, Village Board of Trustees/community resident
- Jim Sheridan, community resident
- Annelies Sheridan, community resident
- Derek Lauer, Derek Lauer Architects
- Aaron Burnett, Regional Housing and Community Development Alliance
- David Dodson, Regional Housing and Community Development Alliance
- Teri Crane, Village Clerk, Village of New Baden
- Rosie Altman, member of the organizing committee/community resident
- Jackie Peters, community resident
- Joanne Brave, community resident
- Cheryl Smith, community resident
- Rachel Lusse, community resident
- Brian Beaird, BD Beaird Architects
- Anne Marie Kinerk, Anne Marie Kinerk & Associates
- Jacqueline Winkler, Jaque Interior Decors, Inc.
- Colleen Starkloff, Starkloff Disabilities Institute
- Damon Femmer, Webster Design, Inc.
- Joy Paeth, Area Agency on Aging of Southwestern Illinois

After a brief introduction to the charette process and schedule, the participants introduced themselves and noted their interests and expertise relating to the problems being addressed. Participants split into three design teams to work together on brainstorming and designing solutions to the problems.
Problem 1 – Housing

Introduction
The bulk of the residential development is north and south of Highway 161 extending just ½ mile north and ¼ mile south from the commercial strip. The available land within the village limits is in the form of smaller infill parcels. This land, although in smaller parcels, offers many advantages to the senior housing market and meets the recommendations of the Village Comprehensive Plan regarding the encouragement of single family development and homeownership goals:

- Close to the commercial and activity centers of the village; the park on the east end, the grocery store on the west end and most other civic and commercial activities spread along the highway between these two anchors.
- Part of a familiar environment
- Located in an already developed area with sidewalks, curb cuts and other aids to walkers

Project
Develop a “prototypical” infill house design to address the needs of seniors that wish to stay vital members of the New Baden Community. There are many prototypes for new housing that can be considered for accommodating the needs of older residents of the community that can be developed on smaller parcels:

- Small group co-housing meeting the needs of several individuals living alone, sharing family spaces, while providing privacy to people used to living independently.

- Small group multi-family housing (2-5 dwelling units/apartments) that share entrances, parking and security.

- Family homes with attached rental units can provide income for the family purchasing a new home, while providing affordable rent and security to older residents who still want to live on their own.

- Add-ons (attached or detached) or remodeling to existing homes to provide something similar to the previous item

There are a variety of financing aids for these kinds of projects including grants and tax credits available, especially for making this housing more accessible and usable by older residents or reducing energy usage and costs.
Solution

The housing design team discussed what choices people currently have when they age and can no longer manage easily the day-to-day tasks in their own homes. The three options that the team identified included remodeling an existing home to make it more accommodating to the needs of aging residents; finding a home that has been built utilizing “Universal Design” features; or relocating into an assisted-care apartment. The team looked at the major elements necessary to making any of these options a success.

Getting Started Ideas

- Develop a brochure to educate the community about:
  - Aging in Place
  - New Housing Options
  - Assisted Care Options

- In foregoing options, ideas, resources
  - What needs to be done
  - How to get it done
  - Where to get funding

- Encourage commercial developers to participate

- Sell ad space to local contractors and suppliers to pay for printing and mailing

- Train a core staff to answer questions and make site visits to help people decide what step(s) to take

- Train contractors to do the work properly
  (and how to communicate with this client base)

- Get volunteers to install some of the items (in the existing homes)

- Find funding
  - Public – grants
  - Private – donations

- Fundraising efforts – volunteers
The team worked on providing details for the individual options.

**Option 1**

Modify an existing home to allow residents to stay in their home longer by making changes to produce a more useable home for a resident with mobility or other physical challenges, such as vision or hearing problems. The team suggested developing a checklist that could be used to inspect an existing home and choose modifications which would make the homeowner more successful in managing daily tasks independently.
Option 2

The team developed a prototypical universally* designed house that could be built on an existing lot in an established neighborhood close to services, commercial development and family members. The team’s prototype would have the following characteristics:

- Can be adapted to any site
- A basic plan with options that can be added to address individual needs
- Must have an accessible (no step) entry
- Should be a low-maintenance home
- Should be adaptable for independent living or as an assisted living home (space for a caregiver)

*Universally designed or universal design is a concept that supports the design of buildings, spaces and products to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for major modifications.
The team developed a schematic or preliminary floor plan to show the important elements of the house and the relationship of the spaces to each other. Starting with a simple, one-story, two-bedroom house with a central hallway and an attached garage, the team identified upgrades that could be added to the house to suit individual needs.

- A basement *(a storm shelter could also be incorporated into the interior bathroom)*
- A third bedroom or caregiver's suite over the garage
- Upgrade to “green” construction, using materials and techniques that reduce energy consumption *(care should be taken to use green techniques that do not require much, if any, homeowner maintenance. Try using passive techniques and non-motorized elements)*
The housing team spent some time identifying infill/vacant lots where a universal style home could be built within the existing neighborhoods.

New Baden Potential Infill Lots

The team discussed the need to provide options for seniors wishing to stay in the community, but who need support for daily living tasks. The consensus was for a small to midsized facility located close to existing community and health services. Several of the team members opted to work separately on the issue of location for an assisted living facility and their recommendations can be found in the Problem 3 portion of the report.
Problem 2 – Community Spaces

Introduction
The Village of New Baden has several public and quasi public spaces that are currently underutilized. Sharing these spaces with other groups and activities can help to reduce operating and maintenance costs. The Village Library is located just 0.16 mile north of the main street, West Hanover, and on the same block as the Village Civic Center. The library is 5,000 square feet on one level and the Civic Center is approximately 10,000 square feet on one level. The site is flat and has access on 3 sides. According to the Village Comprehensive Plan, the community wishes to develop a “Campus Plan” for the library/Civic Center block.

Project
Redevelop these facilities in their existing location to increase their usability with “layered activities” along with site development that incorporates better access to the buildings, additional outdoor activities and provides an attractive community hub. The program for the 2 existing buildings and the site should incorporate current civic uses and include additional community and senior uses, and should consider the compatibility of the activities and how scheduling might be utilized to maximize the buildings’ usefulness.

Existing Civic Center Site
Solution

The community space team started out by reviewing the current uses contained in the Civic Center and the Village Library and then brainstorming available and desired services for seniors in the community along with advantages associated with the existing Civic Center/library site and buildings. The community’s desire to include a new Village Hall on the same site was also discussed.

Current Uses of Civic Center/library Site

- Facility rental for private events
- Meetings and classes (library meeting room and civic center cafeteria)
- Lifelong learning (library has classroom space and computer/internet station)
- Children and adult physical activities (civic center gym)

Desired Services for Seniors

- Congregate meals
- Exercise programs
- Information services
- Socialization
- Classes
- Volunteer activities
- Meetings
- Site/Building Advantages
- Central location
- Visual connection to Hanover Street
- Large lot area
- No steps at entry
- Large open spaces
- Accessible restrooms

Reasons for incorporating Village Hall into new plan for site

- Combining facilities would assist in efficient management of buildings
- Current Village Hall has limited accessibility
- Current Village Hall has limited parking

Would provide a strong civic focus for the community
The team developed a schematic or preliminary plan to show how the site might be developed to include off-street parking, a new Village Hall wing, community gardens space, and other outdoor spaces that could be used for a variety of activities, based on their programmatic conclusions about shared used, intergenerational activities and presence in the community being an important tool in providing information to all Village residents. The proposed plan leaves most of the existing Civic Center and library spaces intact and uses the Village Hall addition and the re-arrangement of the outdoor spaces to help organize and maximize the community activities that might take place here.
The community spaces team's programmatic conclusions:

Conclusions

1. Bring site back into urban community
   - connect e all sides
   - activate all sides

2. Provide “civic focus e 1st Birch - cloister as edge
clock tower” of garden
3. Provide outdoor community garden
   - connect to maple

4. Provide outdoor learning - classroom

5. Parking convenient, easy to find & not - the faules
   - make journey between parking & bldg worthwhile
   - parking along street possible because streets slow
   - provide accessible access & drop off

6. New bldg along street - keep urban facade
   - new city hall 2500 sf + or senior center
   - outdoor dining court b/wn cafeteria and new building

7. Cloister connection, new facade & focus
e garden
The team sketched the proposed community center to show the relationship of the various components. They placed a tower where First Street intersects with Birch, creating a focal point or landmark that can be seen from many areas of town and help people find the Village’s new center. The covered walkway from the tower and parking area leads to the new (accessible) Village Hall while allowing a view through the walkway (called a cloister) into a garden area (which could become community gardens, outdoor performance space and/or a small botanical garden).

Between the new Village Hall and the cafeteria portion of the Civic Center, the team suggested an outdoor dining area that can be reached from both the cafeteria and the Village Hall. Another outdoor area is located between the garden and the Library which could be used as an outdoor meeting or classroom space.
Problem 3 – Transportation

Introduction
The Village of New Baden is organized along State Route 161 (Hanover), with the main portions of current development located approximately one mile east of the I-64 interchange and extending another mile east to Route 160. Most of the businesses are located on Hanover with parking either behind or adjacent to each business. The Village recently added parallel parking on Hanover. The speed limit is reduced inside the Village limits, but there is no signal along the highway within the Village limits except at the intersection of State Route 161 and Route 160 at the east end of town.

Some of the challenges to accessing the Village services and amenities, and taking care of shopping needs for seniors include:

- Crossing Hanover (State Route 161)
- Attempting to parallel park on Hanover
- Walking along Hanover

Project
Develop a program for addressing the transportation needs of senior residents of the Village that will enhance transportation routes and methods from the major population areas, north and south of Hanover to the services and amenities mostly used by seniors:

- The grocery store
- Village Hall
- The library and civic center
- Restaurants and other services along Hanover
- Clinton Manor Living Center
- The Village Park
- The VFW

These methods may include enhancements for walking more safely and with places to rest along the way, some kind of public or private transportation system that can be accessed by seniors, signage and signaling that can make driving through town and parking at services and amenities easier and safer.
Solution

The transportation team incorporated a portion of the housing team, whose interests were in the development of senior housing that would include services to assist with daily living tasks (an assisted-living center). The team first looked at the issues of concern to seniors needing assistance. Father Gene Neff who works with community seniors noted the following:

- Money (living on a fixed income)
- Downsizing from owning a home
- Maintaining connections with friends and family
- Personal security
- Familiarity with surroundings
- Lifelong learning

Assisted Living Prototypes

The team looked at a couple of prototypes for assisted living development that would address these issues, including one with individual cottages surrounding common indoor and outdoor spaces and one with cottage-like attributes with common living and dining spaces, a communal kitchen and shared outdoor spaces.
The team then brainstormed about ideal locations for an assisted facility, identifying locations close to other services for seniors and other general community services. A vacant site close to Clinton Manor Living Center was identified as a priority location. The site is large, currently owned by the Village and is located on East Illinois Street, just a block south of Hanover. Starting with the idea of expanding group style senior living in this area of town, the conversation broadened into a discussion about the necessary connections between services vital to seniors in the community and senior housing locations.
The transportation team suggested the following:

- Re-pave and add sidewalks to Illinois Street extending from the Village Park to at least the planned First Street extension (Hanover to Illinois St.).

- Locate a “vest pocket” park along Illinois Street on Village-owned land between 4th and 5th Streets to be used for resting, congregating and enjoying the landscape. *Access should be provided through the park to the proposed senior housing or other development to the south.*

- Expand current plans for the extension of First Street to improve the sidewalks along First Street two more blocks up to East Birch Street.

- Consider improving sidewalks and pedestrian travel along Birch Street from St George Church west at least to the Civic Center site.

- Create a major crossing at First and Hanover that allows pedestrians to cross Hanover safely (follow Public Rights-of-Way Draft Guidelines/Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines). This would also give the Village an opportunity for landscape improvements to calm traffic and provide more legible signage to direct people on Hanover to destinations in the Village. *This would need to be coordinated with Illinois Department of Transportation because State Route 161 is under their jurisdiction.*

**Overall Transportation Plan**

![Map of the area with the suggested transportation improvements highlighted.](image-url)
Transportation Improvement Recommendations

- Clinton Manor (Southern Illinois Living Centers, Inc. is interested in developing a cottage style assisted living center for seniors. An ideal location would be close to the existing Clinton Manor Living Center on Illinois. The Village owns property south of Illinois between 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} Streets. \textit{There are many opportunities for the Village and Clinton Manor to collaborate on the transfer of property to Clinton Manor for development of an assisted living center and a vest pocket park; the Village could provide Clinton Manor a break on the land costs in exchange for having Clinton Manor (or other developer) construct the park as part of the assisted living facility, a long term lease of the Village property could be provided to a developer, or another form of land transfer that would provide benefits to both entities.}

- If the Village Hall is relocated, the current Village Hall building may provide opportunities for the expansion of Good Old Days restaurant giving them an opportunity to increase the accessibility of the restaurant. The Village could partner with the restaurant, providing them with right-of-way improvements (and maybe some curbside accessible parking) in exchange for a commitment to make the interior of the restaurant accessible.

- Other partnerships could encourage the commercial developments on the west edge of the Village to provide more accommodation to residents. These partnerships should include the enhancement of pedestrian routes to the west commercial zone and public space improvements such as a garden or waiting shelter in the commercial area for people waiting for transportation to and from the shops. \textit{This might be incorporated into Village entrance signage just off of Interstate 64.}
The team recommended the Village look for technical assistance and public/private partnerships to help them develop and implement their goals.

- Illinois department of Transportation (IDOT) for a grant to improve the intersection of First Street and Hanover (State Route 161).

- Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), the State’s housing finance agency, who can provide funding for the development of affordable housing.

- Regional Housing and Community Development Alliance (RHCDA), a non-profit technical assistance organization that promotes sustainable communities.

- The formation of a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) within the community would allow the community through this non-profit organization to access set-aside funding from the State Housing Finance Agency and also to partner with for-profit developers in the development of senior housing for the community, while providing the community more control over the housing development decision-making.
Charette Conclusions

After the Charette teams presented their ideas and recommendations several conclusions were drawn:

❖ The community should look at all proposals for Village improvements for ways to ensure the improvements also enhance the lives of its senior population.

❖ Every idea that allows seniors to age in place more comfortably will also enhance the lives of all the Village residents, regardless of their ages; creating a safer, more accessible, and more commercially successful community.

❖ Working toward the common goal of enhancing Village life will offer opportunities for forging new cooperative partnerships between business, civic and government entities. These partnerships can help reduce development costs, provide funding prospects and encourage resident participation in efforts to enhance the Village quality of life for all its residents.

❖ In order to provide better opportunities for developments that encourage and assist aging in place, the Village should review its ordinances, looking for ways to reduce regulatory barriers and encourage innovative development that enhances the quality of life for its seniors, and all Village residents.