

# Redevelopment from page 1F

that much of Royal Oak was laid out with people in mind. Housing is dense; it is inviting rather than imposing from the street, and sidewalks encourage walking.

"Basically, cute homes in a nice neighborhood," he said. "We wanted to develop a project with a little more of an urban character."

Townhomes like one might find in Philadelphia or Boston were chosen because they maintain an urban feel and density-levels.

Density, Barton said, is not always bad. "High density does not necessarily mean a three-story walk-up apartment."

Garages were moved to the back and townhomes were pushed toward the street to eliminate the impression of "a parking deck that you often get in high density projects."

An people walk by and around the finished development, it should seem as though they are walking through part of the project, not isolated from it. "It should be nice from street level."

At the same time, with proper placement of buildings, use of landscape, and project elevations, Main Street Square achieves a strong sense of public and private space.

An interior courtyard for townhome owners is separated from the outside, and green spaces at the fronts of the townhomes are slightly elevated above the sidewalk level. "There will be an obvious separation — if someone is where they aren't supposed to be you won't have any problem identifying it."

Project manager Terry Stamper said Main Street Square is to be the first part of the much-heralded Royal



Bernard Glibberman

Oak multi-use redevelopment northeast of the I-696 and Woodward Avenue interchange.

The overall project resulted from construction of I-696. During the 1980s, Royal Oak seized the chance and began to purchase and, through condemnation, assemble small parcels into a single large tract.

"That was the hard part," he said. If redevelopment is to succeed, land assembly will have to be done by municipalities who then sell the property to developers.

After years of struggling to amass the necessary land and counter community objections, the economy soured and the project has been on hold.

Now that the economy is picking up again, the project is beginning to pick up as well.

Burton Katzman Development Co. of Birmingham is the lead developer for the entire redevelopment project

that will eventually incorporate hotel, office, commercial and residential space.

Burton Katzman executive vice president Laurence Goss said the area has always been planned for residential use — it just needed the right developer.

"This is obviously an integral ingredient in the overall development," he said. "We hope this (Main Street Square) will be a catalyst for the rest of the project."

"We're very excited about this — we think it's a home run," Goss added.

Main Street Square is going to act as a buffer for the project, separating the existing neighborhoods from the office, hotel components to the south.

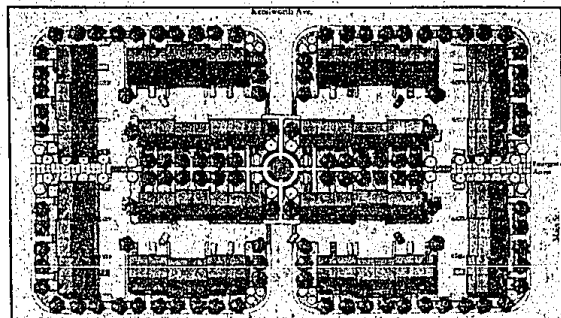
"That's good, sound planning." The project would not have been possible without the patience and foresight of Royal Oak, Goss added. By assembling the property, the city was making an investment in its future.

If further redevelopment is to succeed, other communities will have to take Royal Oak's lead, he said.

Stamper of Crosswinds Communities said judging by the number of phone calls received from interested buyers, it's possible the entire project could be sold out within a year.

Stamper said a sales office will be open in March, construction should begin in April and the first townhomes could be ready as soon late July.

"This is the perfect project for this area," he said. Royal Oak is centrally located for young professionals who work north in Birmingham, west in Novi, or east in St. Clair Shores.



Site plan: A rendering of the Main Street Square Condominium site plan developed by Crosswinds Communities shows the location between Main and Washington in Royal Oak. The townhomes surround the courtyard with gazebo, and terrace homes rim the site.

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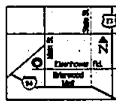
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