

# **Shame on the Sustainability Sham** **Density Is What's Needed**



**Friday March 6, 2009**  
**Dwight H. Merriam, FAICP**

# Overview

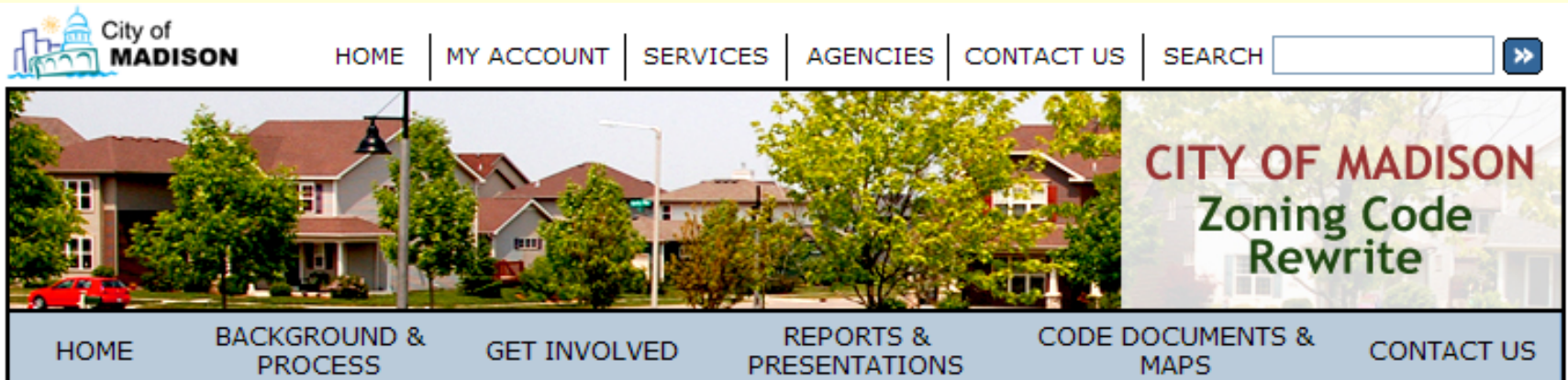
1. An example of good work.



2. A development that looks so good, and yet is less than sustainable.



# Madison Zoning Code Rewrite



## Reports and Presentations

### Project Input

[Zoning Code Sustainability Ideas](#) (PDF 52 KB)

### Project Bulletins

[July 2008](#) (PDF 2,279KB)

### Presentations

[Presentation](#) (PDF 3,844 KB)

[Annotated Outline Presentation for the Community](#) (PDF 5,890 KB)

[Community Meeting Summary Results](#) (PDF 152 KB)

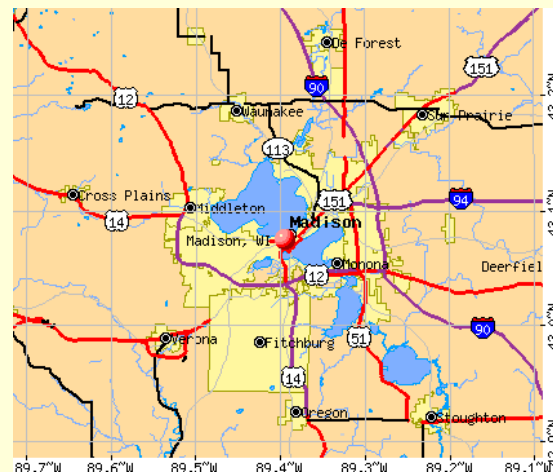
[Issue Identification and Preliminary Findings](#) (PDF 116 KB)

[Meetings, Issues and Initial Findings Presentation](#) (PDF 814 KB)



## Zoning Code Sustainability Ideas

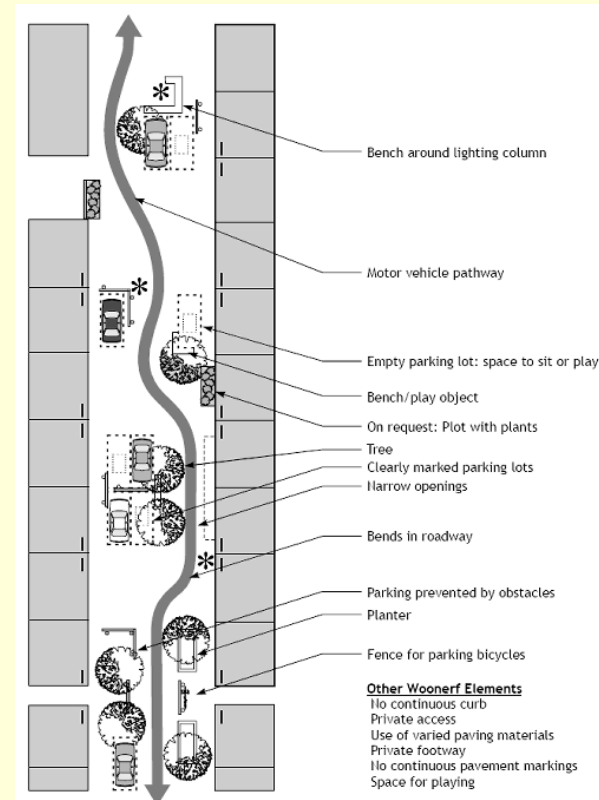
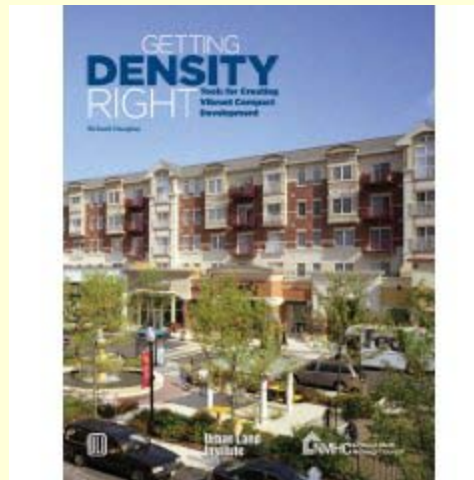
In October 2008, the Zoning Code Rewrite Advisory Committee (ZCRAC) approved an approach to gathering information on sustainability issues that should be considered in the rewrite of the City of Madison's zoning code. The code sets the rules and procedures for the use of land (residential, commercial, etc.) and the scale, mass and form of buildings (height, placement on lot, densities, parking standards, etc.) within the City. The rewrite of the zoning code presents the opportunity to provide recommendations to remove obstacles to sustainability, create incentives for sustainability and enact standards for sustainability.





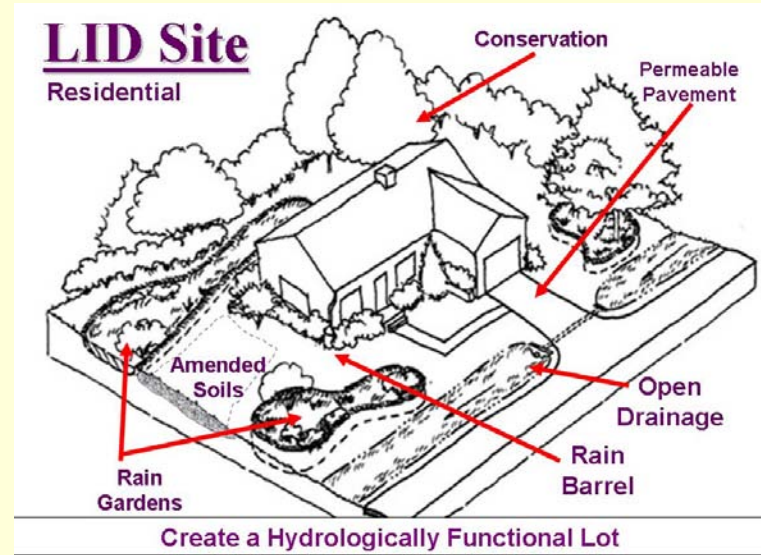
# Sustainability through zoning:

- Energy
- Water
- Green infrastructure/  
urban agriculture
- Public health
- Density



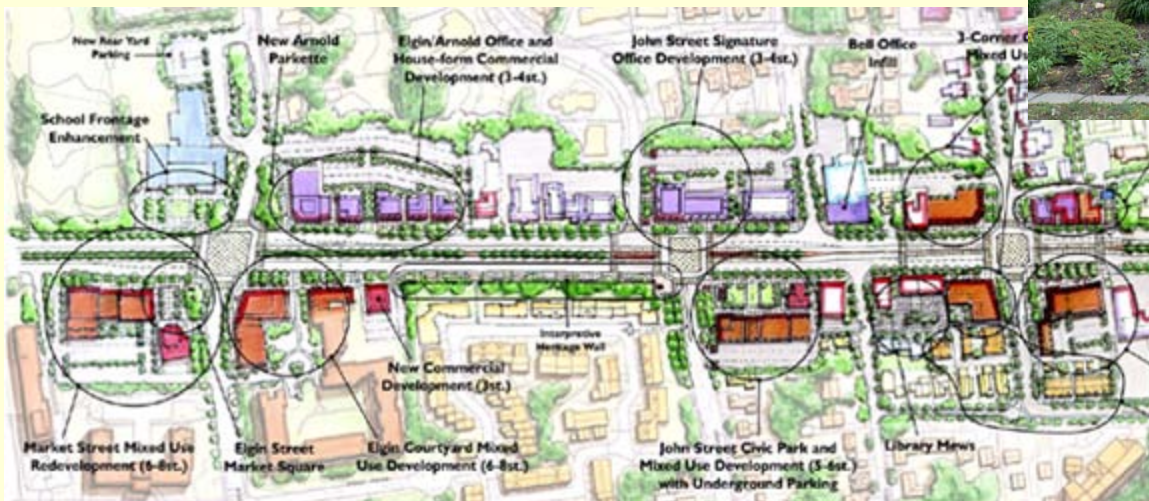
# Density

1. Increase density in nearly all, if not all, zoning districts; especially downtown.
2. Provide bonus for sustainable provisions that exceed minimum standards.
3. Allow density bonuses for green features.



# Sustainability through zoning:

- Mixed use/transit oriented development
- Residential districts
- Commercial districts
- Parking



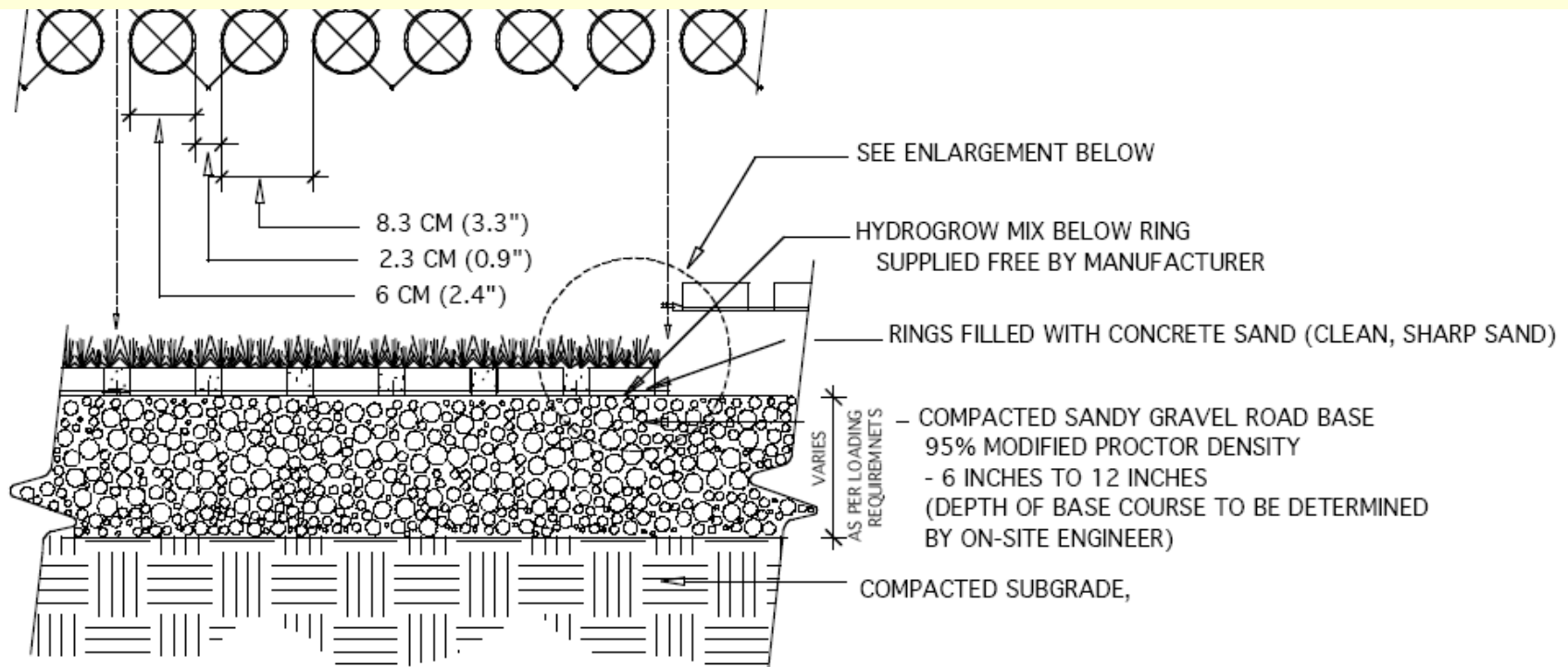






































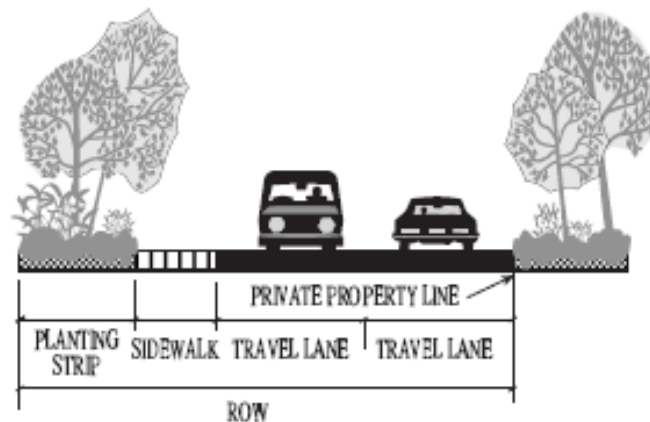






# What you can't do with zoning:

- Allow composting toilets
- Prohibit heated sidewalks
- Mandate % gray water reuse for irrigation
- Sidewalks on only one side of the street



ALDER CREST

# Overall, Madison gets high grades

- Process
- Inclusiveness
- Candor
- Measureable objectives
- Comprehensiveness
- Density
  - Can they do it?





The New York Times

# Travel Dispatch

February 28, 2009

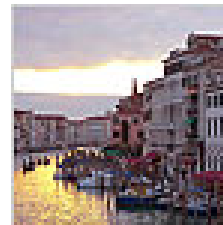
## Travel



FRUGAL TRAVELER

### Frugal Venice, Family Style

By MATT GROSS

Traveling cheaply is one thing. Traveling cheaply, in a foreign country, with an infant in tow is another. But Italy proves surprisingly hospitable to a family of three.



-  Video: Baby on Board
-  Slide Show

## Multimedia



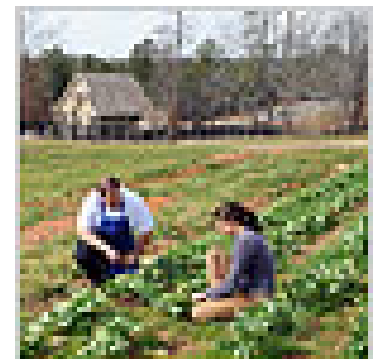
### The Frugal Traveler: Baby

HEADS UP

## Outside Atlanta, a Utopia Rises

By KEVIN SACK

In an experiment in New Urbanism, the town of Palmetto aspires to be something of a Sonoma for the South (though without the wine).









In just a few years, the idyllic community of Serenbe in Palmetto, Ga., has become a destination for Atlantans in search of a getaway. At left, Nick Melvin, chef at the Inn at Serenbe, and Paige Witherington, farm manager, at Serenbe Organic Farms make daily pilgrimages to hand-pick local produce.





Mr. Melvin prepares a frisée salad topped with an egg at the Farmhouse, Serenbe's acclaimed restaurant that has become a Southeastern showcase for the country's growing farm-to-table movement.



Topped with confit grapes, a Southern Manhattan made from peach whiskey and red wine at the Farmhouse. The restaurant has won accolades for food that is both innovative and authentic.



Goats, llamas, donkeys and rabbits dot the rural landscape of Serenbe.





Devoted to the visual and culinary arts, Selborne, left, is one of two hamlets in Serenbe, both constructed according to stringent environmental and conservation standards.



Rooms in the Main House at the Inn at Serenbe, including breakfast, range from a low of \$160 a night on weekdays to a high of \$225 a night on weekends.



The spacious rooms at the Inn at Serenbe are simple and fresh, with cushiony beds that insist that you sleep.





A bakeshop, the Blue-Eyed Daisy, serves as the village gathering spot, luring visitors with red-velvet cupcakes.



Locally produced goods at the Harris & Clark grocery store in Serenbe.



The Bilt-House boutique features a funky mix of women's clothing and accessories.





Front porches replace front lawns at homes in Serenbe. The community is a mix of Arts and Crafts cottages, loft-style town houses and sleek modern boxes.



A tree house, constructed by residents, at Serenbe.













serenbe

DRINK GALLERY  
THE BLUE EYED OAKS  
BAKESHOP

PATH TO THE BAY  
AT SERENBE

POWELL ROAD

ROAD TO THE INN  
AT SERENBE

THE BLUE EYED OAKS  
BAKESHOP

FIVE  
PARKS

CONSTRUCTED  
WETLANDS

THE BLUE EYED OAKS  
BAKESHOP

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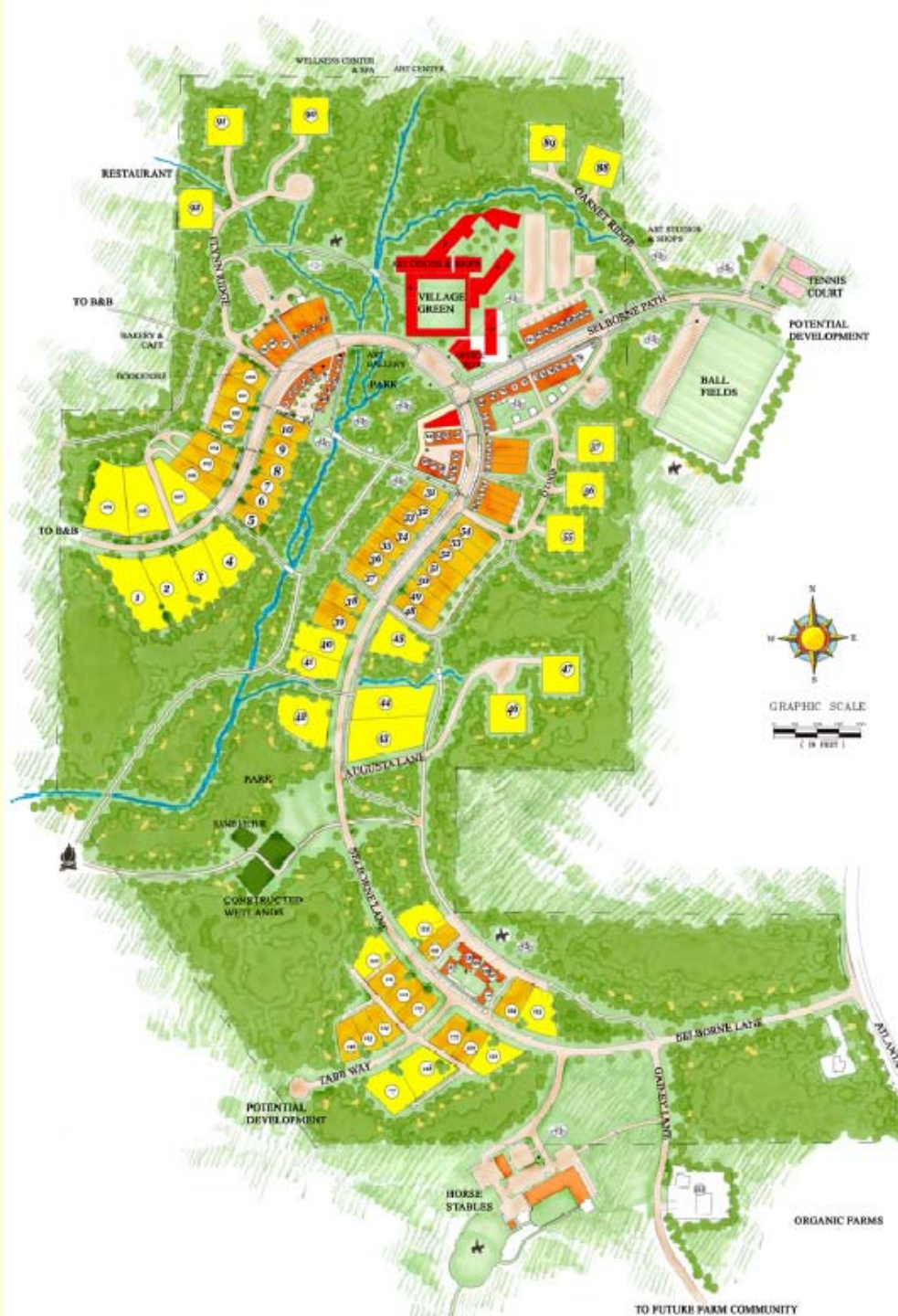
**COLOR KEY:**

- ESTATE SITES
- COTTAGE SITES
- TOWNHOMES
- LIVE-WORK HOMES
- WOODED COTTAGE SITES
- WOODED ESTATE SITES
- FARM SITES
- RETAIL & INSTITUTIONAL



SELBOFNE-GRANGE COMMUNITY







RESTAURANT

B&B

BAKERY & CAFE

BOOKSTORE

ART CENTER & SHOPS

VILLAGE GREEN

OFFICE BLDG

ART GALLERY  
PARK

ART STUDIOS & SHOPS

BALL  
FIELDS

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FLYNN RIDGE

GARNET RIDGE

SELBORNE PATH

O LOOP

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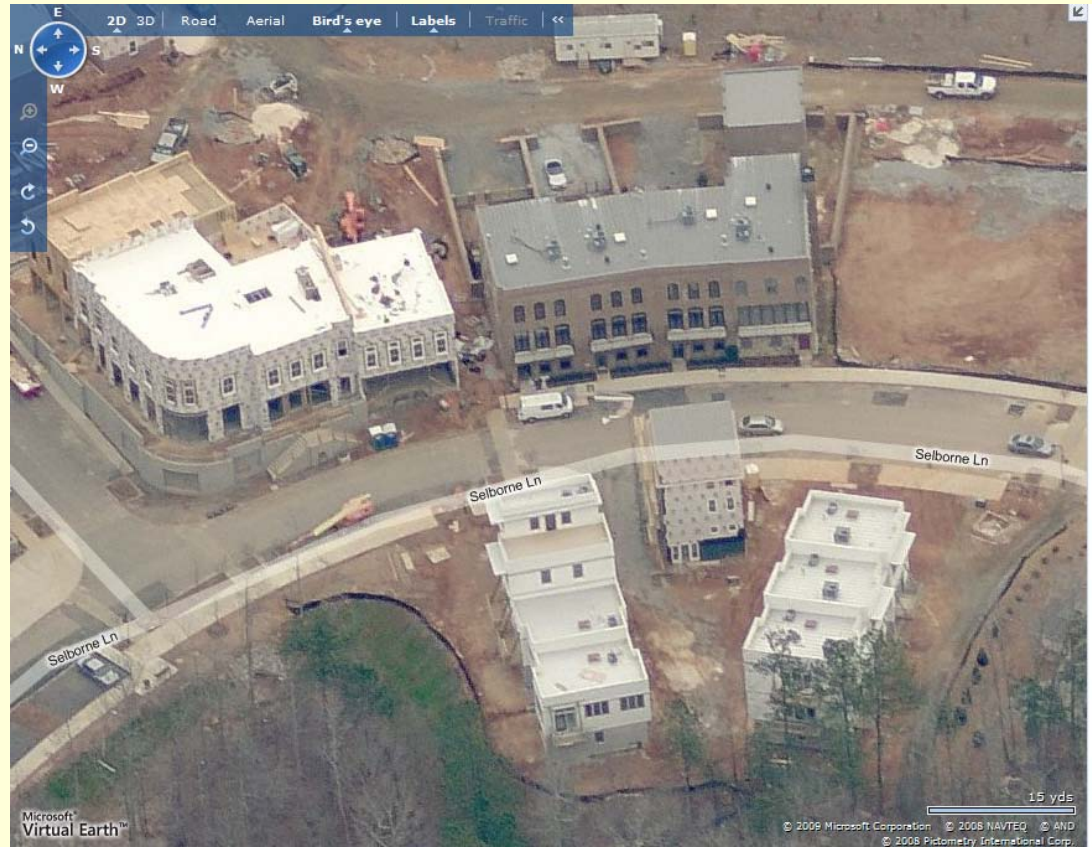


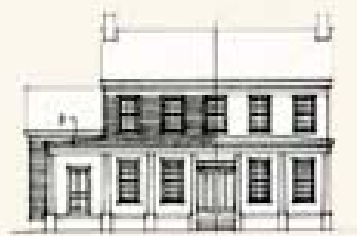




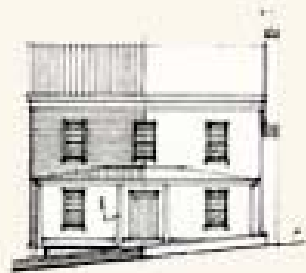








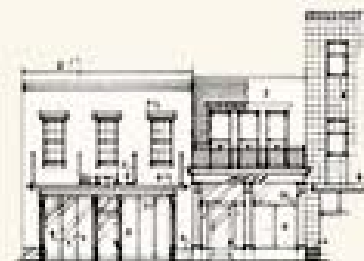
Estate



Cottage



Townhouse



Live & Work





These cottages in Grange all back up to the Serenbe Organic farms.







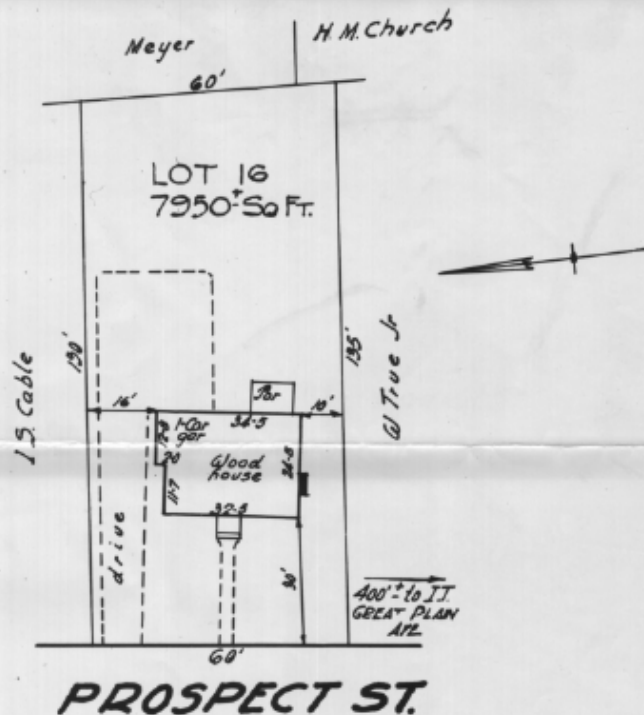


# PLAN OF PROPERTY

APPLICANT

AUSTIN L. &  
LILLIAN B. MERRIAM  
LOT 16 PROSPECT ST.  
NEEDHAM • MASS.

EVERETT M. BROOKS  
CIVIL ENGINEER NEWTONVILLE, MASS.  
SCALE 1 in. = 30 FT. JUNE 17, 1941



**PROSPECT ST.**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE BUILDINGS ON THIS PROPERTY ARE LOCATED AS SHOWN ON  
ABOVE PLAN.

*Everett M. Brooks*  
SURVEYOR.

# THE SERENBE BLOG

Life in a Green Community

Feed on  Posts  Comments



## Mardi Gras at The Farmhouse this Sunday

February 19, 2009 by [serenbe1](#)

Join us for **Mardi Gras at The Farmhouse this Sunday, February 22**. The featured cocktail is a true New Orleans **Hurricane** made with pure sugar cane agricole rum and served in a Mason jar. **\*Come in and mention that you read the Serenbe Blog, and we'll give you a Hurricane on the house** (with purchase of one brunch).

**Special Inn at Serenbe Mardi Gras Rate:**

**\$169**

**Includes a room at the Inn on Sunday, February 22, plus three-course Mardi Gras brunch for two at The Farmhouse.**

Excludes beverages, tax and gratuity.

Subject to availability. For reservations, call 770.463.2622.

**Menu:**

*Enjoy a festive atmosphere and true New Orleans feasting from our native New Orleans chef Nick Melvin.*

*\$30/person*

*Excludes tax and gratuity.*

### AT SERENBE

[EcoMeme \(Eco Lifestyle Boutique\)](#)

[Events at Serenbe](#)

[Harris & Clark](#)

[Restaurants at Serenbe](#)

[Serenbe](#)

[Serenbe Photo Albums](#)

[Shops & Galleries at Serenbe](#)

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### SERENBE FRIENDS

[Cottage Living](#)

[EcoMeme \(Eco Lifestyle Boutique\)](#)

## About Serenbe



Serenbe is a 1,000-acre community in the Chattahoochee Hill Country, just southwest of Atlanta (about 20 minutes from Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport). From the ground up, we're devoted to the environment and being respectful to nature. A community with private homes, restaurants, original boutiques & art galleries, Serenbe was created as an example of how development doesn't have to occur at nature's expense—of our 1,000 acres, a maximum of 30% will be disturbed. For the full story, visit [www.serenbe.com](http://www.serenbe.com). My name is Tucker Berta; I'm the director of communications for Serenbe, and on this blog I'll be sharing some of the amazing things I encounter in this community. Hope you'll visit often. And be sure to check out [serenbe.com](http://serenbe.com) for upcoming events, news & more.



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## Serenbe


[Browse more products](#)

## ▼ Mini-Feed

Displaying 5 stories

[See All](#)


February 20

 Serenbe wrote on its own wall. February 20 at 6:10am

February 18

 Serenbe wrote on its own wall. February 18 at 6:23pm Serenbe wrote on its own wall. February 18 at 6:22pm

February 16

 Serenbe wrote on its own wall. February 16 at 6:54am Serenbe wrote on its own wall. February 16 at 6:53am

## ▼ Fans

6 of 400 fans



Christen



Angela



Brian



Will



Sam



Lisa

## ▼ Photos

4 of 14 fan photos

[See All](#)



EARTH MATTERS



TRANSPORTATION



BUSINESS



TECHNOLOGY



FOOD



HOME



LIFESTYLE



FAMILY

[BUILDING & RENOVATING](#)

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[HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS](#)

[RECYCLING](#)

[MNN.COM](#) > [MNN TV](#) > [LOVE OF THE LAND](#)

## LOVE OF THE LAND: Sustainable Serenbe

**Read more:** [CHUCK LEAVELL](#), [ENERGY EFFICIENCY](#), [LOVE OF THE LAND](#), [SUSTAINABILITY](#)

**earth cents**

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- <http://www.mnn.com/the-home/building-renovating/mnntv/love-of-the-land/love-of-the-land-sustainable-serenbe>



# Sustainability

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What is Serenbe

## *Why we're green*

At Serenbe, we hold the notion that a community is a living part of its natural surroundings, not something to be built at nature's expense. From the ground up, we've taken a new look at community development, and have based every facet of Serenbe design on traditional values and the principles of environmental sustainability. Some elements of this design are obvious, while others are subtle or even unseen.



## **Development Design**

Each Serenbe building project is designed to flow with the terrain, disturbing our natural landscape as little as possible. The entire community is laid out with accessible pathways to encourage walking. Native plants and organic landscaping techniques are used exclusively throughout Serenbe, eliminating the need for chemicals and expensive lawn maintenance.



## **EarthCraft Houses**

All homes are built to the standards of the EarthCraft House Program. These standards include energy efficiency, low maintenance, air quality, water conservation, and resource-efficient building materials and systems. An EarthCraft House is a healthy, comfortable home that reduces utility bills and protects the environment.

## **Wastewater Treatment**

Using newly designed, yet inexpensive reuse water techniques, treated effluent water is reused for irrigation and future water supply for toilets. Other wastewater is treated in a two-stage chemical-free passive system that incorporates non-disruptive filtration and dispersion.

## **Storm Water Management**

Rather than creating concrete spillways that concentrate storm runoff, Serenbe storm water runoff is directed into natural systems of vegetated filter strips and shallow channels of dense vegetation. These natural filters remove pollutants while dispersing water flow.



## Organic Farming

Serenbe Farms is a 25-acre working, organic farm located at Serenbe and part of the national Community Supported Agriculture partnership, Serenbe Farms provides organic produce throughout Atlanta and The Chattahoochee Hill Country.

## Land Preservation

The 900 acres of Serenbe lie in the heart of 40,000 acres protected with a master plan that calls for 80% green space. Building sites are limited to 220 homes, including live/work spaces, and commercial buildings.

BBO  
RESTAURANT

GRANGE

TO  
PHASE III

TO  
PHASE III

MIDDLETON WAY

SERENBE LANE

HANAPET RD

SHANTAL

SERENBE LANE

ORGANIC FARM

ORGANIC FARM

ORGANIC FARM

ORGANIC FARM





FOCUS™ Terms  Search Within  [Go](#) [Advanced...](#)View: [Cite](#) | [KWIC](#) | [Full](#) | [Custom](#)

28 of 42

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NEWSLINE at home;  
Brief Article

**BODY:**

Atlanta -- Although construction at Serenbe has been underway since last January, it's unlikely that anyone has taken notice--and that's exactly the way S founders of Serenbe wantit.

[ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

"Most people expect to see trees falling and large areas of land being bulldozed when they hear that construction has begun, but that'snot the way that we' Nygren said. "Our design calls for the community to be constructed with as little disturbance of the natural setting as possible. We're succeeding in that effo people have driven by the construction site and couldn't tell that work was underway."

[ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

Serenbe, the first development within the Chattahoochee Hill Country south of Atlanta, has been designed with both conservation and community in mind. Ho galleries and other businesses will be concentrated in hamlets designed to encourage a sense of community. This design also enables the preservation of mor Serenbe's acreage as green space. Serenbe homes, built by Hedgewood Properties according to EarthCraft House guidelines, will also be environmentally frier

**LOAD-DATE:** January 15, 2008Source: [Legal](#) > /... / > § Mega News, All (English, Full Text) Terms: [serenbe](#) ([Edit Search](#) | [Suggest Terms for My Search](#))Focus: [environmental](#) ([Exit FOCUS™](#))

View: Full

Atlanta -- Although construction at Serenbe has been underway since last January, it's unlikely that anyone has taken notice--and that's exactly the way Steve Nygren and the other founders of Serenbe want it.

[ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

**"Most people expect to see trees falling and large areas of land being bulldozed when they hear that construction has begun, but that's not the way that we're building Serenbe," Nygren said. "Our design calls for the community to be constructed with as little disturbance of the natural setting as possible. We're succeeding in that effort so well that several people have driven by the construction site and couldn't tell that work was underway."**

**"Our design calls for the community to be constructed with as little disturbance of the natural setting as possible. We're succeeding in that effort so well that several people have driven by the construction site and couldn't tell that work was underway."**



BBO  
RESTAURANT

GRANGE

TO  
PHASE III

TO  
PHASE III











N  
W E S  
2D 3D | Road Aerial Bird's eye Labels Traffic | <<

Microsoft  
Virtual Earth™

40 yds  
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