



AIA Southwest Michigan

THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARETTE

May 18-20 . 2006

Design Charette Objective

Three Rivers, MI - The community of Three Rivers looked to the future as they worked to create a healthy community plan and help build capacity for collaboration. The Southwest Michigan Chapter of the American Institute of Architects facilitated the May 18th, 19th, and 20th charette. Representatives from the City of Three Rivers, Fabius Township, Lockport Township, Three Rivers Downtown Development Authority, Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce, St. Joseph County Economic Development Corporation, Civic Organizations and residents participated in the three day charette held at A Place In Time in Downtown Three Rivers.

The clear purpose of the Three Rivers Community Design Charette was to experiment in city/township planning collaboration, create a basis for state and community grants for expanded study opportunities, create a vision for obtainable and feasible projects that will benefit the community and provide architects with the opportunity for strategic civic engagement at a unique time in Michigan's development history. As designers of the built environment, architects play an important role in shaping our communities. Their design affects our safety, health, and the environment as well as the quality of life in our neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions.

Design teams looked at three components of the Three Rivers Community, the Downtown, the neighborhoods and the US 131 Corridor. The charette took into consideration the AIA's 10 Principles for Livable Communities:

- Design on a human scale
- Provide choices in housing, shopping, recreation and transportation
- Encourage mixed-use development
- Preserve urban/historical centers
- Vary transportation options
- Build vibrant public spaces
- Create a neighborhood identity
- Protect environmental resources
- Conserve landscapes
- Design does matter

AIA's 10 Principles for Livable Communities engages architects as members of their communities, to use and share their knowledge, skill, and experience to participate in civic life. Architecture expresses the values of society and has the power to enrich the human spirit and ensure livability for this and future generations.

The charette was hosted at "A Place In Time" 54 Railroad Drive, Three Rivers. The charette was open to the public all three days. Along with round table discussions on Thursday, the design studio was open all day Friday for community input and the charette concluded on Saturday with a community presentation at 12:00 noon.

References: AIA National website for the "Livability 101" publication, http://www.aia.org/liv_liv101.

AIA's 10 Principles for Livable Communities

1. Design on a Human Scale
2. Provide Choices
3. Encourage Mixed-Use Development
4. Preserve Urban Centers
5. Vary Transportation Options
6. Build Vibrant Public Spaces
7. Create a Neighborhood Identity
8. Protect Environmental Resources
9. Conserve Landscapes
10. Design Matters