

Q5: Vision for the Future (An Interview with The Leavenworth Times)

By Dale Brendel. The Leavenworth Times: May 21, 2011.

Leavenworth, Kan. — Troy Nash is Vice president and director of public sector consulting with Zimmer Real Estate Services, L.C., which is partnering with the City of Leavenworth for a research and development park on the city's north side.

1. Can you describe the project in which you are partnering with the City of Leavenworth on to renovate the North Downtown Neighborhood of the city?

The Downtown/North Leavenworth Redevelopment Master Plan is intended to provide a general vision for the physical design and development associated with future investments by both the private and public sector. The plan establishes the basic framework for improvements to enhance the appearance of the area, the pursuit of quality redevelopment projects and strengthen access to, through and within Leavenworth's core area. These improvements are designed to foster a strong sense of pride within the community and to provide the foundation for future cooperative efforts towards community building among the leadership of Leavenworth, the citizens and potential investors. The difference in a Zimmer lead planning effort is the emphasis on "real world" achievable goals and outcomes. Most land use and economic development plans include many colorful graphics and pretty pictures that usually end up being used as bookends or coasters. Because we are actual developers and owners of projects who've risked our own capital; we know what it takes to get projects done on time and on budget. We treat our customers money like it is our own – it makes a big difference in the results we get for them.

2. This project is pretty big in scope. How long before this gets off the ground and how long would it take to complete it?

The project is well under way with houses being torn down and property being acquired. The city has been an excellent partner with a very engaged mayor and council. The City Manager, Chris Dunn, and especially Andrea Adkins have been determined in their vision to get something done. How long the project takes depends on many factors to include the response from both the public and private sectors; the availability of capital; and overall market conditions. It is definitely a long-term project.

3. What is the funding source and what obstacles stand in the way or must the city overcome to make this project work?

All development is challenging in this current economic and financial environment, so funding will be something we will pay very close attention to as the project progresses. However, an optimist looks at an oyster and expects to find a pearl. The pessimist looks at the oyster and expects ptomaine poisoning. We at Zimmer are optimists and see Leavenworth as a wonderful community with great people, a true pearl in the metropolitan area. We try and head off as many obstacles as we can but realize that with a project of this scale, magnitude, and complexity that challenges will always be present. When challenges

manifest themselves, like any strong partnership, we sit down together and map out a joint plan of action to mitigate them.

4. Zimmer has been involved in some pretty amazing projects here and nationwide. Can you list a few of the highlights?

Zimmer, under the leadership of Hugh Zimmer and an activist executive committee has changed the landscape of the metropolitan area during the last 60 years. Aside from developing some of the most significant projects in the region like The Legends at Village West; the Sprint Campus, Southlake/ECO Works in Lenexa, the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City to name a few, Zimmer's success lies in our solid commitment to our customers. We focus on their bottom line, period. We work diligently to increase their productivity and profitability by offering real estate solutions rooted in the real world. We are also very active in healthcare/medical, educational, and other governmental projects across the country. A growing part of our business has been our owner's representative services. Today, owners of projects tell us that they are being hammered by costs overruns, increasing and escalating scope of services. As a result, they do not know what to do or where to turn. By turning to Zimmer, a firm that has actually developed projects with our own money, we have saved customers millions of dollars in unnecessary and wasteful fees on various professional services. They want a firm that understands this and accordingly people call us to manage their projects with this same personal dedication and oversight. In short, we believe that the only way to keep good will and high esteem from our customers we serve is to deserve it.

5. Considering some of your other projects, what is it about this redevelopment that has attracted Zimmer, and what role will you play personally in the plans?

Leavenworth is a fun community. Before we partnered with the city, like most people, when I thought of Leavenworth, I thought of the military base and the prison made popular by television. Today, I am proud to say that I buy my tea from the Queens Pantry. Also, the military base places the area in a unique position to take advantage of an asset that many communities lack. The role I personally played was that of the lead consultant on the team with Brian Hamilton, one of the country's premier planners. I also worked closely with Mike VanBuskirk, Jennifer Gach, and Dan Musser, Senior Vice President and principal, to craft a development plan that is practical and embedded in reality. In addition, I relied heavily on other Zimmer colleagues in property management, sales and leasing, and corporate services to round out our planning efforts. So while I would like to take credit for the plan, our ONE Zimmer philosophy promotes all of us working together to create something special and unique for our customers, in this case Leavenworth. As Ray Croc, the founder of McDonald's once said, "the customer is the most important person in our business; the customer is not dependent on us-we are dependent on the customer; and finally the customer is not an interruption of our work; but the purpose of it." I keep this on my desk because I feel the exact same way about the city of Leavenworth-our customer and partner.

About the plan

The City of Leavenworth has contracted with Zimmer Real Estate Services to help develop the Leavenworth Research and Development Park between 4th and 7th Streets and Pawnee and Metropolitan on the city's northern side. The project has already begun with the tearing down of some old structures to make room for a hotel at 4th and Metropolitan. The development seeks to add office and flex space to create a vibrant new neighborhood, tied closely with Fort Leavenworth. Zimmer will act as a consultant for the project and help market and recruit potential tenants. A separate project is the North Downtown Neighborhood revitalization project, which would redevelop the neighborhood from Dakota to Seneca streets and from 4th to 1st streets.