

(2/m)  
James

September 22, 1964

TO: William E. Finley  
CC: Morton Hoppenfeld  
FROM: James W. Rouse  
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We're going to be making some very positive value judgments over the next few months regarding our estimates of what the market will care about in our new community. We will be measuring the cost of tennis courts, swimming pools, libraries, transit systems, etc. against increases in the tax rate and carrying charges to the home buyer or renter. Isn't it worth considering the desirability of making some test of what prospective residents of Columbia might really consider to be important - what they would be most willing to pay for through taxes, and what it might be better to have on a user pay basis because of selective preferences in the market? We might find that there are a variety of specialized uses which, although lacking general appeal to the market, might have such strong appeal to specialized groups that in composite they would appeal to enough individual groups to substantially strengthen the market. Horseback riding, for example, might not have a general appeal, but is powerfully appealing to those who care about it. Thus, riding as an opportunity on a user pay basis could be an important amenity to a small sector of the market. Similarly, we may find that some things (tennis for example) which we would regard as having general appeal and appropriate for the CID, might in fact have a very limited appeal and should clearly be on a user pay basis.

M.C. -  
yes, you  
dit.  
JWR

Recently, I read something of a survey made by the University of Michigan, I believe, which was directed at finding what people really wanted in a neighborhood environment. I think I sent a memo back to you on this suggesting that we get hold of it. It would seem particularly desirable for us to do so. Also, should we not consider the possibility of an opinion survey to discover more precisely what our prospective market really expects as a minimum or would respond to with particular enthusiasm if it was provided for them, either by the CID or on a user pay basis. I feel cautious about opinion surveys, and am not at all sure that one is justified here - but I do think it is worth our very serious consideration.

Memo to: WEF  
cc: MH

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Furthermore, it seems to me we should make a very careful analysis of exactly what is being offered by all of the best suburban developments in the Baltimore-Washington area. This, in its own right, is an important reflection of market demand. A developer like Levitt has tested the market more comprehensively than an opinion survey could ever hope to do. We should pay attention to what he has learned.

James W. Rouse

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cc: Willard G. Rouse  
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