

# *Partnership Agreement* between the **International Council of Shopping Centers** and the **National Association of Counties**

## **International Council of Shopping Centers**

Shopping centers are America's marketplace, representing economic growth, environmental responsibility and community strength. Founded in 1957, the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) is the global trade association of the retail real estate industry, representing owners, developers, retailers, lenders and other professionals, as well as academics and public officials. Its nearly 39,000 U.S. members represent nearly all of the 45,000 shopping centers in the United States.

## **National Association of Counties**

The National Association of Counties (NACo) was created in 1935 when county officials wanted to have a strong voice in the nation's capital. More than six decades later, NACo's membership totals more than 2,000 counties, representing over 80 percent of the nation's population. The association acts as a liaison with other levels of government, works to improve public understanding of counties, serves as a national advocate for counties and provides them with resources to help them find innovative methods to meet the challenges they face. Further, NACo understands the importance of strong public-private partnerships and is committed to assisting counties and businesses in exploring new, innovative ways of working together.

## **Background**

In 1996 ICSC developed its Alliance Program in an effort to bring about a greater understanding of the positive economic impact of the retail real estate industry on communities across America. This program is essentially a series of targeted meetings designed to provide a forum to initiate dialogue and develop key working relationships between developers, retailers and local government officials.

While the focus of these public/private sector forums has been primarily urban and suburban, there is an increasing interest among ICSC members to broaden the dialogue to encompass issues relevant to non-urbanized and rural markets (secondary and tertiary markets). There are many development issues that are unique to the mid-size and rural markets including different density models, larger trade areas and smaller store formats, reduced operating expenses and competition, as well as market specific merchandise selection and other economies of scale issues.

As the only national representative of county governments, NACo has a unique responsibility to provide assistance to rural and middle America, as approximately two-thirds of county governments are rural. To address their needs, NACo has implemented legislative and technical assistance programs designed to address the distinctive array of challenges many smaller and mid-sized communities face.

Lead by its Rural Action Caucus, NACo has worked to provide strong legislative advocacy and enhanced technical, educational and programmatic assistance to small and mid-sized county leaders. NACo recognizes that government alone can not assure the economic vitality of these communities, believing that effective collaboration with the private sector is a key to long term success.

### **Statement of Common Objectives**

ICSC and NACo believe that providing sustainable economic development for small and mid-sized communities that preserves the individual characteristics that make each distinct is a key component to assuring the continued health of middle and rural America.

ICSC and NACo believe that both retailers and county officials can play a significant role in assuring the economic vitality of communities.

ICSC and NACo believe a targeted rural retail initiative can help promote both the market and the economic potential of the vast secondary and tertiary markets that comprise middle and rural America.

ICSC and NACo believe that through partnership, an enhanced level of service can be provided by both organizations to their membership by developing a forum for retailers and county leaders to exchange new ideas, seek solutions to common challenges, promote sustainable economic development, and create new partnerships between the public and private sector.

**Therefore**, in recognizing their common interest in increasing sustainable economic opportunity and preserving the unique characteristics of rural and middle America, the National Association of Counties and the International Council of Shopping Centers hereby enter into a National Partnership Agreement.

Through this Partnership, NACo and ICSC will work together to:

- 1) Conduct joint out-reach efforts to create an awareness of the retail development opportunities in mid-size and rural markets.
- 2) Increase local government involvement, specifically from county officials at ICSC meetings and deal makings to create business links between counties and retailers.
- 3) Provide educational and networking opportunities between public and private sector through national and local ICSC and NACo meetings and conferences;
- 4) Develop joint or co-branded publication(s) promoting the market potential of mid-size and rural markets highlighting examples and best practices.

### **Proposed Initial Activities**

During the first year of the National Association of Counties-International Council of Shopping Centers partnership, NACo and ICSC will work together to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To increase awareness of the retail development opportunities in mid-size and rural markets, outreach efforts would include a press event announcing the initiative, followed by publication of articles in NACo, ICSC and other relevant publications. Additional articles could highlight mid-market retailers, promote ICSC's alliance program, research findings or other market specific topics of interest. In order to initiate a viable dialogue, ICSC and NACo would convene a Rural Markets Task Force comprised of county officials and ICSC members (retailers, developers and brokers) whose primary business focus is the mid-size and rural markets. Additional outreach efforts could include web postings of resources and related articles/success stories.

2. Public/Private Partnerships are often the key to successful development projects. Developing working relationships and creating an atmosphere of trust are crucial to the success of these partnerships. ICSC would work with NACo and particularly NACo's Rural Action Caucus to increase local government involvement at ICSC meetings through partnerships with affiliated state associations. These associations can serve as partners for local ICSC alliance meetings and assist in the development of meetings designed to promote relationship building and economic development opportunities in the mid-size and rural markets. In addition, NACo, its Rural Action Caucus and affiliates would work with ICSC to promote the marketing and education opportunities as well as resources and networking opportunities available to local governments through ICSC membership and participation in ICSC meetings and events.
3. ICSC and its members would work with NACo and its designated members and state associations to develop educational sessions for local and regional meetings that would highlight the market potential of secondary and tertiary markets through case studies, demographics analysis and market research. In addition sessions would be designed to promote networking opportunities well as provide a forum for both the public and the private sector to present specific points of view relative to this distinct market.
4. To further support this initiative, ICSC and NACo would work with the members of the Rural Markets Task Force and other designated stakeholders (educational institutions, agricultural organizations, community development corporations, lending institutions, and others) to discuss economic development issues and concerns facing the mid-size and rural markets. ICSC would work with NACo to conduct research and market analysis to support the potential of the market and compile best practices and case studies to further enhance and support the findings of the Task Force. ICSC and NACo will jointly publish a white paper that promotes the retail real estate opportunities in the secondary and rural markets and provides viable statistics and case studies to support the findings.

The duration of this initial proposal shall be for one (1) year beginning from the effective date of the Partnership. However, either party may terminate the agreement upon three months notice, so as to give any current programs sufficient time to conclude. The notice provision will not negatively affect any programs in progress at the time of the decision.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Partnership Agreement is entered into on the 14 day November of , 2003.

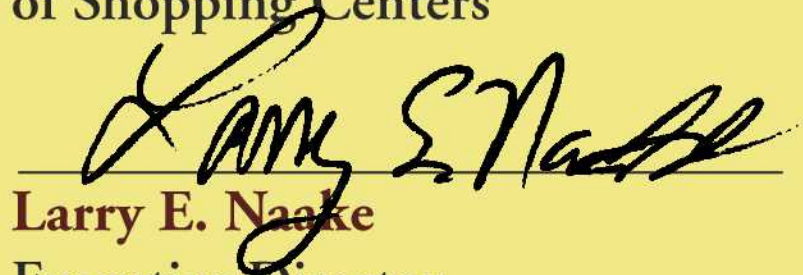
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