

The Good, the Bad, & the Unintended Consequences: Lessons Learned from Pushing the Envelope and Innovation

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Imagine a laundry line...

Snappy shirt

Stone-washed Jeans

Old socks with holes

And worse yet

Cargo shorts

The ICHA Laundry Line

- Successes
- Meh moments
- Out and out fails

For Pete's Sake, why Victor?

- We think that failures are just as important to our story as successes.
- Correctly reviewed, failures propel us forward, help us improve
- We want others to avoid pitfalls
- And its also nice to laugh

Here's what to expect

- The Story
- The Score: How did it work out?
- The Lesson: Our thoughts on lessons learned

Lighting Bollards

- In 2007, ICHA had big project with lots of connecting sidewalks.
- Several dozen light bollards needed.
- An of-the-cuff question: can we use CFLs?
- Yup.
- Saves 25,000 KwH annually. Minimal cost to go CFL.

Lighting Bollards



Lighting Bollards



Score & Lesson

- Score: Home Run!
- Lesson:
 - Sometimes a silly question is the most important.
 - A leading edge technology, not bleeding edge. Someone else took the risk early on.
 - Sustainability can sometimes be invisible.

It all worked out in the wash...

- New rental ADA units had a quirk: you couldn't be at the sink and open the dishwasher at the same time.
- Cost \$2,000. Thankfully, it was only the prototype building

Alturas ADA kitchen and dishwasher



Alturas ADA kitchen and dishwasher



Score & Lesson

- Score: Could have been worse.
- Lesson:
 - Don't rely solely on your consultants. You have a responsibility to review the plans and specifications.
 - The prototype building did what it was intended to do.
 - The importance of considering the experience of the resident. Empathy.

Sewer stubs from the future

- In the early 2000's, road widening project on campus boundary added a new sewer main.
- University Hills' limit was nowhere nearby, no chance of growing.
- Andrew Herndon championed to purchase 4 sewer stubs (connection points) just in case. Boy, was he right!





Score & Lesson

- Score: ICHA team members send thanks to past ICHA members—from the future!!!
- Lesson:
 - Sometimes its worth the risk to spend money on reasonable, potential outcomes.
 - Listen to your visionary team members.

The drought, Part 1

- Or, “The case of the really cool irrigation system”



The drought, Part 1

- During the most recent drought, we looked for ways to reduce water for irrigation.
- Already using reclaimed water for irrigation, but wanted to do a test that may be used by our residents, lead by example.

The drought, Part 1

- Found a great system using “emitters”.
 - No over-spray
 - More efficient way to get water to roots
 - Significant reduction in water consumption for parkway turf
 - Already deployed by 2 cities for large turf areas

But the brochure was so pretty!



But the brochure was so pretty!



But the brochure was so pretty!



But the brochure was so pretty!



Score & Lesson

- Score: This looked so promising. It was deployed on a larger scale nearby. A fail, but not sure why.
- Lesson:
 - Don't let contractor substitute alternate products.
 - Bring in your maintenance team before committing to new product.
 - Test in field before deploying.

The drought, Part 2

- “In which Victor advocates for California natives and ICHA gets more than it bargained for”
- We forgot about the secret sauce needed with this new and unusual front yard plant material: *homeowner maintenance*.

With the “secret sauce”



And without



Score & Lesson

- Score: How did we let this happen?
- Lesson:
 - Outside forces (like the drought) need to be balanced against your reality on the ground.
 - ICHA could have provided education on how to care for drought tolerant plants.
 - We corrected this in subsequent projects.

Postscript

- Took lessons learned and applied them.
- Changed plant palette, additional care info in GPR manual.
- We like the result.
- Here are some photos of our newest neighborhood...

Postscript



Postscript



This “stakeholder stuff” seems to work

- Asked residents to rank recreational amenities for a new 1-acre park
- ICHA team created list of potential amenities
- Community-wide survey--built what they wanted
- Residents LOVE this facility
- Using it as a template to retrofit older facilities

Coltrane Pool



Coltrane Pool



Score & Lesson

- Score: Well, what do you know? It works!
- Lesson:
 - Stake holder engagement works
 - Needs to be guided (but not heavy-handedly)
 - Always follow through with promises
 - Remind stakeholders of what just happened.

When you ask different questions...

- You get different answers.
- Alturas Rental Townhomes
 - The ones we never got to tour at the 2015 CAWH due to those crazy downpours

When you ask different questions...

- We knew we had an opportunity to approach the design differently
- Analyzed 500 rental applications, created in big ol' spreadsheet
- Began to see patterns, crafted a “story” about our potential renter:
 - Households in formation years, strollers, lower professional incomes, need a little house

Our basic design guidelines

- 2 & 3 BR units
- Ground entry if possible
- Larger households
- Meaningful storage inside units and possibly outside
- Attached garages
- Feel like a house, not apartment

Here is what the team came up with



Here is what the team came up with



Score & Lesson

- Score: We are still dancing a jig at the office
- Lesson:
 - Listen to the residents. The market has wonderful solutions, but they are based on presuppositions. Academic Workforce Housing often has a different set of presuppositions.

Its only 4 feet...

- Did you know fire trucks need to pass each other? That's what creates the width of a Fire Lane.
- New Urbanism—walkable, traffic calming, old timey neighborhoods
- Except no one asked the fire department.

The world's widest fire lane

- 32 feet - 8 foot parking = 24 foot Fire Lane
- The firefighters ask for 20 feet typically....
- Can only park on one side of street
- No traffic calming
- Sigh.

Frost Street



Score & Lesson

- Score: We should have caught this.
- Lesson:
 - Consultant often have powerful ideas and compelling stories. But they must be balanced against a livable design and the practical needs of your end-user.

Fiat Lux

- In 2009, vendors and consultants did a demonstration of LED street light heads.
- Followed up in 2010 & 11 with a head replacement for 3 months.
- Impressive results, whiter light, easier to see, fewer hot/cold spots, aesthetic was identical to existing.







Score & Lesson

- Score: Well done, ICHA
- Lesson:
 - Data & experts PLUS real-world demonstrations help inform good decisions.

Time to share your stories

...and Victor will listen



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