



# A Way of Thinking

By Michael McCall

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A broad theme has been running through this column over the months:

**The market context within which our industry develops entertainment is in the process of significant, fundamental change; and, to remain successful, we must significantly and fundamentally change the way we think about and define entertainment destinations.**

In my view, the challenging economy has only served as a catalyst in hastening to the fore the emerging, yet forceful, trends away from themepark-centric, passive, attraction-oriented entertainment. To view the precipitous downturn in attractions performance as simply the result of a challenged economy could end up being a fatal flaw. The old correlation-without-causation problem is insidiously dangerous because it operates under the stealth of misunderstanding.

It is in this light that I recently revisited the wisdom of my mentor, the late and great developer, James Rouse. As the inventor of the modern-day mall and the developer of Faneuil Hall, to name but two of his populist real estate inventions, Jim had the brilliance, courage and dedication to think differently about what should be, and then work diligently to solve the riddle of how it could be.

Jim would often tell his Young Turks (of which I was one from 1982 to 1992) to pay attention to people's "yearnings," the many times silent, even unconscious, but nonetheless powerful forces in search of fulfillment. Jim provided us in the mid-1980s a one-page philosophy of creating places for people, that he had authored in 1970; and, it is, perhaps, even more relevant today, as the industry searches to find its future. My words about today's challenges could never be as eloquent as Jim Rouse's teachings, espoused more than thirty years ago.

**A Way of Thinking**  
By James W. Rouse  
November 2, 1970

*This way of thinking has several parts: It is fundamentally focused on people as the purpose of all planning and development. It seeks to identify the circumstances under which man, woman and family can grow in their individual personality, character, and spirit, and then tries to find the way to*

*shape institutions, land uses, buildings and services to create communities and projects that will provide maximum support for the people who live, work and shop there.*

*It believes that people can have a good life and can live together in brotherhood. It looks upon everything short of that as a malfunction to be corrected and not as a condition to be worked around. It proceeds always with the purpose and in the belief that the good life, the good community, the good project is available if we will build it and that our job is to plan and produce it.*

*It believes that these purposes are among the most important of our civilization and that those engaging in them are at work in the most important tasks that can possibly consume their lives.*

*It is a way of thinking that is geared to victory, not just to fighting better battles.*

*It understands that the important values are created by the most effective inter-relationships of all the pieces of 'city' and all the processes and institutions supporting life in a community.*

*The beginning point of planning is to discover the best that ought to be and then reconcile the individual pieces into the most feasible solution towards those ultimate goals.*

*It asserts that the process of development and change, while focused on human values, must be undertaken within rigorous disciplines of sound economics; the best available knowledge of development techniques and behavioral sciences.*

*It knows that the creation of the economic values generates the earnings to attract the private investment that invigorates the entire process.*

Jim may have been philosophical, but he was not an idealist. Rather, Jim Rouse was a very smart realist. He knew that bold ideas inspire, and that, "...reality will compromise us soon enough;" and, that, "People will rise to the big and dramatically good plans - they will yawn at the timid, the cautious, the unconvincing."

"Without vision," Jim said, "there is no power." As the entertainment destination industry needs power to rev-up its engines, we most assuredly need clear and compelling Vision.

If there are any Jims out there, please standup.