

Santa's Village: A Case Study in Master Planning a Dream Resort

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Mr. and Mrs. Claus have been looking to expand their ventures in the North Pole. They have a perfect vision for a new winter wonderland and finally, the most serene and ideal piece of land has hit the open market! What's next? How do they go about building the best Santa's Village the North Pole has ever seen?!? While they are busy building toys and checking the naughty/nice list... we thought we'd help them out with a crash course in Master Planning!



Designing and Planning Santa's Village

The development of any site involves a planning process with many technical aspects before a build is ready to be executed. The first step to building your project map is a Site Analysis. This is more of a science, which allows your team to create a plan around the surrounding environment. Considering how the buildings will blend into its environment with a focus on the: typology, climate, landscape, vegetation, geology, hydrology, utilities and natural vs manmade resources. In this case, the North Pole site analysis will provide all the necessary information for Santa's team to move onto the second phase of collecting data. Next is looking into local records, history/zoning, development, and any regulations that need to be adhered to in order to develop the best overall program for Santa's Village Resort.

What Will the Village Need? Programming the Village

Programming is an exercise in considering all aspects of Santa's Village – big and small. It is the most important step to making the village operate and run smoothly while making presents for global delivery before Christmas. One must ask an enormous number of questions to understand how much space is needed and for what activities. The more questions you ask and the more ideas you can throw out there, the better! You can always cut back on ideas when considering budget and time, but you don't want Buddy and the other Elves left without the necessary amenities and spaces needed to make toys and stay warm in the North Pole.

Before organizing spaces on the site of Santa's Village Resort development, we must list out the functions and needs of the village in detail:

The Main Toy Factory

How much space will the Elves need to work? Will there be a "welcome to Santa's Workshop" entrance? Will there be a back of shop where the Elves can warm up their peppermint mochas in between shifts? Is there a back loading dock for Santa's Sleigh to load in the presents? What will power Santa's magic? Is it an energy-efficient system?

The Reindeer Stables

Do they need a hot tub? Where will they throw away their trash or store their hay bales? Where will the reindeer sleep? Does Rudolph get his own stable?

Sleigh Station and Garage

How many sleighs will need to be worked on at once? What electrical or means of magic will the shop need to repair the sleighs? How many spaces will be needed? Will it be an open space? Will there be elf parking? Is it separate from sleigh parking? Is there a sleigh runway? A lighthouse so Santa can find his way home?

Amenity spaces

Will there be a ski lift? A Lodge? A place to make snow sculptures? A place for the Elves to work out? Paths for Rudolph and his friends to take a stroll? An aquatic center?

Elf Fun & Games

A Mrs. Claus's Hot Chocolate Tap House? Santa Jr's Cookie shop? A fun event space so the elves can dance while Santa is out delivering presents?

Elf Commune

Where will the elves sleep? How many rooms are needed? Will there be suites? Will the rooms have balconies? Fireplaces?

Administrative Spaces

How does Santa work on his list? Is it a small desk with pen and paper or does he need large technical support? Is there an IT department? A naughty/nice courthouse?

Site & Space Planning

With information from the Site Analysis and Programming phase together, you can start to plot out the site. Assigning the amount of space needed for each aspect, the layout must consider the relationship of activities to each other. Once spatial relationships and square footages are determined, space planning for individual spaces start to get into the specifics. Simultaneously, one must keep in mind bigger questions such as: who does this design serve? Does it blend with the environment? Is it sustainable.

Don't Do It Alone

Santa is no stranger to managing his time and resources in order to focus on making sure Christmas happens. He has an endless supply of magic – but even for him; once it's built, it's built! So, one must really be prepared, and it can't be done by yourself. Even Santa needs to hire the right team of professionals. (link Hiring a Design Team to Lead your Build | Resort Trades) Architects are adept to handle the entire process. They help you define your goals and objectives, set your budget, work with the city of the North Pole on permits and construction documents, and – most importantly – work hands on with you to design a successful and magical Village Resort experience.

Layered Color Schemes

The pendulum has swung from the long-gone trend of cool grays to warmer tones. In 2024 it seems the pendulum is beginning to find balance by moving out of the monochrome space and re-introducing multidimensionality with color palettes that combine the cool and the warm. Color schemes are going one step further by focusing on the layering of colors with varying lightness, darkness, texture and tonality.

Within the search for balance in color, natural earth tones are still striking the right chord. The calming powers of the blues and greens will continue to serve your resort guests. Complimenting each with warmer wood tones offers the same sense of serenity found in the great outdoors.