The Taylor Creek Charrette

A Citizens’ Master Plan

prepared by

Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council

With and for the citizens of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie Village, and St. Lucie County.

Acknowledgements

From the City of Fort Pierce May Robert J. Benton, III; Commissioner R. Duke Nelson; Commissioner Edward Boldt; Commissioner Rufus J. Alexander III; and Commissioner Christine Cole. From the Town of St. Lucie Village Mayor William G. Thieis; Vice Mayor Jim Grimes; Alderman Jim Dormof; Alderman Bo Hutchinson; Alderman Ingrid Van Hekken; and Alderman David Swanz. From St. Lucie County Commissioner Joe Smith; Commissioner Doug Coward; Commissioner Paula A. Lewis; Commissioner Charles Grande; and Commissioner Chris Craft.

This master plan document represents the efforts, ideas, and vision for the future of the Taylor Creek area within the jurisdictions of, the City of Fort Pierce, Town of St. Lucie Village, and St. Lucie County. The designs, illustrations and graphics included within this report are meant to convey that vision and are conceptual by nature.
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**Overview of Process**

**The Process**

The Taylor Creek Master Plan grew out of a public seven-day charrette held April 14 through April 20, 2007. The Master Plan represents the citizens’ vision for the future of the Taylor Creek area within the jurisdictions of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie Village, and St. Lucie County.

The charrette was held at Dockside Inn and Resort in Fort Pierce and was well attended by a diverse cross-section of the community including residents, property owners, and local business representatives. The charrette focused on the study area and the surrounding neighborhoods. Key issues addressed include revitalization of the area as mixed-use neighborhoods, best uses for the waterfront, the potential for opening Taylor Creek to greater boat access, and the future of marine industries in the area.

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council’s Design Studio (Marlene Brunot, Michael Busha, Marcela Cabllo, Wynsum Hatton, and Dana Little) and a team of professionals consisting of ArX Solutions Inc. (Federico Diaz, Lucila Rodriguez, and Pablo Waku); Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. (Shaun MacKenzie); and urban designers (Maria Jose Bendfeldt, Juan Carrascho, Daniel M. Cary, Ignacio Correa, Maria Teresa D’Alba, Steven Fett, Shailendra Singh, Kara Wood, and Annamaria Zampogna) assisted the citizens in studying the many challenges faced by the community, and proposed specific solutions.

During the week of the charrette, the design team set up its studio at Harbortown Marina where the doors remained open to the public all week. Residents regularly visited the studio and made useful comments and suggestions regarding the work in progress.

A presentation of work in progress was held on Friday, April 20, 2007. Residents, property and business owners, and local government staff and elected officials were present.

Work continued following the initial public workshop. A series of final presentations by TCRPC staff will be held during the fall of 2007. This will be a time to collect further citizen and professional input before adoption of the Citizens’ Master Plan by the different jurisdictions.

**The Meaning of “Charrette”**

Charrette means “cart” in French. Various architectural school legends hold that at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, in 19th Century Paris, work was so intense that students frequently continued to sketch even as carts carried their boards away to be juried.

Today charrette refers to a high speed, intense, and very focused creative session in which a team concentrates on specific design problems with citizens and presents solutions.
The study area includes approximately 250 acres of coastal land between Taylor Creek and the Indian River Lagoon south of Naco Road. The area is divided by US Highway 1, which runs north/south along a relatively high and narrow coastal ridge. The property is also traversed north/south by Old Dixie Highway and the FEC Railroad. The area is connected to western neighborhoods by Juanita Avenue and to the barrier island by A1A.

The study area spans three different jurisdictions: City of Fort Pierce, Town of St. Lucie Village, and St. Lucie County. Each was a sponsor for the charrette.

The study area is largely undeveloped or developed by older uses that are ready for redevelopment. The most prominent development features within the study area include the Harbortown Marina, parking houses along the FEC Railroad corridor, older mobile home parks under single ownership, and a shopping plaza anchored by Publix, West Marine, a CVS Pharmacy, limited strip commercial along US 1 and some marine-related industries.

Without a doubt, the study area has the potential to redevelop into a unique and high-value destination. It is located close to the revitalized historic downtown of Fort Pierce. It is a short distance to St. Lucie County Airport. It has immediate boat access to the ocean via one of the best inlets in the region. It is within one of the most desirable sport fishing areas in Florida and within a hundred miles of the Bahamas.

To date, development within the area has occurred without the benefit of a cohesive vision or a master plan to guide development. This has resulted in development that under utilize the potential of this unique location.

The charrette participants recognized the unique features and location of this area and suggested it become a Marine District. The Citizens’ Master Plan reflects this concept and provides a clear vision for how the area should develop and redevelop to maximize its potential.
Marina and other industrial uses are scattered throughout the study area. There is an unprecedented opportunity to expand the economic contribution of marine industries if the obstacles to access can be removed to improve boat transit.

Marine facility just north and outside of the study area.
US Highway 1 is located on top of a coastal ridge providing views to the Indian River as well as lower lying western properties with glimpses of Taylor Creek.

With waterfront potential on three sides, unique topography, easy ocean access, and proximity to downtown Fort Pierce, the study area is strategically located for redevelopment and revitalization. Much of the study area is underdeveloped, and most of the development occurring in the area does not take advantage of this unique location and should, over time, be redeveloped.
CITIES AND TOWNS ARE MADE UP OF NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS WITH EACH NEIGHBORHOOD AND DISTRICT RANGING IN SIZE BETWEEN 40 AND 125 ACRES. WHERE THERE ARE MULTIPLE NEIGHBORHOODS, THEY TYPICALLY CLUSTER AROUND A CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT OR MAIN STREET SHOPPING AREA. WITHIN NEIGHBORHOODS, A DIVERSITY OF USES AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITIES ARE FOUND WITH RESIDENTIAL NET DENSITIES AVERAGING BETWEEN 6 AND 10 UNITS PER ACRE ACROSS THE ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD. SOME HOUSES OCCUR ON LARGE LOTS, AND SOME UNITS CLUSTER AT HIGHER DENSITIES IN THE FORM OF MULTIFAMILY APARTMENTS OR TOWNHOUSES. CITIES MAY HAVE MUCH HIGHER AVERAGE DENSITIES, AND AT HIGHER DENSITIES, A GREATER VARIETY OF SERVICES ARE POSSIBLE WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO HOMES. TOWNS AND CITIES RECOGNIZED BY THEIR CITIZENS TO BE GREAT PLACES TO LIVE SHARE THESE AND THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS.

A WELL DEFINED CENTER AND EDGE. THE BEST TOWNS HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF PLACE. YOU KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE ARRIVED AND YOU KNOW WHEN YOU LEAVE. THEY DO NOT SPRAWL AND MERGE INTO ONE ANOTHER, AND THEY HAVE A RECOGNIZABLE CENTER. THE CENTER IS THE PLACE PEOPLE GO TO SHOP, CONDUCT BUSINESS, GATHER NEWS, AND SEE THEIR NEIGHBORS. THE CENTER USUALLY OCCURS AT AN IMPORTANT INTERSECTION (MAIN AND MAIN) WHERE SHOPS HAVE MAXIMUM ACCESS AND EXPOSURE. THE TOWN CENTER IS TYPICALLY ANCHORED BY SOME IMPORTANT COMMUNITY CIVIC BUILDING SUCH AS A TOWN HALL, LIBRARY, OR COMMUNITY CHURCH. THE CIVIC BUILDING IS TYPICALLY SITUATED ON A PUBLIC GREEN OR PLAZA THAT SERVES AS A RECOGNIZED GATHERING PLACE FOR RESIDENTS.

A HIERARCHY OF INTERCONNECTED STREETS. GREAT TOWNS POSSESS A DIVERSITY OF STREET TYPES SERVING ALL OF THE DIFFERENT PURPOSES THE COMMUNITY REQUIRES AND PROVIDING STRONG INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN A DIVERSITY OF LAND USES. STREETS TERMINATE AT INTERSECTIONS WITH OTHER STREETS FORMING A FINE NETWORK OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION ROUTES. THE BEST PLACES TO LIVE NEVER UNDERMINE THE VALUE OF THE GRID BY CLOSING STREETS TO PUBLIC USE OR GATING OFF NEIGHBORHOODS.

BEAUTIFUL STREETS DESIGNED FOR BOTH CARS AND PEDESTRIANS. STREETS ARE DESIGNED AND VIEWED AS PART OF THE PUBLIC REALM TO BE USED EQUALLY BY BOTH CARS AND PEOPLE. EQUAL ATTENTION IS GIVEN TO THE FUNCTIONALITY AND ATTRACTIONS OF THE STREET TO PEDESTRIANS, CHILDREN, AND AUTOMOBILES. GREAT TOWNS RECOGNIZE THAT LARGE PORTIONS OF THE POPULATION (I.E. THE CHILDREN AND ELDERLY) DO NOT HAVE INDEPENDENT ACCESS TO AN AUTOMOBILE BUT STILL NEED TO BE ABLE TO MOVE AROUND. THE ABILITY TO OWN AND OPERATE AN AUTOMOBILE SHOULD NOT BE THE PREREQUISITE TO ENJOYING A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE. HOWEVER IN MUCH OF FLORIDA, THIS IS EXACTLY THE CASE. SIGNIFICANT PORTIONS OF THE POPULATION ARE EITHER TOO YOUNG OR TOO OLD TO DRIVE, AND OTHERS CAN NOT EASILY AFFORD A CAR. IN THE BEST COMMUNITIES CHILDREN WALK TO A PLAYGROUND, AND THE ELDERLY ARE NOT FORCED TO ABANDON THEIR HOMES OF MANY YEARS BECAUSE THEY CAN NO LONGER DRIVE A CAR.

A DIVERSITY OF HOUSING TYPES AND AFFORDABILITIES. ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY MUST BE ABLE TO FIND A SUITABLE PLACE TO LIVE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. COMMUNITIES NEED A GREAT VARIETY OF PEOPLE TO FUNCTION WELL INCLUDING PHYSICIANS, BANKERS, CARPENTERS, SHOP KEEPERS, TEACHERS, AND BABY SITTERS. IF THE COMMUNITY IS NOT ATTRACTIVE TO A FEW WEALTHY INDIVIDUALS, THERE MAY BE NO ONE TO DONATE MONEY TO BUILD A LIBRARY. WITHOUT SKILLED AND UNSKILLED LABOR, THERE WOULD BE NO ONE TO REPAIR A CAR OR MAINTAIN LANDSCAPING.

PLACES FOR WORK AND SHOPPING IN PROXIMITY TO HOUSING. QUALITY OF LIFE IS IMPROVED WHEN PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO LIVE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO WORKPLACES AND FREQUENTLY USED SHOPPING DESTINATIONS. IDEALLY, MANY RESIDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO REACH CENTRALLY LOCATED WORKPLACE AND SHOPPING DESTINATIONS BY WALKING, VERY SHORT VEHICLE TRIPS, OR EASY ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.

APPROPRIATELY LOCATED SITES FOR CIVIC BUILDINGS. WELL-DESIGNED COMMUNITIES HAVE SPECIALLY CREATED AND PROMINENT LOCATIONS FOR PLACEMENT OF THEIR IMPORTANT CIVIC BUILDINGS SUCH AS CHURCHES, LIBRARIES, SCHOOLS, THEATRES, AND COMMUNITY MEETING HALLS.

PROVISION OF A VARIETY OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES. COMMUNITIES HAVE A VARIETY OF OPEN SPACE NEEDS INCLUDING RECREATION FIELDS, QUIET PLACES FOR MEDITATION, AND SMALL OPEN SPACES WHERE YOUNG CHILDREN CAN SAFELY PLAY WITHIN “SHOUTING DISTANCE” OF THEIR HOMES.

DISTRICTS. LARGER TOWNS AND CITIES OFTEN INCLUDE SPECIALIZED DISTRICTS. DISTRICTS INCLUDE INDUSTRIAL AND RESEARCH PARKS, UNIVERSITIES, AND ENTERTAINMENT AREAS OR ATTRACTIONS. THE BEST DISTRICTS INCLUDE A VARIETY OF USES THAT COMPLEMENT AND SUPPORT THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF THE DISTRICT. THE OBJECTIVE OF DISTRICTS IS NOT TO COMPETE BUT TO COMPLEMENT OTHER SPECIAL AREAS WITHIN A TOWN OR CITY.

CITIZENS’ PARTICIPATING IN THE TAYLOR CREEK CHARRETTE RECOGNIZED THESE PRINCIPLES AND DEVELOPED A SERIES OF REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONSISTENT WITH ACHIEVING THESE CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN THE STUDY. THEIR Vision WAS ARTICULATED IN THEIR DRAWINGS AND PRESENTATIONS AND IS ILLUSTRATED IN THE CITIZENS’ MASTER PLAN.
Citizens’ Requests:

**WELL-DEFINED CENTER, EDGE, AND IDENTITY**
- Announce arrival
- Develop the area with a unique character
- Retain the community's character
- Define the area as a Marine District, a special area that will become an economic engine for the community

**HIERARCHY OF INTERCONNECTED STREETS**
- Maintain Old Dixie Highway for local traffic
- Create a pedestrian/vehicle loop around the study area
- Expand the navigability of Taylor Creek and the L-20 and Belcher canals
- Improve the street network (grid) and transportation system
- Maintain traditional public access to the waterfront

**BEAUTIFUL STREETS DESIGNED FOR BOTH CARS AND PEDESTRIANS**
- Improve the physical appearance of US Highway 1
- Maximize views to the Indian River Lagoon and Taylor Creek
- Civilize US Highway 1 to achieve a sense of place

**A DIVERSITY OF HOUSING TYPES AND AFFORDABILITIES**
- Protect and improve existing neighborhoods
- Create new neighborhoods consistent with the character and scale of the area

**PLACES FOR WORK AND SHOPPING IN PROXIMITY TO HOUSING**
- Create opportunities for marine industry, restaurants, small shops, residence, a hotel
- Create a waterfront district that complements the Fort Pierce downtown waterfront

**APPROPRIATELY LOCATED SITES FOR CIVIC BUILDINGS**
- Add civic uses such as a community building
- Include a public pier for fishing
- Reserve key locations for future civic buildings

**PROVISION OF A VARIETY OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**
- Increase recreation for all ages
- Maintain fishing opportunities and other water-related activities
- Create linear parks that connect to other greenways and parks and that link to other greenway and recreation efforts planned by Indian River County and St. Lucie County
- Minimize impacts to the environment

**Special Projects**
- Provide a regional approach to address drainage
Citizens’ Master Plan

Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
Indian River - St. Lucie - Martin - Palm Beach
TRANSPORTATION: OVERVIEW

During the charrette, a variety of transportation issues were discussed relating both to the roadway system that would serve this area and to the possibility of opening Taylor Creek up to boat access. Issues pertaining the opening of Taylor Creek to boat traffic are treated in the next section of this report.

An appropriate network of streets has never been developed to serve the study area, proposed during the charrette as a special district, named by the residents as the “Marine District.” Currently, the roadway system serving the area only includes two north/south streets (US Highway 1 and Old Dixie Highway) and two east-west streets (Juanita Avenue, which runs from U.S. 1 west across Taylor Creek and A1A, which runs from US Highway 1 to the barrier island). A handful of additional street segments exist, but these segments are really little more than improved access drives serving one or more properties. If the area is to develop appropriately, the first priority must be to plan for the establishment of a good hierarchy of interconnected streets that can efficiently serve the area.

Good street connectivity assures that one can move from parcel to parcel using more than one route. Good connectivity also allows movement between parcels without having to use busy main arteries such as US Highway 1.

The Citizens’ Master Plan establishes an ideal hierarchy of interconnected streets throughout the Marine District. The backbone of the plan includes the conversion of US Highway from the unsightly highway as it exists today into a beautiful and authentic boulevard section that includes frontage streets to accommodate on-street parking and provide slower speeds for local traffic. The frontage roads would be separated from the through lanes by a wide median.

The plan also addresses the important intersection of US Highway and A1A and assures good street connectivity to all parcels within the district. The entire area is provided with a good diversity of interconnected streets. The intersection of US Highway One and A1A is designed as a proper "main and main" mixed-use center and includes an organizing central park feature.

Concerns were also raised regarding the aesthetics of US Highway 1. A fundamental principle of the planning effort has been to view street spaces as part of the public realm and to assure that they are designed to be attractive and comfortable places for people and cars. Attractive streets require attention to scale of buildings that line the streets, the location of these buildings relative to the sidewalk, the street edge, tree plantings, lighting, and street furnishings. All of these issues are discussed further in the report.

A special interest during this charrette was the unique relationship of US Highway 1 to the Indian River Lagoon. US Highway 1 is located at the top of a coastal ridge that sits approximately 35 to 40 feet above the nearby Indian River. As a result, views of the river to the east and views of the lands and creek west toward Taylor Creek are spectacular. Citizens and planners working on the project were anxious to preserve these views, and special attention was paid to protecting view corridors to the Indian River and low areas surrounding Taylor Creek.

Considerable thought was also given to the Old Dixie Highway Bridge crossing Taylor Creek. In an effort to open Taylor Creek to boat traffic, consideration was given to eliminating this crossing. Given the intensity of development proposed within the district and the importance of maintaining maximum connectivity to the adjacent port property and historic Fort Pierce, in the final analysis, it was decided that although the bridge connection could be temporarily removed. It should ultimately be replaced, and consideration should be given to continuing Old Dixie Highway through the port property all the way to downtown Fort Pierce, without merging it with US Highway 1.

Preliminary traffic studies of the master plan suggest that the proposed street network will provide adequate levels of service. Level of service improves for all key intersections except the intersection of US Highway 1 and Old Dixie Highway south of the project. This intersection remains at an acceptable level of service "L." However, this condition could be substantially improved by continuing Old Dixie Highway south without merging it back onto US Highway 1, thus providing two north/south routes between the district and downtown Fort Pierce (see traffic model on page XXX).
The Importance of a Good Network of Streets

One of the objectives of the Citizens’ Master Plan was to improve the street system serving the study area. The proposed street network provides a great variety of routes that can be used to access locations within the study area. Importantly, the proposed network makes it possible to move between locations and neighborhoods without using US Highway 1, thus avoiding congestion of the busiest routes. Small block sizes and good street networks also facilitate pedestrian and bicycle activity by shortening trip lengths.
Improvements to the North Causeway and Bridge

The Florida Department of Transportation has been systematically replacing the bascule bridges that cross the Intracoastal waterway with high fixed span bridges offering approximately 67 feet of vertical clearance. Replacement of the bascule bridge on the north causeway of A1A is being studied, but construction has not yet been scheduled. Currently three options are being considered. The first two land at approximately the same location as the existing bridge and would have motorists cross the FEC Railroad and Old Dixie Highway at grade as they do today before passing up the hill to the US Highway 1 intersection (shown in blue below).

A third option has traffic coming off the bridge remaining at a sufficient elevation to cross above both the FEC Railroad and Old Dixie Highway with no intersection until US Highway 1 (shown in red below). This “swayback” configuration would allow island traffic to connect to US Highway 1 without the delays that might result from passing trains, and it accomplishes this by taking advantage of the proximity and unusually elevated position of US Highway 1 on the coastal ridge. Unfortunately, this design negatively impacts the connectivity of land east of US Highway 1 with the primary north/south artery serving the area and damages connectivity of these properties with island traffic. This proposal additionally results in island visitors ad residents “by passing” Harbortown Maria significantly reducing vehicular trips along its proposed retail. Successful retain (including restaurants) is greatly dependant on traffic volume i close proximity. If island traffic is designed to avoid commercial areas i the Maria District, it could underperform “by design.”

The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes that the landing of any replacement bridge retain the existing landing location as is proposed by the first two Florida Department of Transportation options. Keeping this landing would maintain the highest degree of connectivity within the Marine District and enhance the economic viability of properties east of US Highway 1. Concerns regarding delays due to railroad traffic could be avoided by using the new bridge across the FEC Railroad proposed to the north, which is discussed in greater detail in the Garden neighborhood section of this report.

The Florida Department of Transportation is evaluating three options for replacing the North Causeway Bridge on A1A. The first two land similarly in the existing conditions and cross Old Dixie Highway and the FEC Railroad at grade. The third option is a swayback design that remains elevated until its intersection with US Highway 1 allowing Old Dixie Highway and FEC traffic to pass under A1A.

T R E A S U R E C O A S T R E G I O N A L P L A N N I N G C O U N C I L

Transportation: Improvements to the North A1A Causeway and Bridge

A Beautiful Address

The existing approach from the barrier island to US Highway 1 is car-oriented and unattractive and gives the impression that one is entering a blighted area rather than an important district. The Citizens’ Master Plan suggests splitting east and west bound lanes to create a central green that would be lined by wide sidewalks, plazas, and mixed-use buildings oriented towards the central park space. Building heights facing the park space should be at least 3 stories in order to properly define the space and make it feel like a great outdoor room.

The proposed park space should be designed and detailed like a park and not simply as a wide median in the road. In general, all street spaces should be viewed and detailed as parts of the public realm to be enjoyed by people. Streets should not be viewed as places for cars only. This attitude and approach to road building is the reason so much of our environment is unsafe for pedestrians ad usually repetitive ad unattractive. The narrower section proposed - 2 lanes with on-street parking - was modeled by the team’s transportation engineer and provides adequate capacity, sufficient stacking, and appropriate turning movements (see model on page XXX).
Protecting View Corridors

The Marine District is unique in that US Highway 1 is located 35 to 40 feet above the Indian River Lagoon on a long narrow section of the coastal ridge. This section of the highway provides long views eastward of the lagoon and barrier island and long views westward of Taylor Creek.

Recognizing the unique character of the highway within the Marine District, citizens and planners proposed that these views be protected by orienting the grid system of streets and public squares predominantly east-west. The east-west alignment of streets and buildings assures long views of the Indian River Lagoon, Taylor Creek, and the western neighborhoods.

To further maximize views within the study area, the plan calls for buildings along US Highway 1 that face the road to be taller than buildings below the ridge. This assures the residential value of buildings along the highway and provides the buildings with roof-top views of lower lying areas and long views of the river and barrier island. Residential units facing the east-west streets should be provided with long views from their balconies even if their buildings are off the waterfront. This configuration will add value to the residential units while fostering ownership of the lagoon by all.
One of the unique characteristics of the site is the fact that US Highway 1 sits on top of a narrow elevated coastal ridge providing long views to both the Indian River Lagoon and low lying lands to the west. Buildings sitting along US Highway 1 have the advantage of third or fourth floor views even on the ground floor of buildings.

In developing the plan for the area, careful consideration was given to protecting the view corridors from the principle north/south arteries to the water and from US Highway 1 to the west as well. In most cases, these corridors also provide the neighborhoods with direct access to the waterfront. The diagram at the right identifies these view corridors (black arrows).

Even where elevation differences are too small to provide an extended view of the water, the relationship of a street to the water can be improved by marking the intersection of the street and waterfront with a beautiful structure. The structures should be shared by all residents and provide a focal point or terminated vista on the street. Attractive architectural structures, such as gazebos or towers, are proposed to terminate the streets indicated with red arrows and circles at the right. Where there is sufficient space, the street/waterfront interface might also be celebrated with a public building such as a small chapel or recreation hall.

The proposed street network maximizes views and passage to the waterfront.

View corridors
The intersection of the street and the water can be celebrated with public art and architectural elements such as public gazebos or tower overlooks. Such edifices can be community projects, and when well-executed, these structures can enhance both the address of the street and property values and foster ownership and pride of the natural resources of the area.
Because US Highway 1 is constrained as it enters into the City of Fort Pierce, there is no need for the highway to be greater than four lanes through the study area. The Citizens' Master Plan calls for the transformation of the highway into a true boulevard with four lanes of through traffic. A wide, tree-lined median separates the lanes. Frontage streets run parallel to the highway in front of buildings. Another wide median separates the frontage streets from the through lanes.

The drawing on the right provides an example of what the boulevard section of US Highway 1 might look like within the Marine District. The small one-way frontage streets provide on-street parking for storefronts and residences facing US Highway 1. The parking is essential to successful retail and provides a buffer for the pedestrian between the sidewalk and the busy street. The frontage street with its wide median provides additional buffer helping residential uses to be very successful along the highway.

The wide median that separates the one-way frontage roads from the through lanes of the highway make an ideal location for bus stops and benches as illustrated in the drawing to the right.

The boulevard is contemplated in two distinct sections described in subsequent pages. One section is for commercial and marine-related businesses, and another is for more residential in character. The primary differences have to do with the width of the sidewalks provided and the type and formality of landscaping. Palm trees are preferred in commercial areas to provide clear views of storefronts. Sidewalks are generally wider in commercial areas, to provide for outdoor dining, and more pedestrian traffic.
In the existing condition through the study area, US Highway 1 exists as a four-lane divided highway occupying a small percentage of the right-of-way. Because buildings are set far from the street and are generally only one or 2 stories in height, the street has a poor building height to street width ratio and looks like the kind of place that both residents and visitors prefer to avoid. There is nothing about the design of this highway to suggest that the surrounding area as any value. In its existing condition, US Highway 1 is not a desirable address. Fortunately, there is very little development fronting the highway, and its transformation into a boulevard can easily be achieved.
Illustrated above are the two boulevard sections proposed for the transformation of US Highway 1.

The main differences between these two sections are the types of street trees used in landscaping, the width of the median separating the frontage street from the through lanes, and the width of the sidewalks in front of buildings. Shade trees should be avoided in front of storefronts since shade trees block views and hurt retail. A wider median separating residential buildings from through lanes with a double alleé (row) of shade trees provides better separation and buffer from the street. Within commercial areas sidewalks should be very wide to accommodate larger numbers of people and outdoor dining. Ideally, sidewalk widths in commercial areas should be at least 20 feet wide and can be as wide as 40 feet in busy areas.
Design Guidelines
for Commercial and Residential Streets

Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
Indian River - St. Lucie - Martin - Palm Beach
Design Guidelines for Commercial Streets

Street development should be undertaken with the same care that is given to creation of any other important public or civic space. Streets should be viewed as centers of human activity and designed to be inviting and comfortable places for people to be whether they are in a car or walking.

The most critical issues in designing beautiful and active commercial streets include the height of buildings relative to the width of the street space, the placement and alignment of buildings along the street, sidewalk widths, street trees, landscaping, adequate parking, street furnishings, and lighting.

Height to width ratios. Adequate building height relative to the width of the street is important to provide a sense of enclosure and definition to the street space. Recommended heights will vary with the width of the street and sidewalks, but for four-lane boulevards like US Highway 1, building heights should range between 3 to 5 stories. Smaller commercial streets can feel good with smaller buildings.

Building placement and alignment. A fairly continuous façade of appropriately scaled buildings set close to the street is essential to transforming the appearance of US 1 from that of a highway that divides the community into a beautiful public space that serves as a unifying central “main street” and front door to the area. The consistent alignment of building façades forms the walls of the great outdoor room of the street.

Sidewalk widths. Sidewalks should be very wide on commercial streets. The minimum sidewalk width for a commercial street should be 15 feet, but in important commercial areas that are anticipated to have a great deal of pedestrian traffic, sidewalks might be even up to 40 feet wide. Wide sidewalks provide space for pedestrians, bicycles, tables, chairs, street furnishings, lighting, and street trees.

Street trees and landscaping. The most beautiful streets include strong alignments of regularly placed street trees. Trunks should be clear to at least 12 feet so that retail is easily visible from the street. Palm trees can be used in combination with arcades, but where arcades are not provided it is much preferable to use shade trees such as oaks, black olives, or sycamores. In retail areas, palm trees are preferred to not block the view of signage and windows from the street. Street plantings at regular and small distances from each other is an effective traffic-calming device.

Parking. Whenever possible, on-street parking should be provided at store fronts. Parking lots and garages should be provided at the rear of building and hidden from street view. Parking lots should not front the street in a commercial retail district.

Street furnishings and lighting. Benches, shelters, fountains and signage should be detailed and designed as furniture to be placed within the outdoor room of the city that constitutes the street. Lighting should be pedestrian in scale and full spectrum.
**Ideal Height to Width Ratios**

The height to width ratio of any space generates spatial enclosure, which is related to the physiology of the human eye. If the width of a public space is such that the cone of vision encompasses less street wall than sky opening, the degree of spatial enclosure is slight. The ratio of one increment of height to six of width (1:6) is the absolute minimum to create a sense of spatial enclosure. As a general rule, the smaller the ratio, the stronger the sense of place and oftentimes the higher the real estate value. Spatial enclosure is important on all streets, but is particularly important for shopping streets that must compete with shopping malls that provide very effective spatial definition.

In the absence of opportunities to provide spatial definition by building façades, disciplined tree planting is an alternative. Trees aligned for spatial enclosure are necessary on thoroughfares that have substantial front yards and setbacks.

*Examples of ideal street sections showing height to width ratios from Architectural Graphic Standards by The American Institute of Architects*
Wide sidewalks provide space for pedestrians, children on bicycles, strollers, and a variety of street activities including dining and outdoor cafés. Sidewalks in commercial areas should never be narrower than fifteen feet, and in busy areas may be up to 40 feet.
The greatest and most beautiful commercial streets include a combination of wide sidewalks and formal alignments of shade trees. Random plantings of different species have no place in formal urban commercial landscapes. Trees should be of a single species and size and planted in straight lines.
Wherever possible, on-street parallel parking should be provided at the front of retail shops and businesses. On-street parking provides short-term parking for shoppers and patrons, buffers the sidewalk from street noise and traffic, and helps to define the space of the sidewalk just as buildings define the space of the street. Furthermore, wherever it is provided, parking calms and slows traffic. When traffic slows as a result of on-street parking, it is easier and safer for motorists to see storefronts and for pedestrians to cross the street.

Parking

Parking lots and garages should always be placed at the rear of buildings. They should never front a commercial street. It is impossible to create a beautiful and comfortable street environment when parking lots are allowed to front the street. Gaps formed by surface parking lots undermine the critical objective of providing enclosure and continuity to the street space. Gaps in the continuous façade of retail storefronts and businesses also discourage pedestrian shoppers and as a result hurt the value of the retailing environment.
The main street should be viewed as the living room of the city. In great commercial spaces, as much care is taken in the furnishing and detailing of important commercial street spaces as would be taken in furnishing one's living room.
Design Guidelines for Residential Streets

The most critical issues in designing beautiful residential streets are similar to those for commercial streets and include the height of buildings relative to the width of the street space, the placement and alignment of buildings along the street, sidewalk widths, provision of street trees and landscaping, provision of adequate parking, and how the street is furnished and lighted.

Height to width ratios. In high density residential neighborhoods where buildings sit close to the street, adequate building height relative to the width of the street is important to provide a sense of enclosure and definition to the street space. Where streets are wide, as in the case of boulevards, the sense of enclosure can be enhanced by the use of tall, formally aligned street trees planted in medians. In lower density single family neighborhoods where homes may be set back from the street, the enclosure necessary to make the street feel like an outdoor room can be provided with a continuous alignment of street trees as illustrated in the image at the lower left of this page.

Building placement and alignment. Regardless of the setback, it is beneficial to have buildings align to a build to a single line. In higher density areas, this might be at or close to the sidewalk, and for single family areas, it might include a generous setback to provide front yards.

Sidewalk widths. Ideally, sidewalk width, even in lower density residential areas, should be sufficient so that two people can comfortably walk abreast to one another. In some neighborhoods where streets are narrow and traffic is extremely sparse, sidewalks are unnecessary, and pedestrians can comfortably walk in the streets.

Street trees and landscaping. The most beautiful streets include strong alignments of regularly placed street trees. Trunks should be clear to at least 12 feet so that vehicles can easily pass and pedestrians are clearly visible. On residential streets, tall shade trees such as oaks, or sycamores are recommended.

Parking. Wherever possible, on-street parking should be provided. Within urban residential neighborhoods, on-street parking calms and slows traffic. Parking lots and garages that support higher density multifamily buildings should be provided at the rear of buildings and hidden from street view. Parking lots should never front the street.

Street furnishings and lighting. Benches, shelters, and signage should be detailed and designed as furniture to be placed within the public street space. Lighting should be pedestrian-scale and full spectrum.

Within residential areas, street furnishings can include architectural features that differentiate neighborhoods or streets such as the street entry feature illustrated at the right, which includes a sitting place for children to wait for the school bus. Within residential areas street furnishings can include architectural features that differentiate neighborhoods or streets, such as the street entry feature illustrated at the right, which includes a sitting place for children to wait for the school bus.
Traffic Calming Strategies

The objective of traffic calming is to slow traffic down while still allowing it to travel in an uninterrupted manner through a neighborhood. Traffic calming measures include narrowing streets, planting street trees close to the pavement edge, on-street parking, placing monumets and plantings at mid-intersection, using of pavers at crosswalks, providing bulb-outs to narrow ingress and egress points where streets intersect, and many other methods.

The best traffic calming methods create psychological barriers to speed rather than physical barriers. By planting large shade trees close to the edge of the pavement and creating a canopy over the street, drivers feel they are in a tight space and slow down. In addition, the trees trigger “alternness” as well as parked cars along the sides of the street.

Some traffic calming methods can also be used to beautify the neighborhoods and help create a unique identity. At intersections small islands can be created like the one illustrated, that can include attractive tree plantings and markers or monuments.

As connections and street improvements are made to improve connectivity within the study area, consideration should be given to including traffic calming strategies into the design of the improved street sections. Incorporation of appropriate traffic calming measures will minimize the impact of traffic using the new connections on existing neighborhoods.

Consistent with the principle that streets should be viewed as part of the civic realm of public spaces and should be designed as beautiful places attractive to both people and vehicles, all proposed measures should be beautifully designed and built with high quality materials.
Great residential streets include the same components as beautiful commercial streets: building alignment, wide sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and on-street parking. The best residential streets are narrow with on-street parking on both sides and large street trees planted close to the curbs. Both these elements combine to dramatically slow and constrain traffic flow. They differ from commercial streets in having greater (but still uniform) building setbacks, narrower sidewalks (5 to 6 feet), subdued lighting, and more landscaping.
Expanding Marine Industry Opportunities
Expanding Marine Industry Opportunities

During the charrette, the residents proposed expanding the opportunities available to marine industries by opening up Taylor Creek to boat traffic to access industrial areas further west. The concept would require replacement of several existing bridge crossings and the potential replacement of existing spillways with locks to allow boats to pass further up stream. Such access would provide a safer harbor than the Indian River for boats during hurricanes and access to additional lands for marine industry expansion.

Access further up stream could be provided in phases with the minimum improvement being the replacement of both the FEC Railroad and Old Dixie Highway crossings. This would allow small boats to access a portion of Taylor Creek. Large boat access would require improving the clearance at the US Highway 1 crossing as well. Further expansions could occur via opening the L-20 Canal to the north or west via the Belcher Canal.

After the charrette concluded, these options were further evaluated. Since more usable acreage can be accessed along the L-20 Canal, this is the option that was considered the most viable. This option could be implemented in phases and are presented for consideration on the following pages. The option should be carefully considered, and a cost/benefit analysis needs to be conducted by St. Lucie County and the City of Fort Pierce.
In order to expand marine industry opportunities and boat access to the west, both the FEC Railroad crossing and the Old Dixie Highway crossing will have to be converted to either bascule or vertical lift type bridges. Temporarily the Old Dixie Highway bridge could be removed without immediate replacement, however as the area grows this crossing will ultimately be needed to maintain connectivity with the port property and downtown Fort Pierce, and in order to prevent falling below acceptable levels of service at the US Highway 1 crossing.

Removing and replacing the low bridge crossing will open up a portion of Taylor Creek to small boat traffic. In order to allow large boat and sail boat access would require replacement of the US Highway 1 crossing with a bridge of much greater clearance. Access to significant land for marine industry activities, including storage, construction, and maintenance, will require accessibility beyond Juanita Avenue.

Replacement of the existing low fixed span crossings will be expensive, but the importance of marine industries to the regional economy and the potential benefits associated with providing for their growth and expansion within the region, suggests that the cost benefit relationship associated with making these improvements should be carefully considered by both St. Lucie County and the City of Fort Pierce, and if warranted, should be pursued.
The Vertical Lift Bridge

A vertical lift bridge is a type of movable bridge in which a span rises vertically while retaining a parallel relationship with the deck. The vertical lift offers several benefits over other movable bridges such as the bascule and swing span bridge. Generally, the vertical lift bridge costs less to build. The counterweights in a vertical lift bridge are required to be equal to the weight of the deck. With a bascule bridge, the counterweights must weigh several times more than the span being lifted. As a result, heavier materials can be used in the vertical lift bridge's deck without multiplying the weight needed in the counterweight. Consequently, this type of bridge is especially suited for heavy railroad use.

Although most vertical lift bridges use towers each with counterweight, some use hydraulic jacks located below the deck. The towers associated with most vertical lift bridges can be very attractive and represent an opportunity to mark the water entrance to an area with a beautiful piece of civic architecture as illustrated in the drawing above.

A potential disadvantage to the vertical lift bridge is the height restriction that results from the deck being above the waterway. However, since the degree of vertical lift can be designed to accommodate the same sized vessels that are accommodated by high fixed span bridges throughout the region, this is not an important consideration.

Since the Old Dixie Highway and FEC Railroad crossings are so close to one another, consideration should be given to combining both crossings on to a single bridge. This approach would seem feasible since the modifications will be funded by the public. During the charrette, the design team met with FEC Railroad representatives who deemed the vertical lift bridge not only feasible but the preferred option.
"Bascule" is a French term for seesaw and balance, and a bascule bridge operates on this principle. A bascule bridge is a drawbridge with a counterweight that continuously balances the span throughout the entire upward swing to provide clearance for boat traffic. It is the most common type of movable bridge in existence because they open quickly and require relatively little energy to operate. They also have the advantage of providing the highest vertical clearance for vessels such as sail boats.

Due to the need to rapidly open and close a bridge on a busy highway such as US Highway 1, a bascule bridge would likely be the best alternative to the existing fixed span.

Use of a high fixed span alternative is not recommended along US Highway 1 at this location because of the narrow width of the crossing needed and because the ramp required to accommodate a fixed span would adversely impact access to a large number of properties including the port property to the south.

While the Florida Department of Transportation is reticent to building bascule bridges on state roads due to traffic interruptions, the industrial nature of the proposed access could limit the openings to limited times and/or days ensuring minimal or no impact to the flow of traffic on US Highway 1.
EXPANDING MARINE INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES: IMPROVING ACCESS - EXPANSION PHASES

The first phase of opening opportunities for expansion of land for marine industries would require the following:

1) conversion of the FEC Railroad crossing over Taylor Creek from the low fixed span bridge that currently exists to either a draw bridge or a vertical lift bridge (65-foot clearance)
2) the removal of the existing Old Dixie Highway Bridge until it be replaced with either a draw bridge or vertical lift bridge (also 65 foot clearance)

Replacement costs for the FEC Railroad crossing are estimated at approximately 20 million dollars. Replacement of the Old Dixie Highway Bridge would cost a similar amount (source FEC Railroad).

Removal of these obstacles to boat access would open 625 feet of frontage to large boats and approximately 8.5 acres of potentially usable and shielded land between Old Dixie Highway and US Highway 1 for servicing large boats. Since the US Highway 1 crossing has sufficient elevation to accommodate small craft, an additional 8,100 feet of water frontage would be available with approximately 1,400 feet of this frontage having sufficient depth to accommodate upland activities such as storage. This 1,400 feet of frontage is associated with approximately 32 acres of potentially usable land (illustrated in the Phase II diagram).

The Phase II of opening opportunities for expansion of land for marine industries would require conversion of the US Highway 1 crossing over Taylor Creek from the fixed span bridge that currently exists to a bridge with greater clearance. In order to avoid impacts to surrounding properties, either a draw bridge or a vertical lift bridge could be used.

Replacement costs for the US Highway 1 crossing are estimated at approximately 30 million dollars.

The improvement of this bridge to allow large boat access would open an additional 8,100 feet of frontage to large boats and approximately 32 acres of potentially usable land along an additional 1,450 feet of frontage suitable for servicing large boats.

These improvements in combination with Phase I improvements would open up a total of 8,725 feet of water frontage for docking; 2,075 feet of frontage suitable for marine industry use; and an associated total of 40.5 acres of land (indicated above in red).
The final phase of opening opportunities for expansion of land for marine industries would require the following:

1) A lock on Taylor Creek at the existing spillway
2) Conversion of the North 25th Street crossing over Taylor Creek from the existing fixed span bridge to a bridge with greater clearance. Sufficient land appears to be available to allow the elevation of the road to provide the necessary clearance using a fixed span bridge. Canal dredging would likely be necessary.

Replacement costs for the North 25th Street crossing are estimated at approximately 20 million dollars. The improvement of this bridge to allow large boats to pass would open an additional 23,500 feet of frontage to large boats; more than 240 acres of potentially usable land along; and an additional 10,500 feet of frontage suitable for servicing large boats.

These improvements in combination with earlier phase improvements would open up a total of 40,875 feet of waterfront for docking; 16,025 feet of frontage suitable for marine industry use; and an associated total of 324.5 acres of land (indicated above in red).
Marine District Neighborhoods
Marine District Neighborhoods

The Marine District has been divided into three neighborhoods: Garden Neighborhood to the north, Indian River Neighborhood south of the Juanita Avenue axis and east of US Highway 1, and Taylor Creek Neighborhood west of US Highway 1.

All of the neighborhoods are planned to have a mix of uses with taller buildings along the redesigned boulevard section of US Highway 1 and lower buildings of 2 or 3 stories off the ridge along the Indian River and Taylor Creek. Although all the neighborhoods would include an appropriate mix of uses, the Garden Neighborhood would be largely residential. The preponderance of shopping opportunities, entertainment, and workplaces would be located within the Indian River or Taylor Creek Neighborhoods with a core, focused on the area where A1A intersects with US Highway 1.

Traditional planning principles were used throughout the district. Block sizes were kept small, and a fine network of interconnected streets were proposed to facilitate vehicle and pedestrian activity without roadway congestion. As already noted, a special and deliberate effort was made to orient the street grid east and west to provide views of the Indian River Lagoon and Taylor Creek. Special care was also taken to maximize the public access to the waterfront via the layout of proposed streets.

The plan includes a great diversity of street types ranging from the proposed boulevard section for US Highway 1 to winding lanes that traverse some of the park lands along the waterfront. This diversity helps to provide the variety of addresses and conditions that are necessary to make a great place.

Care has also been taken to design the streets to be beautiful parts of the public realm where people will enjoy walking and spending time. Even the busiest street can be a comfortable place to spend time if it is well designed.

Besides the provision of shopping and workplace opportunities in proximity to where people will live, the plan also includes a variety of park spaces and sites suitable for civic buildings such as meeting halls and churches.

The strong consensus of the design professionals, who assisted in developing the citizens' ideas and vision for the Marine District, is that this area constitutes an outstanding and unique real estate that has the potential to become a world-class destination to live and work and is an important engine to Fort Pierce and the region. Remarkably, the area remains largely undeveloped, and what development has occurred can easily be redeveloped overtime to conform to the vision of the Citizens' Master Plan.
To a great extent, the Indian River Neighborhood is the gateway to Fort Pierce from the north and east whether traveling by land, sea, or air. The Citizens’ Master Plan is designed to assure that the district makes a strong first impression of the area.

Keys to the success of the plan are the redesign of US Highway 1 as a boulevard with frontage streets and on-street parking, the proposed network of streets including two new north/south streets east of the FEC Railroad, the central park at the intersection of A1A and US Highway 1, and the development of the area using appropriate building types with authentic architectural styles.

The neighborhood is proposed as mixed-use with residential, office, shopping, and working waterfront uses. The area also has the potential to develop as an attractive resort destination centered on the proposed Harbortown redevelopment and could include the Fishing Village and the redevelopment area just north of the causeway. The extent to which the economic value of this successful resort destination can be maximized will depend greatly upon how interconnected the neighboring parcels are to the core area.

The Citizens’ Master Plan illustrates how this should occur. Of paramount importance is that the entire neighborhood be perceived as a continuous urban area (i.e. an authentic town and not as isolated projects).
The Harbortown Marina includes the land east of the FEC Railroad, north of Taylor Creek, and south of the north A1A causeway. The property exists largely as a wet slip marina with pull out and repair and storage for larger boats including sailboats. The marina possesses a small amount of retail and office uses that support the marina operation. The north-west corner of the parcel holds as a small office building.

The Citizens’ Master Plan suggests that the wet slip operation be expanded, and the large boat repair and storage moved over time to the adjacent property between FEC Railroad and US Highway 1. The proposal includes approximately 24,300 square feet of office uses; 34,800 square feet of retail including restaurants; approximately 300 residential units; a hotel and conference center; and a dry-storage facility. Harbortown has the potential to develop as a world-class resort destination.

The proposed plan is pedestrian orientated with the street network having a strong east-west orientation; emphasizing views to the water and marina, and encouraging pedestrian use of the wide waterfront promenade.

Parking is largely consolidated into a single, centrally located garage or as on-street parking. Since first floor elevations are likely to be higher than current elevations (in order to meet FEMA flood standards), additional parking may be provided under buildings provided that the ground floor remains at level with the public realm (i.e. a level underground deck over which development occurs).
Harbortown and the nearby Fishing Village to the west have the potential to develop into a first class resort destination. The property is close to revitalized historic Fort Pierce, the port, and the St. Lucie County Airport and has excellent ocean access. With the Bahamas less than 100 miles away, the project represents a good "jumping off" place for Bahamas trips. The property has the opportunity to offer permanent anchorage for mid-sized power boats and sailboats.

The proposed hotel, associated conference center, and marina anchor the resort. Currently, no high-end hotel serves the Fort Pierce area. Residential units proposed as part of the development could be marketed with the potential to be pooled as vacation rental properties when owners are not in residence.
Harbortown is proposed to be anchored by a hotel, a possible conference center, and a grand ballroom for wedding receptions. The hotel is proposed to have an elegant Mediterranean architectural style that is consistent with the theme of historic hotels throughout Florida. It is proposed as a five story courtyard building with a taller tower element that serves as a graceful landmark at the junction of Taylor Creek and the Indian River Lagoon. The hotel is to be a place that contributes significantly to making Harbortown a popular destination.
Virtual Tour of Harbortown

The above illustration represents a virtual tour of Harbortown looking east down the proposed extension of Sunny Lane between US Highway 1 and the waterfront promenade along the face of the project.

Streets within the district emphasize the east-west orientation to assure connectedness to the water and Indian River Lagoon views from both the street and facing residential units. The street is provides on-street parking, wide sidewalks, proper lighting, and street trees to encourage pedestrian activity. The proposed building height varies between 2 and 4 stories with the hotel having the potential to be taller. The building to the right conceals a parking garage that serves a large part of the project.

The illustration above shows the Approach to the waterfront. A small public green can be seen to the right. This space is illustrated as a green but could be designed as a landscaped plaza. The space is sized to serve as a gathering place for residents and visitors and is surrounded by retail uses such as restaurants or cafés at the street level.

Along with the promenade, the surrounding storefronts and restaurants are important to keep the space of the green or plaza active, interesting, and safe.

Sidewalks are wide, and on-street parking is provided on both sides of the streets surrounding the civic green.

Crosswalks are proposed with pavers to highlight the pedestrian crossing and slow traffic with the texture change.
The Harbortown marina is proposed to expand and improve as part of the redevelopment project. The marina's location is ideal for sailboats and large powerboats due to its direct access to the ocean. The existing project includes live-aboards, and this capability should be included within the expanded facility to ensure maximum pedestrian activity.

Improvements include extension of some of the docks and design changes to minimize the need for maintenance dredging. Dock levels are below the level of the promenade, to provide a degree of privacy to the marina.

A wide pedestrian promenade would front the marina and be lined with retail shops, restaurants, and cafés at the street level. The promenade should be designed as an important public space with care given to the landscaping and furnishings. The wide sidewalks facilitate outdoor dining and provide a venue for art and craft festivals and other public events.

In the distance, Harbortown Marina could be seen a 2-story building with a tower that is proposed to be a waterfront restaurant and entry feature to the marina from the water.
The promenade should be viewed as the main street of the Indian River Neighborhood, and the shared outdoor room of both the proposed residential area and the marina. It should be detailed and managed as civic space where people can stroll, sit comfortably, and enjoy the unique atmosphere of the area. The promenade should attract pedestrians from the project and the surrounding neighborhoods to the north and to the west.

The proposed space is wide enough to allow for outdoor dining and a large amount of pedestrian traffic.

Landscaping includes a formal row of palms that do not obstruct the view of the marina and shade trees within the plaza.

Viewed from the water, the Indian River Neighborhood has the scale and look of a beautiful Mediterranean port town.

The project has been simulated and drawn with Mediterranean style architecture. Both Mediterranean and Florida vernacular architectural styles dominate historic Fort Pierce, and both styles are recommended for use within the marina district study area.

The proposed hotel is located at the extreme left of simulation above and sits at the junction of the Indian River Lagoon and Taylor Creek. It has the potential to become a landmark and entry feature into the district visible from both the water and from US Highway 1.
Harbortown has been designed as an authentic neighborhood within a seaside town. The primary differences between the Citizen’s Master Plan proposal and actual Mediterranean towns are the provision of parking and, consequently, the proposed density. Historic Mediterranean towns typically have much higher densities and much less parking. If Harbortown is to develop as a resort destination, every effort should be made to minimize the areas for to parking and maximize the density within the scale proposed by the Citizens’ Master Plan.

Due to the project’s proximity to historic downtown Fort Pierce and other proposed redevelopment areas, consideration should eventually be given to encouraging the development of a water taxi service.

The promenade along the marina terminates on a small peninsula of land that has been proposed for a special building of sufficient architectural character that serves as an icon for the project. As designed, the building reminds one of a custom house with a bell tower. Functionally, it is an ideal location for a quality restaurant accessible by both land and water.
Until the bridges are modified to accommodate direct access by large boats, short-term access to the proposed facility can be provided by pulling boats at the existing lift point east of the FEC Railroad crossing and transporting the boats overland on a lift to the site via an existing rail crossing just to the north. The route of overland transport is highlighted in yellow on the proposed plan illustrated to the left. The heavy-lift facility would be relocated to the property once the bridges are eliminated or replaced culminating the need for overland transport.

Eliminating the bridge obstructions into Taylor Creek would not only open up the land north of the creek to marine industry uses but also allow access to land south of the creek adjacent to the port property.

The proposed Fishing Village is to the north of the marina operation and accommodates a variety of single and multi-family residential buildings. The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes that the frontage along US Highway 1 be used to house larger courtyard multifamily residential buildings with parking provided below grade and accessed by the street near the base of the ridge. Because of the rapid elevation change between US Highway 1 and the small street just east of the highway, parking can be provided under the buildings entirely hidden from the street. Larger multi-family apartment or condominium buildings make sense facing US Highway 1 for a variety of reasons. These building types can tolerate the busier street and would act as a buffer the single family residences from noise. Additionally, larger buildings are needed to hold the space of the street along US 1.

The interior blocks of this site accommodate single family residences although some might be built to a larger scale to serve as bed and breakfast establishments. Given the proximity of this block to Harbortown, these residences can serve as an extension of the resort-like atmosphere of Harbortown and can provide attractive rental properties for visitors.

Residential uses can easily be accommodated in proximity to the marine industrial area if close attention is paid to the architecture of the industrial buildings and the work areas are laid out well and properly maintained.

Working Waterfront and Fishing Village

In its current condition, the area just north of Taylor Creek between US Highway 1 and Old Dixie Highway includes residential and industrial uses. Marine industrial uses have not developed along the Taylor Creek frontage since access to the creek frontage from the Intracoastal Waterway is precluded by the low Old Dixie Highway and the FEC Railroad bridge crossings.

The Citizens’ Master Plan envisions replacing the existing FEC Railroad crossing with a vertical lift bridge and eliminating the Old Dixie Highway Bridge crossing until it can be designed as a draw bridge or lift bridge. The plan suggests that the open air-marine industrial uses and boat barns that currently exist east of the FEC Railroad should be relocated to the area between US Highway 1 and Old Dixie Highway on better protected and less valuable land. The plan proposes redevelopment of this area as working waterfront with a portion of the land reserved for a fishing village.
Industrial Buildings

Large industrial buildings do not have to be an eyesore that stands out the landscape negatively affecting neighboring property values. There are many historical examples of architecturally attractive industrial buildings that were eventually converted into residential condominiums and apartment buildings.

In order to achieve the advantages associated with living close to places of work, it is important that workplace structures be designed attractively so that they can be good neighbors to residential uses.

The example above illustrates how minor modifications to the façade of the dry storage building can transform a boat dry storage barn into an attractive building.
As envisioned in the Citizens' Master Plan, the Working Waterfront and Fishing Village are natural extensions of the Harbortown. The Fishing Village is directly connected to the mixed-use working waterfront by a street, and the waterfront and commercial uses within the district are a short walk from the village. The residential buildings within the village may be single family homes or vacation rental properties.

The Fishing Village can operate in a similar manner to Seaside, located in the Florida Panhandle, and some oceanfront condominiums. Properties are owned by individual families as second homes and managed and rented by real estate offices as vacation properties when the owners are not in residence.

Residential buildings within the Fishing Village should be encouraged to follow the historic models characteristic of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie Village. The fabric of the village should be tight with small outbuildings encouraged. Outbuildings should be sized to be used as small apartments or rental properties. Main houses can vary in size from small bungalows to larger structures that serve as bed and breakfast accommodations. Examples of appropriate small and large residential structures are provided on the following pages.
Residential buildings within the Fishing Village should reflect the historic architectural styles that characterize Fort Pierce and St. Lucie Village. Residential buildings can vary in size with some large enough to support bed and breakfast operations.
Examples of residential structures within the area that would be appropriate for use within the Fishing Village. The large residence at the lower right currently is an apartment building and could serve as a prototype for a bed and breakfast.
Interim Improvements

Although redevelopment of the Marine District could proceed quickly, it is likely that some uses such as the packing facility that exists between the FEC Railroad and Old Dixie Highway (illustrated above), will remain in place for a period of time. There is no reason that such businesses could not remain within the district. However, it is important that consideration be given to their physical appearance to assure that they can be good neighbors to the redevelopment areas surrounding them. Design is particularly important within mixed-use neighborhoods where residential uses are encouraged to occur in proximity to workplace and shopping.

In this example above of the packing house, this industrial building would share Old Dixie Highway with office and residential uses proposed across the street as redevelopment occurs. Sitting between Old Dixie Highway and the FEC Railroad, the building shields adjacent properties from railroad noise, but it would be an even better neighbor if façade improvements were made along the street face of the building. The drawing above shows how simple design changes to the façade and landscaping improve the look of the street and help minimize impacts.

As property values increase within the district as a result of redevelopment, all property owners benefit, and every effort should be made by the local governments within jurisdiction to encourage such improvements.

A guiding principle of successful redevelopment is to assure the attractive quality of the street space recognizing that the streets are very much a part of the public realm and the front door to the community. Attractive streets require that building face them, and the landscaping and street trees help enhance and form the walls of a great outdoor room.
Looking south along Old Dixie Highway at the façade improvements suggested for the existing citrus packing plant that sits along the FEC Railroad.
Taylor Creek Neighborhood

The Taylor Creek neighborhood includes the area west of US Highway 1 along Taylor Creek. It is prominently an existing under utilized shopping center that serves the area anchored by a Publix grocery store, a CVS pharmacy, and West Marine.

The entire area is proposed for redevelopment with many of the existing uses retained, phased, and reorganized into a more efficient, attractive, and urban format. The neighborhood includes shopping, workplace, moderate to high density residential uses, and a new marina along Taylor Creek. The marina allows boat access to the shopping area but can only be developed if the Old Dixie Highway and FEC Railroad obstructions to boat traffic are removed or modified. Small boats can move under the US Highway 1 crossing, and if it is replaced with a bascule bridge, the marina could also serve larger boats. Parking within the shopping area occurs behind buildings in hidden surface parking lots at mid block or in the form of on-street parking.

The proposed central park is formed by splitting east and west bound traffic along the alignment of A1A (page 15) and extends from Old Dixie Highway to the new marina at Taylor Creek. The park is the organizing center and core to the Marine District neighborhoods.
Existing Conditions

The above illustration shows the current configuration of the intersection of US Highway 1 and A1A. Commercial uses are seemingly scattered without much care to the public realm in a very suburban form. To a large extent, this is due to the fact that the area had no master plan for development that suggested and educated the potential value of the district as an important part of Fort Pierce and the region. In the absence of a well-articulated community vision, commercial developers focused on the value of the US Highway 1/A1A intersection and developed it following conventional suburban models that are entirely auto-oriented and are completely inconsistent with the character of the communities that surround it.

Although some of the uses that occur are fairly new, the shopping center and several other properties have high vacancy rates and appear to be under performing, seemingly approaching obsolescence and ripe for redevelopment. The proposed plan increases development potential of this area both in terms of allowable intensity and as a result of having a consolidated vision for the area.
The proposed plan at US Highway 1 and A1A

Proposed Plan

The Citizens Master Plan calls for the area to redevelop as an authentic and beautiful mixed-use neighborhood. The neighborhood serves the commercial needs of the surrounding areas, provides a great place to live, and creates a beautiful gateway to Fort Pierce and surrounding neighborhoods. The above proposal retains all of the existing uses and reconfigures them to an urban form designed with a more appropriate mix of uses and a character that makes it attractive as a place to live, shop, work, and visit.

Streets within the area are treated as beautiful public spaces that encourage pedestrian activity and serve as functional automobile routes. US Highway 1 is transformed into a boulevard with frontage streets that can accommodate on-street parking at storefronts along the boulevard with wide tree-lined sidewalks to encourage outdoor dining and pedestrian activity. Dixie Highway is divided to create a central park and focal point to the heart of the Marina District (see page 15).
Existing Condition

This area is not likely to redevelop all at one time, and proposal is a phased approach for redevelopment that minimizes impacts to existing properties.

Phase I

The first phase would be the redevelopment of the Publix grocery in a larger format with a mixed-use building that could include many of the existing retail uses on its ground floor, structured parking, and residential or office uses above.

Phase II

Once the new grocery and retail area is completed, the old strip mall is raised to make space for the next phase of development including the potential marina on Taylor Creek.

Phase III

The reconfiguration of US Highway 1 into a boulevard is critical to the successful redevelopment of parcels facing the street, and this should occur as soon as possible. Ideally, this reconfiguration should occur before development happens or concurrent with redevelopment.
Phase IV

The fourth phase of development includes the mixed-use blocks and buildings fronting US Highway 1 and Taylor Creek and the proposed marina if the replacement of the FEC and Old Dixie Highway bridges proceeds. The park and US Highway 1 would have ground floor commercial uses.

Phase V

Phase V includes predominantly multi-family residential uses in proximity to the central commercial area.

Phase VI

One of the design challenges of the area is how to provide for service stations in a manner that does not undermine the aesthetics of the area. Phase VI proposes a mixed-use reverse service station building where pumps are hidden behind the main building that pulls up to the street.

Phase VII

The final phase of the redevelopment includes replacement of the CVS Pharmacy with a larger mixed-use building that accommodates the pharmacy use on the ground floor.
The typical modern gas station and convenience store model often includes a building at the center of the parcel that functions as a convenience store. Pumps are arranged on the street side or sometimes both the front and rear of the property. With no building holding the street, this arrangement has a negative effect on the streetscape and prevents the proper enclosure of the street space, which is necessary to make the place feel comfortable to pedestrians and motorists.

Furthermore, in retail areas, service stations represent a significant disruption in street frontage and interfere with pedestrian activity. Shoppers will walk a fair distance as long as they are presented with interesting retail storefronts. When faced with any significant break in the retail frontage, shoppers will stop walking and turn back.

Gas stations are a particular problem at major intersections, which traditionally should be the Main and Main center of shopping activity. Gas companies prefer these locations as ideal places to capture auto traffic but end up damaging a potentially strong main street retail opportunity with their presence.

The negative impact of service stations could be reduced by moving them away from Main and Main intersections and by requiring them to pull their convenience store up to the street like a traditional corner store. They should place the pumps and any car-related services in the rear, as in the illustration to the right demonstrates. The key is to require the stations to contribute to holding the space of the street by facing it with store fronts and including enough massing to properly enclose the street. This means that on very wide streets the building should not be one story but several stories.
Approaching the neighborhood center from the south

Continuing the approaching the neighborhood center from the south

Virtual Tour

The neighborhood includes a diversity of street types including this 2 lane street divided by a landscaped median illustrated on both images above. This street connects the proposed Taylor Creek Marina at the neighborhood center with Taylor Creek and the waterfront drive.

On-street parking is provided to support storefronts and offices. Residential uses are envisioned above the ground floor although some buildings could be entirely residential in this area. The sidewalks are wide and separated from the street by parking. The majority of parking is provided in surface lots located mid-block behind the buildings so that the parking does not damage the integrity of the street space.

The simulation continues the approach to the neighborhood center shopping area. The street terminates with a tower element.

Care should be given in the design of buildings to provide attractive architectural termination to the street vista. Wherever this is done well, it creates real estate value along the entire street. Important locations within the plan should be required to provide a high standard of architecture.

Approaching the neighborhood center, retail and business uses become more probable as ground floor tenets, and the buildings should be designed to accommodate such uses. Flexible building types should be designed to accommodate a variety of uses over time.
The new Taylor Creek Marina can be seen on the above left with a building to service the marina’s needs for office space, restrooms, etc.

The marina is a viable option for inclusion within the plan providing the FEC Railroad and Old Dixie Highway crossing of Taylor Creek can be improved to provide vertical clearance. Currently, small crafts can access the site without modification to the US Highway 1 crossing. The new marina represents a more protected harbor than the Indian River during hurricanes. However, use by sailboats and larger boats requires modification of the US Highway 1 crossing of Taylor Creek.

The new marina also becomes a unique terminating vista for those driving west on A1A and a unique location where views of the India River and Taylor Creek are possible from the top of the ridge on US Highway 1.

Besides providing expanded wet slip storage in an area with a growing demand, the proposed marina would provide an attractive destination for pedestrians within the district. The more pedestrian activity that can be generated the more viable are the retail storefronts within the neighborhood.

The Marina District has the potential to become one of the most beautiful and sought-after addresses in the region. However, realizing this potential will require careful attention to assure that all of the individual development proposals adhere to the goals and objectives reflected in the Citizens’ Master Plan.
View along the street fronting the new Taylor Creek Plaza at the proposed mixed-use shopping area
The sideyard single-family homes illustrated above left represent an urban residential type that do well within the more urban mixed-use portions of the Marina District. The units are fairly large and have private side yards and rear alley garages. The garages can be single story out-buildings or 2 stories to accommodate a small ancillary apartment.

The yards are walled to provide privacy within the urban environment, and the rear alleys provide a managed location for utilities and garbage collection. Parking is off the alley within the garages, and guest parking is on-street parking.

The image on the above right shows one of the many street types provided within the district. This one has been includes a neighborhood park. Small parks within neighborhoods provide places for children to gather and play within shouting distance of homes. When included within the neighborhood, a degree of security is provided by the homes that overlook the parks.

Where attractive parks are provided within neighborhoods, they always increase the value of properties surrounding them. Oftentimes, this increase in value accrues out for some distance (at least 700 feet).

Too often small parks are overlooked in favor of large managed facilities in urban areas. This is a mistake that adversely impacts the quality of life in neighborhoods.
Including parks within neighborhoods provides natural places for locating public art and monuments. As an area matures, there is a need for such places. In beautiful places, residents will often contribute to the adornment of areas they love.

Building heights away from the elevated coastal ridge and US Highway 1 should be lower than those along the boulevard section of the highway. Taller buildings are needed along US Highway 1 to properly hold the space of the street, and the naturally high elevation provides for long views over the lower lying neighborhood areas such as the one above.

Off of the ridge, building heights should range between 2 and 3 stories as illustrated above right. Buildings along the boulevard should range between 3 and 5 stories.

The park above is includes a place where people can sit and talk or wait to be picked up for a ride home. Although the illustrated design is not particularly expensive, it is very attractive and gives the street an appropriate degree of elegance and formality.

In general, urban landscapes should be formal and not attempt to mimic natural landscapes that occur in more rural settings. Furthermore, since urban landscapes are compact, there should be no excessive obsession with xeriscape and use of native species. Such practices make sense within the countryside and suburbs, but the emphasis within urban areas should be entirely on beauty. Landscapes need to be maintained at the highest level within urban areas as well.
The townhouse designs to the right show how elegant high-value residences can be provided within a townhouse configuration.

Three different designs are provided within the illustrated increment of development. The designs vary between 2 and 3 stories on the street, and all include outbuildings at the rear alley. Outbuildings can be 1 or 2 stories. The 2-story versions include granny flats or small ancillary apartments above the garage.

The concept of small apartments above garages should be encouraged as a natural and easy way to increase the stock of affordable housing. Such apartments are perfect for students and singles, and where they exist, they take market pressure off of limited supplies for more traditional rental units. Ancillary apartments can also help to maintain the affordability of larger units since they can generate income. However, they should only be allowed to be rented when the owner of the property lives in the main house.

Townhouses should always be provided with alley access to rear garages or parking areas. The alley provides a convenient location for utilities and assures that the public face of the street side is never littered with garbage cans and other unsightly elements.

The units illustrated vary in size, but all include small side courtyards large enough to include a lap pool or formal open space. Townhouses can also vary in size within the same development increment providing a diversity of housing types in close proximity to one another.
Front façade of the townhouses illustrated in plan on the previous page
One of the advantages of townhouse building types is that they can provide moderately high densities in a very attractive form. The small townhouse units illustrated above are only 24 feet in width, and may have a depth of less than 40 feet. Three story versions of this type allow parking to occur at the first floor rear of the building, and therefore, townhouses can be built on very shallow lots.

This building type is perfect for shielding parking garages and the sides of big-box retail stores in mixed-use neighborhoods. An alley separates the building to be shielded from the townhouse units.

The sideyard house is another urban residential type that is suitable for areas intended to have moderate residential density. The sideyard house is set at the property line on one side of a narrow lot forcing the green space and yard to one side. This arrangement assures that even on small lots a usable garden space can be provided. Typically, the side of the building facing the neighboring yard is limited to high windows to prevent views into to private space of the adjoining unit. This is known as the "privacy side."

Both unit types are raised at least 18" above grade, to prevent pedestrians from looking directly into the interiors of the residences through windows facing the street.
The mix of residential types should also include apartment buildings and condominium types similar to these buildings proposed to face Taylor Creek.
The Garden Neighborhood includes the northern portion of the study area from Taylor Creek to the Indian River Lagoon. It is envisioned as a predominately residential neighborhood with a modest amount of neighborhood commercial and workplace uses. Most of the commercial uses are proposed fronting US Highway 1.

The main feature of the Garden Neighborhood is the large amount of proposed green spaces and parks that includes protection of the green spaces along the Indian River Lagoon. The design concept for the area calls for the parks to treat storm water runoff and prevent the degradation of the Taylor Creek and the Indian River Lagoon. The parks would also provide passive recreational opportunities to the surrounding residential areas and can include some informal play fields.

Consistent with plans for the other neighborhoods, a diverse hierarchy of interconnected streets is provided with an emphasis on linking Juanita Avenue across the FEC Railroad by a bridge to the waterfront park and proposed public fishing pier. The proposed bridge would provide traffic relief during train crossings on A1A and connectivity to the coastal properties, which would otherwise only be accessible off of the A-1A crossing of the FEC Railroad.
Currently access to properties east of the FEC Railroad is very limited. Within the study area, one private crossing point has been approved by the FEC north of A1A, and this approval would not allow general public access. In order to incorporate this important property into the district and to facilitate public use and access, an elevated bridge crossing or expanded FEC approval would be necessary.

The proposed bridge has been designed as an attractive architectural element to the park landscape. It would not be an excessively expensive structure, and it would open a large amount of valuable waterfront land to both private and public use. In addition, such a crossing would provide emergency relief as an alternative route across the FEC from A1A when trains are passing. Blocked traffic at the FEC Railroad crossing could move north along either of two proposed new streets and access the bridge from the street leading to the proposed public fishing pier.

The cost of this bridge would likely be justified based upon the real estate value created by the improved access to waterfront properties.
The proposed bridge across the FEC Railroad in the Garden Neighborhood. Sufficient space appears to exist to construct a bridge with adequate rail clearance between Old Dixie Highway to the west across the FEC Rail Line to the proposed park land along the Indian River Lagoon.
Civic building looking into one of the many Garden Neighborhood parks.
The Parks and Greenways

The Marina District is proposed to include a wide variety of parks and greenways. Some are intended to be designed as formal urban spaces, and others would be more natural in design intended for passive recreational uses such as picnics and fishing.

Wherever beautiful park spaces are provided, the quality of life is improved, and real estate values are enhanced. Market studies indicate that home buyers are willing to pay a substantial premium for properties adjacent to or even near a beautiful park space.

The proposed park system serves several functions that also assure its reality. Parks provide passive recreation and informal play areas, treat storm water, and prevent degradation of the Indian River Lagoon and Taylor Creek. The proposed greenways are designed to link to prior City and County efforts and plans.
Storm Water Management

In order for the Marina District to redevelop expeditiously at the densities required to create attractive and viable mix-use neighborhoods, storm water management requirements should be met area-wide and provided as an urban utility service. Such a system would be more efficient and better managed than trying to meet drainage requirements on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Properties served by the area-wide system could pay for service as a utility charge.

The idea of meeting storm water requirements on a parcel-by-parcel basis is discouraged since it is less efficient and precludes realizing the full development potential of the district. It would also compromise the compactness required to form attractive streets and good pedestrian neighborhoods.

Given the elevations and soil conditions along US Highway 1, development fronting on the proposed boulevard could be served along with the highway by an exfiltration system located within the separation median of the road. Development on lower elevations should be provided with an urban storm sewer system designed to collect runoff from individual projects and route it to dry and wet retention systems that are incorporated into the proposed park system.

Dry and wet retention systems can be incorporated attractively into parks if thoughtfully designed. The systems should be designed to meet water quality standards and at the same time, fit well into the landscape design of the park. Wet systems can be designed as attractive water features, and dry retention systems can be used as informal play areas during the extended dry season.
Indian River Historic Park

The proposed park along the Indian River Lagoon at the north end of the Marine District has the potential to be unique and serve educational purposes. The proposal includes traditional amenities such as a public fishing pier and picnic areas. It could also be designed to depict the life of the early settlers that homesteaded along the Indian River Lagoon. The property includes a few historic structures, and others could be relocated to the site to recreate the atmosphere of a historic Indian River homestead. Development and management of the facility could perhaps be undertaken by the Historical Society. Fort Pierce, St. Lucie Village, and St. Lucie County have a rich and interesting history that should be protected in a way that allows future generations to directly experience life on the Indian River.

The following pages include design considerations for the other park properties included with the Marine District.

Fast, shallow-draft sharpies were once favored craft along the Indian River and throughout south Florida. With the centerboard up, these boats could skim across shallows only 14" deep and were used to deliver mail and for other purposes.

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Parks and greenways should include a diversity of landscapes: some formal and others naturalistic. In all cases, they should be managed and maintained as if they were a botanical garden rather than left overland.

Landscaped to include a tiered sitting area, and a formal row of shade trees, a storm water management facility can be converted into a very special dual purpose park space.
Park lands should be designed with beautiful views and focal points. Focal points such as sculptures and interesting buildings encourage pedestrians to walk. Shelters, fountains, and large-scale sculptures can provide accents and interest two paths and streets within the park.
IMPLEMENTATION
The Marine District includes significant development and redevelopment opportunities. There is no doubt that this area will redevelop, but in order to assure that redevelopment improves the quality of life within the community and enhances property values in surrounding neighborhoods, it is important that the redevelopment conform to a master plan for the area adopted jointly by the City of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie Village, and St. Lucie County.

In order for a redevelopment effort to fully succeed, it is essential that there be a clear and well-thought understanding of how the area should develop and how properties should interact to create the best value and environment within which people will live and work. This vision must be articulated in the form of a detailed master plan that forms the primary basis for reviewing development proposals within the area. The objective of this master plan is first to maximize the value of the area in terms of property values and its contribution to the quality of life of residents. Secondly, it is to provide assurance to developers and potential investors in the area that their property will increase in value as neighboring properties are developed. Developers need to understand what specific objectives the local governments are working to achieve, and what is likely to happen on adjacent parcels of land in the future. They need assurance that what will happen next door will not adversely impact the value of their own investment.

In the absence of a detailed master plan, most redevelopment efforts will fall short of their potential or in some cases will fail. In the absence of a master plan, property owners often do not invest in redevelopment for fear of missing out on some hoped for future opportunity, or out of fear of what might happen on neighboring parcels. Often what development is proposed without the guidance of an overall strategy for redevelopment turns its back on the surrounding properties and tries to wall or gate itself off from neighboring parcels. The result is rarely good.

Because of this need for assurance and certainty, it is equally important that having adopted a carefully considered master plan, the plan is very rarely changed, and never changed to accommodate a particular project. If the development community perceives that the local governments are not committed to their plan, uncertainty rears its head, and quality developers will shy away.

**Keys to Success**

There are two important keys to the successful redevelopment and revitalization of the Taylor Creek Marina District. The first is recognition that the general principles outlined on page 7 of this report represent a fundamental paradigm for city building that should form the basis for most, if not all, planning decisions. The Citizens’ Requests (page 8) and the Citizens’ Master Plan itself (page 9) were developed based on these general principles, and individual development approvals should be judged based on consistency with them.

The second key is to assure that projects proposed within the local governments’ jurisdictions are designed to interact and support one another and the area as a whole. The best way to assure this is by requiring a high degree of consistency with the adopted master plan.

**Priorities and Project Management**

The Citizens’ Master Plan represents a vision intended to guide governmental actions and investment toward a well-defined objective. The plan is comprehensive and includes a large number of proposed improvements and redevelopment opportunities. Not all of these opportunities should be pursued immediately. Attention and resources should instead be focused on those opportunities that are strategically most important to achieving the long-term objectives of the plan.
Items requiring Immediate Attention

The City of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie Village, and St. Lucie County should assign an experienced senior level redevelopment team with responsibility for shepherding all existing and proposed development within the study area to consistency with the Citizens’ Master Plan. The established team should work together and regularly communicate. It will take months to develop and adopt into law all the zoning code and comprehensive plan changes that may be needed to assure that redevelopment proceeds in the manner proposed in the Citizens’ Master Plan. Any changes made to the plan in one jurisdiction must be coordinated with adjoining jurisdictions to assure successful implementation.

Until this process is complete, the responsible jurisdictions cannot rely on the normal development review and approval process alone to be successful. During this interim period while plans and implementing ordinances are being developed and adopted, the jurisdictions must be creative and persuasive to accomplish their objectives. It is vital that the team work aggressively and in partnership with one another and developers to encourage and facilitate full implementation of the plan. The key to success will be to demonstrate to developers that being consistent with the plan will be more profitable, quicker and easier than not being consistent.

High Priority Items

The City of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie Village, and St. Lucie County should adopt the Citizens’ Master Plan by resolution as the vision of these jurisdictions for the ultimate build-out of the Marina District. This is a critical first step toward moving forward with the revitalization of the corridor.

The City of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie Village, and St. Lucie County should assign an individual or team with responsibility to shepherd the Citizens’ Master Plan and all required implementing ordinances through the review, approval, and adoption process. It is important that someone in each jurisdiction be designated as the person responsible for assuring that the Citizens’ Master Plan for the Taylor Creek Marina District is expeditiously adopted and that all comprehensive plan, zoning, and land use changes necessary to assure implementation of the plan are processed. The study area is already experiencing rapid growth and development pressure, and achieving the objectives of the plan requires that land use and zoning policies be put in place to assure that new development proceeds as envisioned. It is recommended that a team representing planning, design, and law be assigned the responsibility.

The most difficult task may be to convert the existing Floor Area Ratio (FAR) approach to zoning to a model based on building form. It is necessary to assure that no Bart Harris taking claims result from the conversion, which is accomplished by assuring that landowners have as much or more development potential after the conversion as they did before. Ideally, the revised code should provide incentives for redevelopment of lands, but this must be done in a way that the value of the property is not increased without desired redevelopment occurring. If land value is increased without requirements for construction of the desired product, it may have the effect of slowing the redevelopment process, since landowners ask too much for property.

This problem has generally been best addressed by providing limited duration zoning incentives. A significant increase in development potential, consistent with the goals of the plan, is provided for a limited and defined period of time and becomes effective only if the required building type is actually built within the specified time frame. This is a “use it or lose it” incentive. Nothing prevents the landowner from proceeding with development of the base amount allowed in the plan after the incentive period runs out, but the bonus of density (or other specified incentive) is only granted if development actually occurs within a typical 4 or 5-year period. This allows the local government to provide incentives that do not permanently increase the value of land, which is very important to maintaining growth.

The City of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie Village, and St. Lucie County should begin negotiations with Florida Department of Transportation regarding proposed design changes to the US Highway 1 Corridor. It is important that as soon as possible, these jurisdictions share with Florida Department of Transportation their design objectives for US Highway 1 and begin working with the Florida Transportation Agency in designing the corridor so that the necessary changes are integrated into the plan while still protecting the character of the corridor.
Department of Transportation to develop funding and implementation strategies. Attention should be focused on assuring that any improvements to this highway are designed in conformance to the proposed vision included within the plan. There is a long lead time required to coordinate and implement significant changes, and it is critical that the Florida Department of Transportation be made aware of the proposed design changes as quickly as possible so that opportunities are not lost. Priorities for US Highway 1, within the study area include:

1) conversion of the highway to a boulevard with a maximum of 4 through lanes, 2 in each direction, and frontage streets with parking as detailed in this report;
2) a center median and side median between the through lanes and frontage street planted with continuous row of canopy shade trees or tall, elegant, closely-spaced palms, per the plans provided;
3) 15 to 20 foot sidewalks (as described in the plan) with a continuous row of canopy shade trees on each side of the street within boulevard sections of the plan;
4) bricked pedestrian crossings with appropriate signalization at indicated intersections
5) accommodations for future changes in intersections and signalization as required by the plan particularly as necessary to accommodate the design changes to the proposed intersection of US Highway 1 and A1A;
6) decorative pedestrian level street lights;
7) either buried utilities or utilities that have been relocated to proposed alleys.

It should be noted that the jurisdictions may need to participate in the funding of some items outside of normal Florida Department of Transportation practice. The purposes of early negotiations with Florida Department of Transportation is to share with them design objectives, gain an understanding regarding the costs that the local governments would be responsible for, and schedule for improvements so that the local governments can properly budget and require from all new development. What is most important is that no action is allowed that would preclude the ultimate implementation of the street sections proposed.

The City of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County should expeditiously evaluate the costs and benefits associated with converting the FEC Railroad crossing to a vertical lift bridge and likewise the benefits and costs associated with conversions to the Old Dixie Highway crossing and that of US Highway 1 over Taylor Creek. There are a number of potentially valuable benefits to opening Taylor Creek to boat traffic, and these should be carefully evaluated as soon as possible. Benefits include enhancing the redevelopment potential of the entire Taylor Creek Marine District and to the economy of the region as a result of expansion of marine industry activities. Benefits might also include safe harbor opportunities during hurricane events.

Evaluations should also include conversion of the Juanita Avenue Bridge, a lock on the L-20 Canal, and any dredging and expansion of that canal to provide access to potential inland marine industry sites. Depending on the results of this analysis, discussions should proceed with Florida Department of Transportation, the FEC, and South Florida Water Management District regarding steps necessary to implement the changes. If the decision is not to proceed, amend the plan to remove any features dependent upon these conversions (e.g., the proposed Taylor Creek Marina).

Any existing Community Redevelopment Areas with jurisdiction over the study area should...
IMPLEMENTATION

update their plans to make them consistent with the adopted master plan. Such action is necessary to give the Community Redevelopment Area board the authority to implement aspects of the plan.

Moderate Priority Items

Each jurisdiction, including any Community Redevelopment Areas, should develop a series of “project tear sheets” that describe in detail each of the projects proposed within the Marina District and should use these during the budget process to prioritize projects for funding. Illustrated below are examples of project tear sheets. Sheets may be simple and short. For complex projects, such as the provision of street infrastructure to a large project, tear sheets may be several pages long. The tear sheet summarizes all essential information regarding the project including goals, objectives, estimates of cost, management responsibility, and funding sources. These concise documents are extremely helpful in prioritizing projects for funding and for promoting projects with other agencies. The development of tear sheets takes the implementation of the plan a step forward beyond the conceptual level in the direction of construction.

Example of “Project Tear Sheets”

The City of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County should establish an expedited review process. A process should be established that makes it easy for developers to get approvals for projects that are consistent with the adopted master regulating plan, and zoning code, especially within any Community Redevelopment Area boundaries. Expedited reviews are provided as incentives to projects that are found to conform to the adopted master plan and implementing ordinances.

Longer Term Priorities

The City of Fort Pierce should work with property owners and St. Lucie County to accomplish the annexation of unincorporated portions of the Marine District into the City’s jurisdiction. It seems logical that the Marine District be viewed as a natural expansion of the City of Fort Pierce. Further the administration of the master plan would be facilitated by having the entire area administered by one entity. For similar reasons, the City should enter into an agreement with St. Lucie Village to assure the smooth implementation of the plan.
Funding Sources

Tax Increment Revenues: Tax Increment Revenue is typically the major source of funding for redevelopment projects under the State of Florida Community Redevelopment Act.

Redevelopment Revenue Bonds: Section 163.385 of the Florida Statutes empowers the city to issue Revenue Bonds to finance redevelopment projects with the security of the bonds based on the anticipated assessed valuations of the completed community redevelopment. In this way, "tax increment" is used to finance the long-term bond debt.

Interest on Redevelopment Trust Fund: Any interest that may be earned from deposit of Trust Fund monies may become a part of the funds used for redevelopment activities.

Industrial Revenue Bonds: Chapter 159, Florida Statutes, cites the Florida Industrial Development Act, which authorizes the use of Industrial Development Revenue Bonds to finance certain types of capital projects for private development.

General Obligation Bonds: Some jurisdictions have also issued General Obligation Bonds for projects within the Community Redevelopment Area area. These bonds are secured by debt service millage on the real property within the City and typically must receive voter approval. For example, sports stadiums are often partially funded by such bonds.

Special Assessment Districts: This is a tax system whereby property owners within the district agree to pay an additional fee or an ad valorum tax to raise funds for specific projects, which will benefit them. This approach could be used to fund improvements within the SR 7 corridor that are over and above what Florida Department of Transportation and the respective jurisdictions are willing to contribute.

Land Sales and Leases: Cities may acquire and sell land or property.

Contributions and Donations: Voluntary contributions by private companies, service organizations, individuals or foundations are a potential source of income for special or popular projects, particularly those of a civic nature, such as building parks, or perhaps a beautiful bridge or public building.

Foundations: Several communities have researched the purpose and intent of foundations and designed portions of their Plan to attract grants from a particular foundation. Foundation money is often a good source for training and education programs.

Public/Private Ventures and Partnerships: Some redevelopment projects have been designed to stimulate additional private investment and were accomplished through public/private ventures or partnerships. The City can give assistance to a developer in the assembly of land for a private development.

In return, the developer may be obligated for building renovations, street, landscaping, sidewalk and other redevelopment improvements. The private contribution may also be through direct contributions, or payment to assessment districts.

Community Contribution Tax Incentive Program: This program was created by the Florida legislature to encourage corporate involvement in community revitalization. This program allows businesses a fifty-percent tax credit on Florida corporate income tax or insurance premium tax for donations to local community development projects. Donations must be made through an eligible nonprofit corporation conducting a City approved community development project such as affordable housing.

Direct Borrowing: The City is empowered to fund redevelopment projects and programs through direct borrowing of funds. Depending on the particular projects, the City may utilize both short and long-term borrowing.

Enterprise Zone Investment: This program is designed to encourage increased business in distressed areas. The State provides property tax credits, jobs tax credits, partial building sales tax refunds and partial sales tax refund on business equipment purchased.

Utility Enterprise Funds: Several communities in Florida have used "enterprise funds" to fund infrastructure improvements in their redevelopment areas.

Private Business Development Program with Banks: Banks may incorporate a subsidiary to provide loan assistance not normally permitted for commercial banks. The loans are used to help start or expand business operations, as long as the purpose is related to community development and not to just simply a conventional commercial loan.

Bank Reinvestment Pools: Many cities have developed a cooperative approach with local lending institutions to supplement the funding for their community redevelopment program. The Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 requires banks to define a service area, assess local credit needs and make efforts to meet the community's needs. The Citizens' Master Plan may serve as the basis for goal establishment and planning by local lending institutions.

Property Improvement Grant Programs: Several communities have established grant programs that are used for facade improvements and building renovation. These programs are usually directed towards improvements that have a high potential for stimulating additional private development in the area. Several communities have used State Programs and private investments to initiate a revolving grant program. For example, Chapter 80-249 of the Laws of Florida offers a 50% credit against state corporate income taxes for contributions of up to $200,000, for community development with the contributions used as a direct grant or to start a revolving loan fund.
County, State and Federal Grant Programs: Funding may be available from several Federal and State agencies, such as the Department of Community Affairs and the Florida Department of Transportation.

Economic Development Administration Grants: This federal agency provides grant to fund public works projects. This grant/loan program assists distressed communities to attract industries, encourages business expansions and primarily focuses on generating long-term, private sector employment opportunities.

Small Business Administration (SBA): The Small Business Administration is a federal agency that provides low-interest loans to business people who cannot qualify for standard commercial loans. This loan program has been used to encourage economic development by assisting small business start up and expansion within the Community Redevelopment Area districts.

Ongoing Assistance

The principal jurisdictions have put together teams of very competent professionals with wide ranging and extensive planning and redevelopment experience. Their greatest difficulty with implementing the recommendations of this report will undoubtedly be time. A large amount of time consuming work will be needed to move this plan forward expeditiously.

The Regional Planning Council has developed a team a experts that can provide cities with supplemental man power and experience, should time constraints make such assistance necessary. The Council can direct City, County and Village staff to model ordinances, RFPs, models for design competitions, and development regulations and codes that can simplify the task of developing these documents. Assistance in actually preparing such documents is available on a contractual basis from other the RPC and many experienced town planning firms.
PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS - WORKING AT TABLES

Views of the residents drawing and sharing their ideas

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
INDIAN RIVER - ST. LUCIE - MARTIN - PALM BEACH
PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS - WORKING AT TABLES

Views of the residents drawing and sharing their ideas

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
INDIAN RIVER - ST. LUCIE - MARTIN - PALM BEACH
PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS - CITIZENS PRESENTING THEIR PLANS

Views of the residents presenting their ideas

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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INDIAN RIVER - ST. LUCIE - MARTIN - PALM BEACH
PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS - CITIZENS PRESENTING THEIR PLANS

**Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council**

**Indian River - St. Lucie - Martin - Palm Beach**

Views of the residents presenting their ideas.

Design team studies the citizen-drawn plans.
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Images from the April 2007 Taylor Creek Charrette held in Fort Pierce, Florida.