Royal Poinciana District Charrette

A Plan to Preserve the Community’s Character.

prepared by

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
with and for
THE COMMUNITY OF PALM BEACH
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

This public process is the result of the hard work of many people who truly care about the Town’s future. Our sincere gratitude to all those who participated during the public event and visited the studio during the week, and special thanks to Mayor Jack McDonald, President Richard Kleid, President Pro-Term Gail Coniglio, Councilman Denis Coleman, Councilwoman Susan Markin, Councilman David Rosow; Planning and Zoning Commissioners: William M. Gutman (Chairman), Alan S. Golboro (Secretary), Lowry M. Bell Jr., John Schuler, Leslie A. Shaw, Walter Anthony Dowell, Eugene Lawrence, Floyd L. Wideman, Jr., (Alternate), Martin I. Klein (Alternate), E. James Ryan (Alternate), Charrette Steering Committee members: Mayor Lesly Smith - Chair; Wendy Victor - Vice Chair; Gerry Goldsmith-Secretary/Treasurer; Alex Anlyan, Ned Barnes, Page Lee Bell, Jeff Cloninger, Elizabeth Dowdle, Gerald Frank, Ida Goldstein, Arnold Hoffman, Paul Leone, Mayor Yvelyne “Deedy” Marix, Kit Pannill, John Ripley, Jimmy Ryan, Sidney Spiegel, and Rebecca Williams; staff members: Peter Elwell, John Paige, Paul Castro, Veronica Close and Tim Frank; the Palm Beach Civic Association, the Palm Beach Preservation Foundation, and Lee Goldstein and the Citizens’ Association of Palm Beach.
INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Summary</th>
<th>Chapter VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Charrette Process</td>
<td>Breakers Planned Unit Development: Providing Certainty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Announcing Arrival: A Dignified Entrance to the District</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Analysis: Improving Vehicular Flow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Poinciana Plaza: Honoring the Past, Adapting for the Future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Poinciana Way: The Town’s Commercial District</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Parking: A District-Wide Strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter VII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Retail: A Complete and Healthy Environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter VIII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoning: Analysis and Preliminary Recommendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter IX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Plan To Preserve The Community’s Character. A Guide For Future Generations

ENVISIONED BY THE RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES WORKING TOGETHER, THE ROYAL POINCIANA DISTRICT MASTER PLAN IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AND UNIFIED VISION FOR THE FUTURE GROWTH OF THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT OF THE ISLAND.

The Town of Palm Beach is a model for inspiration and wonder. It is one of the best examples in Florida and throughout the United States of a complete, sustainable community. It is also as one of the most beautiful. The graceful character of the Town is the result of the application of traditional town planning principles, an interconnected network of streets and blocks, world renowned architecture, remarkable civic spaces and a complete and integrated mix of uses. The design of the Town was not accidental. It was masterfully planned in 1929 by Bennett, Parsons and Frost of Chicago.

Like most Towns and Cities, Palm Beach is adapting, and constantly reacting to change. For the first time since the original 1929 plan, the community of Palm Beach has united to address specific planning issues for the Royal Poinciana District, and to create a plan that will not only ensure that growth and inevitable change happen in the community’s terms, but that this generation leaves as worthy a legacy to future generations as the one inherited in the 1929 plan.

The Royal Poinciana District Master Plan represents a community’s vision for character preservation, evolution, and unification of the Town’s commercial district. It represents the ultimate growth and form of a special district within the Town.

The main ideas were developed during a design charrette held from February 21 through 29, 2008.

The Charrette, conducted by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC), was organized with the help of the Charrette Steering Committee: a group of dedicated residents, property, and business owners appointed by the Town Council, who met weekly for 2 ½ months to plan the event and coordinate public outreach. This committee
is also charged with reviewing this Report, together with the Town Council, different boards, and staff, on behalf of the residents and property owners of Palm Beach.

The public workshop session of the Charrette was held at St. Edward’s Catholic Church, and was well attended by over 200 residents, property and business owners, representing a good cross section of the community.

During the week of February 23-29, 2008, TCRPC’s Urban Design Studio set up its office at 201 Chilean Avenue, where the doors remained opened every day between 9:00am and 9:00pm for the community to observe the work as it progressed, and to provide additional input. Between 50 and 70 residents visited the studio daily.

The University of Miami’s Historic Preservation Studio assisted the design team. Their work was used as the basis to guide many of the decisions during the week of the charrette.

While some of the student’s work is included in this report, it is of such quality and value to local architects, planners, historians, and just interested residents, that it is worthy of a special, separate publication.

A presentation of work in progress was held on February 29, 2008, at the Breaker’s Hotel, where, with over 200 attendees, additional input was taken into account. Work continued in the weeks that followed the initial public workshop, leading to a presentation of a draft report on April 7, 2008.

During the Charrette, the citizens, with the assistance of a professional team of consultants working in conjunction with the TCRPC, studied the many challenges affecting the study area, and proposed specific solutions. The overall Master Plan and specific project plans and sketches included in this Report are conceptual in nature, provided to graphically illustrate one possible solution to an identified problem or opportunity. They are not meant to represent the only solution, but to provide a starting point for additional discussion and detailed design.

**This Report is not intended to be an all-or-nothing solution to the planning problems afflicting the area.**

It is structured as separate chapters.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - THE CHARRETTE PROCESS

goal. It is an effort to achieve a general sense of unity within the Town. The Citizens’ Master Plan attempts to identify common goals that will unite residents and business owners, both of whom are stakeholders, both of whom are intrical to the ultimate success of the Town. It quickly became evident during the charrette that there are strong difference of opinions between some that view the Town as a residential enclave, and the needs of the Towns’ commercial property and business owners.

The Town of Palm Beach is a complete unit. As such, it needs both a safe and diverse residential realm, and a healthy and successful business environment. Having these two work together and support each other is probably this Plans’ most difficult but important accomplishment.

THE COMMUNITY’S REQUESTS
Under the constant premise of preserving the character of the District, keeping the scale low, human, and organic, the community drew up plans for the area to achieve the following:

1. CREATE A DIGNIFIED ENTRANCE TO THE DISTRICT BY:
   a. Building the new bridge with a design comparable to that of Center Bridge;
   b. Extending the multi-use regional path under the Flagler Memorial Bridge;
   c. Extending the multi-use regional path south of the Flagler Memorial Bridge;
   d. Redesigning Bradley Park so it is still passive, but more town-serving
   e. Creating a green, linear park along the north end of Royal Poinciana Plaza, eliminating the sea of parking that currently greets those entering into Town.

2. IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:
   a. Royal Poinciana Way and County Road Intersection;
   b. Royal Poinciana Way and County Road Intersection;
   c. County Road
   d. Sunrise Avenue (Publix)
   e. Sunset Avenue (Publix)

3. REVITALIZE, PRESERVE, AND ADDRESS REDEVELOPMENT PRESSURE IN THE ROYAL POINCIANA PLAZA:
   a. Preserve historic buildings and architecture;
   b. Make more active, as it was when it was first opened;
   c. Allow for a public waterfront;
   d. Shield parking

4. REVITALIZE, PRESERVE, AND ADDRESS REDEVELOPMENT PRESSURE IN THE ROYAL POINCIANA WAY
   a. Preserve historic buildings and architecture;
   b. Create zoning regulations consistent with what the community wants to preserve;
   c. Preserve the scale and character

5. ADDRESS ZONING CONFLICTS:
   a. As development occurs, ensure that the character of the town is preserved;
   b. Ensure the preservation of historic buildings and contributing structures,
   c. Make building “the good easy and the bad difficult”

6. IMPROVE OVERALL PARKING
   a. Create a district-wide parking strategy; and,

7. CREATE CERTAINTY REGARDING THE BREAKER’S PUD ENTITLEMENTS

CHARRETTE STEERING COMMITTEE
Mayor Lesly Smith - Chair; Wendy Victor - Vice Chair; Gerry Goldsmith - Secretary/Treasurer; Alex Anlyan, Ned Barnes, Page LeeBell, Jeff Cloninger, Elizabeth Dowdle, Gerald Frank, Ida Goldstein, Arnold Hoffman, Paul Leone, Mayor Yvelyne “Deedy” Marix, Kit Pannill, John Ripley, Jimmy Ryan, Sidney Spiegel, and Rebecca Williams.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE WEEK-LONG CHARRETTE WEEK - THE TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS AT WORK
CHAPTER I: ANNOUNCING ARRIVAL
A Dignified Entrance to the District
ANNOUNCING ARRIVAL: A DIGNIFIED ENTRANCE INTO TOWN

THE FIRST IMPRESSION

During the Charrette, the community identified certain improvements to elements and parcels in and around the western entrance to the District (entrance from the Flagler Memorial Bridge) that would improve not only the overall aesthetics, but also solve some difficult and dangerous conditions for pedestrians and automobiles. Those improvements include:

a. FLAGLER MEMORIAL BRIDGE: A New Bridge with Design Comparable to that of Center Bridge.

The Flagler Memorial Bridge is one of the three bridges that connect the Town of Palm Beach to Florida’s mainland. It spans the Lake Worth Lagoon as well as the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW), and has a bascule system (lift bridge) to allow for larger vessel traffic.

Recent bridge inspections conducted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) show that the bridge is structurally deficient for the following reasons:

• The bridge sub-structure was graded a 4 on a scale of 10,
• The remaining bridge structure was graded a 32.4 on a scale of 100,
• Previous inspections have noted exposed steel at several bridge locations.

Additionally, the bridge does not meet current FDOT and US Coast Guard standards, and is considered functionally obsolete by these agencies because:

• Lane widths are 10 feet. The current FDOT standard is 12 feet,
• Handrails do not conform to current design standards for impact loading,
• Vertical clearance over the ICW is 17 feet. The current standard is 21 feet,
• Horizontal clearance at the navigable channel is 80 feet which is less than the current standard.

The FDOT is currently in the process of doing a “Project Development and Environment” (PD&E) Study to evaluate various bridge replacement and design alternatives. In anticipation of this process, the Citizen’s Master Plan proposes a new design, consistent with FDOT’s standards, comparable to the design of the Royal Park (Center) Bridge and including the features the community desires for this entrance.

Above: Bird’s eye view of the west entrance into Town. Residents and visitors are greeted by an exquisite park to the north, and a suburban parking lot to the south.
Various details of the proposed design are depicted in this report. Classical architecture, a signature tower, decorative lighting with a design based on that of the historic lanterns, and balustrades, ornament the New Flagler Memorial Bridge as proposed by the Citizens’ Master Plan.

The Citizens’ design allows for the preservation - but re-location due to FDOT’s widening of the bridge - of the historic pylons, such that they are visible from both the top of the bridge, as well as from the underpass.

In addition to exemplary design features, the Citizens’ Master Plan proposes to incorporate a site for a statue at the foot of the bridge. The design of this art piece should be the focus of an international competition to honor Henry Flagler’s memory, emphasize arrival to the Royal Poinciana District, and feature Palm Beach and its commitment to the arts.
b. Extend the Multi-Use Regional Path Under The New Bridge

During the Charrette, residents expressed the desire to extend Palm Beach’s Multi-Use Regional Path under the Flagler Memorial Bridge. The idea was to create an underpass similar to the one currently existing on the west side of the Royal Park bridge. The design team tested this idea, and determined the construction of an underpass is feasible given the height, width, and columniation space the FDOT is proposing.

He suggested that if the community decides to support this extension, Town officials should make a formal request to the County’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Town should request that the construction of this regional facility be incorporated and paid by FDOT during the construction of the bridge.

The fundamental condition for agencies like the FDOT and MPO to fund this regional facility is that it be clearly public in nature.

Not just feasible: County commissioner Jeff Koons, who attended the charrette, visited the design studio.

Left: A view of the connection under the Royal Park Bridge in West Palm Beach. Top Left: Plan and elevation views of the Flagler Memorial Bridge as proposed by the Citizens’ Master Plan. Bottom Left: Detail of proposed connection under the Flagler Memorial Bridge and relocated pylons such that they become visible from the top of the bridge and from the underpass. Opposite page: Detail of the Multi-Use Path extending along the shoreline of Royal Poinciana Plaza as it is redeveloped to achieve community goals.
c. Extend the Multi-Use Path South of the Flagler Memorial Bridge

The community expressed desire to extend this heavily used path south of the bridge, bordering the waterfront along the Royal Poinciana Plaza, up to the Palm Beach Towers property, where it turns east to continue along Cocoanut Way. Essentially, to make it public south of the bridge, just like it is north of it.

The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes an extension — squaring off — the bulk headed area along the Royal Poinciana Plaza. This would require infilling about 50’ on the northern part of the plaza. Since the construction of the bridge will disturb the lagoon, and much of the debris (concrete) of the old bridge needs to be disposed, and is, in many cases, disposed to create artificial reefs, the Master Plan proposes that this bulkhead expansion be done in conjunction with the construction of the bridge, as part of FDOT’s and the Department of Environmental Management’s (DERM) Lake Worth Lagoon mitigation process.

During the Charrette, the team informed DERM and FDOT of this proposal. It was suggested that the Town request to participate in the mitigation master plan the agencies are developing.

A more in-depth analysis showed the presence of sea grass that would potentially make this expansion out of concrete not feasible, but possible as a cantilevering structure. No matter what option is decided upon, this work needs to involve FDOT and DERM.

d. Redesigning Bradley Park So It Is Still Passive, But More Town Serving

Bradley Park is a signature feature of the Town. But, while loved by all, it is used by very few. A covenant restricts the construction of any fixed structures on the park, so the community proposed certain landscaping and aesthetic improvements to make this park a more Town Serving destination, which include:

- Relocation of the historic fountain that will remain shadowed by the new bridge,
- Relocation of the Historic Pylons that will be necessary due to the construction of the new bridge,
ANNOUNCING ARRIVAL: BRADLEY PARK

- Removal of the tool shed that exists in the center of the park today,
- Leveling (grass) to achieve a more uniform, walkable environment,
- Increased landscaping,
- Passive areas to allow for concerts or small, Town-serving events.
- Facade renovations to the existing pump house as depicted in the image to the right: The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes to renovate the existing pump house (above), with architecture that honors this precious gift to the Town. Vernacular architecture, appropriate proportions, and carved stone architectural elements framing the door, arm this utility building with great dignity.
ANNOUNCING ARRIVAL - BRADLEY PARK: A FORMAL DESIGN

Opposite Page Top Left: View of the pump house. Top Right: Aerial view of Bradley Park. Bottom: Detail of proposed facade improvement to existing pump house.
ANNOUNCING ARRIVAL: BRADLEY PARK: A MORE ORGANIC OPTION
c. Creating a linear park along Royal Poinciana Plaza, eliminating the sea of parking that currently greets those coming into Town. Charrette participants expressed great concern about the sea of parking fronting Royal Poinciana Plaza that marks the first impression into Town. Landscaping and green space, mirroring Bradley Park, with a limited amount of habitable structures along the public right-of-way where expressed as an ideal solution to create a dignified gateway.

The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes to convert the front rows of parking along the entire length of the Plaza into a green lawn with a waterfront piazza, a stoa for bike storage and rental, a waterfront restaurant anchoring the western end, and a mixed use building as a cap to the eastern end of the green, linking the Royal Poinciana Plaza and the Royal Poinciana District. Both these proposed “bookends” to the green are low in scale to allow for the unique and uninterrupted perspective views of the Breakers in the background.
Announcing Arrival: A Dignified Entrance to the Town

Above: Detail from the Citizens’ Master Plan showing the proposed improvements to both sides of the Flagler Memorial Bridge that result in a signature entrance to the District and the Town.
CHAPTER II: TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Improving Vehicular Flow,
Enhancing the Pedestrian Realm
LEVEL OF SERVICE: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE DISTRICT

ROADWAY & INTERSECTION LEVEL OF SERVICE

Florida roadway and intersection performance is rated in what is known as level of service (LOS). LOS is qualified by the letters "A" through "F", with "A" indicating the most favorable driving conditions and "F" representing the least favorable. LOS measures the number of “trips” or vehicles on a roadway at a given time, and also indicates the speed at which those trips or cars can go through that road. The higher (A, B) the classification, the faster cars can go. Intersection classification is an average of the overall wait time for vehicles to sort an intersection during a specified time. Maximum levels of service for roadways and intersections are determined by the local government that has jurisdiction over the facility, and it is mandated at the comprehensive plan level. Royal Poinciana Way has a maximum level of service established at F (it is currently operating at C), and the intersection of Royal Poinciana Way and Cocoanut Way is E, currently operating at C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL OF SERVICE</th>
<th>DELAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&lt;10 Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>10-15 Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>15-25 Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>25-35 Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>35-50 Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&gt;50 Seconds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The intersection of Royal Poinciana Way and Cocoanut Way: A difficult condition both for cars and pedestrians.
Top Left: 2006 turning movements at the intersection of Royal Poinciana Way and Cocoanut Way showing that the intersection is currently operating under capacity both during morning and afternoon. Bottom Left: Turning Movements projected through 2034 show how the intersection is projected to continue to operate below capacity. These numbers, while consistent with the LOS for the intersection, are deceiving, since while this intersection operates with an appropriate LOS, it is one of the most difficult to sort in the region. Above: Traffic Counts (daily and yearly average) for Royal Poinciana Way show a road operating within its projected LOS, both now and through 2034.
Concerns about over development impacting what many in Town perceive as roads and intersections operating over capacity were expressed during the Charrette.

The team conducted a preliminary traffic analysis (based on information provided by FDOT and Palm Beach County) of existing roadway and intersection level of service in the District, considering existing and proposed development through the year 2034. The analysis (included in following pages) established that both the Royal Poinciana Way, and the intersection of Royal Poinciana Way and Cocoanut Way are operating under capacity (that is within the allowable LOS).

Despite the fact that the road and intersection are operating well within their limits, the Royal Poinciana Way and Cocoanut intersection is a very difficult one. This is not a capacity issue, it is an issue of function.

In order to mitigate future traffic impacts and solve current traffic prob-
Above: Computer generated graphic showing the reconfigured intersection which operates more efficiently. This reconfiguration reduces crossing distance for pedestrians, making this a safer environment and a more inviting connection between Royal Poinciana Plaza and the shops at Royal Poinciana Way. The image additionally shows proposed pedestrian connections through the median, allowing for easy access to parking on the south side of the Way.
ROYAL POINCIANA DISTRICT TRAFFIC: THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION

The Department agrees that this is a simple and viable solution, and discussed the possibility of including the reconfiguration of this intersection as part of the Flagler Memorial Bridge project. If this is a solution the Town wishes to further explore, it needs to meet with FDOT and request that this be included in upcoming improvements to the Flagler bridge.

A Longer-Term Solution
While the simple solution will address the current situation, it will not remove any trips from this intersection, or from the intersection of Royal Poinciana Way and County Road. The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes a long term solution to improve traffic flow and overall roadway capacity at both intersections and throughout the entire District: A new, mid-block narrow road connecting Royal Poinciana Way and Sunrise Avenue. A road where the bank sits today, directly aligned with the future municipal garage, with there is a possibility to extend it through to Sunrise Avenue.

Only by adding travel lanes through this District will it be possible to increase overall roadway capacity and create long-term relief for the entire District.

It is critical to design this roadway with much care. This should not be a fast cut through. The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes a narrow, two lane road with on-street parking, slightly angled in an almost medieval way, to ensure slow traffic through this environment. It also needs to be fronted by habitable space, and designed with as much detail as every roadway planned in the original 1929 plan.
View from Royal Poinciana Way at the new north-south street that connects through the District. The computer generated image shows the building on 233 Royal Poinciana Way (green awnings) remaining, with windows added to address the new street. The building north of it is part of the proposed redevelopment of the Testa property (now a parking lot). The building to the left is a long-term proposed reconfiguration of the bank building in a character that responds to the community’s vision for the area.
Looking north along the proposed new street. The computer generated image shows how a small “crank” in the road will slow down traffic, creating an environment that is inviting to the pedestrian. This road will foster a stronger connection between Publix and the stores along Royal Poinciana Wa, allowing these retailers to benefit from the proximity to this important retail anchor.
SPEED, CONGESTION AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Charrette team analyzed traffic conditions on County Road through the study area. Residents expressed concern about the danger posed by narrow sidewalks south of Royal Poinciana Way, directly adjacent to fast moving vehicles with no buffer (trees, bike lanes, on-street parking). Some also expressed concern about slow moving traffic (stop and go) at certain times of the day, as well as traffic flow problems caused by cars parked on the outside lane during special events at the Bethesda by the Sea Church.

The preliminary analysis indicates that the problem on County Road is not a car capacity problem, but a car “behavior” problem. Left turning movements on the center (fast) lanes continuously interrupt traffic flow. Cars that remain parked after special events or mass (sometimes for several hours after the events are over) create tremendous hazards. Cars and trucks (particularly those with big mirrors) zooming by too close to the sidewalk contribute to the perception that speeds are higher than what is posted, and alienate pedestrians. The Citizens’ Master Plan suggests four possible configurations that will address the problems outlined above, all of which require County Road going on a “road diet” - from four to three lanes. A three lane road still operates well within the acceptable LOS for this road.

Looking north along County Road
Option 1:
A Simple re-striping project. Two travel lanes, one center turn-lane (eliminating all stops caused by turning movements), and two six-foot travel lanes that double as parking lanes for special events and buffer (separate) moving vehicles from pedestrians.

Option 2:
Same as Option 1, where the center travel lane is replaced by a landscaped median allowing turns where necessary. This solution is more costly, but more appropriate for Palm Beach. Option 1 could be treated as an interim phase, and Option 2 as ultimate build-out.
**COUNTY ROAD LONG TERM PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**

*Option 3*

A three-lane section, with a six-foot bike lane that doubles as parking for special events only on one side of the road, with the widening of the eastern sidewalk to 13’ (allowing for bikes and pedestrians).

*Option 4*

Like Option 2, is an ultimate build-out condition for Option 3, which calls for a center median instead of a simple central travel lane.

All four options are consistent with the Town’s traditional interconnected network narrow roads. Four lane highways were never envisioned for the Town, and do not prove to be necessary when it comes to LOS.
CHAPTER III:  
THE ROYAL POINCIANA PLAZA  
Honoring the Past, Adapting for the Future
**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The Royal Poinciana Regency Style Plaza, designed by local architect John Volk, is one of the key parcels within the study area.

With office and retail space, and a theatre, now dark, but once an epicenter of society, it constitutes one of Palm Beach’s most controversial icons, but an icon nonetheless.

The commercial component of the Plaza today operates as a relatively healthy, predominantly office environment. The theatre, on the other hand, has been dark for over four years.

Court orders, conflicting private interests of Plaza owners as well as numerous interest groups, uncertainty regarding public sector’s role and responsibilities, and questionable historic value of certain structures, has made of the Royal Poinciana Plaza an unfortunate object of discord and divisiveness in the Town.

During the charrette there were many suggestions, but no absolute consensus regarding the direction the Citizens’ Master Plan should illustrate the future of this parcel. The requests to demolish the entire Plaza and start over with new development where many, as were those asking to preserve every building, structure, and parking space currently in it. A myriad of suggestions with every possible combination of both extremes described above were also expressed.

**THE CONSENSUS REACHED**

Within this extreme range of opinions, the Charrette team was able to identify a few points of consensus:

- *The First Impression Should Be One Worthy of Palm Beach:* The Plaza, in its strip-shopping center configuration, is surrounded by a sea of parking that is particularly unsightly when viewed entering the Town. A dignified entrance to the Town, echoing the beauty of Bradley Park on the opposite side of the Plaza, was desired by most. The proposals on how to address this issue ranged from simple landscaping to development fronting the entire Plaza. The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes to mirror the Bradley Park by creating a linear-park along...
Royal Poinciana Way, anchored by an urban piazza and waterfront restaurant to the west, and a commercial building to the east. This easternmost building serves as a link between the Plaza and the commercial district on Royal Poinciana Way. The Citizens’ Master Plan replaces and relocates the parking spaces impacted by this linear green into a structured parking facility where the Slat House is today. This garage would be hidden, virtually “invisible”, surrounded by buildings, in an area that does not interrupt neighboring properties’ views, and in lieu of one of the few buildings - the Slat House - that is not significant architecturally. (Note: Citizens’ Master Plan proposes to relocate the Slat Houses’ historic cupola to a more prominent location within the site).

- **The Banyan Tree Should Be Preserved:** Preserving the beautiful Banyan tree in the southern edge of the property was high on everybody’s list. Today, while the tree is cherished, its roots are encroaching into the parking lot and cars are often seen parked all over them. The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes to formalize the environment of this great tree into an authentic but small green. This proposal also removes asphalt and parking from the existing configuration. These parking spaces are also to be relocated into the structured facility. The green is proposed with development (the existing Plaza, the Palm Beach Towers, and new development shielding the parking structure) fronting it on three sides, putting “eyes on the park” (Jane Jacobs) to ensure a naturally surveillance to ensure a safe, public open space.

- **The Main Vista Through the Center of the Plaza Should Be Re-established:** Removing the late Gucci addition to the center of the Plaza that interrupts the Vista terminating in the Royal Poinciana Playhouse was a consensus among the group. The Citizens’ Master Plan endorses this suggestion. It also takes it further, proposing a narrow travel lane for vehicular traffic, including on-street parking on both sides through the center of the Plaza. It is very impor-
tant to emphasize that this vehicular travel lane is only necessary if the intent is to turn the Plaza into a more retail-oriented environment. As it was previously stated in this report, the Plaza currently appears to function well as a predominantly office district. As such, a travel lane through the Plaza is not necessary. And, while it is possible to have a retail environment without the travel lane, it is important to note that eliminating the travel lane in a retail environment, but will typically generate only 20% of the interest of developers and end users. This will also create an environment with less natural supervision. At the time this recommendation was made (the travel lane), the team was challenged with claims of ruining the “Plaza”, and turning it into a “sea of asphalt”. This is a common misconception given the fact that most retail environments developed in the last five to six decades were, for marketing purposes, called “Plazas”. This is an erroneous term to describe a shopping center, which is what the Royal Poinciana Plaza essentially is. Understanding the community’s desire for green and public open space, the Citizens’ Master Plan proposes a series of ways to “formalize” authentic plazas and greens around the buildings and within the property.

Top Left: Detail of the “Gucci” addition the master plan proposes to remove to restore the Plaza to its original configuration and create an environment more conducive to retail and business. Above: Views of the blank walls fronting the Lagoon. The challenge of the master plan is to preserve the historic component while providing a dignified entrance to the District.
Address the Unsightly Elevations of the Royal Poinciana Playhouse: While the Royal Poinciana Playhouse has a signature eastern elevation, the other three sides simply reflect their service oriented nature, essentially lacking design and attention. They generate “dead” spaces. The problem is that these dead spaces are created on what is possibly one of the most valuable commercial sites in the County, but most importantly, the first impression while entering the Town. The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes to remove the buildings to the sides of the Theatre, as well as the rear projection that currently houses changing rooms, and “wraps” the building with three additional buildings to house waterfront restaurants and allow support space for whatever ultimate use occupies the Playhouse, as well as allow space for a publicly accessible waterfront.

The consensus regarding the fact that the elevations where unsightly does not imply consensus on the use or location of a Playhouse.

While there was consensus regarding the unsightly elevations, the community’s hopes for the Plaza previously described are not free, or even inexpensive to implement, and have a significant financial impact on the current land owner, particularly when it comes to the re-location of parking. It is with the intent of fulfilling these community goals that the Citizens’ Master Plan proposes additional development in the amount of 130,000sf distributed along the waterfront and around the proposed garage to offset the cost of these public goals. The uses proposed for this new development are flexible, so long as the waterfront remains publicly accessible, with at least at a minimum one waterfront restaurant, and the ground floor uses of both existing and new development are compatible (e.g. retail should front retail, office should front office. The same is true for residential). If the community decides that additional development is not desired on this site, other alternatives such as the use of public funds, or the implementation of a special taxing district can be explored as methods to pay for the desired physical improvements.
Above Left: View of the Royal Poinciana Plaza. The dark colors and lack of transparency of the windows result in lack of natural surveillance and an uninviting environment. Above Right: A simple coat of paint and transparent windows create an environment that is conducive to business and recreation. The Town of Palm Beach has some of the best window displays in the world along Worth Avenue. The principles embedded in those displays and lighting should be applied to the windows of the Plaza. Opposite: View of the waterfront plaza and public multi-use path from the Indian River Lagoon.
LOOKING EAST FROM THE LAKE WORTH LAGOON AT THE PROPOSED WATERFRONT PIAZZA
LOOKING WEST FROM COCOANUT WAY AT THE PROPOSED MIXED USE BUILDING
Looking West from Cocoanut Way at the Proposed Mixed Use Building Linking the Retail

Left and Above: Aerial perspective and computer generated image views looking west at the proposed mixed-use building at the corner of Royal Poinciana Way and Cocoanut Way. The building, which given its configuration allows for uninterrupted views of the lagoon, creates a good pedestrian link between Royal Poinciana Way and Royal Poinciana Plaza.
Above: Looking west at the Royal Poinciana Playhouse along the proposed travel lanes through the Plaza. These lanes are only necessary if the desire is to convert the Plaza into a local retail environment. Today it is functioning properly as an office environment with some restaurant facilities. As such, the lane is not necessary.
Regarding Landmarking of the Royal Poinciana Plaza

Landmarking and the Plaza

During the Charrette, the team of professionals was asked to make a recommendation regarding the landmarking of the Plaza.

While Landmarking buildings is a method to ensure historic preservation unique to Palm Beach, and the team of professionals participating in the charrette are not experts on the Town’s landmarking policies and was not hired to specifically comment on landmarking issues, the subject became unavoidable once the Plaza became key to solving a myriad of community requests.

Based solely on the team’s knowledge of historic preservation, construction costs, financial feasibility and market analysis, experience working with historic theatres, a visit to the Playhouse and several to the Plaza, the review of all documentation provided, over 100 interviews, and meetings with different landmarking board members and interest groups, the team made the following preliminary recommendation to the Town Council:

• Proceed with landmarking the

Above: The areas highlighted show the proposed landmarking strategy: a) Landmark the structures shaded yellow, hold off (60-90 days) on landmarking the area shaded green; c) re-build and or redevelop structures that are not shaded.
REGARDING LANDMARKING OF THE ROYAL POINCIANA PLAYHOUSE

The architecture of these buildings is a strong and unique example of the Regency Style. While some windows and details appear to have been modified or altered over time, there are no other similar examples of this use showcasing this architectural style and care for details in southeast Florida.

The Plaza, currently functioning as a healthy, predominantly office district, is adaptable and reusable in its current form and configuration. The building layout and construction could easily support additions and modifications without affecting the integrity and intent of the Style and original design.

Its current use is consistent with the community’s vision, and an adaptation to an environment more conducive to retail – also consistent with the community’s vision – is not only possible, but also financially feasible and clearly sustainable.

• POSTPONE THE DECISION TO LANDMARK THE PLAYHOUSE until an independent person or group – selected by the Council and trusted by all - works with the Plaza owner and other interest parties during a pre-established, finite time period (60-90 days, or more if the Council deems necessary) to come up with a substantiated business plan, realistic renovation/adaptation cost, and clearly identified funding sources for startup and long-term operation and maintenance. This does not imply any change to the “under consideration for landmarking” status.

While the team of professionals heard many conflicting arguments regarding probable renovation and operation costs, seating constraints (or excess), possible uses and likely users, code compliance and compliance with ADA (American Disabilities Act), and historical significance of all structures, no comprehensive analysis was presented to support any of these specific positions.

The person or group designated by the Council should - within that specified time frame - determine the actual cost to re-do the building (whether for playhouse or other adaptive use), create a serious business plan with solid funding.

Landmarking the Playhouse without this information would be premature, and could result in unintended costs to the Town and its residents.

As far as design, the Master Plan does show the core structure of the Playhouse incorporated in the overall design, with the main façade terminating the Plaza, wrapped with new development housing uses such as waterfront restaurants and public amenities. While the Master Plan does not make a specific recommendation regarding the use of this central structure, adaptive re-uses of it could include a theatre, an upscale two to three screen cinema (a movie theatre with very few screens, higher priced tickets ($35 and up), no under 18 admittance, full restaurant and bar service, currently in, or being built in exclusive locations throughout the world), a conference center, an art gallery/museum, etc.
Assigning a value to history is sometimes very hard. The historic significance of something is sometimes more emotion than tangible value. And this is OK. The team recognizes that the Plaza and the Playhouse meet all of the Town’s landmarking criteria. The team knows that landmarking a structure does not guarantee that it can be modified or even demolished. The intent of this pre-determined, finite proposed timeline, is to avoid false expectations and give the Playhouse an honest chance to survive.

All interested parties are encouraged to conduct and make public a comprehensive analysis supporting their position and plan for the Playhouse, avoid unintended costs to the Town, the community and the property owner, but fundamentally, to end with the divisiveness affecting the community, mostly fueled by well-intended passion.
CHAPTER IV:
ROYAL POINCIANA WAY
The Town’s Commercial District
STRIKING A BALANCE

The future of the buildings along Royal Poinciana Way, between County Road and Bradley Place is uncertain. While some redevelopment pressure struggles with historic preservation efforts and the community’s hopes to preserve the District’s character, the current zoning regulations encourage a pattern of development that does not address either concern. Some of the District’s buildings are at the verge of becoming uninhabitable, with the ability to be renovated in many cases stifled by these same zoning regulations. (Note: Current zoning regulations and recommendations are addressed in Chapter VIII of this report).

*Top: Diagram of existing massing along Royal Poinciana Way. Below: Photographic elevation of current condition.*
Many in the community, especially in the days leading to the public charrette, opposed the public planning process out of concerns about change and overdevelopment in the District. These two diagrams to the left demonstrate why not planning the area simply will not guarantee its preservation. On the contrary, current regulations are somewhat suburban in nature, and most importantly, do not respond to the form on the ground today, and encourage the suburban more pattern of settlement inconsistent with the community’s vision for the area.
A CLEAR STRATEGY

During the charrette, the community expressed a strong desire to preserve historic structures and ensure that new development, where appropriate along the Royal Poinciana Way, is consistent in scale and character with the historic buildings that surround it.

The community’s concerns and hopes for Royal Poinciana Way expressed during the Charrette are to:

- Maintain the low scale and character of the District;
- Preserve and enhance historically contributing structures;
- Buildings with fronts on Royal Poinciana Way and Sunset Avenue should address both streets (eliminate trash and odors from Sunset Avenue);
- Improve sidewalks (clean, organize, widen);
- Facilitate access to parking on the south side of the Royal Poinciana Way center median;

And where new development is appropriate, it should:

- Be in the form of Vias, creating pedestrian cut-through conditions between Royal Poinciana Way and Sunset Avenue;
- Be “organic”, as opposed to a continuous mass. A variety of height and form consistent with the tradition of development on the island;
- Be no taller than two to three stories along the public right of way, and, where additional height is appropriate, it should be achieved away from the public realm, in reduced amounts, in the center of the block, much like it is done in Vias Parigi and Mizner;
- Complement, not compete with Worth Avenue.

After considering the community’s input, the Janus Report (commissioned by FDOT for the District), and the University of Miami’s Historic Preservation Studio’s preliminary analysis of existing buildings, the Citizens’ Master Plan identifies four different sites where redevelopment proposals could help achieve different District-wide goals:

1) Testa’s and the Gas Station - two parcels, one proposal;
2) 265 Royal Poinciana Way; and,
3) 245 Royal Poinciana Way.

It is important to note that:

a) The Janus Report identifies 9 out of 17 structures along the Way as “contributing Structures”;
b) The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes redevelopment on only 4 of the 19 structures; and
c) The Citizens’ Master Plan only proposes a blueprint to guide development and redevelopment in the District, over time and only where appropriate and if consistent with the community’s vision.
Testa’s & The Gas Station
The first proposal impacts two parcels along the Way: Testa’s and the Gas Station. The Citizens’ Master Plan shows redevelopment of these sites as an alternative to a previous proposal for a mixed use development that, at the time of the charrette, was the object of controversy. By showing an alternative, the Master Plan attempts to strike a balance between private property rights, financial feasibility, and the scale, form, and character desired by the community for this area.

The Palm Beach Daily News
The second redevelopment proposal is for 265 Royal Poinciana Way: the Daily News building. This proposal is a simple exercise to show how non-contributing structures – in this particular case one developed according to a more suburban pattern of settlement (single use, with parking in the front) inconsistent with the spirit and intent of the District, can through a simple addition, achieve consistency with the prevailing character of the District. First, consistency is achieved through a simple addition. A second alternative demonstrates new development (see pp. 52 & 53) redeveloped in a form consistent with the community’s vision. This exercise provides a model for redevelopment proposed on other non-conforming structures and vacant land along Sunset and Sunrise Avenues.

Fidelity Federal Bank
Finally, the third proposal redeveloping the Federal Savings bank site on 245 Royal Poinciana Way, is linked to resolving transportation issues. In order to ensure long-term relief of the traffic congestion that is currently affecting this District, and is certain to increase over time, the Citizens’ Master Plan proposes that if or when this site redevelops, the Town secure a travel lane through the site, as well as through the vacant parcels on the north block. This will reduce turning movements and increase capacity at the intersections of Royal Poinciana Way and Coconut Way, and Royal Poinciana Way and County Road. This connection will additionally add two north-south travel lanes between Royal Poinciana Way and Sunrise Avenue, formalizing a traffic pattern currently occurring within the District (vehicles cutting through the bank’s drive-thru lane), and increasing overall traffic capacity.

Plans and a more detailed descriptions of these three proposals are included in the pages that follow.
CONTRIBUTING & NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

It is important to note that the “Contributing Structure” designation as represented in this report is not a local one, nor is it a designation defined in the Town’s zoning regulations. It is the recommendation prepared by Janus, FDOT’s consultant. All buildings along Royal Poinciana Way that are not designated historic or landmarked by the Town may currently redevelop. The Town needs to decide how or which of the Janus’ recommendations to adopt, and how to enforce them. Understanding the community’s concern to preserve the District and its character, the Citizens’ Master Plan proposes strategies to combine Janus’ recommendations with existing development rights.

**Strategies for Contributing Structures (Red):** Create incentive-based land development regulations (LDR) that encourage and facilitate the renovation, maintenance, and upgrading of these contributing structures.

**Strategies for Non-Contributing Structures (Yellow):** While the Citizens’ Master Plan only shows two non-contributing structures (the gas station and the bank) completely redeveloped, it is important to have LDRs in place that ensure that if or when proposals to redevelop other non-contributing structures are submitted to the Town, the result is new development that maintains the character of the District, establishes an organic form that responds to the community’s vision, is laid out to create authentic “Vias”, and manages height and parking in a manner acceptable to the community. The two parcels shown below are depicted in the Citizens’ Master Plan as redeveloped to demonstrate new development consistent with the community’s requests.

Below: Two of the non-contributing structures designed under the current regulations and more suburban in nature (parking in front, multiple vehicular curb-cuts) analyzed during the charrette.
In order to implement development, redevelopment and historic preservation strategies proposed in this report for the Royal Poinciana District, and to create an environment consistent in scale and character with the community’s vision, it is imperative to address parking on a district-wide (as opposed to a parcel-by-parcel) basis.

Parking for this District is discussed in Chapters V and VIII of this report.

Contributing structures as identified by the Janus Report are shown in Red; non-contributing structures are depicted in yellow.
PROPOSED POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF 265 ROYAL POINCIANA WAY:
Currently housing the offices of the Palm Beach Daily News, the building that sits on 265 Royal Poinciana Way is the only building along Royal Poinciana Way developed in a suburban manner (single use, parking in front). This layout interrupts the flow of the pedestrian environment desired for this commercial Main Street. To achieve a continuous, authentic Main Street environment, the Citizens’ Master Plan proposes two alternatives for this site.

Alternative #1 shown in this page, illustrates the existing building remaining, and two new “wings” housing a mix of uses, with retail on the ground floor. This additional development creates an active ground floor courtyard condition (similar to the Bradley Hotel on Sunset Avenue), consistent with the spirit of the Main Street. The courtyard can become outdoor seating, space to display art, or a simple but pedestrian oriented break along the street.
Alternative #2 shown here, illustrates this non-contributing structure replaced by a two-story mixed-use building with retail on the ground floor, residential or office above, and parking in the rear, accessed through an arched portico, minimizing the potential conflict between cars and pedestrians.
REDEVELOPMENT OF TESTA’S AND THE GAS STATION: AN ALTERNATE PROPOSAL

TESTA’S AND THE GAS STATION

At the time of the charrette, a redevelopment proposal of the Testa property and the gas station had been conceptually proposed and received community opposition for different reasons:

Testa’s:
What the Team Heard: The Testa restaurant and Via are part of the Town’s heritage, and should be preserved. Fact: While these parcels have been identified as contributing structures in the Janus report, the buildings are in great need of repairs, the Via did not start as an authentic Palm Beach Via (ala Mizner or Parigi), and, therefore presents many challenges. Since neither of these properties are landmarked or have any historic designation or restriction, they are currently legally entitled to redevelop. It is also true that current zoning would (without special exceptions) potentially yield less density, intensity, and lot coverage, as well as higher parking requirements than what the property has today.

The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes an approach for redevelopment of these parcels that would allow re-location of the current tenants and restaurant, that is consistent with the community’s needs, and that addresses financial feasibility in a manner current zoning does not.

The Gas Station:
What the Team Heard: The gas station is a service needed in the north part of the island, and it should therefore not be redeveloped into anything but a gas station. Fact: While it is clear that there is need for a gas station in this part of the island, it is not possible to force a landowner that currently is allowed by code to redevelop, to continue in a business that he wishes to end or simply cannot profit in any longer. This is a basic property rights issue. If the Town and the community feel strongly about a gas station in this particular location, there are a couple of options: a) the Town can purchase and operate or lease the gas station, or sell it to someone with a covenant that it will remain as a gas station in perpetuity or; b) Since the owner claims that this business is not profitable for him, the Town can enter into an agreement to subsidize the operation of this Town serving use. What is clear is that under today’s regulat-
**VIA TESTA: DEVELOPMENT CONSISTENT WITH THE COMMUNITY’S VISION**

The Citizens’ Master Plan shows these two parcels redeveloped fronting both Royal Poinciana Way and Sunset Avenue, with retail and residential development carefully arranged around courtyard areas that connect through authentic Vias. Note red arrows showing the detail of how every Via is not designed as a “straight shot”, but as an intricate and organic path, constantly terminating views in key features, much like Mizner achieved with his original Via designs. Service is proposed in courtyards, just as it is masterfully done in Worth Avenue. This proposal depicts 18 residential units with retail on the ground floor. While the footprint of the actual Testa’s restaurant is shown (red) is redeveloped, this proposal can work if that building remains and is incorporated to the overall plan. This proposal shows Testa’s restaurant relocated to new space slightly east (yellow). Proposed development additionally fronts the new lane that connects Royal Poinciana Way and Sunset Ave. through the bank property. Both parcels, while connected, could be developed incrementally. Incremental development, while potentially more expensive, would allow for uninterrupted re-location of existing tenants.
Top Right: Elevation of the proposed mixed use buildings on the Testa parcels. Below: Detail of elevation proposed where the gas station currently sits. While designed as one unit, the elevation is organic and diverse to read as separate volumes and buildings. A tower element is seen in the background. Height along the main street is maintained between two and three stories.
REDEVELOPMENT OF TESTA’S AND THE GAS STATION: AN ALTERNATE PROPOSAL

Top Left: Elevation of the proposed mixed use buildings on the Testa parcels. Below: Detail of elevation proposed where Testa’s is currently located. The restaurant building can be incorporated into the new design. These two parcels can be built together or incrementally and allow for the relocation of existing tenants. A tower element is seen in the background. Height along the main street is maintained between two and three stories.
Above: Looking north from Royal Poinciana Way into one of the Vias proposed on the Testa parcels. The proposed Vias were requested by the community during the charrette. They are viewed as typical of Palm Beach, and a great way to connect retail and parking areas to the north. The Vias are designed maintaining the proportions and character of those along Worth Avenue.
Above: A view through the proposed Via. Access to residential units is off of stairs opposite to retail space. A courtyard in the background is an ideal location for outdoor seating for cafes and restaurants.
Above: The redeveloped Testa parcels. Vias that open up into courtyards with fountains and special architectural moments. Retail on the ground floor, residential above.
While the Citizens’ Master Plan shows all development as two to three story structures with varied, organic massing, it is important to state that during the Charrette, participants found the tower elements at Vias Parigi and Mizner very tasteful and an acceptable form of development, provided that they are done in the center of the block, and in limited, special sites. The plan shows one 4-story tower element at the Testa site. It also exemplifies (above, left) how two stories of mixed uses typical in the District, are almost equivalent in feet as three stories of residential uses (given the height required for commercial uses). The Master Plan takes advantage of this design tool to accomplish financial feasibility without impacting scale and massing.
CHAPTER V: ON PARKING

A District-Wide Plan
**The Situation Today**

Palm Beach is one of the most walkable towns in America. Nevertheless, its residents rely heavily on the use of the automobile. While many live in close proximity to shopping, services, entertainment, and jobs, the lifestyle is such that the vast majority prefers to drive, even for short distances.

Walking is viewed more as a sport than a means of transportation.

Jobs, beaches, sophisticated shopping, unique restaurants, and an unparalleled physical environment draw thousands to the Town daily.

And while the Town offers an array of uses and services, it lacks others that require driving to the mainland to fulfill many daily needs.

The combination of all of the above inevitably results in a need for great amounts of parking, and not much can be done to eliminate the need to provide parking for these trips. But the Royal Poinciana District has a unique potential to become a well organized “Park Once” District.

The Citizen’s Master Plan provides the opportunity to implement a flexible, diverse, and creative parking strategy that is accomplished using a variety of tools. This strategy must not exist in isolation, but be integrated into a comprehensive development, redevelopment and transportation plan that emphasizes walking and encourages walking, biking and local transit.

**District-Wide Parking Strategy**

With appropriate, easily accessible, and convenient parking, it is possible to live, work, shop, relax and access entertainment by parking in one space and completing several errands: walking between the barber and the bank, the doctor’s office and the post office, stopping for lunch and doing some shopping is possible without hoping onto one’s car each time. Many trips but only one parking space. This is called a "Park Once" district, where people are encouraged to park in one place and then make stops on foot rather than driving from one destination to another.

Creating the type of environment where its easy for people to walk between destinations has to do both with urban design and with parking policies. If each destination is required to provide its own off-street parking, and each building may have parking on all sides, dead zones of surface parking lots are created between destinations that make walking distances longer and walking experiences less pleasant, so that people have every incentive to get back in the car to go only a few stores down.

And while many in the Town believe that more commercial uses in the Town...
will invariably generate more traffic, and more parking needs, the fact is that the relation between commercial and residential uses, parking and congestion is a very delicate balance. An increase in the right type of uses (those lacking and necessary to the Town’s residents) in appropriate amounts and carefully integrated with other uses, will actually improve the traffic and parking situation.

The Town has, on numerous occasions, addressed the community’s concerns regarding parking. At first glance, the Royal Poinciana District has a parking problem during peak hours. A more in depth analysis reveals that the current parking is regulated in a very complex manner (too many variables), and, in some cases is simply underutilized.

Limited duration parking zones, parking by permit, metered parking, on-site parking, painted curbs, and valet parking are some of the strategies that have been implemented. The problem is that they have all been implemented within a two block radius.

When “Form Follows Parking”
The need to drive and park at every destination is generally a consequence of sprawling patterns of development where the automobile is not a choice, but the only alternative for every trip. The result is an environment dominated where unfortunately, “form follows parking”, where suburban zoning regulations are heavily based on fulfilling high on-site parking requirements.

The Town of Palm Beach, and the Royal Poinciana District where planned following traditional town planning principles, where uses are mixed within such proximity, that it is possible to generate a park-once environment. The Town was specifically designed so that not every use needs to provide its parking on site. This does not mean parking is not necessary. It just means it can – and should be – handled in a more urban manner.
Unfortunately, somewhere in the last decades, suburban parking standards and policies found their way into the Town’s zoning regulations. This single issue is very possibly the most significant matter endangering the character of the Town today.

Current zoning requires that each new development provide for parking on-site. This is not the way the Town was intended.

This also makes it impossible to renovate many of the existing buildings, since doing so triggers the need to provide parking on-site, a situation most of the time simply impossible.

These parking requirements (explained in more detail in zoning Chapter VIII) have the potential to erode the fabric, raze buildings, and eliminate the charm and unique character of the District and the Town, converting it from the one of the most walkable Towns in America, to yet another assemblage of strip suburban development.

During the Charrette, residents, aware of a parking inadequacy in the District, identified three vacant parcels between Sunset and Sunrise Avenues as an ideal site to provide a centralized parking garage to shift from dealing with parking on a parcel-by-parcel basis, to a district-wide strategy.

The Citizens’ Master Plan recommends the following strategies to address parking in the District:

1) Address parking quantity and on-site parking requirements in current zoning;
2) Build a centralized municipal parking garage;
3) Shield and connect parking lots within the District;
4) Encourage shared-parking strategies;
5) Make existing parking more accessible;
6) Explore reverse-angle parking where appropriate;
7) Consolidate parking in the Royal Poinciana Plaza into a garage to fulfill other community goals;
8) Establish a shuttle/trolley service;
9) Address the “Town Service Ordinance”

1) ADDRESS PARKING QUANTITY AND ON-SITE PARKING REQUIREMENTS IN CURRENT ZONING: Parcels that develop, redevelop, or renovate existing structures in a manner that is consistent with the community’s vision should not be required to provide parking on-site, and should in addition:

a) Have the option to participate in a “Payment in Lieu of Parking” (PILOP) program, where funds are destined to the construction of the municipal garage proposed by the Citizens’ Master Plan. This PILOP program should be implemented immediately.
b) Allow reduced, and in special conditions eliminate parking requirements when the proposed development includes a mix of uses that generate an appropriate shared parking condition (e.g. retail & residential, or office & residential, or a combination of all three: retail, office, and residential in the right amounts).
c) Provide flexibility for redevelopment of small sites and for the preservation of historic buildings.
d) Allow redevelopment of surface parking lots if the spaces are not needed, or relocated to the municipal parking garage, or if developers/property owners pay into a fund to be used for building public parking in the future.
e) Count on-street parking towards parking requirements;
f) Establish maximum allowances for how much parking may be built by use and/or by neighborhood,

g) Establish flexible parking requirements based on:
i. alternative mode access (especially proximity of transit, but also pedestrian and bicycle facilities)

ii. expected demographics of residential developments (age, income, other auto-ownership factors)

iii. parking studies providing data to support requests to reduce or increase parking

iv. implementation of programs to reduce the need for parking spaces, such as parking cash out, shared parking, priority parking for car pools, or car sharing, and, most importantly,
h) Avoid adverse parking impacts on neighborhoods adjacent to commercial areas.

2) BUILD A CENTRALIZED, MUNICIPAL PARKING GARAGE: The garage should be, above all, shielded from the public view. This was strongly emphasized by Charrette participants. It is possible to achieve this by wrapping the structure with habitable (office, residential, retail) space.
There are a number of different configurations possible for the District’s municipal garage.

The Citizens’ Master Plan envisions a structure that shares parking with a new Publix: the garage was designed as a larger (wider) structure, encroaching on Publix’s property. Spaces on the ground level of the garage (provided this level is at least 14’ and has spaces in parking isles oriented perpendicularly to the store) would be reserved for the grocer, and available for general use off peak hours. This proposal allows for the grocer to rebuild as a one-story structure.

Regardless of which option the Town decides to go with, it is imperative to line Publix’s “big box” with habitable, accessible space (not just window displays).

3) Shield and Connect Parking Lots Within the District

Palm Beach has historically dealt with parking in a manner that has inspired communities nationwide. The Town’s tradition of shielding parking with pristine hedges on more service-oriented streets (or “B” streets), behind buildings, camouflaged between an allée of trees, does not appear to be followed within the Royal Poinciana District.

Sunset and Sunrise Avenues, and the Royal Poinciana Plaza expose parking, resulting in visible auto-oriented environments, in a manner that is totally incompatible with the rest of
the Town.

For existing surface lots the Citizens’ Master Plan proposes:
a) connecting existing lots wherever possible and share driveways in an effort to minimize or eliminate curb-cuts and driveways that unnecessarily interfere with the pedestrian character desired for the District;
b) establishing incentives to encourage shielding and landscaping existing lots;
c) prohibiting exposed parking;
d) developing an agreement with the owners of the Royal Poinciana Plaza to relocate and rearrange parking to allow for the implementation of the community’s vision.

4) EXPLORE A SHARED PARKING STRATEGY WITH PUBLIX

Parking garages are anchors to any district. They are to a district what the national big box retailers (Saks, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom) are to a mall: they anchor businesses, and, when strategically located, they put people “on foot” generating pedestrian traffic key to a healthy retail environment and fundamental to an organized parking environment. Publix, directly adjacent to the proposed municipal garage, is also an anchor. With Publix reconfigured and lined with retail, it will work as a better link to the retailers on Sunset and Royal Poinciana Way.

5) MAKE EXISTING PARKING MORE ACCESSIBLE

During the Charrette, residents expressed reluctance to park on the south side of the Royal Poinciana Way median. It is difficult to traverse, particularly when on high heels. The Citizens’ Master Plan proposes natural paths around existing flower beds – made of crushed shell or other natural materials – to add mid-median connections. These naturally designed paths do not affect the landmark designation of the Way, and are a simple solution to access what will become desirable parking spaces.

6) EXPLORE REVERSE ANGLE PARKING STRATEGIES

Many participants expressed concern with using the angled parking spaces along the Way due to the danger resulting of backing-out of these spaces. A commonly used parking technique where angled parking is appropriate is to “reverse” parking. This requires a simple re-striping of spaces that accomplishes the
Above: Plan and aerial views of proposed crossings connecting parking on south side of Royal Poinciana Way with development on the north side.
7) **Consolidate Parking in the Royal Poinciana Plaza into a Garage**

As described in Chapter X structured parking will be necessary in the Plaza in order to accomplish the community’s goals. Building such a structure is costly. The Citizens’ Master Plan recommends that the Town and property owner enter into a new agreement that honors those elements previously outlined in the 1979 agreement that are still important to the community, and that allows for additional development to offset the implementation of the community’s goals.

- Easier (reduced) maneuvering than that required for parallel parking;
- Ability to “pull-out” with clear visibility of on-coming traffic, bicyclists and pedestrians;
- Ability to load-unload the trunk from the sidewalk;
- Ability to keep pedestrians off the street since when doors open, driver and passengers are naturally directed to the sidewalk.
GENERAL PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

8) **ESTABLISH A SHUTTLE OR TROLLEY SERVICE**
The idea - proposed by many Charrette participants - of establishing a trolley system to connect different areas within the Town, has been successfully implemented in many communities throughout the country.

Applied to Palm Beach this would:
- a) create an important synergy between Worth Avenue and the Royal Poinciana Way District
- b) Offer potential parking solutions to other areas that are currently experiencing a parking “crunch” (school, beach, special events, etc.)

9) **ADDRESS THE “TOWN SERVICE ORDINANCE”**
Clarify whether the Town Serving Ordinance is intended as a parking management measure (i.e. parking relief to those businesses that can prove that more than 50% of their customers are local and more stringent requirements to regional attractors), or whether it is a business decision to attract or detract certain types of retail. This clarification will result in more clear parking and business plans for the Town and its merchants.

10) **IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT IN GENERAL WITHIN THE DISTRICT.**
The District’s sidewalks need attention. They are either too narrow, or wide enough but filled with clutter (as is the case of Royal Poinciana Way). Develop detailed sidewalk plans that identify immediate and long term improvements.

Finally, it is important to create a coordinated, managed approach to parking that increases the visibility and accessibility of parking and uniformity of parking.
CHAPTER VI: BREAKERS’ PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD)

Providing Certainty
The Breakers: A Palm Beach Icon

The Breakers Hotel is a Palm Beach icon. A clear landmark, the sight of which makes residents feel they are “home”.

The team heard constant praises during the Charrette about the hotel, its management and events. The one constant was that the Breakers was “a good neighbor”, and one that cared for the community.

While the Breakers is not in the development business, the property it sits on, through a long-standing Planned Unit Development (PUD), is entitled to build 251 multi-family residential units and some commercial space. These are not zoning maximums, they are actual entitlements.

Faced with the fact that, due to these entitlements, more development is not a matter of “if”, but simply “when” within the District, the community discussed the potential form, location, and pattern of settlement this development should follow to be consistent with the vision for the area.

The Citizens’ Master Plan illustrates the 251 residential units distributed through 4 different locations within the Breakers property. Each location is proposed to be developed in a unique manner that addresses its environs; all configured with building types that are typical to Palm Beach.

1) Development on Royal Poinciana Way and Cocoanut Way

This is the only one of the four sites proposed for development where the Citizens Master Plan proposes the inclusion of the entitled commercial uses, in the form of a mix, integrated with residential development. This mixed-use development creates a gateway along Cocoanut Way that, together with the new mixed use building proposed on the Royal Poinciana Plaza; contribute to seamlessly link the Plaza with the Royal Poinciana Way businesses.

The proposal shields parking, greeting those arriving with signature architecture. The height varies between 2 and 3 stories, and the units are laid out generating human scaled meandering vias, passages, and courtyards that serve as entrances to residents as well as locations for small shops and restaurants.

The current staff parking lot is located on this site, proposed to absorb approximately 60-75 of the 251 potential units.

The architecture is Mediterranean Revival. Important features to the style include: A strong and discernable base, a variety in the massing of each building, such as changes in building heights, roof depths, projecting balconies, inserted loggias, towers and bridges. Traditional materials applied in traditional ways and the use of a classical architecture vocabulary also add to the authenticity of the style.
Above: Looking east at the proposed mixed use development at Royal Poinciana Way and Cocoanut Way.
2) Development on Main Street and Breakers Row
Multi-family residential courtyard buildings with heights no greater than 3 stories constitute a resilient building type that creates an ideal transition between the commercial character to the west, and the residential one to the east of this site.

Below: Looking east at the proposed residential development. Right: Plan view of proposal.
3) **Breakers’ PUD at Breakers Hotel**

The largest surface parking lot in the Breakers property is the valet lot located to the northwest of the hotel’s main entrance. It is in this location where the majority of the 251 units have been proposed. 100-150 of the units (depending on size of unit) are planned to occupy this site. The proposal is to build a small neighborhood of groups of attached houses, each with their own small piazza at the foot of the Breakers. These units could be sold, but more likely rented as part of the Breaker’s room inventory. Access to amenities (pools, etc) could accompany the rentals. Approximately 75 percent of the proposed development is raised 5-10 feet and built on top of a vast half-underground parking garage holding over 700 spaces. The result is a hidden valet and employee parking lot and a charming and profitable guest neighborhood at the base of the Breaker’s hotel. The garage is completely concealed with the exception of the entrances and should appear as topography rather than a ramp when accessed by car. This sensation is accentuated by the use of cobblestone paving and no curbs on the streets. Three large blocks with car access are designed to ease drop-off, provide for some guest parking, and allow maintenance access to the property. Otherwise, the site is highly pedestrian with small plazas, fountains, and urban landscaping.
LOOKING WEST FROM THE BREAKERS AT PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OPTION 3
4) Breakers PUD Beach site

The Breakers’ P.U.D. Beach site builds on the tradition of the existing Shingle Style cottages by proposing three blocks of new housing development in the shingle style tradition. A regional variation to the style is the addition of a white stucco base. This masonry building system will help with maintenance and storm protection. A more traditional street & block pattern is proposed to create a neighborhood feel compatible with the neighborhood that surrounds this site, and provide a more approachable and visible beach front. These roads, however, and although not ideal, will more then likely remain private, as Breakers Row, the adjacent street is gated. Notice in the plan that each street terminates on an existing Shingle-style cottage. This will restore views from the cottages to the ocean, an amenity that is currently blocked by the existing cabanas. The existing beach cabanas and swimming pools would have to be removed and relocated to accommodate this plan. A new pool, a boardwalk and a beachfront pavilion are proposed along with 20 units for sale or lease as part of the Breakers hotel.
CHAPTER VII: ON RETAIL
A Complete and Healthy Environment

- Vacancy: 2%
- Apparel: 18%
- Food/Dining: 23%
- Retail: Other: 35%
- Services: 21%
- Home Furnishings: 1%
As clearly expressed by the community, the Royal Poinciana District is “Home”. It is the place where locals conduct daily business, satisfy service needs, and meet neighbors.

Within the Charrette Study Area, in this report identified as the Royal Poinciana District, there are three distinct areas of commerce: The Royal Poinciana Plaza, the Royal Poinciana Way businesses, and the Publix grocer and surrounding retailers. Each one of them constitutes a destination. Each is a unique attraction and a complete unit.

What makes each of these units special is the fact that they do not compete with each other. On the contrary, they have the ability to benefit from the proximity to the others.

To achieve the previously discussed park-once district, easy access, and close proximity applies as a general rule to all of these uses. This seamless connection will have added benefits to these three commercial areas, allowing them to feed off of each other.

**Retail Strategies:**

**Regarding Royal Poinciana Way**
This area is currently operating as an office center. As such, it is doing fine and needs no reconfiguration.

Existing retailers in the Plaza may be experiencing underperforming profits and large turn-over rates due to the fact that it is mainly an office environment and to:
- A confusing layout: The Plaza is essentially strip retail, laid out as four parallel strips;
- An environment that is not welcoming: glazed and mirror store fronts, and storefronts with drawn curtains and shades that essentially are sending the message that visitors “should not be looking in”, or are not welcome, creating a lonely environment where it is hard to tell if any one is watching (natural surveillance of public space) which results in an unintended feeling of insecurity;
- Poor visibility given the linear configuration interrupted by the Gucci addition;
- Excessive competition of similar type of environments (strip center) in the mainland;

During the charrette, many expressed a desire to see the Plaza return to its days of functioning as an active retail environment, making it clear that they did not want it to compete with Worth Avenue.

If it is the community’s desire to convert this area to an active retail environment (which would be very beneficial for the other two commercial areas within the District), the master Plan recommends the following:

a) Ground floor should be reserved for retail, office or other uses should be limited to upper floors;

b) Gucci addition should be removed

c) A narrow travel lane with on-street parking should be opened through the bar buildings. Not including this vehicular lane may still result in a viable retail environment, but if the Town decides against the vehicular lane, it needs to understand the following implications and facts:

   i) only 20% of the interest (retailers and developers) will be achieved,

   ii) of the more than 160 streets that were made pedestrian only in the 60’s and 70’s, only 6 remain pedestrian and economically viable environments today (it took Lincoln Road in Miami 16 years and many subsidies and high densities surrounding it to get where it is today),

   iii) it requires very high residential densities (that the Town does not have nor want) directly adjacent to pedestrian streets to support them, or they need to become mall-type regional destinations (e.g. Bal Harbor shops) to be viable, as opposed to conventional retail that can be supported locally, and,

   iv) each on-street parking space generates an average of $200,000 in gross annual sales, which is of substantial help for retailers.

d) A junior anchor (e.g. a bookstore) should be located in one of the two-story ends of the bar buildings;

e) Waterfront restaurants are key;

f) Public waterfront access is a must, although it is not critical to have a waterfront view from the retail environment. As retailers simply put it “fish don’t shop”;

g) A building anchoring the corner of Royal Poinciana Way and Cocoanut Way, linking the Plaza with the merchants along the Way;

h) Commercial uses entitled to the Breakers framing this intersection, on the opposite side of this proposed anchor, to create a seamless pedestrian, visual and physical link between all areas of commerce.
RETAIL CONSIDERATIONS

REGARDING ROYAL POINCIANA WAY

Retailers along Royal Poinciana Way appear to be underperforming as well. This area, dear to the community in general, needs to:

a) Widen the Royal Poinciana Way sidewalk by simply eliminating unkempt (by Palm Beach standards) planting strips and replacing them with decorative planting tree grates, eliminating, pots, signs, hedges and service elements that intrude into this public space;
b) Simplify zoning and create incentives to encourage renovation of commercial space;

c) Support a District wide, non-time limited parking strategy (and not allow employees and business owners to park on preferred spaces);
d) Improve pedestrian links to Publix (through buildings and parking lots);
e) “Clean up” and formalize existing walkways between buildings.

REGARDING PUBLIX

Publix is contemplating an expansion to their Palm Beach store, consistent with the community’s request of a larger, more convenient store with a wider selection of organic products.

The Citizens’ Master Plan recommends the following be considered at the time of this expansion:

a) Bring the storefront to the sidewalk, allowing pedestrian access directly off the sidewalk;
b) Line all blank walls with habitable space;
c) Line front with retail;
d) Configure access along Sunset and Bradley Place, so that the grocer anchors existing businesses along this road as well.
e) Allow (and require) an expedited construction schedule (since it does not seem physically possible to build a new store and keep the old one operating at the same time);
f) Address delivery hours. They should not compete with the District’s peak traffic.

REGARDING SUNSET AVENUE

a) Shield parking lots, consolidate driveways, increase landscaping
b) Once the municipal parking is available, infill vacant parcels and surface parking lots; c) Ensure the construction of building types that are consistent with the Towns’ pattern of settlement (as opposed to the suburban pattern most new buildings in the District are responding to);
d) Do not turn this road into one-way traffic.

REGARDING SUNRISE AVENUE

e) Shield parking lots, consolidate driveways, increase landscaping
f) Once the municipal parking is available, infill vacant parcels and surface parking lots. These developments should be heavier on residential and office.
g) Ensure the construction of building types that are consistent with the Towns’ pattern of settlement (as opposed to the suburban pattern most new buildings in the District are responding to);
h) Do not turn this road into one-way traffic.

REGARDING COUNTY ROAD

a) Put on-street parking back whenever possible. Businesses have a harder chance to succeed without it, and pedestrians feel less safe;
b) Eliminate the “blank wall” effect generated by certain uses (synagogue, church, etc), within the retail environment. Allow these uses where retail is no longer desirable.
c) Infill (when the garage is available) the Paramount’s parking lot. This will link those retailers to the rest of the District.
GENERAL RETAIL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ENTIRE DISTRICT:
1) The District’s merchants, working in conjunction with the Chamber and the Worth Avenue merchants, should hire a retail broker to ensure the right tenant mix and mutual benefit without competition.
2) Develop a Merchandising Plan for the Area
3) Merchandising Recommendations:
4) Keep simple window displays
5) Keep well lit window displays
6) Keep open floor plans
7) Maintain extended hours of operation
8) Include a front & center display table
9) Include lifestyle displays
10) Clean surfaces
11) Keep daily specials
12) Tell your story. The District is unique, people want to experience this uniqueness
13) Keep clear store windows (no mirrored surfaces, glazing, curtains)
14) Update interiors yearly (even if it is just a coat of paint)
15) Cross merchandise w/others in the District
16) Improve and implement more consistent dimensional signage
17) Improve and implement more consistent shade (awnings, canopies, etc)
The Royal Poinciana study area is a 36 acre/seven block historical commercial district located in the Town of Palm Beach’s north central quadrant. The district services many of the daily goods and service needs of the Town’s residents, visitors and employees including groceries, restaurants and personal services. A post office, pharmacy, gas station, Publix Supermarket (the Town’s only full service supermarket), and two of the Town’s most popular restaurants serve as Poinciana’s primary destination and anchor. In addition, the famous Breakers Hotel and Resort is located along Poinciana’s eastern and southern edges.

Although the Poinciana area remains an active commercial center, it does not appear to be meeting its market potential or fully serving many of the neighborhood retail needs of the Town’s community. Many of its businesses report a gradual decline in sales, and numerous buildings appear tattered and underutilized. The Town’s once premier shopping center, the Poinciana Plaza, has lost most of its leading retailers to office users. Some of the key property owners have expressed an urgent need to rebuild their properties to higher densities than is presently allowed by the Town. A recent proposal to completely revitalize the Poinciana Plaza was reportedly poorly received by the City.

The apparent slowdown in the area’s retail commerce does not appear to be market related. Instead, its stagnation is likely a result of ineffective merchandising and numerous, but well intended policy and zoning practices implemented by the Town.

This study concludes that the Poinciana commercial district can significantly expand its market share and better service the Palm Beach community by relaxing many of its business regulations, improving parking, implementing a series of physical improvements, and creating an effective Business Improvement District.
BACKGROUND

Gibbs Planning Group, Inc. was commissioned by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) to participate for five days in a charrette for the Royal Poinciana Area of the Town of Palm Beach, Florida. This study was conducted from February 23-27, 2008 and is based on a series of interviews with local residents, business owners, community leaders and GPG’s experience with public and private sector commercial centers.

GPG did not conduct any market studies or independent surveys as part of its scope of services for this study. Interviews with local residents, business owners and community leaders that were conducted during the charrette have not been independently verified by GPG.

LIMITS OF STUDY

This report is intended to provide the TCRPC with general retail principles and guidelines to be used in the master plan of the subject study area. The findings and recommendations of this study should not be the sole basis for urban planning, design, public policy, land acquisitions, leasing or real estate development.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

1. Tenant Mix: The Poinciana commercial area falls into the shopping center industries’ ‘neighborhood center’ classification. Poinciana is anchored with a full service supermarket (Publix) and offers numerous goods and services used by the Town residents on a daily basis. The overall Poinciana commercial is made up of approximately 29% retailers, 18% services, 14%, groceries, 12% housing, 10% playhouse (presently vacant), 7%
medical, 2% home furnishings, 1% pharmacy and 5% vacancy.

2. Business Groupings: The Poinciana commercial area is grouped into three primary areas: Poinciana Way, Sunset Street and the Poinciana (shopping) Plaza. These three areas reinforce each other’s trade, with visitors sometimes cross shopping between each commercial grouping. There is a potential for additional linkages between each of the commercial groups and their businesses.

3. Business Types: These businesses include apparel, bike shop, gas-service station, gift shops, ice cream, home furnishings, jewelry, package liquor, a pharmacy, professional services, restaurants, and a specialty food market. These businesses reinforce each other when residents make multiple stops to various shops. For example, a grocery shopper may also stop at the tailor or the ice cream shop.

4. Sales Trends: The Poinciana commercial area is reported to have flat or declining retail sales. However, there are few vacancies and some of the businesses have expressed a need to expand.

5. Pedestrian Circulation: Pedestrian circulation is difficult and often dangerous for many of the Poinciana commercial areas. High traffic speeds and limited signals along Poinciana Way and the County Road limit cross shopping between the three commercial areas.

6. Parking: Most of the Poinciana area parking lots and street stalls were noted at capacity. Valet parking is used by several restaurants. The Poinciana Plaza had surplus parking during the charrette time period.

7. The Poinciana Plaza: Is well positioned to be redeveloped with leading retailers and restaurants that can provide Palm Beach’s residents with needed and desired businesses.

8. Physical Character: The Poinciana area has a pleasant village scale that complements much of Palm Beach’s quality. This study found that some of Poinciana’s landscaping and maintenance is in need of repair.

RETAILER COMMENTS

As a part of this study, GPG interviewed several small independent Poinciana area merchants. These merchants were selected at random, and are not necessarily representative of the area’s businesses. In addition, GPG has not independently verified the business owners’ comments. Please find below a summary of the Poinciana business owners comments:

Sales Trends: Many retailers reported that their retail sales during the past five years have been flat or on the decline. This downward performance is said to be a result of a shortened season and more competition off of
2. Like the Location: In spite of weak sales, many of the Royal Poinciana retailers stated that the area is a good place for their business and they are pleased to have established their store in their existing location. The merchants noted that the boulevard’s large traffic volumes and the area’s multiple restaurants contribute to their location.

3. Employee Parking: All businesses reported that their employees have a difficult time parking, resulting in constant moving of their cars and expensive tickets. Recommendation: Allow 4 hour parking along the south side of the boulevard, or issue monthly permits. A public parking lot or structure will be necessary for a long term solution to this issue.

4. Traffic Speeds: All of the retailers expressed a concern about the high speeds of the vehicular traffic along Poinciana and at the cross streets. The retailers reported that their customers and employees are often nearly hit by passing cars.

5. Levels of Service: Most of the business owners reported that they were generally pleased with the levels of service provided by the Town, including: police, maintenance and refuge disposal. Some merchants expressed a desire for the bicycle policeman to be reintroduced into the area.

6. Landscaping: Most retailers would like to see additional landscaping installed along the boulevard. The merchants were also frustrated that the grass strip between the curb and the sidewalk

Two of Poinciana’s independent business owners.
(along their store) was poorly maintained and that the irrigation system was not functioning.

7. Landscaped Median: Most merchants would like to see the central park improved with additional landscaping, fountains, sculpture, pavers and lighting. All of the business owners stated that the park contains broken glass (from beverage containers), and that this sharp glass poses a serious hazard to their employees and customers who park along the south side of the park. Decorative paver walkways were noted as an important improvement for the park. Mizner Park also was suggested as a model to consider for the park’s design.

RESIDENTS’ COMMENTS

During the Charrette, GPG interviewed approximately 50 residents who visited the planning studio from personal interest in the process. GPG did not randomly select individuals or focus groups for these interviews. The following represents the general comments of the Palm Beach residents who were interviewed by GPG during the charrette:

1. Status Quo: Many of the residents expressed that they liked the Royal Poinciana area as it is, and some said that they would not like for any changes to be implemented. The residents expressed mixed opinions about what to do with existing property development rights.

2. Gas Station: The Shell gas station was identified by most residents as an important and necessary business for the Palm Beach community. The residents also liked the station’s location and would not support its relocation to a different site, should the existing owner close the business.

3. Tenant Selection: Numerous residents stated that they do much of their daily shopping in the Royal Poinciana commercial area, including: groceries, pharmacy and convenience goods and services. Some
residents expressed a desire for additional coffee stores, apparel stores, and restaurants.

4. Off Island Visitors: Many of the interviewed residents expressed a desire that the Poinciana businesses be oriented towards Palm Beach residents only.

5. Additional Businesses: Most residents stated that they did little of their primary shopping with Palm Beach businesses. Many of the residents interviewed shop at the Garden’s commercial area for large fashion, electronics and home furnishings. There was little desire expressed to attract the Garden’s type of businesses to Palm Beach.

6. Publix Supermarket: Almost everyone interviewed liked the quality, size and service of the Publix supermarket. Some residents expressed a desire for a ‘green’ grocery such as a Whole Foods to be added to the Island. Many residents expressed that they had experienced parking difficulties at Publix during the busy tourist season.

7. Restaurants: Most of the residents felt that Palm Beach had the ‘right amount and types’ of restaurants. Both the Testa’s and the Palm Beach Grill (Houston’s Grill) were reported as their favorite restaurant by many of the interview participants.

8. Parking: Most residents stated that parking was generally difficult in the Poinciana area.

9. Royal Poinciana Plaza: Almost every resident interviewed expressed a desire for the Plaza to be improved. Some felt that should be preserved as an historical landmark and fully restored, others thought that the Plaza should be demolished and that a new, similar mixed-use center be constructed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Town Serving Requirement: The requirement that businesses over 2,000 sf generate over 51% of their sales from Palm Beach residents should be reconsidered. This local serving requirement places an undue hardship on many unique small business owners, and is often counter-productive to the needs of many of the town’s residents.

2. Parking: Establish 1.5 hour parking along the north side of Poinciana Way and 4 hour parking along the south side of Poinciana Way, to accommodate employee parking. Consider installing parking meters along the prime blocks.

3. Business Expansion: Work with existing businesses to allow for rea-
3. **Traffic Calming:** Implement methods to slow the vehicular traffic along Poinciana Way and County Road to increase pedestrian safety - particularly at the intersection.

4. **Poinciana Plaza:** Allow for Poinciana Plaza to be redeveloped, to accommodate modern retail operating requirements without compromising the historic character of the existing buildings. Consider allowing for new limited second levels, new colors, windows, additional in-fill liner buildings and a vehicular lane between the two buildings. Consider all of the above, not as an “as of right” or “giveaway”, but as a condition to implement the community’s vision expressed in this report.

5. **Business Improvement District:** Establish a Business Improvement District (BID) or equal to improve the commerce of the Poinciana commercial area.

6. **Landscape Improvements:** Repair damaged landscape and install an irrigation system along Poinciana Way’s north sidewalk.

7. **Boulevard Walkway:** Install small pedestrian walkways across the Poinciana Way boulevard islands to allow for safe walking across the lawn areas.

8. **Business Mix:** There are numerous additional retailers that could complement the existing neighborhood character of the Poinciana area and help meet voids in needed goods and services for Palm Beach residents. These additional businesses include: coffee shops, home and garden stores, home furnishings, apparel, books, restaurants and specialty foods.

9. **National Chain Businesses:** The Town apparently discourages name brand or national retailers. One of the Island’s most popular restaurants is labeled “The Palm Beach Grill”, but is actually a Houston’s, a well known national restaurant. This study recommends that national businesses such as Borders Books, Talbot’s, Origins, Smith & Hawken, etc. be recruited for the Poinciana business area.

10. **Gas Station:** This study recommends that alternative locations be considered for the Shell Service Station in the event that it closes, as reported by the owners during the charrette.
CHAPTER VIII: ZONING

Analysis & Preliminary Recommendations
The combination of elements that sets Palm Beach apart from other coastal development did not occur accidentally or organically. As previously mentioned, the Town’s development was guided by the plan developed by Bennett, Parsons and Frost. Presently, the growth of the Town is guided by planning documents: the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. These documents instruct the changes that affect the physical character of the Town.

While fully developed in the sense that there are no longer rural lands within the Town boundaries, changes are inevitable over time. Buildings will be updated or replaced, infill buildings will be proposed on the few remaining vacant parcels, and previously approved developments will be completed. This section of the report compares the concerns raised by the charrette participants with the current development instructions contained within the Town’s planning documents. This analysis will also suggest adjustments the Town may want to consider if the charrette recommendations are deemed desirable.

Within the Royal Poinciana District, growth pressure occurs in three locations:
- The Commercial area located north and along of Royal Poinciana Way;
- The Royal Poinciana Plaza
- The Breakers Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Charrette participants voiced a number of concerns and hopes regarding future development in Palm Beach:
- Preserve Town’s character;
- No increases in intensity, and for some, no increases in density;
- Maintain low building heights;
- Improve Parking;
- Encourage and retain Town-serv ing uses;
- Provide more venues with outdoor dining.

This report reviews how current regulation addresses these concerns, and/or how the Master Plan recommends they be dealt with.

** Preserve Town’s character **
The first objective of the Town’s Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan states that:

> Future growth and development within the Town shall be managed to maintain and enhance the Town’s unique physical and historic character with emphasis on its visual qualities, and compatibility and harmony among its diverse land uses.

Charrette participants clearly stated the Town’s historic development pattern should be maintained, consistent with this objective. The specific characteristics noted by the participants as indicative of Palm Beach include arcades and awnings to provide shade, the unique pedestrian vias, courtyards, balconies, landscaping and superior architecture. It is important to note this pattern is also characterized by a mix of uses, high lot coverage and little (if any) on-site parking. Two to three stories in height was considered acceptable by the citizens. Existing buildings range in height from one and two stories along Royal Poinciana Way, up to four stories on Sunset Avenue (with some taller enclaves) and up to six stories in limited amounts and masterfully achieved in the District and areas like Worth Avenue. The variety of architectural styles exhibited throughout the town was frequently expressed to be a benefit.

Many of the existing buildings in the Town that define the unique style of Palm Beach are now considered non-conforming. Non-conforming means that the development on the site does not meet the current Town building and zoning requirements. The most common non-conformities are:
- Parking quantity
- Lot coverage
- Set backs
- Building Height

The Town’s Comprehensive Plan considers such non-conforming situations:

> "there are a great many properties in the Town that were developed earlier at densities or intensities now considered inappropriate. Most, however, while inconsistent with the Town’s Future Land Use Plan Map, are not inconsistent with the Town’s prevailing character. Therefore, there is not need to affirmatively encourage redevelopment or reduction of these uses. Rather, such inconsistencies will be addressed through attrition, with future redevelopment required to conform to the intensities incorporated in the Town’s Future Land Use."

---

**TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL**
Palm Beach - Martin - St. Lucie - Indian River
This strategy raises a number of concerns.

First, many of the buildings in the study area determined to be valuable to the community cannot be reproduced under the current zoning requirements. Under the current regulations, structures that are not landmarked yet, but nonetheless contribute to the flavor of Palm Beach, will be replaced by new “conforming” structures potentially less consistent with Town’s prevailing character once modern-day parking needs are addressed on-site.

Second, waiting for buildings to age and then redevelop with less intensity is a dubious method of planning. While some level of success may have occurred in multi-family structures, which tend to combine multiple units in single, larger units (thereby reducing density), the implications are more complicated for commercial properties. Generally, commercial property owners will not purposefully reduce intensity. Business owners in the Town are concerned about tripping a code threshold that will require conforming with the current code. In practical application this means either securing additional (non-existent) parking spaces through an off-site agreement, reducing size, or going through a special exception process. The result promotes efforts to fly under the radar screen of code compliance or renovate in phases, which is not optimal for either the property owner, business owner, or the Town. A pro-active approach is recommended to encourage these buildings to remain and to allow a similar development pattern to be built.

Landmarking is a tool that has been used effectively within the Town to preserve buildings. The Royal Poinciana Plaza and Theater are currently being considered for Landmark designation which is discussed in more detail in Chapter III. The Janus Report commissioned by FDOT in conjunction with the Flagler bridge project, identifies those buildings along Royal Poinciana Way considered contributing to the Town’s historic character.

The Citizens’ Master Plan maintains the contributing structures and proposes infill buildings consistent with the historic character of the District. Due to the property owners’ efforts to redevelop, the Testa’s property which is considered contributing in the Janus Report, is illustrated with new development, but in a form consistent with the input received during the charrette process. While designating eligible buildings provides a level of protection, a district-wide parking strategy and adjustments to the Zoning Code are recommended to ensure the remaining, non-contributing properties redevelop in a form consistent with Town’s character.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESERVING CHARACTER:**

1) Develop a district-wide parking strategy including a municipal garage to relieve the on-site parking burden from individual parcels.
2) Simplify the approval process by identifying specific desired features and using clear, performance-based requirements. For example:
   • Allow higher lot coverage for development that provides vias and internal court yards;
   • Allow reallocating development potential from areas used to form vias and internal courtyards into three-story authentic tower elements;
   • Create a “payment-in-lieu of” option to providing parking for both new construction and use changes to help fund the proposed municipal garage;
3) Allow two-story buildings without a special exception process;
4) Allow second story (and upper floors) residential uses without a special exception process;
5) Do not require side setbacks along Royal Poinciana Way.

**DENSITY AND INTENSITY**

The potential for increasing the density of the Town was one of the frequently voiced concerns during the charrette. Reviewing the recent growth trends of the Town should help to alleviate some of these concerns. According to the data submitted in the 2006 Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) of the Comprehensive Plan, the resident population growth has been almost static in the Town since 1997, and is projected to grow at most 3% through 2016.

The largest remaining residential development potential in the Town is contained within the Breakers PUD.
The PUD, approved in 1981, has 251 residential units remaining in the development order. If the population demographics remain consistent with the characteristics measured by the 2000 US Census, this development will have less impact than might be anticipated. Based on previous household size and residency trends (58.2% year-round), 264 new people will reside on the island once all the units are built. During high season, 163 additional people are expected. The Comprehensive Plan’s projected population increase of 3% per year includes full build out of this development.

There are other indicators regarding population to consider. The EAR also reports in four of the last five years, the number of permits for residential permits exceeded new permits for residential construction. This trend, coupled with the fact that few undeveloped parcels remain in the town, generally precludes any substantial population increase.

The future land use for property in the study area (excluding the Breakers PUD) is Commercial. Policy 2.3.3 of the Comprehensive Plan allows up to 6 dwelling units per acre in the Commercial category provided the units are “located above the ground floor”.

The zoning on the Royal Poinciana Plaza property is Commercial Planned Center (C-PC). C-PC does not allow residential uses. The zoning on the Royal Poinciana District is Commercial-Town Serving (C-TS). C-TS allows one-story development. A special exception process is necessary to build two stories and/or up to 6 dwelling units per acre. Palm Beach defines an acre as 40,000 square feet. Generally, a lot 50 feet x 100 feet (5000 sf) would be able to build one unit if given Town Council approval.

Significant changes in density cannot happen without extensive exceptions and review.

Residential uses above retail or office uses are consistent with the historic character of the Town. This mixed-use arrangement was considered appropriate by the charrette participants provided the height and scale of the buildings is maintained.

Currently, special exceptions are required to approve both a second story and any proposed residential uses. This process is largely driven by the Town’s desire for oversight over the proposed parking solution.

The proposed parking strategy for the study area is discussed in more detail below and in Chapter V. If the parking strategy outlined in this report is implemented, a special exception process should no longer be necessary to allow two-story buildings or upper level residential units.

**Density and Intensity Recommendations:**
1) Allow two-story buildings without a special exception process;
2) Allow upper story residential uses without a special exception process in both C-TS and C-PC;

**Building Height**

Concerns were voiced regarding building height. Building height is important for a number of reasons including architectural scale and compatibility, but also is viewed by some charrette participants as the physical manifestation of increased density. It is important to understand the current building height limitations regulated by the Town’s planning documents.

The future land use for property in the study area (excluding the Breakers PUD) is Commercial.

According to Policy 2.3.3 of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, the maximum building height is three stories, which is intended for “limited circumstances”. Taller buildings are simply not permitted. Changes to the plan cannot be made without an extensive public process and approval from not only the Town Council, but from the Florida Department of Community Affairs as well. The Citizens’ Master Plan does not illustrate any new buildings exceeding three stories.

The zoning on the parcels further limits height and density. The Breakers PUD documents indicate the remaining condominium development is proposed in a range from 2-5 stories.

Zoning on the Royal Poinciana Plaza property is Commercial Planned Center (C-PC). C-PC restricts building height to two stories and does not allow residential uses. The zon-
ING ON ZONING

ing on the Royal Poinciana District is Commercial-Town Serving (C-TS). C-TS allows one story development. A special exception process is necessary to build two stories and/or up to 6 dwelling units per acre. Two to three stories in height is generally compatible with the historic fabric of the town.

The Town should consider creating provision in the Zoning Code allowing limited circumstances of three stories in height as an incentive to achieve specific characteristics such as vias or courtyards.

BUILDING HEIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) Maintain the current building height limitations in the Comprehensive Plan.
2) Use a provision for additional height (to a maximum of three stories) to encourage specific, physical results within the Zoning Code. For example:
   a. Providing cross-access in the form of a via;
   b. Removing asphalt parking for more landscaped areas;
   c. Providing structured parking;
   d. Participating in a district-wide strategy to build a municipal parking garage.
3) Allow authentic architectural tower elements (as in Via Mizner and Via Parigi) with habitable space.

COMMERCIAL USES

The Future Land Use of the Royal Poinciana Plaza and the Royal Poinciana District is Commercial. Policy 2.3.3 describes the Commercial land use designation as intended to provide “primarily for the frequently recurring needs of Town persons with limited provisions for more intensive commercial uses”.

The Town’s Comprehensive Plan recognizes a number of factors affecting commercial development pressures. Escalating land values and rents have contributed to a shortage of services identified as “Town-serving”. Embedded within both the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code are policies which intend to promote commercial uses which are “Town-serving”, and to discourage the creation of regional commercial destinations. Town-serving is defined in both the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code as:

...establishments principally oriented to serving the needs of town persons which would not substantially rely upon the patronage of persons not defined as town persons.

Town-serving establishments, by definition, would typically contain 2000 or less square feet of interior gross leasable area (GLA) and would not engage in advertising designed to attract other than town persons.

Waivers from the maximum size are possible if adequate parking can be demonstrated and a hardship exists regarding the size of the business. The Comprehensive Plan states the most common waivers have been “for financial institutions and professional office space.” Other policies reflect concerns that off-island clientele generates traffic and exasperates the existing parking problems within the Town. The Comprehensive Plan states that:

The tremendous pressure for expansion of commercial land use is a direct function of the economically valuable image of a Palm Beach address. It is imperative that region-serving, high traffic generating, commercial uses be prevented from further proliferating and be reduced wherever possible.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies new development in West Palm Beach as a potential source of additional commercial pressure, but fails to acknowledge that the resurgence of downtown West Palm Beach and other competing venues in Palm Beach Gardens and Wellington may be contributing to the difficulty in retaining desired retail uses. New shopping options dilute the amount of shopping townpersons conduct on the island. Given the trend of a shorter season, a fairly static population, and the Town’s general attempt to discourage off-island clientele, retailers on the island face many challenges.

During the charrette, a number of town-serving retail uses were discussed as desirable or missing including hardware stores, drugstores, gourmet markets, a moderately priced restaurant, and electronic stores. These retail uses are currently described in the Zoning Code as “Town-serving”. For some of these uses to be truly viable, they
need to occur in increments larger than 2000 sf. Some examples of the existing demand and quantities as determined by retail consultant Bob Gibbs are as follows:

- Hardware Store: 6,000-8,000 sf,
- Green market: 8,000-10,000 sf,
- Pharmacy: 8,000-12,000 sf,
- Garden store: 2,500 -5,000 sf

Generally, town-serving uses are limited to 2,000 square feet; however, the C-PC zoning category on the Royal Poinciana Plaza has allowances for larger retailers, including those listed above. The current planning framework allows some larger retailers on the Plaza site while a composition of smaller retailers anchored by Publix is intended within the Royal Poinciana District.

If the Town truly wants these specific shops, the Royal Poinciana Plaza has to be re-positioned to better support retail uses if the businesses are to succeed over time.

The Master Plan suggests several interventions to improve the Plaza:

First, provide additional parking and relocate existing surface parking spaces in a garage. This arrangement will provide parking to support the Plaza and Playhouse. Removing the surface parking will make way for a signature entry to the Town composed of both landscaping and built features. The proposed new buildings create new venues for waterside dining and provide a pedestrian-friendly link to the Royal Poinciana District. This strategy establishes an environment where the different uses support each other. The other benefit is a “park once” environment is created, relieving congestion on the adjacent roadways.

In order to implement this strategy on the Plaza, allowances in the Zoning Code and adjustments to the current Agreement with the Plaza will be needed. Incentives are necessary to afford building a structured garage. The proposed Master Plan uses additional square footage, introduces residential uses and exceeds the current 35% lot coverage limit in the Zoning Code. In addition, the Town has an executed Agreement with Plaza owners which prohibits building additional square footage and limits the business hours for retail uses. These standards need to be re-evaluated to use the proposed solution.

**COMMERCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1) Maintain the current building height regulations in the Comprehensive Plan;
2) Amend the Agreement with Poinciana Properties, LTD to remove the limitation on the evening business hours for the Plaza’s retailers to create synergy among the stores, restaurants and Playhouse.
3) Amend the Agreement and Zoning Code to allow residential uses as an incentive to implement the community’s goals as outlined in the Citizen’s Master Plan;
4) Amend the Agreement and Zoning Code to allow new buildings as shown on the Master Plan to create waterside dining options, off-set the cost of a parking structure, and promote a walkable connection to the Royal Poinciana District.
5) Allow three story buildings in the C-PC category to offset the cost of building a parking structure and creating more landscaped areas;
6) Establish form-based criteria for larger retailers, including storefront standards for glazing, materials, signage and awnings;
7) Establish form-based criteria for parking structures to ensure habitable uses and proper architecture are used to shield parking from view.

**PARKING**

A shortage of parking in the study area was raised again and again by charrette participants. A proposal to relieve the current shortage of parking spaces in the Royal Poinciana Plaza is discussed above. For the Royal Poinciana District, the Citizen’s Master Plan suggests:

- a municipal parking garage
- one additional fine-grain local circulation route,
- creating a more walkable, park-once environment between the Royal Poinciana Plaza and the Royal Poinciana District
- increasing the amount of parking at Publix

These suggestions may seem extreme to some, but the modern parking need is the biggest constraint in achieving the physical characteristics of the Town’s historic pattern.

On-site parking requirements con-
ON ZONING

strain building size, thereby promoting smaller, detached single-story buildings inconsistent with the Town’s historic character. Parking needs, coupled with the current regulatory limitations on setback and lot coverage, preclude the ability to form vias or interior courtyards and relegate most of the un-built portions of a parcel to parking lots. Those owners with parcels spanning a full block width may be able to provide a continuous building façade along Royal Poinciana Way; however, Sunset Avenue will erode over time, as is already evident.

Relieving the on-site parking burden will improve the pedestrian experience in the town. Pedestrian routes are currently unlikely to occur through vias like Sunset Via, but will transverse expansive surface lots and past service areas. Access to parking and service areas for most parcels in the study area is from the front as no alleyways exist in this area of town. Though architectural treatments can visually improve the drive ways, the potential for vehicular-pedestrian conflicts on the sidewalks remains.

Front access also disrupts the flow of shoppers from one storefront to another compromising retailers’ ability to capture interest from passers-by a critical need for town-serving uses.

Trying to resolve a district-wide parking shortage on individual parcels is not going to resolve the parking problem neither quickly nor well and will present a heavy burden for town-serving retailers.

Under the current regulations, the desired town-serving uses have high parking requirements: 2000 square feet of retail must provide ten parking spaces. This requirement is a suburban standard, not one of a multi-modal town like Palm Beach.

The Zoning Code provides an important caveat for landmarked structures by relieving owners and businesses from procuring additional parking spaces that might otherwise be required due to changes in use or renovations. A similar solution of a payment-in-lieu of option should be considered for all buildings. Additionally, the parking burden for individual businesses should be somewhat reduced to 1 space per 300 square feet for retail and 6-8 stalls per 1000 square feet of restaurant. A store 2000 square feet would be required to provide 7 spaces or contribute to the municipal parking garage through a payment in lieu of option.

Parking Recommendations:
1) Develop form-based criteria to ensure new parking structures have habitable uses and proper architecture to shield parking from view;
2) Support Publix’s plans to rebuild with additional parking in a structure provided the Town’s criteria (#1) are met;
3) Develop a mid-block municipal garage to provide centralized parking for the district;
4) Provide a payment-in-lieu of option for those changes in use or structures that require additional parking;
5) Amend the on-site parking quantity requirements from 1 space per 200 sf to 1 space per 300 sf.
6) Allow a payment-in-lieu of option for new construction.

Outdoor Dining

One of the most frequent observations made during the charrette was the lack of venues with outdoor dining options. The beautiful weather that defines the season lends itself to al fresco dining. Currently, some restaurants open the sides of the buildings to outside air, but most do not offer outdoor dining. A few outdoor tables belonging to smaller eateries occur along the sidewalk, but not many. Many participants also noted that, given the town is an island; waterfront dining options outside of the clubs are lacking.

The current Zoning Code limits the option of outdoor dining to the C-TS category. Within this category, a special exception process is required. As such, under the current regulations, a restaurant that offers outdoor dining could occur, with a special exception, in the Royal Poinciana District, but not on the Plaza site. The Master Plan proposes new waterside restaurants adjacent to the Playhouse.

Outdoor Dining Recommendations:
1) Allow outdoor dining within the C-PC zoning category.
Above: The situation today: A low-scale, urban, mixed use environments. While the fabric presents some interruptions mainly due to buildings built following more modern regulations and the suburban nature of the gas station, the street behaves like a traditional main street.
Above: The Situation under the current code. The image above is a schematic representation of Royal Poinciana Way if it were to be rebuilt under the current code. On-site parking requirements, and the need for special exemptions to the code would yield a single-use, one-story fabric, where the land is mostly consumed by parking. The urban, pedestrian oriented and vibrant main street is eroded. In its place, a more suburban retail district. Under the current code, the gas station as a use is not permitted.
CHAPTER IX: IMPLEMENTATION
IMPLEMENTATION

STEPS IN IMPLEMENTATION

The success of any Master Plan, whether for the District or the entire Town, relies heavily on the Plan's ability to be implemented economically and socially within a designated time frame. The implementation of the Citizens' Charrette Master Plan will require a reorganization of land uses and zoning, efficient inter-department and inter-agency cooperation, and responsive political leadership. To that end, the general recommendations throughout this report have been developed as independent but interrelated projects. In this chapter, the first five critical steps towards that successful implementation have been outlined.

The Citizens' Master Plan is a conceptual document that, if adopted, sets forth the direction, and advertises the Town's intentions for its future. As it is a conceptual document in nature, it does not have regulatory power, but it is the most effective tool towards establishing predictability in the area.

The adoption of this conceptual document - with or without conditions of approval - should be the first order of action. Once adopted, it becomes an efficient tool that allows residents, staff, and elected officials to easily communicate their intentions to investors and residents.

One approach a local government can take to temporarily preserve the character of the community, or to avoid having to make decisions that could compromise the implementation of a master plan that still has no regulatory effect - as is the case of a recently adopted conceptual charrette master plan - is to adopt an interim zoning ordinance.

An interim zoning ordinance, often referred to as a stop-gap, is an ordinance that allows existing land uses and zoning to continue or expand, and uses consistent with current regulations (i.e. not requesting zoning or land use variances) to be approved, but it maintains the community's status quo by not allowing different uses to be established while a more detailed, permanent zoning ordinance or land use are being developed.

A stop-gap ordinance differs from regular zoning in that it can be quickly adopted, does not change the current zoning or land use, therefore not affecting people's property rights, and is intended only to temporarily preserve current zoning and land uses. It is essentially a tool that allows development consistent with the current regulations that is not requesting any zoning or land use changes to proceed seeking development approvals, while it provides a tool that enables the Town to hold back those that, in requiring changes, could potentially affect the implementation or outcome of the Citizen's Master Plan.

A Stop Gap ordinance essentially protects property rights, while providing ample leverage towards ensuring the implementation of the community's plan.

Comprehensive Plans are not static documents. They are documents that provide a broad framework to guide growth in a community. They evolve and change just as the community changes over time.

The Comprehensive Plan is divided into five distinct, yet interrelated elements. In addition to the text that describes the community's future, the Comprehensive Plan also includes a Future Land Use Map. This map designates land use and transportation routes, and in conjunction with applicable policies, provides guidance on how the City will grow and develop over the next 15 to 20 years. The Plan is used to guide the decisions of numerous groups. Elected officials refer to the Comprehensive Plan when making decisions that impact growth and development in the community. Many boards and commissions like Planning and Zoning, use the Plan's direction when making recommendations. The development community uses the Plan to determine appropriate locations for new development.

This guidance is provided by the Plan's land use policies and the Future Land Use Map. The Plan is also used when planning for capital improvements throughout the City. The Plan shows where growth is anticipated and therefore indicates where infrastructure will be needed. Since the community's vision for their future growth is not totally consistent in some parcels with the current Comprehensive Plan some elements of it may have to be updated.
IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Other recommendations, in order of priority include:

**IMMEDIATE ACTION:**

- Adopt the Citizens’ Master Plan, or the chapters the community accepts;
- Include the improvements to the intersection of Royal Poinciana Way and Cocoanut Way in FDOT’s PD & E study;
- Include the multi-purpose regional trail and underpass in the MPO plan and in FDOT’s PD & E study;
- Get involved in FDOT and DERM’s Lake Worth Lagoon Mitigation Master Plan;
- Enact a Stop-Gap ordinance;
- Initiate process to address zoning inconsistencies;
- Present the Citizens’ Master Plan bridge design to FDOT;
- Begin working towards a District-wide parking strategy.

**SHORT AND MID-TERM ACTION:**

- Draft an agreement with the Royal Poinciana Plaza owners to define a strategy that will accommodate the community’s vision;
- Initiate conversations with Publix;
- Initiate conversation with Bradley Park trustees, and secure funding;
- Define historic preservation in the Royal Poinciana District (contributing vs. non-contributing);
- Secure land for parking garage;
- Develop a merchandising strategy for retailers in the District;
- Initiate sidewalk cleanup/widening/restructuring project;
- Establish pedestrian connections through Royal Poinciana Way median;
- Secure land for parking garage;
- Develop a merchandising strategy for retailers in the District;
- Initiate sidewalk cleanup/widening/restructuring project;
- Establish pedestrian connections through Royal Poinciana Way median;

**LONG TERM ACTION**

- Develop new road through the District;
- Improvements to County Road;
- Define LDRs for the Breakers PUD;
- Establish a trolley/shuttle system