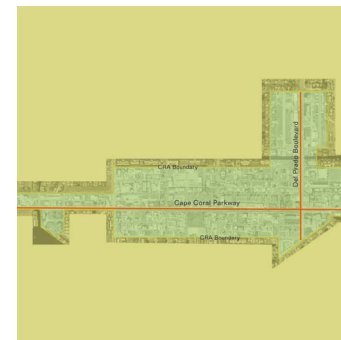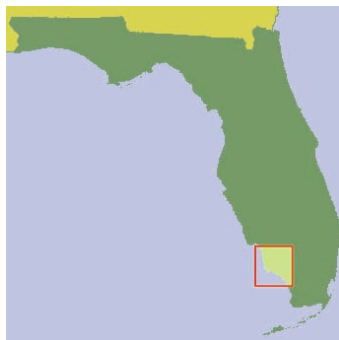# *Design*Downtown
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA MASTER PLAN
*Cape*Coral

March 2002

Downtown

is just one small part of the City as a whole, yet it has a big job to do. Downtown should provide for a thriving and sustainable economy, serve growing daily needs— and also captivate minds and inspire the citizens and visitors.

prepared by:

HPE

DOVER, KOHL & PARTNERS

February 2002

ZHA

Spikowski Planning Associates

Cape Coral
FLORIDA
Community Redevelopment Agency

inside

WATERFRONT WONDERLAND

Introduction
PURPOSE & INTENT

In just four decades, Cape Coral has gone from an uninhabited hunting camp to one of the largest cities in Florida. It has come far in its brief past, and will continue to improve and blossom. Downtown is just one small part of the City as a whole, yet it has a big job to do. It should provide for a thriving and sustainable economy and serve growing daily needs. It should also captivate minds and inspire citizens and visitors. This plan is a glimpse into Downtown's future and can serve as a guide for how to get there. It is a tool for developers, investors, business owners, public officials, and community members. It begins with an analysis of existing conditions in Downtown. Then it illustrates future possibilities. Finally, it defines and explains policies and guidelines for how to make the ideas become reality.

Artist rendering for Bimini Basin

1
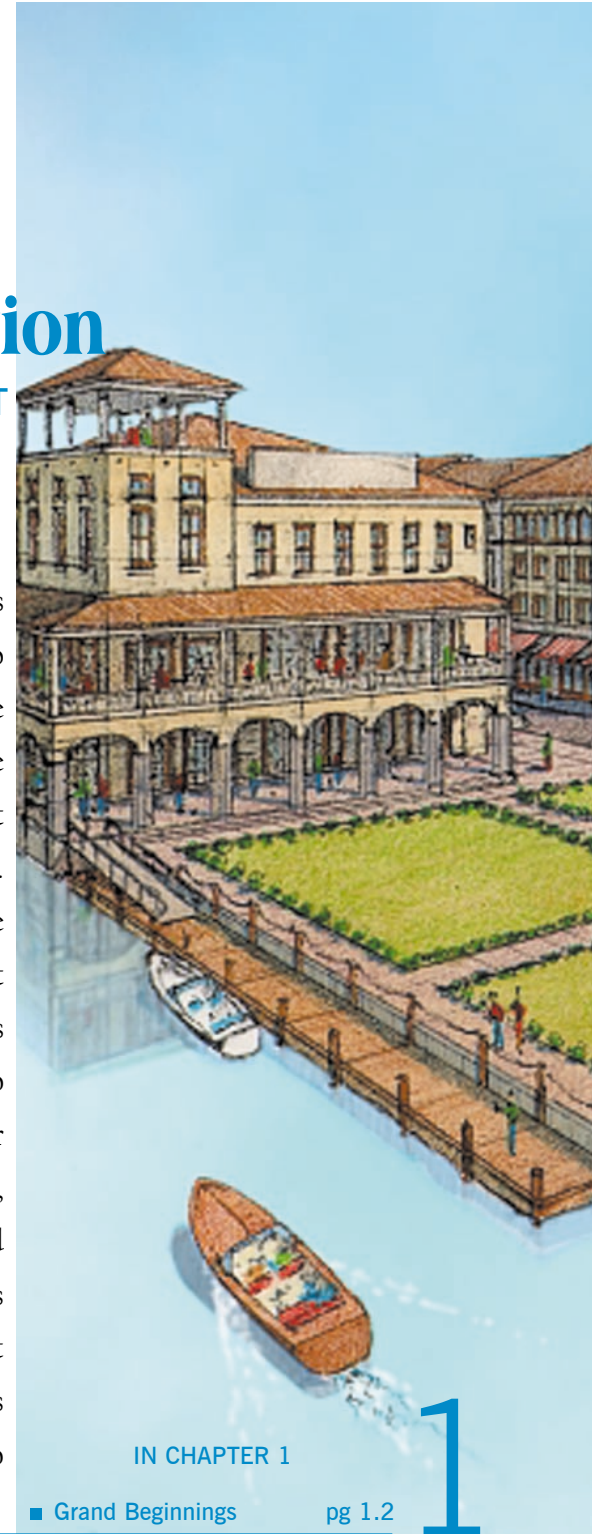
Grand Beginnings

Redfish Point: 1957

Cape Coral began with a plane flight over the little known peninsula called Redfish Point. The land, belonging to a group of various landowners, was a mixture of uplands and wetlands mainly used for hunting and fishing. It was 1957 and Florida was barely settled. There was no Disney World, no Miami-Ft. Lauderdale megalopolis, and no reason not to build a city.

The Rosen Brothers, who were principals of the Gulf American Corporation, laid out a grand plan to develop the 'Venice of America.' Their success in Cape Coral was remarkable, especially compared to many other places in Florida and throughout the United States that underwent similar programs of development. Most of these developments remain unsettled and unfinished, their undeveloped tracts shocking when seen from the air.

The Rosen Brothers said then, "We'll make a city here in spite of ourselves." Gulf American Corporation undertook an aggressive, and highly successful, campaign to bring people to the Cape. Advertisements described the housing choices, commercial opportunities, and civic activities that a future resident could expect to find. Early plans and drawings for Cape Coral show a Downtown, with a grid of streets, varying block sizes, and parking lots. Promotional materials also promised the types of stores planned, because when the city was first built there was no bridge and, therefore, an even greater need to provide daily needs and services in the Cape.

Early promotional material for Cape Coral

All historical pictures courtesy of Cape Coral Historical Society.

A canal in 2001

Looking west towards Downtown

Redfish Point: 2001

Two bridges and some forty years later, there is still a need to provide more quality businesses, stores, civic opportunities, and housing choices. Recently, momentum has been building to enhance the sense of community and civic mindedness that already exists in Downtown. It has a growing population, a healthy assortment of locally owned businesses, a motivated City government, an active Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), and a foundation of urban structure from which to work. There have been improvements to Cape Coral Parkway's streetscape. The business mix is evolving with a mix of national chains and local businesses. The CRA is motivated and energized.

Why Cultivate Downtown?

1. Businesses are losing money to other neighboring communities —
   Cape Coral can avoid this leakage.

2. Downtowns are enjoying a surge in popularity —
   Cape Coral can use this trend to its advantage.

3. There is a significant amount of vacant and underutilized land —
   Cape Coral can capture this lost value.

4. Cape Coral Parkway faces pressure to balance commuter traffic needs with those of a thriving Downtown —
   Cape Coral can meet this challenge.

On the Pages that Follow...

...are physical plans, explanatory pictures, and text.

Chapter 2 describes the public involvement process that was under-taken to create this plan.

Chapter 3 analyzes the existing conditions in Downtown with regard to urban form, economics, and transportation.
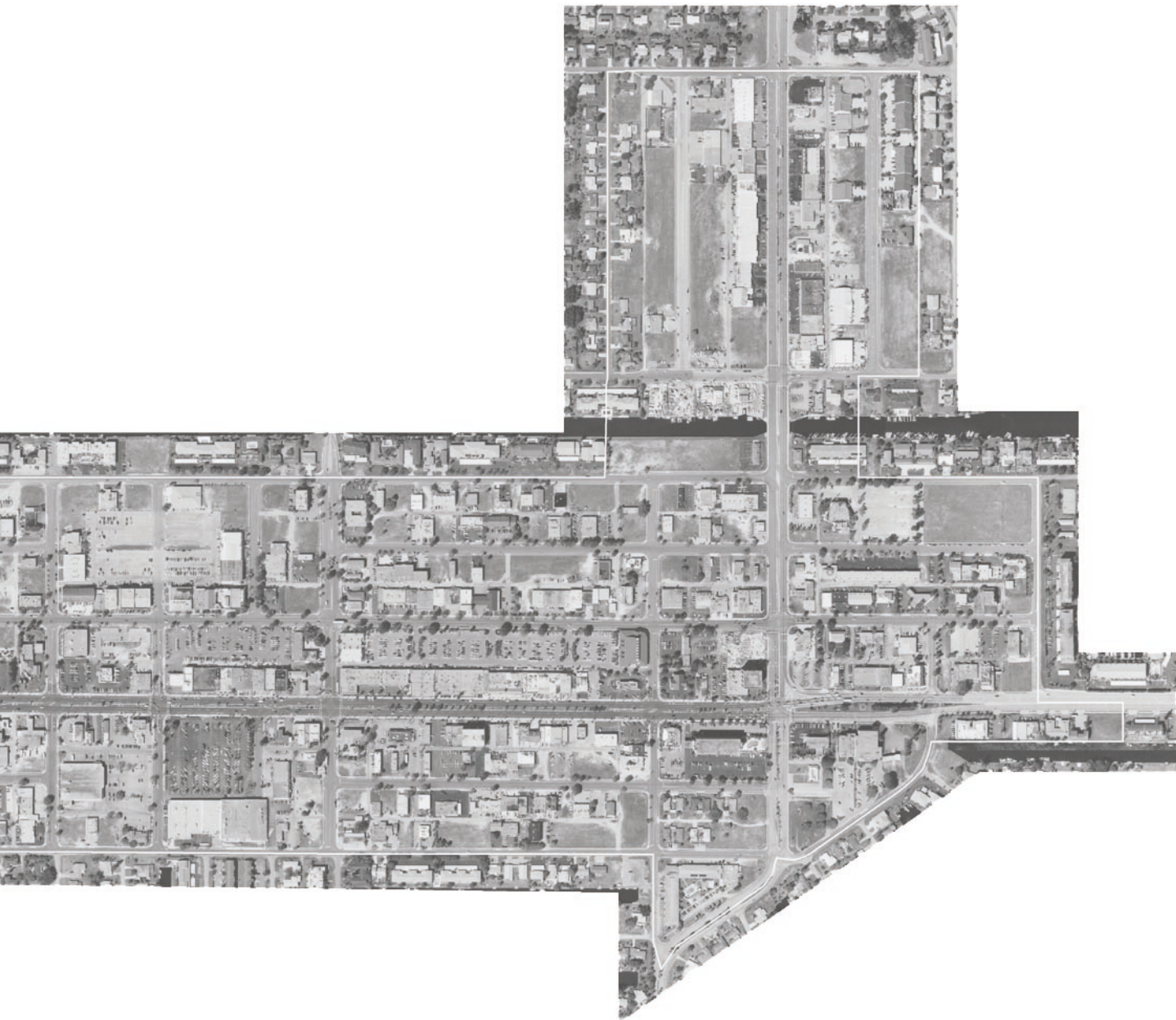
Chapter 4 explains and illustrates urban design principles and applies them to Downtown.

Chapter 5 details changes to specific areas.

Chapter 6 recommends policy and organizational changes as well as details financial programming strategies.

Aerial photograph of Community Redevelopment Area
Cape Coral, 1998

Eastern entrance - page 5.2

Market Square - page 5.20

Bimini Basin - page 5.24

New Streets - page 5.16

The Process
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The best vision for a city is shaped hand in hand with the people who live, work and invest there. That's why a community involvement process was undertaken to create a plan for Downtown Cape Coral. In early 2001, the CRA selected the town planning firm of Dover, Kohl & Partners to lead the project. The team included urban economists ZHA, transportation experts Hall Planning and Engineering, local firm Spikowski Planning Associates, City and CRA staff, and scores of local volunteers. The whole program came to be called *Design*Downtown, and proved to be an invaluable way to think anew about the community, weigh its opportunities, and devise a strategy to meet its challenges.

2

The Process Begins

Preliminary Studies

Dover-Kohl compiled information including base maps and several previous plans and reports. Hall Planning conducted a survey of existing conditions, traffic-flow patterns, and transportation needs. After conducting meetings with developers, bankers, realtors, and business owners, ZHA detailed the economic make-up of the City of Cape Coral — analyzing spending patterns, income levels, service needs, and intra-county comparisons. Another useful tool was the local knowledge provided by Spikowski Planning Associates, City leaders and CRA staff.

Regional Precedents

Cape Coral's uniqueness must not be underestimated or forgotten, but in cities surrounding Cape Coral, the team was able to gain a sense of other downtowns that work within the region's geographic and climatic features. The Dover-Kohl team explored Naples, Fort Myers, and Fort Myers Beach to better understand how those downtowns were recently transformed into success stories. Tours of Sanibel Island and greater Cape Coral forged an overview of the rest of the region.

On-site Touring

An intensive walking tour allowed the Dover-Kohl team to experience first-hand, and on the "human scale," the current opportunities and constraints of the CRA. Special vistas, street and mid-block crossings, block length, and objects of architectural interest were investigated. Parking supply and demand, presence or absence of alleys and civic buildings, street width and building height were studied from a pedestrian viewpoint, thereby allowing a more thorough understanding of the how people experience Downtown.

A waterfront area in Naples, Florida

Touring the CRA on foot

Discussing ideas

Putting ink to paper

Deciding on ideas

Working On-Site

Saturday Session

The next step was to hear from the residents of Cape Coral. On a Saturday morning in late September 2001, around a hundred residents gathered for the *Design*Downtown Workshop that was held at the Board of Realtors building in Club Square. The CRA Board promoted the public session in flyers and newspaper advertisements. The mood on Saturday was enthusiastic and the conversations lively. After a presentation on urban design principles, transportation issues, and an explanation of the preliminary economic analysis, the citizen-planners were asked, "What do you want your Downtown to be when it grows up?" People worked in small groups, gathered around a table with a map of the CRA area. Individual ideas and group suggestions were discussed and drawn onto the maps. After a working lunch, table representatives presented their table's ideas and maps. Often, recurring themes emerged.

The foremost message from the citizenry was 'Emphasize the waterfront!' Cape Coral is special precisely because of its 400 miles of canals, yet there is very little public access to the water views. Residents want dining, entertainment, shopping, and gathering places that show off the City's most precious asset. Both Bimini and Bikini Basins were recommended as wonderful areas to develop into water oriented destinations. Linkages between existing canals were discussed. Most agreed that the large Club Square area would benefit from a facelift; it could be an ideal place for a town square or plaza. On Cape Coral Parkway, citizens wanted more shade trees, pedestrian crossings, and a grand entrance to the city. Cape Coral's wealth of canals invoked images of Venetian streets, European plazas, and Amsterdam's canals.

Table 2 presenting their ideas

Notes were projected on a screen

The interactive process

Working on designs

Sketches and initial plans accumulated
on the walls

Exit Survey

A brief questionnaire was distributed during the closing comments, to allow for individual questions or comments to be relayed. Overall, the citizen response was extremely positive. The participants felt the workshop was helpful and informative. And they were excited about the propositions for redeveloping Downtown Cape Coral.

On-Site Studio

The following day, the Dover-Kohl team set up the on-site design studio in a storefront on Cape Coral Parkway. Community members were invited to stop by the studio, observe the progress, and offer input. The design team created detailed lists, drawings and plans, combining and refining the ideas of the community. Working on-site gave the design team a chance to closely study the CRA, during all hours and on different days. In between drawing sessions and meetings, the planners observed day-to-day traffic patterns, public uses, and other details of civic life. The design team was able to observe Downtown on foot, in the car, even in a bucket truck.

Informal Pin-Up

Wednesday evening, an informal "pin-up session" was held to gauge the direction and possible stumbling blocks of the plan-in-progress. Attendees viewed some of the suggested changes to Cape Coral Parkway, Bikini and Bimini Basins, Club Square and other downtown sections. A videotape about grand boulevards was used as a springboard for discussion about the potential improvements of a redesigned Cape Coral Parkway.

Studio work continued late in the evenings

Work-In-Progress Presentation

Preparation intensified for the Friday evening "Work-In-Progress" Presentation to the community. The Dover-Kohl team revised, re-worked, and revamped the plan, integrating the critiques received at the pin-up session. The presentation identified the most important ideas and began with a list of First Principles (see box).

During the wrap-up of the presentation, exit surveys were distributed, providing yet another chance for residents to voice their opinions on the future of their city. Ultimately, the *Design*Downtown proposal generated a positive buzz, laying out a vision for the City of Cape Coral. CRA Board members declared, "Let's do it!"

First Principles

- Connectivity to water

- Walkability

- Taming through-traffic

- Smart parking

- Buildings relating to their streets

- Emphasizing the evening

- Outdoor dining

- Shade & greenery

- Mixed uses; mixed incomes

- Better public gathering spaces

- Urban architecture

- Business-friendly street details

Existing Conditions
THE STATE OF DOWNTOWN

We must know where we came from and where we are now, before we can earnestly decide where we want to go. The *Design*Downtown project began with a site analysis in August 2001 that focused on urban design, transportation, and economics. Ideas and observations were framed by two things. First was the CRA's Mission Statement, which says the agency "will facilitate the emergence of a vibrant urban village where people of all ages will live, work, shop, and be entertained." Second were best practices and proven urban design strategies. For being a young town, barely in its adolescence, Cape Coral has a rich history. It has much to be proud of, and plenty of room to grow and mature into a fine city.

Veterans Memorial on Cape Coral Parkway

3

Urban Form

How Did It All Begin?

Cape Coral was developed as an early project for Jack and Leonard Rosen's Gulf American Corporation. The Rosen brothers, developers from Miami, Florida, are also known for developing Lehigh Acres in eastern Lee County and Golden Gate Estates in Collier County. If one considers Cape Coral a teenage city, then Golden Gate Estates or Lehigh Acres are barely toddlers.

It began in 1957 with a plane flight over Redfish Point, the southernmost tip of what was to quickly become the waterfront wonderland of Cape Coral. In the early years, development was sparse, at best. A fourplex at the corner of Cape Coral and Coronado Parkways was the only building for some time, but sales of homesites skyrocketed rapidly, and the Cape grew faster than many people could have ever imagined. Within two years, sales were at $5 million. (From *Lies that Came True* by Eileen Bernard, page 18)

Sales and the Suburban Dream

Cape Coral's Historical Society maintains a treasure of the sales material used to entice early buyers. The $5 million sales figure demonstrates the effectiveness of the promotions. Forty years ago, the dream of a beautiful home on a large lot with year-round sunshine was free from those pesky present-day complications like traffic congestion and saltwater intrusion. A few monthly payments were all it took to get your home in the sun. Yet today, many residents still feel that something is missing. "Put in the things that make a town a town," said one participant at the Design Workshop for Downtown Cape Coral.

A superbly planned *improved* WATERFRONT community of gracious living...

8698 waterfront homesites on 138 miles of navigable waterways

Original advertisement from Gulf American Corporation – the first vision of Downtown at center right.

An early view of the Cape Coral Shopping Plaza

Big John, with grocery bags

What's here now?

Census data from 2000 puts Cape Coral's population at 102,286 people. Many live in the southeast and southwest sections of the city, proximate to Downtown. And many people, over 47,000 cars a day during peak season, drive down Cape Coral Parkway, right through the heart of downtown. But despite all these people passing through Downtown everyday, there are definite indications that show much of the Cape's potential sales also flow across the river.

With the exception of single-family homes and campus-like civic buildings, only a small number of new buildings have been built in the past ten years. Much of Downtown stands as it was twenty to thirty years ago; even the signs for Cape Coral Shopping Plaza remain. The small downtown area is comprised mainly of single story buildings that developed in a commercial strip format, rather than that of a traditional main street.

Many residents live on canals

Stores along Cape Coral Parkway

Water, Water Everywhere, But Still No Place to Eat…

The seemingly endless canal system was, and still is, the Cape's biggest selling point. Homes with access to the Gulf and Caloosahatchee River have always fetched higher prices than homes with freshwater access or none. The dream of homes in the sun that lured buyers here initially was first and foremost a residential vision, but it included a bit of commercially zoned land. Yet even that vision overlooked the potential to have commercial *waterfront* development. On 400 miles of canals, there are only a few places to dine with a view over the water, for example.

Streets, Blocks & Alleys

Much of the Cape was designed around canals using a conventional suburban design with cul-de-sacs and dead end streets. Downtown, however, was built along traditional design standards with a grid of streets and blocks. Most streets are quite wide and have sufficient width for either parallel or diagonal on-street parking. Along the eastern portions of Cape Coral Parkway, Lafayette Street, and SE 47th Terrace, the street edge is lined with buildings, which is a standard component of most thriving downtowns. As one travels to the southern and western boundaries of the CRA, the buildings become fewer and farther between. The "streetwall," where the building meets the sidewalk, is full of gaps and vacant lots. This character does not support urbanity or optimize land use.

The CRA has an assortment of block sizes. The blocks between SE 15th Avenue and Vincennes Boulevard are quite long (1200 feet). This distance takes up the bulk of the five-minute walk (about 1350 feet) that most people are willing to walk before opting for another mode of travel. Most blocks have alleys which are important for trash and delivery areas. However, some alleys are poorly defined and not used to their fullest extent for trash and service activities.

Club Square

A combination of curbcuts and on-street parking along Cape Coral Parkway

A view of Cape Coral Parkway looking towards the Caloosahatchee, from a bird's eye view

Architectural Diversity

Cities that have grown naturally over time have a variety of architectural styles and have an assortment of types of buildings, including civic buildings. Cape Coral's building stock reflects these principles. There is no unifying architectural style or theme among the existing buildings.

Places to Live

Within the immediate CRA boundary, there are virtually no residential dwelling units. Immediately north, east, and west, there are condominiums and condominium-style apartments. To the south, there are single-family homes. It appears that many of these homes are renter-occupied as shown by a prevalence of For Rent signs. Also, the lots are not as well kept compared to the sections of Cape Coral that are characterized by large, higher-end suburban homes.

A view of Cape Coral Parkway, from the pedestrian's perspective

Places to Shop

In the CRA, there are a number of locally owned, "mom & pop" businesses, some of which are quite popular —a 45 minute wait at Iguana Mia is common. (It is one of the few outdoor dining establishments.) Still, fast food, gas stations, and auto-oriented uses comprise much of the CRA. Walgreens, Eckerd, Auto Zone, and Publix are among the national chains found Downtown. The remaining commercial areas in the Cape are strip malls or big box developments strung out along corridors or crowded at busy intersections.

Surveys performed by the CRA indicate that residents do in fact desire pedestrian friendly streets as well as more varied and higher quality retail prospects. As for having the kind of pedestrian friendly shopping streets always found in thriving downtowns, Cape Coral is utterly deficient. While some people may walk, the streets are rarely brimming with activity, with the notable exceptions of the Art Festivals or other special events.

Places to Play

Downtowns with an overabundance of parks, open space, and natural lands are few and far between. Downtowns are by definition urban places, quite distinct from natural lands. However, public parks and some greenspaces are crucial to successful cities. Imagine New York without Central Park, Boston without the Emerald Necklace, or Savannah without its squares.

Four Freedoms Park, at the westernmost boundary of the CRA, is Downtown's only notable public park. Harney's Point at the foot of the Cape Coral bridge is a historic place and there are plans to include a walking trail around the base of the bridge. Club Square also serves as a public plaza when not being used as a parking lot.

On-street parking and wide sidewalks on Cape Coral Parkway

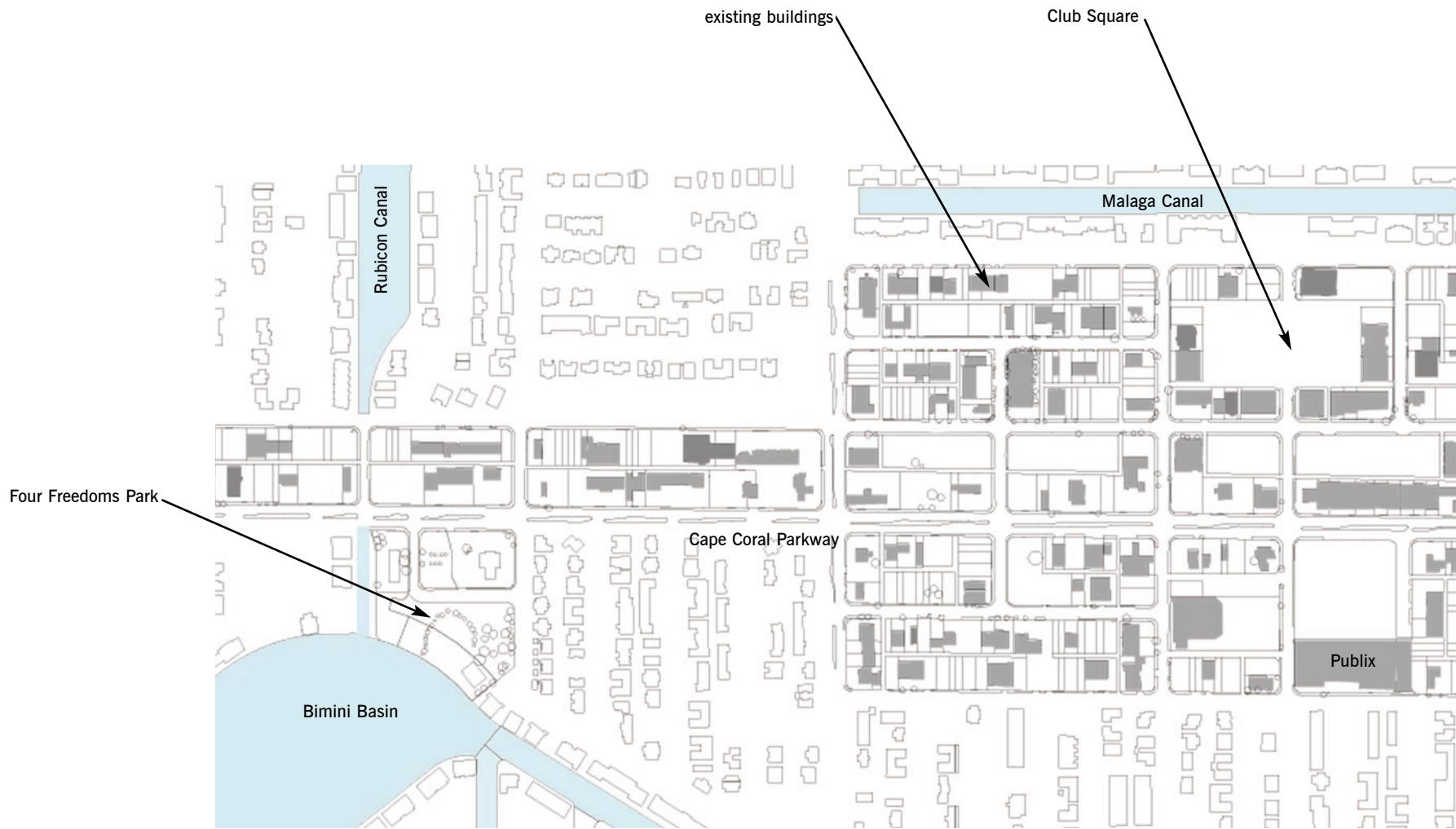A bird's eye view of Bimini Basin and Four Freedoms Park
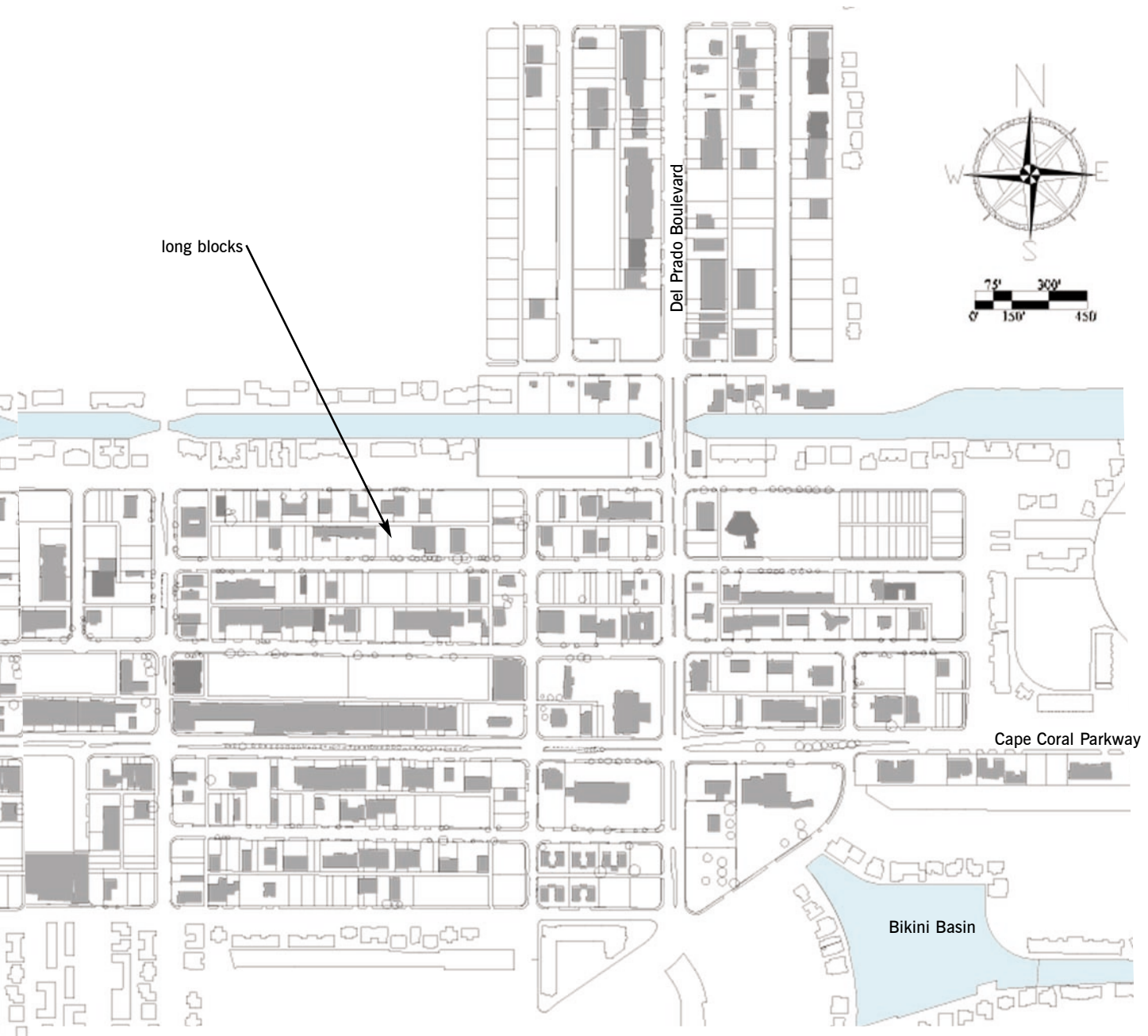
Parking: Too Much, Too Little, or Just Right?

Downtown Cape Coral has plenty of physical space for parking. While there may not be an urgent need for more parking, balancing parking supply and demand over time can be tricky. The rules of thumb usually reflected in suburban sprawl are <u>not</u> the right rules for parking in a successful urban setting like the one the CRA seeks to create in Downtown. Urban areas do not have all the parking directly in front of the stores, and in the most prosperous communities the local government almost always loosens the number of spaces property owners must provide with their buildings. By contrast, suburban sprawl areas reflect very high parking requirements and place all the parking spaces directly in front of the businesses. Cape Coral has a mixture of both approaches.

The seeming abundance of Downtown's parking supply is slightly problematic. Businesses and customers want convenient parking near the stores. However, too much empty space may give the impression that there is actually less economic activity than what actually exists. Parking lots that are not maintained look unsightly and can discourage use and activity. From a transportation standpoint, ample parking is needed for the automobile, but should not preclude someone's ability or desire to walk or bike.

Parking lots behind the buildings

existing buildings

Club Square

Rubicon Canal

Malaga Canal

Four Freedoms Park

Cape Coral Parkway

Publix

Bimini Basin

long blocks

Del Prado Boulevard

N
W   E
S

75'   300'
0'   150'   450'

Cape Coral Parkway

Bikini Basin

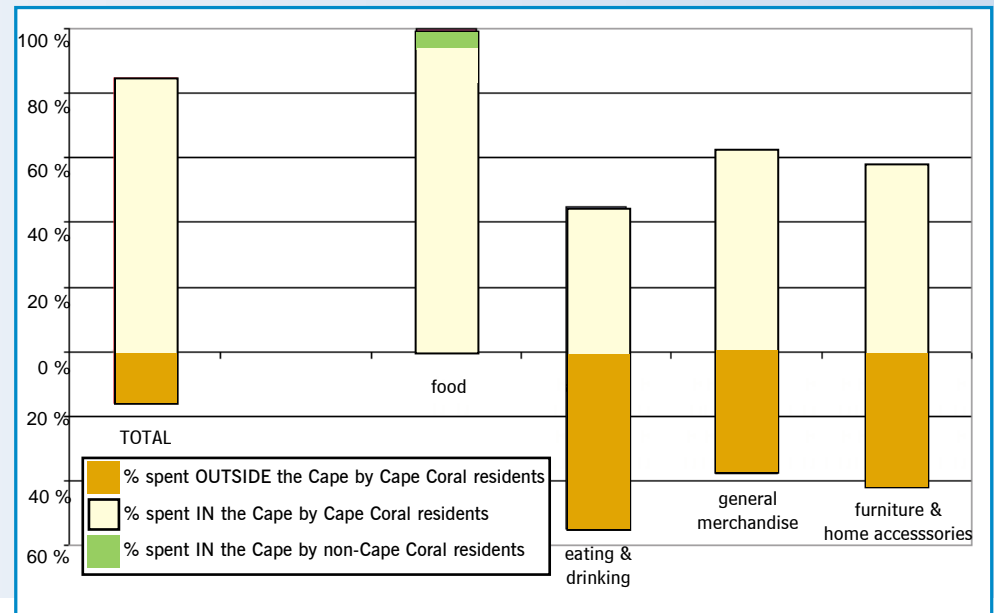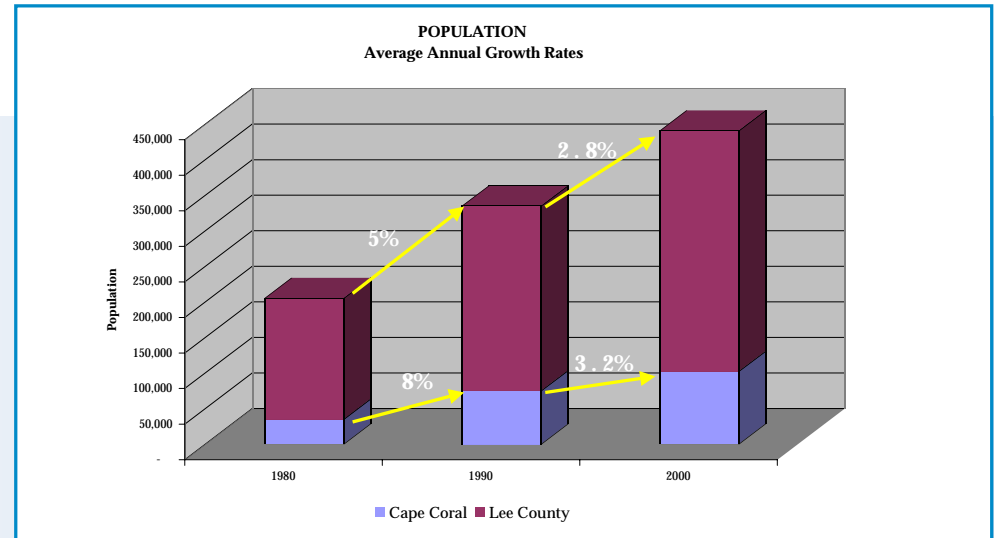EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN OF CAPE CORAL COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA

Economics

It's Not "the Other Side of the River" Anymore

The Cape was originally envisioned as a bedroom community of Ft. Myers and this sentiment may still linger, even if it is quite false. Cape Coral is a vital component of Lee County and should be proud of its many positive qualities. The city has a friendly feel to it. It is the safest city in Florida and has a high quality of life.

The Cape's economic prospects are bright. Its population, just over 100,000, comprises 25% of Lee County's population, which is the 20th fastest growing Metropolitan Statistical Area in the United States. This growth is an increase from 1980, when Cape Coral was only 17% of the County. The people that are moving here potentially have more money to spend. The median household income of $43, 984 is higher than that of Lee County ($40,510) and of Fort Myers ($31,055). This high median income is due to the fact that 40% of the households that arrived since 1990 have incomes over $50,000.

However, with all of the people and money coming over to the Cape, there is a bit of a lag in retail, office, and residential diversity. With 25% of Lee County's population, only 9% of the jobs are located on the Cape. There is a significant amount of retail "leakage." This figure demonstrates that the Cape's retail is underserving the needs of the population. Those dollars are going somewhere else. Even with the great restaurants, over 50% of dollars spent on eating and drinking are lost to neighboring communities. General merchandise and furniture also lose a large share of sales potential. One citizen participant may have said it best: "Keep the money here that's going across the bridge."

POPULATION
Average Annual Growth Rates

Cape Coral ■ Lee County

TOTAL

% spent OUTSIDE the Cape by Cape Coral residents
% spent IN the Cape by Cape Coral residents
% spent IN the Cape by non-Cape Coral residents

food

eating & drinking

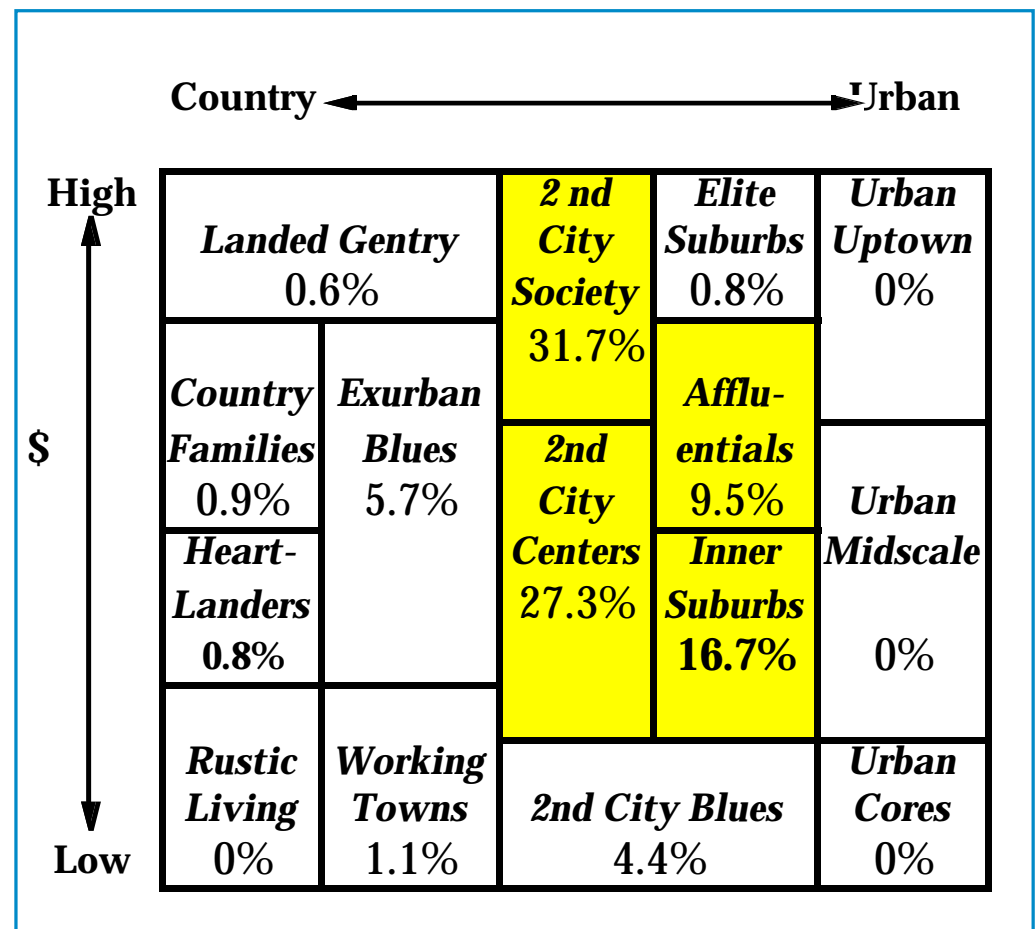general merchandise

furniture & home accesssories

High end, or Class A, office space is totally deficient everywhere in the Cape. As southwest Florida changes from a retirement area to one with national firms and headquarters, Class A office space must be made available. As it stands, any firm desiring Class A office space would have to build a new building to meet their demands.

Apartments are fully leased. Existing apartment and condominium stock is fairly shallow. There are few condominiums with three or more stories. The majority are one and two story, suburban style apartment buildings. There do not appear to be any luxury, high-end apartments/condominiums available. There is also no significant stock of rowhouses or townhouses.

The demographic characteristics are changing. The population is getting younger, as families with children and younger people move to the Cape. Household size is increasing, meaning that people with families are moving into Cape Coral. Similarly, the average age (41.6) is on a downward trend according to the 2000 Census.

The chart at right compares a continuum of wealth with a range of preferences for types of living, from rural to urban. The graphic represents the distribution of typical socio-economic characteristics that can be applied to any city. Highlighted in yellow are the highest percentage of Cape Coral residents, who are neither extremely wealthy nor do they prefer an extreme urban or rural setting.

Country ◄————————————————► **Urban**

High					
	Landed Gentry 0.6%		*2 nd City Society* 31.7%	*Elite Suburbs* 0.8%	*Urban Uptown* 0%
$	*Country Families* 0.9%	*Exurban Blues* 5.7%	*2nd City Centers* 27.3%	*Afflu-entials* 9.5%	*Urban Midscale* 0%
	Heart-Landers 0.8%			*Inner Suburbs* 16.7%	
Low	*Rustic Living* 0%	*Working Towns* 1.1%	*2nd City Blues* 4.4%		*Urban Cores* 0%

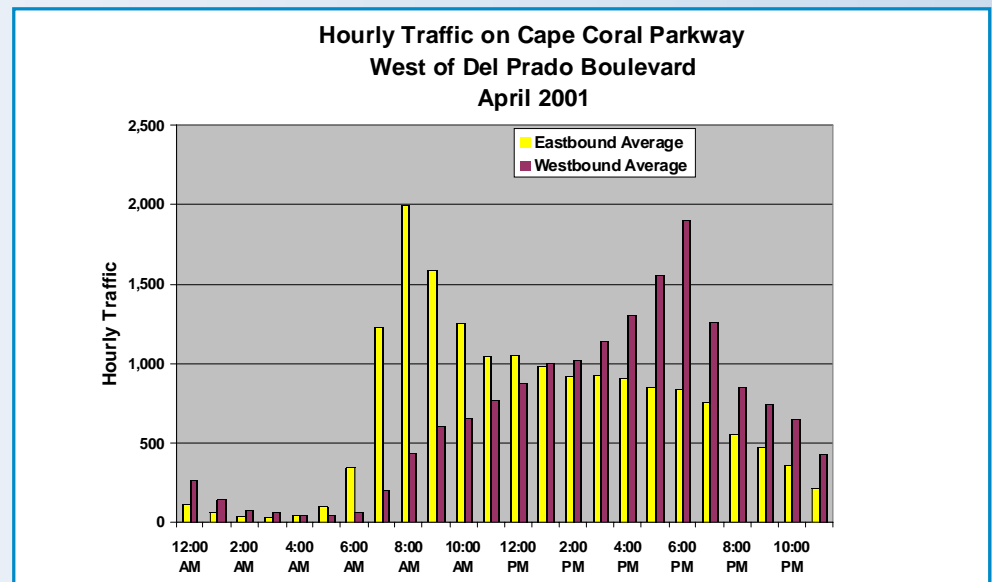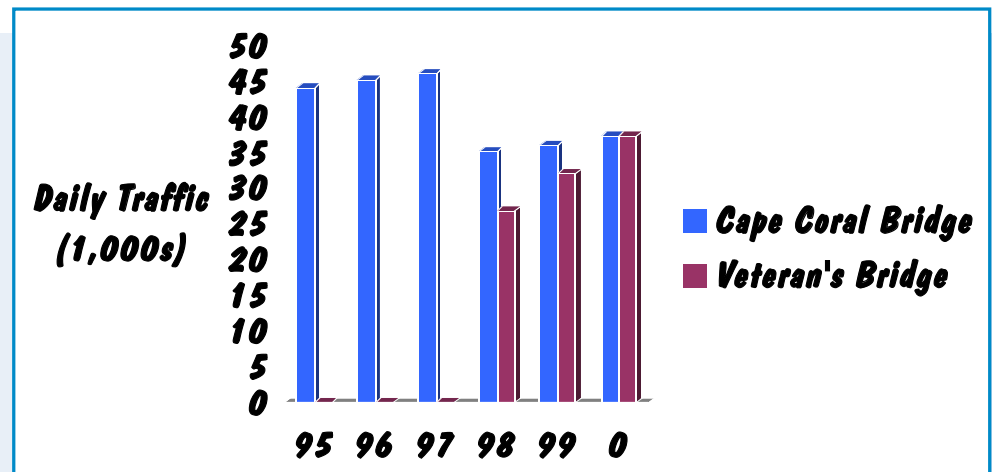Lifestyle Matrix - Urban/Rural, High/Low Income

Transportation

Getting Around

The Cape is linked to the mainland of Florida at its far northern tip. It is most conveniently accessed at the southern end by the Midpoint Memorial Bridge and the Cape Coral Bridge. Tolls are levied on both bridges. A grade-separated interchange takes people in and out of the Cape at the Midpoint Bridge. This is a pedestrian wasteland, and interestingly, but not surprisingly, has the highest traffic conflict and crash count of any place in the city. Here, the car dominates mobility. The entrance to Downtown on the Cape Coral Bridge is indicated by the Veterans Memorial.

Prior to the opening of the Midpoint Bridge, average daily traffic (ADT) on Cape Coral Bridge hit a peak in 1997 at 45,000 cars a day. The installation of the Midpoint Bridge with ADT in 2000 of 25,000 reduced ADT on Cape Coral Bridge to 35,000. Since 1998, ADT has climbed steadily on both bridges, with more total bridge traffic than before the new bridge. Granted, a portion of this increase is due to increased population growth and its traffic, but a certain portion of that increase comes from people seizing the opportunity to drive more, now that the roads (e.g. Cape Coral Bridge) are less congested. It's called Induced Travel Demand and it happens just about every time a highway is built or widened.

Cape Coral Parkway

Cape Coral Bridge Road becomes Cape Coral Parkway and passes through the CRA. It plays a double role in that it serves as both an urban arterial and the main street of the downtown. The morning peak

Daily Traffic (1,000s) — Cape Coral Bridge / Veteran's Bridge — 95 96 97 98 99 0

Hourly Traffic on Cape Coral Parkway West of Del Prado Boulevard April 2001 — Eastbound Average / Westbound Average

at 8:00 am has around 2000 cars an hour. Afternoon peak is at 6:00 pm and has just under 2000 cars an hour. In 2001, the section from Coronado Parkway to Chiquita Boulevard was widened to six lanes. The portion through the CRA is currently four lanes with on-street parking, another standard component of urban areas.

A streetscape program was completed for this section in 1997. This program fashioned much needed improvements to the street, including wider sidewalks, landscaping, lightposts, and benches. A key element of the streetscape improvements, mid-block crossings, was left out of the final construction. This oversight was unfortunate given the difficulty most pedestrians now have in crossing Cape Coral Parkway on those long blocks. The lack of consistent shade, either from significant shade trees, arcades and/or awnings, is another deterrent to pedestrian activity on the street. There is an indication that people in the Cape want to walk, as many residential roads in the southern sections have been reduced from four lanes to two lanes with a wide biking and pedestrian lane. Even on these roads, however, the lack of consistent shade trees may still dissuade many people from walking.

The current configuration of Cape Coral Parkway, and other roads in the CRA, encourages people to speed. The travel lanes are very wide and the buildings are often set back from the street so the indication for the drivers to slow down is lost. This width means traffic goes by too fast to make pedestrians feel comfortable, especially at off peak hours. Also, when the cars are moving through too quickly, it means that the drivers are not stopping and spending any money.

The signal at Del Prado and Cape Coral Parkway controls the flow of traffic through Downtown. The 2.5-minute cycle causes traffic to back up at this intersection, but unfortunately, the current traffic system on the Parkway is designed to make up that time by having traffic move too fast through Downtown, to the great detriment of businesses and people.

Criteria for Walkability

- Small Block Size
- Buildings Fronting Street
- Mixed Land Use
- Lower Traffic Speeds
- On Street Parking
- Interconnected Streets
- Sidewalks
- Traffic Volumes
- Street Trees
- Narrow Streets

General Design
NEAR TERM PLAN

There are a number of common elements that are found in nearly every successful downtown. Many of these qualities center around the pedestrian and creating interesting, comfortable, and safe places for people. These characteristics go beyond design, but many of the challenges facing Downtown can be met with simple design solutions.

In the chapter that follows, basic design standards are first described and then applied to a Near Term Plan for Downtown Cape Coral. This plan illustrates initial projects that could be realistically undertaken anytime within the next twenty years. More detail on specific projects is given in Chapters 5 and 6.

4

Cape Coral Town Center's Big John

General Design

Mix of Uses

Since Cape Coral's inception, single-use zoning has been used as a way to manage development. It leads to a pattern of zones for living, zones for shopping, zones for driving, but hardly any place where a mix of these uses is allowed. For centuries, people lived above shops, or at least within walking distance of them. A mix of uses is evident in all successful downtowns. Even in the smallest of settlements, there is a concentration of activity where people can live, work, shop, or enjoy themselves. One of the benefits of a mix of uses is within walking distance is that it allows people the opportunity to replace a trip in a vehicle with one on foot, or on a bike. Living in apartments above shops, or in townhouses near the shops, allows the residents the luxury of walking to many of their daily needs. Civic uses, such as a post office, day care, and places of worship should also be within walking distance.

Besides the historical precedent, and the potential for increased personal convenience, having more people living and working downtown is another way to bring more customers into Downtown's stores and offices. Small apartments and townhouses located close to services and entertainment in Downtown provide a unique housing choice, especially for those folks who want a smaller, more manageable home. These residents are potential customers for Downtown businesses. And, the increased pedestrian activity throughout the day and evening provides additional security by having more "eyes on the street."


A commercial area...

...and another commercial area; single use zoning doesn't guarantee quality places

Building Placement and Height

Where the building sits on the land and how tall it is are vital elements of urban form. Streets should be thought of as three-dimensional public rooms where the buildings serve as the walls. When buildings are set far back from one another, pedestrians may feel psychologically lost or ill at ease. When buildings are too close and too tall, there is a feeling of constraint. This proportion of "streetwall height" to "road width" must feel comfortable to the pedestrian. The prevalence of single story buildings is the main detriment to a comfortable street proportion and scale when the roadway width is large.

Deep building setbacks with large parking lots in front are devastating to the street space and overall pedestrian environment. The most effective way to ameliorate this condition is to replace the suburban notion of a "front setback" for buildings, which implies that anything goes as long as the building is somewhere behind the line. Instead, the "build-to line," where one must build up to a certain alignment, should be used.
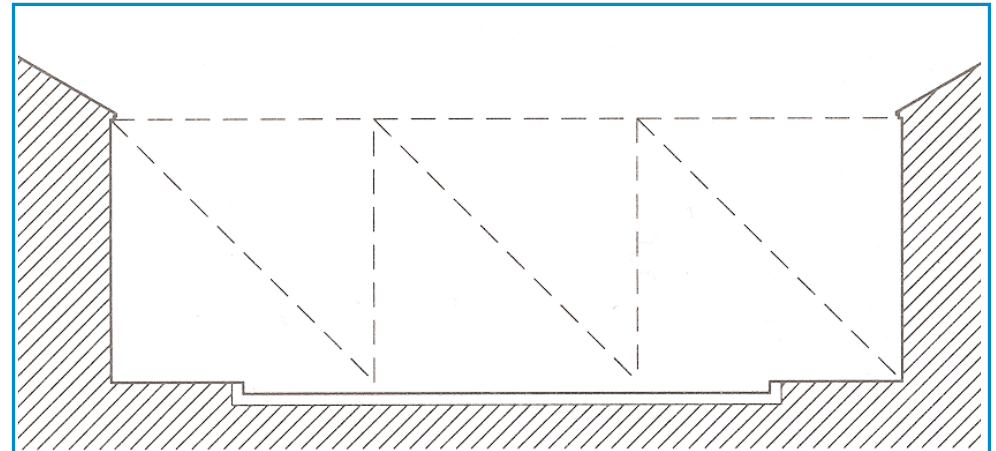
RATIO 1 : 3

The height-to-width ratio of the space generates spatial enclosure, which is related to the physiology of the human eye. If the width of a public space is such that the cone of vision encompasses less street wall than sky opening, the degree of spatial enclosure is slight. The ratio of 1 increment of height to 6 of width is the absolute minimum, with 1 to 3 being an effective minimum if a sense of enclosure is to result. As a general rule, the tighter the ratio, the stronger the sense of place and often, the higher the real estate value. Spatial enclosure is particularly important for shopping streets that must compete with shopping malls, which provide very effective spatial definition. [emphasis added]. In the absence of spatial definition by facades, disciplined tree planting is an alternative. Trees aligned for spatial enclosure are necessary on thoroughfares that have substantial front yards.

Graphic and quote excerpted from *American Institute of Architects Graphic Standards, Seventh Edition*

A ratio of about 14:1 where the road seems wider than it actually is

Special Sites for Civic Buildings

Because they serve the entire community, civic buildings should be accessible and located in places of greater activity. Because these buildings are important to community life, they should be placed in prominent locations, such as along a public square, at the end of a vista down an important street, or at a key streetcorner.

Integrated Network of Streets

A network of streets allows pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists to move safely and comfortably throughout the area. Having small blocks on a grid of streets provides multiple routes. Different routes are important whether you are walking, biking, or driving. If there is congestion, and there is only one road, automobiles are forced to remain in the congestion. With a complete network, multiple routes are always available. Downtown Cape Coral has interconnected streets, but many of the blocks are too large.

Pedestrian Friendly Streets

In addition to a mix of uses and properly scaled streets, other details are necessary to generate pedestrian friendly streets. Safety, interest, and comfort are the three basic ideas. Having people on the street is beneficial because it provides another customer base without adding a tremendous amount of traffic to the roads.

Pedestrians need to feel safe from personal crime and also from automobiles passing on the road. Separating the sidewalk from the roadway is a key factor for promoting the needed feeling of safety. On-street parking and street trees provide the simplest barrier.

Feeling safe at night is a matter of lighting, activity on the street, and being able to see into stores. Boarded up windows or metal garage doors do not communicate the idea that 'this place is safe.' More activity on the street will also add to feelings of security.

An interesting setting is crucial to keep people walking, and also to encourage people to make purchases at stores. A continuous row of shops and restaurants that have clear views to what is inside, or intriguing window displays helps keep pedestrians on the street. (See next section on Street Walls.)

Comfort, especially in Florida, is key. In the hot days of summer, walking without shade is not a viable option for most people. Mature shade trees help add shade, provide beauty, and benefit the environment. Awnings and arcades are more permanent, and offer protection from the daily rain showers that occur in the summer season. Benches and resting places can make places more people friendly too. Unfortunately, small sidewalks cannot accommodate these necessary ingredients; so wide sidewalks are a necessity.

A discontinuous streetwall

A stretch of a blank wall

Street Walls

The success of a downtown can be undermined by a discontinuous streetwall, even with the best mix of uses. The pedestrian's experience and perception where the building and the sidewalk meet (or don't meet) is crucial.

The character of a streetwall can either entice or repel a pedestrian from walking down a street. Encouraging walking is important for many reasons. Activity on the street keeps a constant flow of customers for the businesses. Meeting people on the street is an important part of civic and community life; people rarely fall in love while sitting in traffic! Walking can reduce traffic congestion, which also improves air quality.

Walls without windows are another problem. Clear views to merchandise and maintaining a continuous thread of stores must be maintained and enhanced. Ability to clearly view merchandise cultivates the interesting environment that pedestrians demand. Also, window-shopping is often the first step in making an eventual purchase.

THE DETAILS OF A PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY STREET

Buildings should abut the sidewalk with the ground floor containing retail and/or office uses.

Shade and shelter can be created from awnings and street trees OR using colonnades and arcades.

Merchandise is easier to sell when pedestrians and motorists can see it, and get to it, from the street side.

Doorways and transparent windows should face the street.

Sidewalks should be wide, at least 10 to 14 feet. Narrow sidewalks make walking side by side difficult.

Canopy trees should be planted at regular intervals on most streets. Notice the shade that is provided.

Wide sidewalks leave plenty of room for street furniture and sidewalk cafes.

Parking lots should be located behind buildings with on-street parking located along the curb. Large fields of parking in front of buildings discourage pedestrian activity. By contrast, parallel and diagonal parking on the street enhance the pedestrian experience by providing a perceived barrier between the sidewalk and the moving traffic.

Special Details

Along with details of pedestrian friendly streets, there are additional details that should be considered on Downtown's streets. The broad concepts discussed previously form the skeleton of a well designed place, but these big ideas must be coordinated with smaller details. These small items are often overlooked in the big picture, but they are extraordinarily important for the pedestrian.

The recent streetscape program on Cape Coral Parkway included improvements to many of that street's details. The following are for future street improvement projects.

Sidewalks - Sidewalks should be at least 10 to 14 feet wide. The main path of the sidewalk should be clear of any other street furniture, like newspaper stands, benches, planters, etc. It should also be free from utility poles, fire meters, or other public infrastructure. Concrete with a simple scoring pattern is a recommended material. Excessive stamping or a 'faux stone' look will not reflect authenticity. 'Buy a Brick' programs that stamp contributors names on the bricks are good for promotional efforts.

Crosswalks - Crosswalks should be clearly marked by a different color and/or type and texture of material. It should clearly indicate to both the pedestrian and motorist that it is a crosswalk. Textured pavement, brick, and cobblestone would be appropriate in these locations.

Street furniture - Benches, waste receptacles, news stands, lights, and planters are all important elements for the street and careful attention should be paid to all of these. Using a local merchant (if one is available) to purchase these items is an excellent way to support locally owned businesses. Some municipalities have had success with using benches made from recycled materials. Lighting should be oriented to the pedestrian and subsequently low enough so that it does not interfere with mature shade trees.

Maintenance - No matter how much money is spent on any street details, if it is not kept up and maintained, it will not last over time. Keeping streets clean and free from trash is a crucial part of a successful downtown. Downtown businesses could contribute money to a fund to pay for a private maintenance service or arrangements could be made with the City.

Landscaping - Native plants are favored as they are easier to maintain in the long term. The following is a brief list of types of trees and shrubberies that are native to southwest Florida: Live Oak, Mahogany, Wild Tamarind, Satin Leaf, Royal Palm, Sabal Palmetto, Saw Palmetto, Silver Palm, Everglades Palm, Thatch Palm, Cocoplum, and Wax Myrtle.

Parking - Parking lots must stay mindful of design as well. They should be clean, well lit, and safe. Resurfacing the drive aisles and proper landscaping are also necessary. It is best when they are free and very easy to access. As a note, parking lots that serve primarily retail or residential locations cannot be as utilitarian as the average office garage.

Signs - New signs for businesses should be constructed and located so that they are clear and easy to read, but do not detract from the building itself, or more importantly, what is for sale inside. Signs should be flat against the facade, projecting from the facade, or mounted above the facade. Signs should be externally lit, with individual letters and symbols internally lit. The maximum gross area of a sign should not exceed 10% of the building facade. The maximum gross area of any single sign shall be 10 square feet.

CRA Specifics

Curbcuts, Curbcuts, and More Curbcuts

A significant improvement was made to Cape Coral Parkway when many of the curbcuts were removed. Removing the nowhere-land right in front of the store that seemed to be neither a parking lot nor a sidewalk was an excellent improvement that must be repeated throughout Downtown. The benefits have already been reaped on some blocks; think of the outdoor dining at Iguana Mia and Brewed Awakenings. These are good additions to Downtown that would have been impossible when that area was a pseudo-parking lot.

The technical term for this traffic improvement is "access management." It removes potential sources of conflict (i.e. car wrecks) by reducing the number of places automobiles can turn. Since this improvement benefits both drivers and pedestrians, access management has been a first step towards thinking about overall Downtown mobility, not just favoring one mode of travel over the over.

But what about the loss of parking? For many, the benefits of access management are enough to outweigh the loss of a few extra parking spots. More importantly, keep in mind that access management does not remove every single parking space. Parallel or pull-in diagonal (where right-of-way allows) on-street parking has been created with a reduction of the continuous curbcut. The overall reduction in the number of spaces should be acceptable.

Before Access Management

15 spaces

After Access Management

12 spaces

Area now available for street trees & outdoor dining

Total Change in Parking Supply: -3 Spaces

Fronts Face Fronts

When all the other urban design elements are in place, concerns about fronts of buildings facing the fronts (and not the backs) of other buildings simply are not a concern. However, many of Cape Coral's buildings were built haphazardly. One was built on one block, then a few years later another one was built on a different block. There was no overall plan specifying blocks and how the buildings should relate to one another. Also, Cape Coral grew quickly, and concurrent to the rise of the automobile as the dominant mode of travel. Because of this rise, parking became a valuable commodity, and what would have been the other side of a block, often became the parking lot. Excessive parking requirements may also exacerbate the need for parking.

Certain problems arise from this situation. The distinction between fronts and backs gives a clear indication of how people enter a building, where deliveries take place, and where trash and other maintenance is taken care of. Additionally, a confusing front-back situation neither looks attractive nor does it encourage pedestrian activity.

Alleys

Related to the notion of fronts facing fronts is the use of alleys, which are present in many older cities, especially in the northeast. People who grew up with alleys are sure to recognize their benefit. Using an informal street behind the buildings, parallel to the primary street, provides a location for "back of house" actions to occur. Things like deliveries and trash pick-up need not occur on the front side of a store or house. Alleys also produce access to rear parking lots (a crucial element of access management and community-wide parking strategies).

Parking lot, open space?

Backs of houses face the sides of stores

Powerlines

Locating powerlines is a contentious issue everywhere. The need for electricity is obvious, but the expense of burying them may not be justifiable to some. From an urban design perspective, burying powerlines keeps the attention on the stores, the sidewalks, and the people on the street. It is the preferred solution.

As an alternative, alleys do provide a place for powerlines, if burying is not an option. Burying powerlines also shows a commitment to investment in the community. If money is spent on creating grand streets with shade trees, it seems unwise to detract from these improvements with out-of-scale powerlines.

Shade and Street Trees

Just an additional note on shade: shade is of utmost importance in Cape Coral. Not only is it hot in south Florida, it rains quite a bit in the summer. Street trees can provide the needed shade, but the protection from rain that comes from awnings and arcades cannot be underestimated.

There are additional benefits to planting trees and greenery. Trees assist with groundwater retention. They help convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. A tree planting program can instigate a community activity, which over time can increase community pride. With the exception of raking leaves and occasional droppings from berries, the benefits of trees far outweigh any negatives.
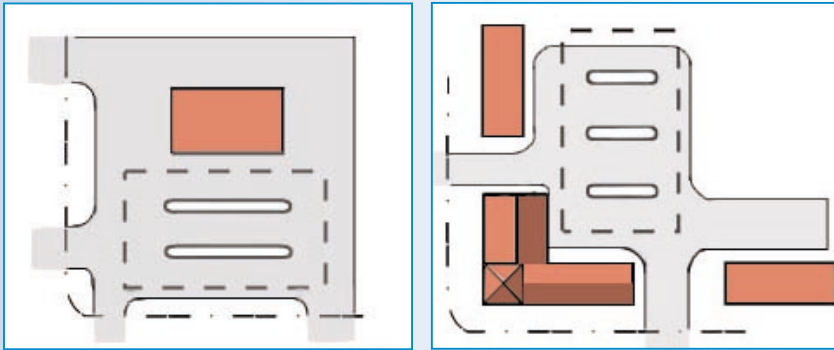

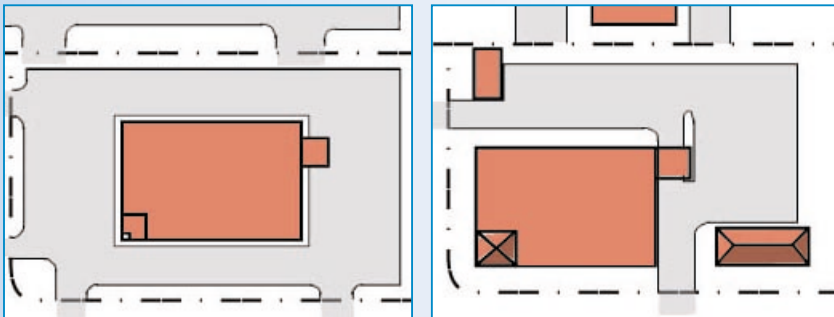Large powerlines dominate the view of this road
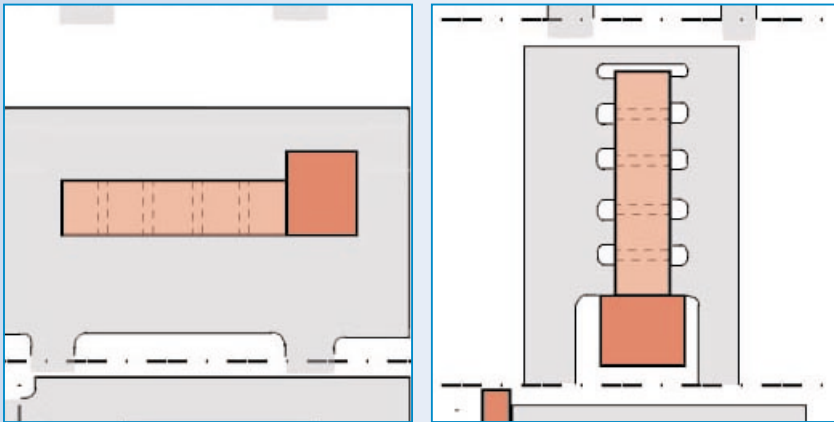

Shade trees along SE 47th Terrace

Automobile Dominated vs. Multi-Mode Friendly

Gas Station

Fast Food Restaurant

Mechanic's Shop

Keep the Gas Station, Lose the Blight!

Service stations, car washes, mechanics shops...we all use them, we need them. They are a vital part of any business community, but do they have to be so unsightly and potentially threatening to the environment? This report challenges Cape Coral: Be the first town to have a pedestrian, automobile, and environmentally friendly Gas Station! The site design is simple. Put the building on the corner, at the street edge. Then put gas bays behind it. Also, there is an opportunity when you build a garage, to put a gas station / convenience store, or mechanics' shop in the liner building.

Near Term Plan

The physical plan, shown at right, applies these principles to Cape Coral as near term or initial projects. The plan illustrates what a future aerial photograph of Downtown Cape Coral might look like.

Redevelopment plans such as this one are a little different than plans for lands that previously had nothing built on them. Even though the CRA has a certain amount of power with eminent domain, this plan must not be interpreted as a CRA buy-out plan. Many of the positive changes in Downtown will be in the hands of private developers and investors. It is a much wiser decision to use a combination of public and private energies to enhance Downtown.

It also shows new canal basins. The plan will "work" with out any dirt being dug, but waterfront is an integral factor in the life of Cape Coral, so waterfront areas are a strong part of changes to Cape Coral.

It is impossible to predict which property owners will decide to make a renovation and when they will do it. There are simply too many factors and variables. The physical plans included in this report are a cross section in time that illustrate the necessary design standards and building configurations as well as changes to the street.

live-work units

garden style apartments

shade trees added to the streets

alleys and rear parking lots

mixed-use buildings

lofts

renovated buildings built up to the street edge

future parking garages

rowhouses

new canal

new public park / greenspace

offices and apartments
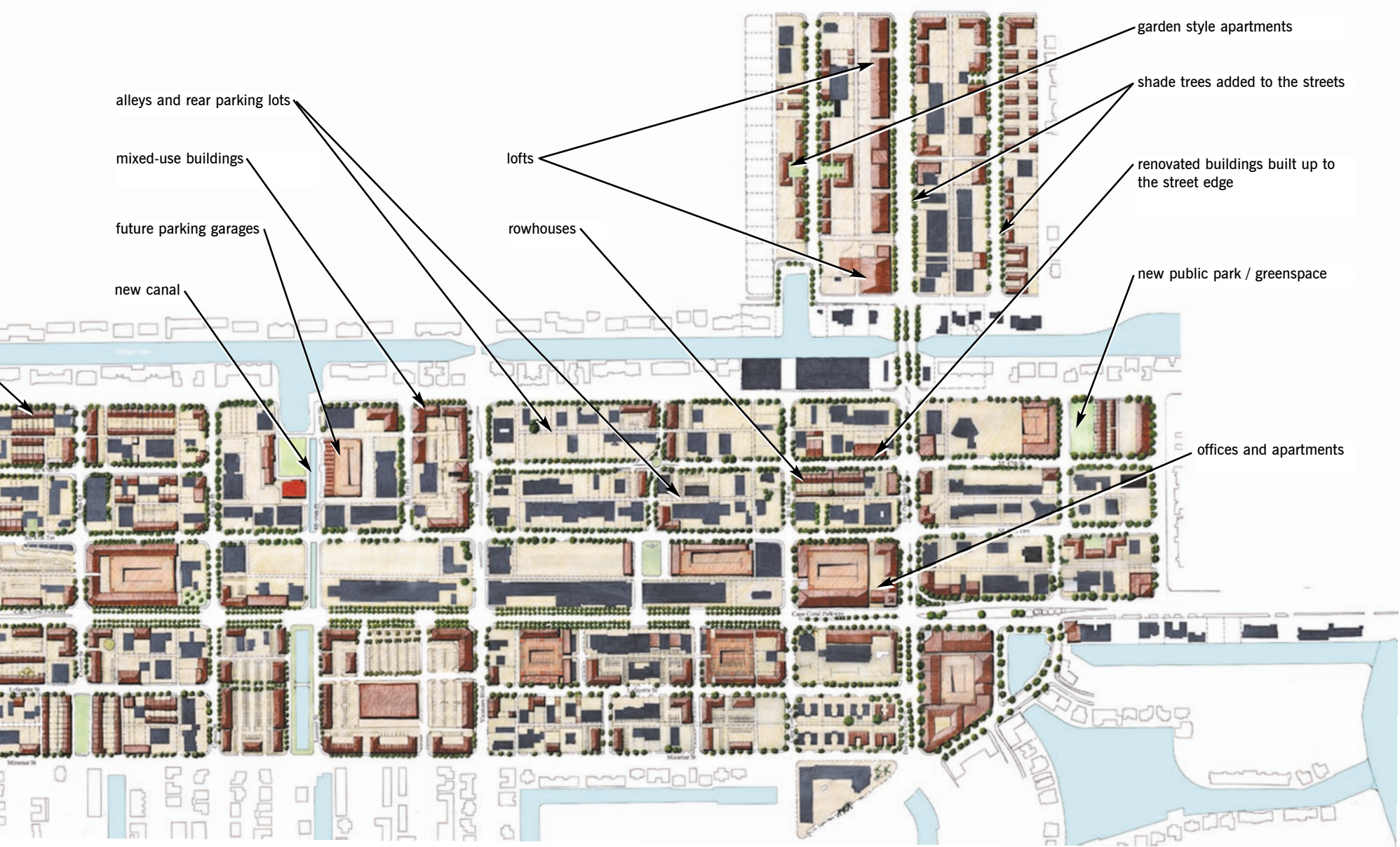
NEAR TERM PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN CAPE CORAL

Special Places
INITIAL PROJECTS

Thus far, this plan has been about the "big picture," but now special attention is focused on specific sites within Downtown. These sites are prime locations for initial projects. They are Bikini Basin, Cape Coral Parkway, Club Square, Market Square, and Bimini Basin. Other improvements can happen by the addition of new streets and infilling a greater variety of places to live. These sites are places where things can begin to happen in the next few years. While each site is unique, similar design principles have been applied to each site: celebrate the waterfront, buildings meet the street, pedestrian friendly streets and sidewalks, and efficient parking.

5

Renderings for Downtown

East Gateway - Bikini Basin

This site is the eastern anchor of Downtown and is highly visible to the commuter traffic that passes by each day. A distinguishing feature of this area is the Veteran's Memorial, which sits in the median of Cape Coral Parkway. The rest of the area has one large office building, an assortment of other commercial buildings, a parking lot, a restaurant, and a hotel. Traffic generally moves quickly coming off the Cape Coral Bridge. During rush hour it tends to collect at the intersection with Del Prado Boulevard.

The plan for this site includes bringing water to the site from the Bikini Canal, which has direct access to the Caloosahatchee River and the Gulf of Mexico. The existing office building can be redeveloped into a mixed-use building with an interior parking garage. Retail locations on the first floor can take advantage of the water view and provide outdoor dining. The

Aerial view of eastern entrance to Downtown Cape Coral

Bird's eye view of eastern entrance to Downtown Cape Coral

A NEW ENTRANCE FOR DOWNTOWN CAPE CORAL

Proposed view of a new entrance to Downtown Cape Coral

mixed-use building with
parking garage

new street network

potential connections for
a continuous waterway

new mixed-use building
with garage

scale varies

PLAN FOR EAST GATEWAY - BIKINI BASIN

remaining floors could be used for offices, or perhaps condominiums or apartments. The site would be ideal for a movie theater, but due to national problems in the theater industry, financing may be difficult to secure in the short term. New residential buildings are located at the eastern edge of the site with the top floors providing long views over Downtown.

If possible, another option is to close Waikiki Court road at Cape Coral Parkway and bring the water all the way in from Bikini Canal. This connection would allow large motorboat and sailboat access directly to and from the Gulf of Mexico and Caloosahatchee.

Same urban design, but different architecture

Cape Coral Parkway

Cape Coral Parkway has a dual role in Downtown. It is the main commuter route through Downtown AND it is also the street where people shop and do business. It is, in every sense of the words, the Main Street. But these roles are often in conflict. One solution for commuting needs is to widen the road in order to increase speed. The widening of Cape Coral Parkway west of Downtown to six lanes may put pressure on the CRA portion of the street to undergo widening at some point in the future. A widening would be a certain end to pedestrian activity and in sharp contrast to the CRA's Mission Statement.

In contrast, the recent median plantings, access management improvements, and the keeping of on-street parking indicate that Cape Coral Parkway should continue to provide a dual role, and balance the needs of automobiles with those of pedestrians and business owners. For the most part, these improvements only serve automobile traffic, leaving pedestrians, and subsequently business owners, out of the solution. Requests from the public involvement workshops echoed this tug of war. Both cries were heard, either "move the traffic through Downtown" or "slow down the traffic."

To summarize:
 – Traffic capacity must be maintained in the long term
 – Traffic noise and speed are too high
 – On-street parking is essential permanently
 – Business activity is dependent on a beautiful tree-lined street
 – The median plantings are too thick and high
 – Recent streetscape investment need not be repeated or wasted
 – The sidewalks are already at their minimum width
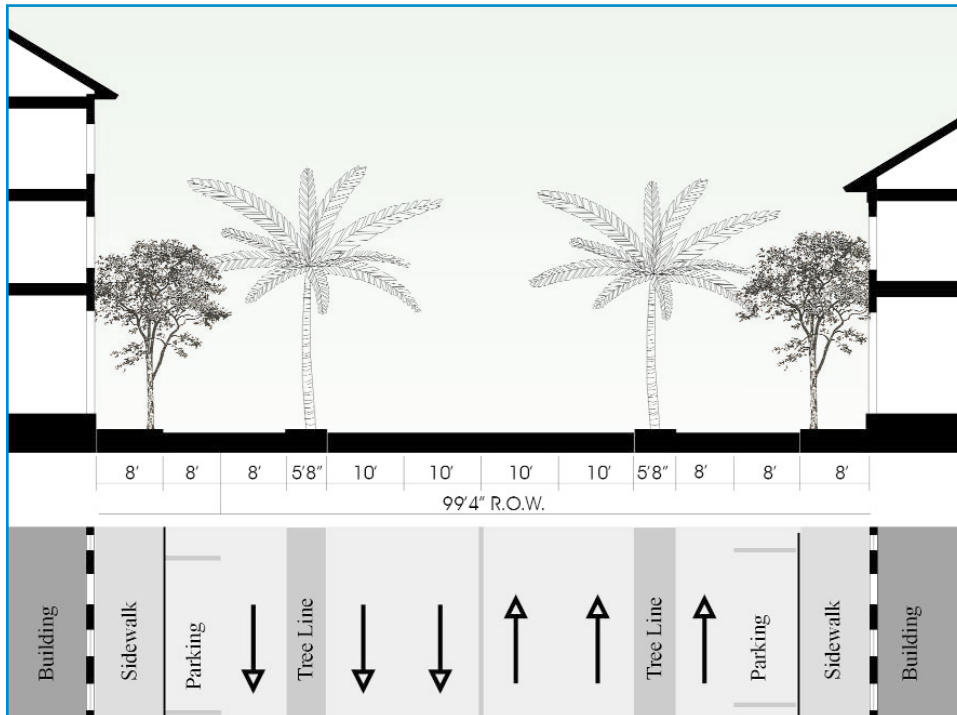

Looking west down Cape Coral Parkway
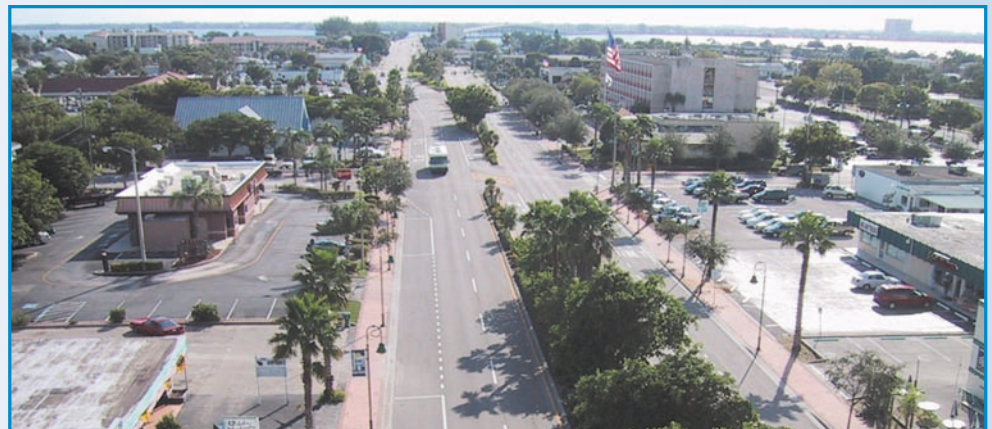
Looking east down Cape Coral Parkway

CAPE CORAL PARKWAY AS A BOULEVARD

Cape Coral Parkway as a boulevard

8'	8'	8'	5'8"	10'	10'	10'	10'	5'8"	8'	8'	8'

99'4" R.O.W.

Building | Sidewalk | Parking | Tree Line | Tree Line | Parking | Sidewalk | Building

The plan for Cape Coral Parkway is to transform it into a grand boulevard. With inspiration from the Avenue Montaigne in Paris, a new cross section for Cape Coral Parkway was developed. In the United States, boulevards are not nearly as widespread as they are in Europe; the grand Parisian boulevards may come to mind. This seeming rarity is no indication of their potential utility.

The boulevard works by channelling through traffic on the center four lanes, the same capacity that exists now on Cape Coral Parkway. The next lane is a slow moving travel lane for local traffic with on-street parking. The boulevard section is possible within the existing right-of-way (see cross section to left). The biggest change is in the movement of the median plantings to the sides of the streets. The transfer of the plantings also helps to create the much needed shade on the sidewalk. Using Royal Palms on the median strips coincides with previous survey requests to be able to see the stores more clearly. These would be appropriate along the interior median strips, with shade trees lining the sidewalk.

Cape Coral Parkway must also undergo improvements that benefit the pedestrian, especially crosswalks. Work should continue on the Streetscape Improvements Master Plan, especially in regards to the bulbouts and pedestrian crossings. Textured and raised pavement should

scale varies

be included at every intersection (indicated in orange on the plan below). Additional mid-block crossings should be added on the long blocks, especially between SE 15th Avenue and Vincennes Boulevard. These pedestrian improvements should be undertaken regardless of when construction on the boulevard cross section begins.

Any improvement to the street is beneficial for mobility, but also because it will enhance Cape Coral Parkway's location as a signature address for both offices and residences. The boulevard section does not force the architecture into any particular style.

As a supplement to the boulevard concept, any future traffic pressure on the Parkway could be alleviated by making additional east-west connections outside of the immediate CRA boundary. El Dorado Parkway, south of the CRA, was originally designed as a through east-west street and a connection here could alleviate traffic pressure on Cape Coral Parway.

A VARIETY OF ARCHITECTURE

As it is in 2001

in the future....

or this....

or maybe this.

PLAN FOR CAPE CORAL PARKWAY

Club Square

Club Square serves both a civic function and a practical purpose for Downtown. It contains many civic buildings as well as some offices and restaurants. These buildings provide locations for people to gather and discuss important affairs, or sometimes just to meet and have fun. Club Square's second purpose is to provide a large open space that is used most of the year as a parking lot. The buildings are located around the edge of the block creating some problems with trash pick-up and deliveries. Many people enter from the parking lot side of the buildings, but this is also where all of the dumpsters are located. So, it is unclear which side is the front and which side is the back of the buildings.

Club Square's proximity to the Malaga Canal was a central feature in this site plan. The other elements were to keep the important civic nature of Club Square, solve the dumpster problems, and balance parking needs. The most notable feature of the plan for Club Square is the extension of the Malaga Canal into a small basin and then continuing the canal down through the site, eventually joining with the Viceroy Canal at the south side of the CRA boundary The extension of this canal provides additional waterfront sites that can be used for outdoor dining or other retail locations. A new civic building is constructed with a public greenspace as its front yard. This building could be used as a community theatre. Whatever the specific use, it should remain open and accessible to the community of Cape Coral. Parking needs are taken care of by a multi-story parking garage with a liner building on the west side of the site.
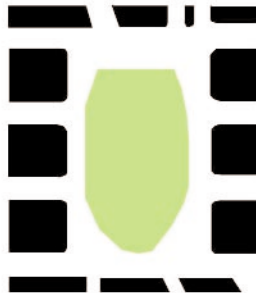

A bird's eye view of Club Square and the Malaga Canal

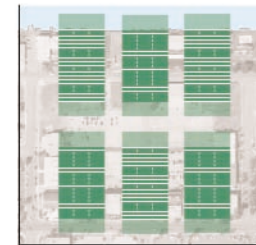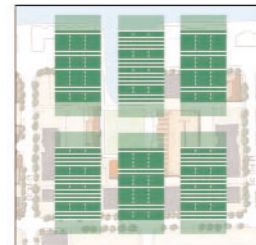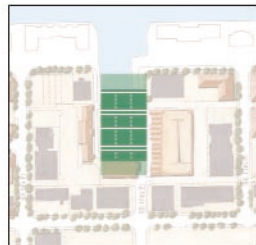On the ground in the middle of Club Square

Scale Comparisons

The size of Club Square was compared to a variety of other places. It was compared to grand public plazas and smaller more intimate parks. Perhaps a more familiar frame of reference is a football field; six can fit into the block of Club Square.
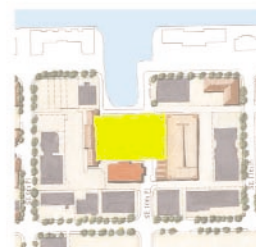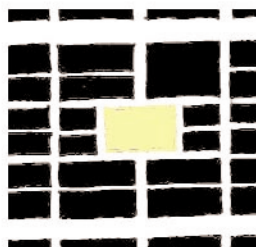

Union Square, New York, New York

Piazza San Marco, Venice, Italy

Football Field

Savannah Square, Savannah, Georgia

Phasing Plan

Now

First....

– Add street trees
– Formalize the perimeter of the block with on-street parking
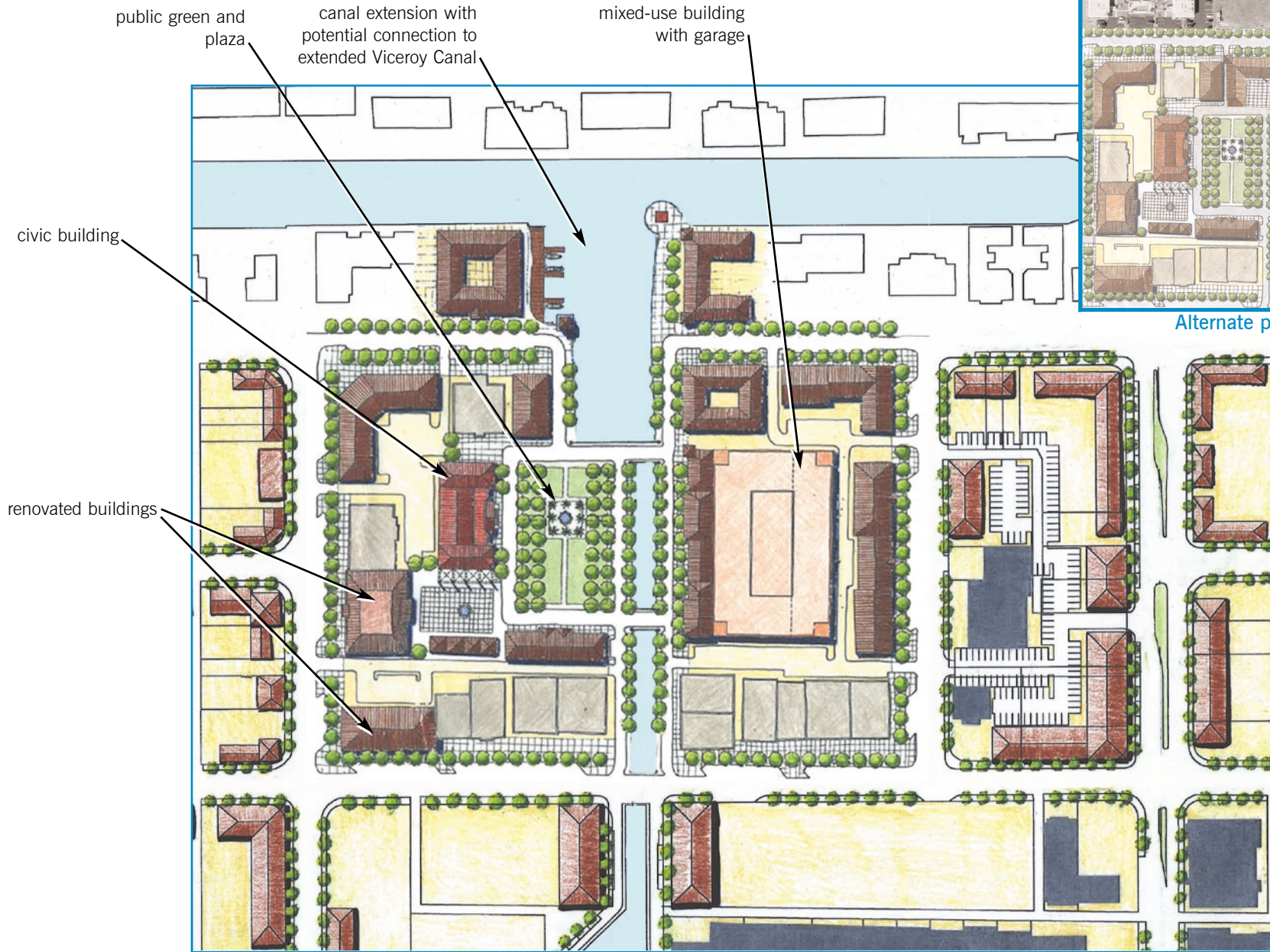
Second....

– Renovations of existing buildings are completed
– New construction of additional buildings
– Two plazas are created

Third....

– Add a parking garage with a mixed-use liner buildings
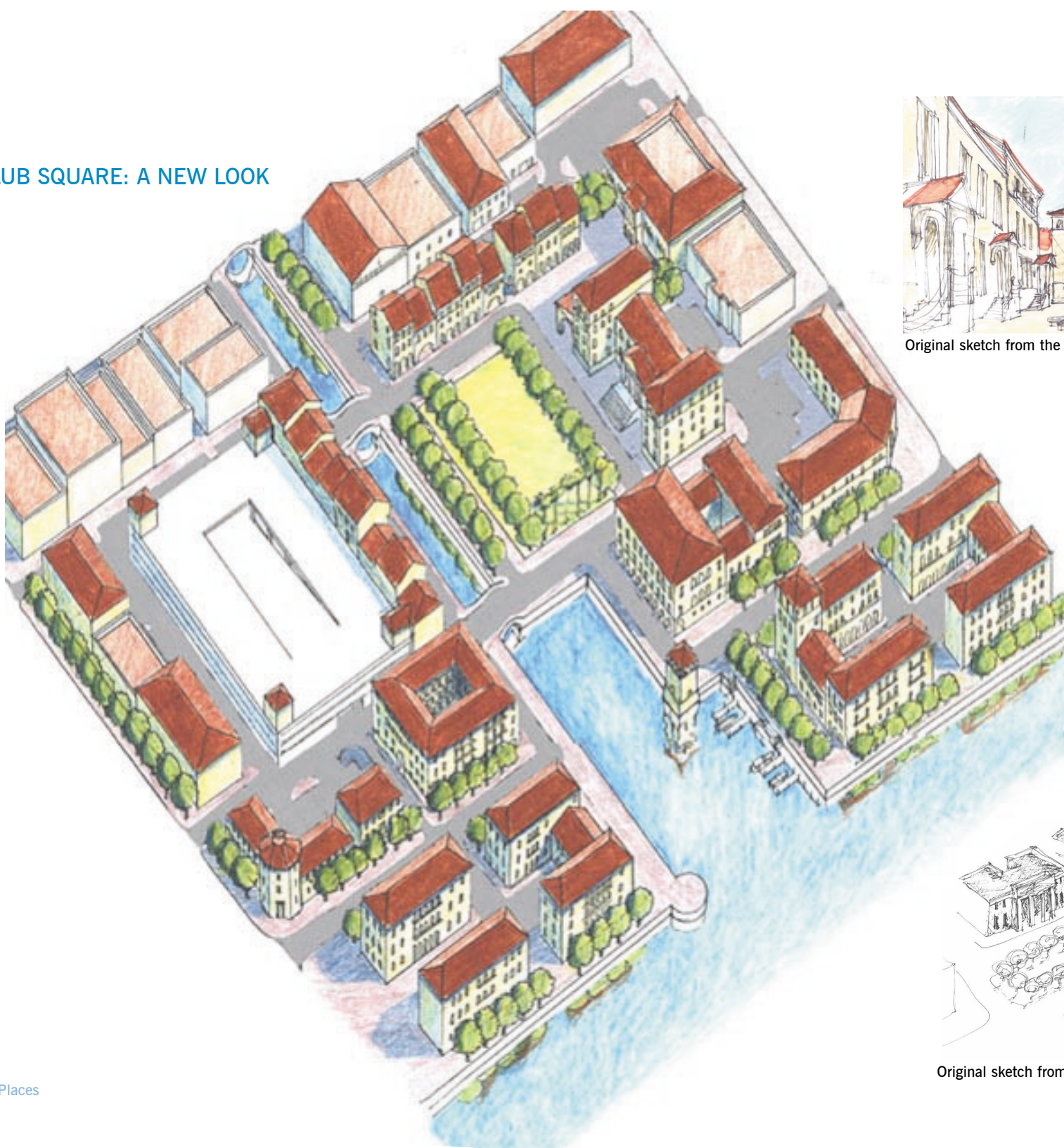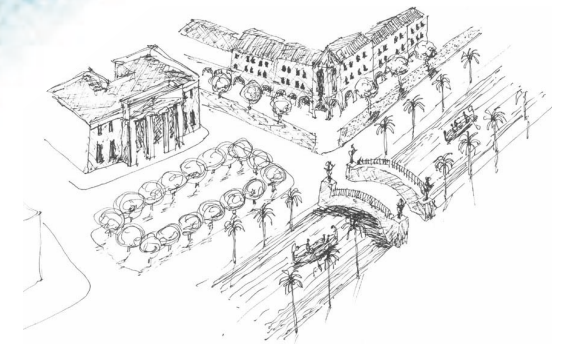– Other mixed-use buildings fill the block

And finally...

public green and plaza

canal extension with potential connection to extended Viceroy Canal

mixed-use building with garage

civic building

renovated buildings

Alternate plan with no dredging

PLAN FOR CLUB SQUARE

N

scale varies

CLUB SQUARE: A NEW LOOK

Original sketch from the Design Studio

Original sketch from the Design Studio

New Streets

This section of the plan details the new street connections throughout Downtown. These connections are important for adding multiple routes for pedestrians and automobiles. New streets also help to break up the long blocks that may dissuade people from walking. The location of these streets was not based on a full-blown survey. The new streets can be repositioned a number of yards to accomodate private property owners where necessary and to respect property lines whereever possible.

(1) Coming from the east, one of the first blocks in the heart of Downtown is the stretch of Cape Coral Parkway between SE 15th Avenue and Vincennes Boulevard. At about the middle of this block a new north-south street is added. It begins at Cape Coral Town Center and continues on to SE 46th Lane. The street is lined with buildings that are a combination of offices and retail. Closer to SE 46th Lane, some residences may occupy the top floors. (see next page for location)

A small public green is added to the Cape Coral Town Center and Big John, the familiar statue, is placed at the head of the green. The street jogs just slightly and a roundabout is added near the northern terminus.
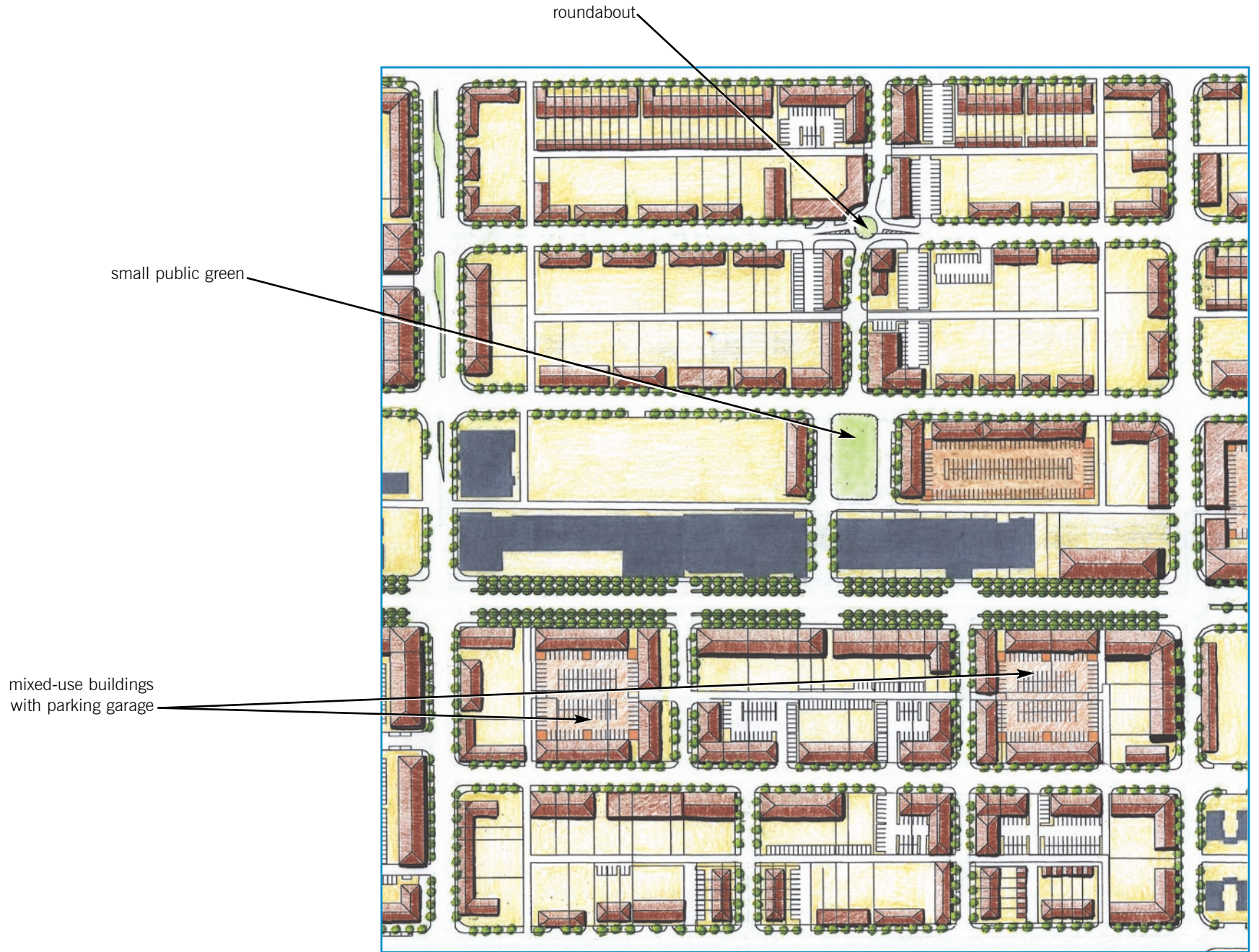

Cape Coral Parkway in 2001

A NEW SIDE STREET OFF CAPE CORAL PARKWAY

Conceptual image of a new side street off Cape Coral Parkway

roundabout

small public green

mixed-use buildings
with parking garage

PLAN FOR NEW STREETS

N
scale varies

Other New Streets

(2) South of Cape Coral Parkway, two more north-south streets are added. These streets add to walkability by creating smaller blocks and alternate routes for travel.

(3) Chester Street is extended south to Miramar Street. It winds around a public green that is lined with rowhouses. Chester Street would circulate one-way, in a clockwise direction around the new park.

(4) To the north, SE 8th Court is extended to SE 46th Lane. It is located near the new bus transfer station and the Malaga Canal.

(5) A north-south street is added parallel to Leonard Street, perhaps named Jack Street to honor the Rosen Brothers. The streets follow a new canal that is lined with residential units on both the east and west sides.

(6) The large block where the Publix grocery store is located gets a new east-west street, a continuation of Lafayette Street. Additional north-south streets are added in the north side of the block.

(7) SE 17th Avenue is continued north to SE 46th Lane at the eastern end of the CRA boundary. A small greenspace flanks the west side of the street

(8) In the north end, a street on the same line as SE 45th Street is added between SE 14th Place and SE 15th Avenue.
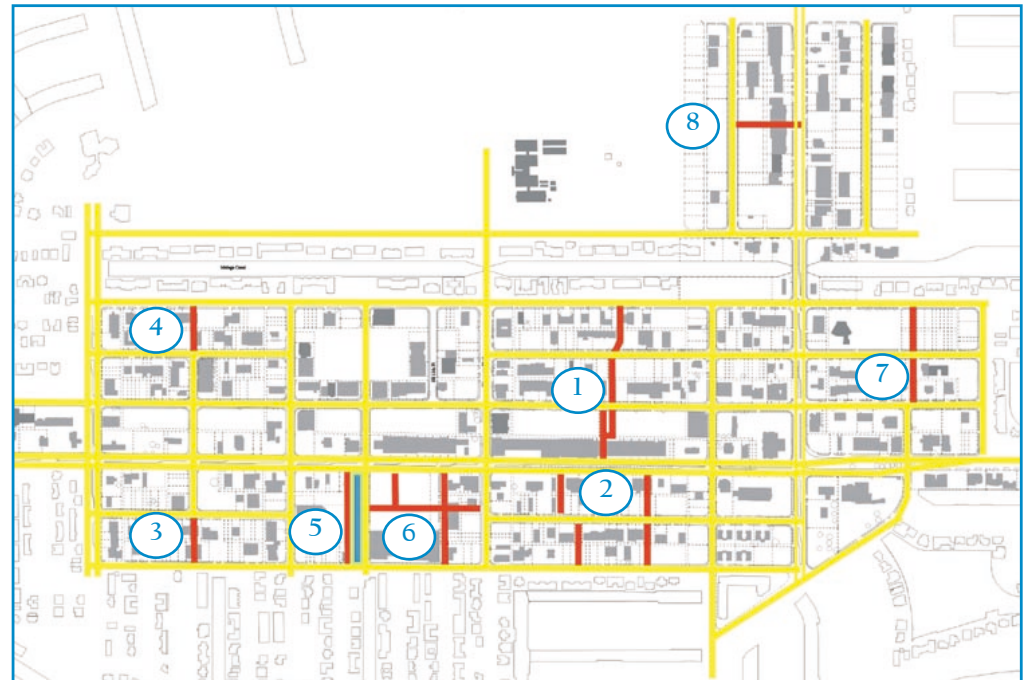
New streets in Downtown

Market Square

Having a grocery store located Downtown is a key element in fostering an urban village. Its central location makes it accessible on foot or via automobile. The site, as of 2001, contains 100% commercial activities. The existing configuration favors the automobile. In order to reach the store on foot from Cape Coral Parkway one must traverse the expansive parking lot. On the east and west sides, the grocery is flanked by other buildings making it essentially inaccessible on foot.

The plan infills portions of the parking lot with office, mixed-use, and apartment buildings. The grocery store is redeveloped and moves north on the site. The store's facade bisects the site into two blocks. The grocery store has a second story containing offices. Parking is contained in the interior of the blocks.

Aerial view of the Publix grocery and surroundings
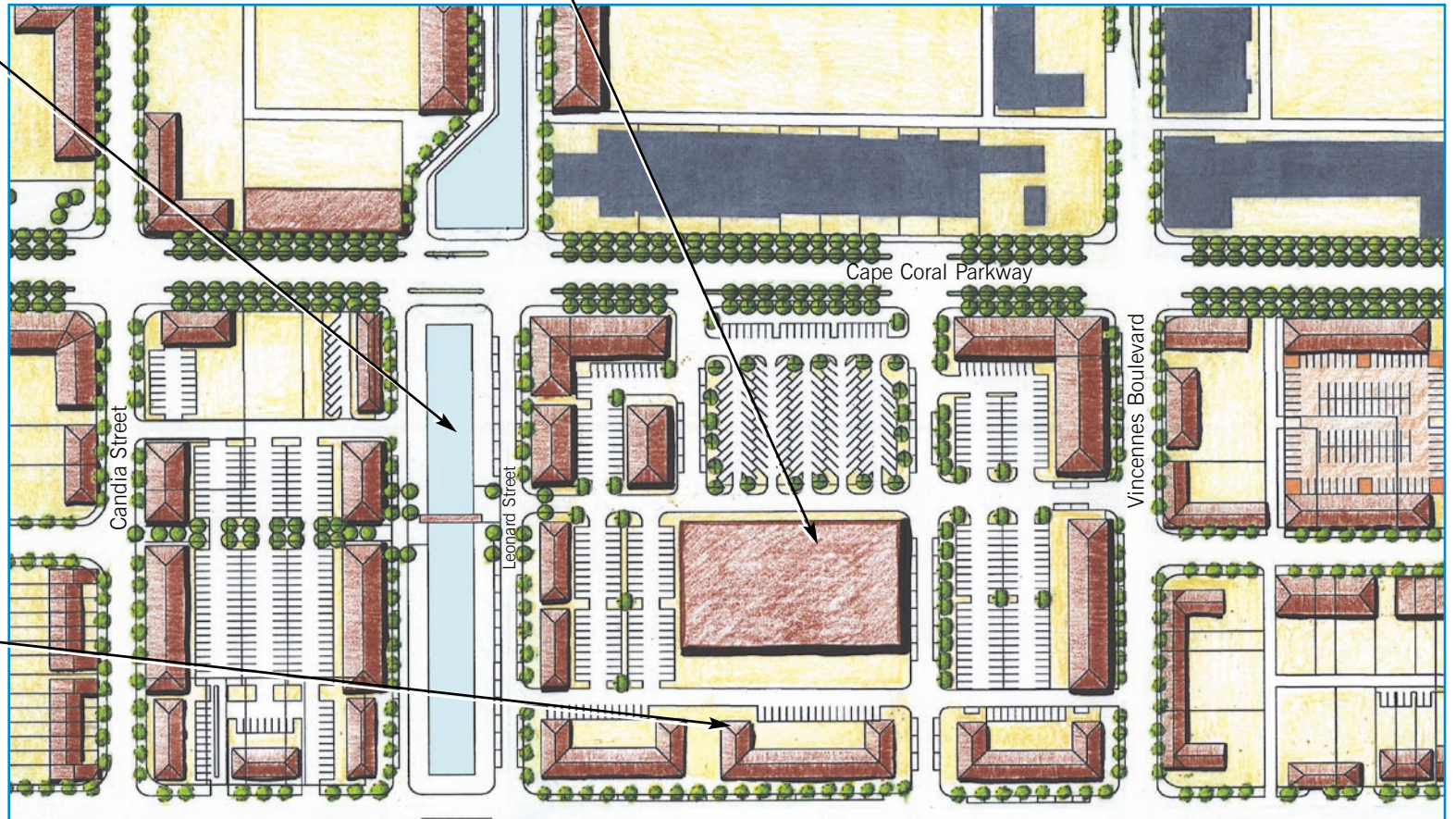
A NEW AND IMPROVED GROCERY STORE

Increased accessibility for the pedestrian need not hinder automobile access

two story grocery store

rowhouses along the
extension of the
Viceroy Canal, which
could remain as
greenspace or a
stormwater rentention
area in the near term

Cape Coral Parkway

Candia Street

Leonard Street

Vincennes Boulevard

apartment buildings

scale varies

PLAN FOR MARKET SQUARE

Precedents for multi-story shopping

Multi story shopping, Russia

Multi story shopping, Germany

Multi story shopping, New York

Multi story shopping, Florida

Four Freedoms Park – Bimini Basin

This site anchors the western end of Downtown. Its southern boundary is Bimini Basin, which can be accessed by motorboats and sailboats. The site's most distinguishing feature is Four Freedoms Park; the only direct public waterfront in Downtown. Other uses in the area are a bank, a parking lot, and apartment buildings to the east and west. Keeping it accessible to the public was of utmost importance when planning this site. The creation of places to walk along the waterfront was another element in this site plan.

Improvements to Four Freedoms Park and adding boat docks are central features of the plan for this area. A new civic building is added to the park. Buildings are added along Cape Coral Parkway. These new buildings contain a mix of uses. Retail on the first floor creates locations for outdoor dining that can overlook the park and water. Offices and residences are located on the floors above. Parking is included on the interior of the building in a parking garage.

Aerial view of Bimini Basin and Four Freedoms Park

Bird's eye view of Four Freedoms Park
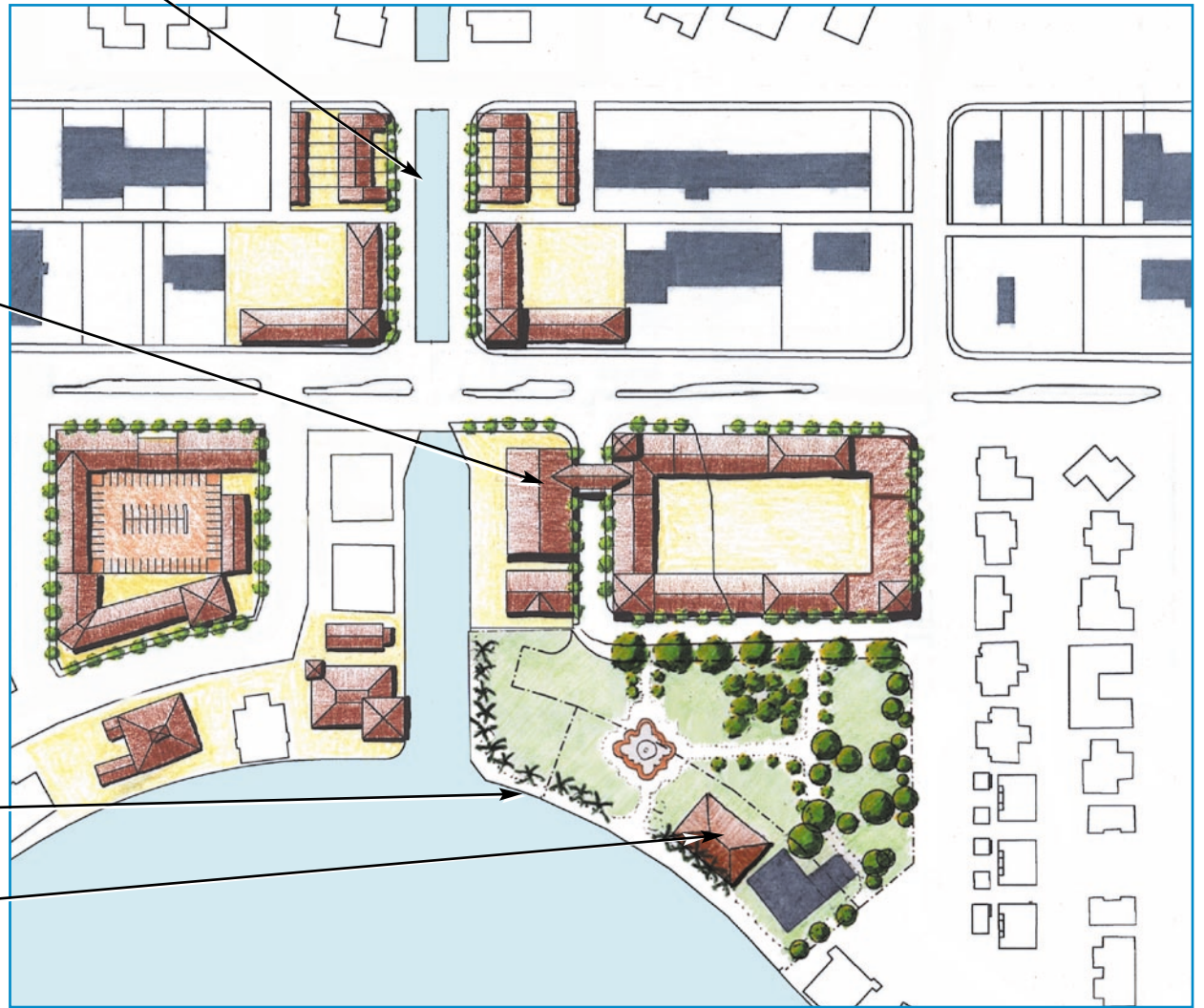
A RENOVATED BIMINI BASIN AND FOUR FREEDOMS PARK

More activities, both private and public

rowhouses along a canal

mixed use building with
parking garage

boat docks

civic building

PLAN FOR MARKET SQUARE

North of Cape Coral Parkway, a new canal connection is made between the Bimini Basin / Versailles Canal and the Rubicon Canal. As of 2001, there is not a connection between the two canals. Duckweed often collects at the end of the Rubicon Canal. Creating a new canal connection helps with flushing and gives increased boat access to Downtown. Rowhouses can line the banks of this new canal.

Rowhouses along the new canal connection

Live-Work Infill

There are condominiums and apartments surrounding Downtown, but there are virtually no places to live within the immediate CRA boundary. Having a wide and varied supply of apartments, rowhouse, and/or condominiums was another central element of the plan. This type of housing choice is not for everyone. It is for those who would like a smaller (or non-existent) yard. It appeals to people who want to be within walking distance to stores and shops. It is also for people who are looking for a smaller living arrangement.

The concept of "live-work" comes from the oldest of settlements, but it has been re-created in a variety of architectural styles and settings. A general definition for live-work is that the living portion takes precedence over the work portion. Commercial activities are secondary. Walk-in business and employees are generally avoided.

Work-Live is another form of live-work, and is probably the more familiar concept. People live above shops. In this scenario, the work portion takes precedence. These places would have employees, walk-in businesses, and have the hustle and bustle of normal commercial activity. The residents above would be aware of this arrangement. The people living in the apartments may or not be the owner of the stores. Artist's lofts are a common form of this arrangement.

A typical street along a canal in Amsterdam, Netherlands

Rowhouses in Prospect, Colorado

19 Live-work units, Union Street Studios, California

Rowhouses in Upper East Side, New York City

60 Live-work units, the Calcot Lofts, California

Live-work units, Market Square, Washington D.C.

Rowhouses, Hubertus House, Amsterdam

Ellesworth Mews, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Rowhouses, Camac Street,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

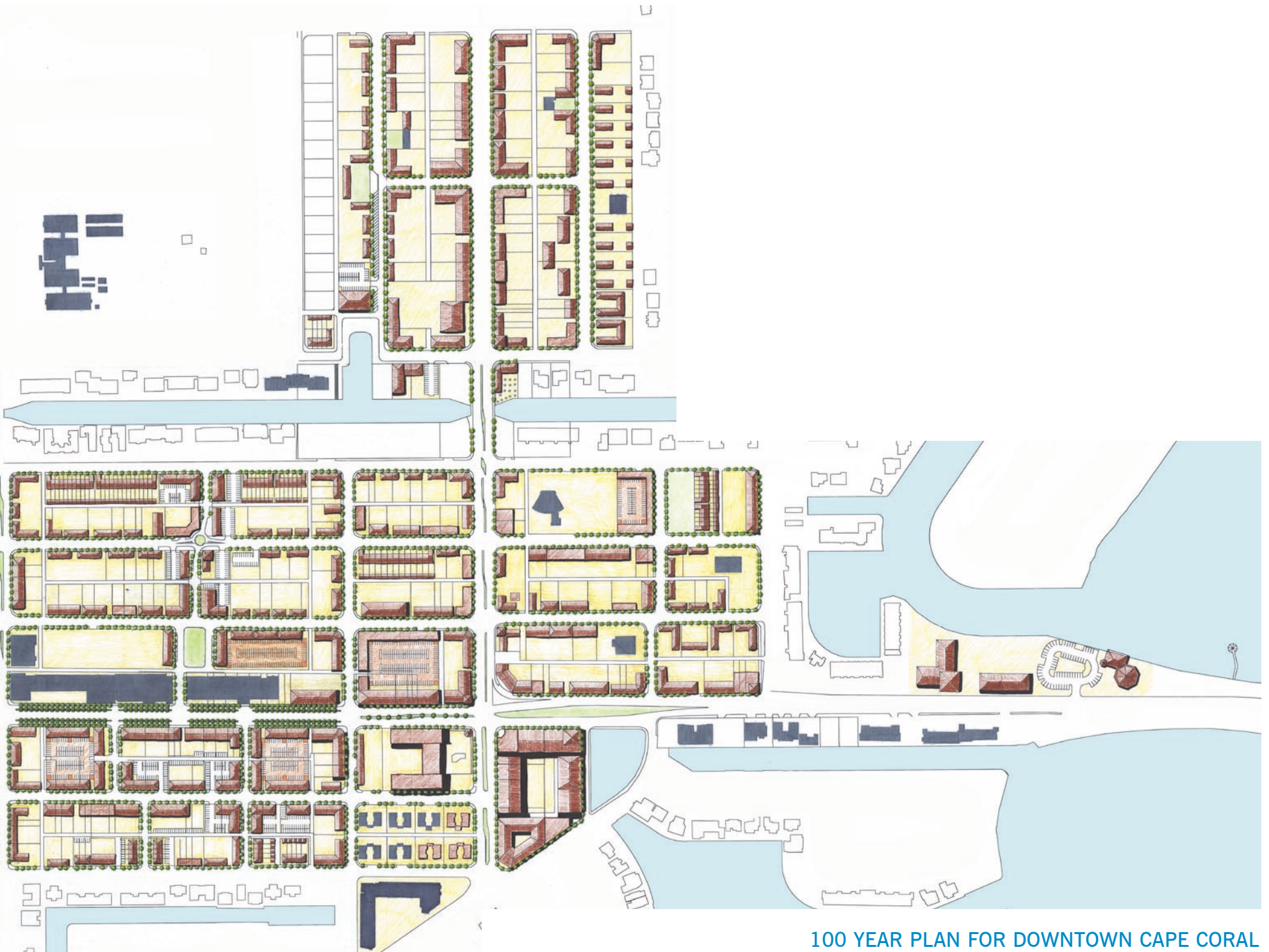Rowhouses along the Herengracht, Netherlands

Amsterdam at night

Amsterdam

Haile Village, Florida

N
W E
S

75'   300'
0'   150'   450'

How to Make it Happen
STRATEGIES & IMPLEMENTATION

Transferring these concepts on paper to buildings on streets will take time and hard work, but the reward will be worth the effort. The realization of the residents' grand ideas and visions can only happen through careful attention to detail, now and in the future. This chapter includes recommended policy changes, suggestions for organizing downtown businesses, and financial progamming. The following should be considered a working "to do list" for Cape Coral's developers, investors, CRA Board, politicians, public servants, and community members. Eventually new tasks will be added to this working list. This chapter is the first step.

Conceptual image of Cape Coral Parkway

6

Policy Changes

Adopt Plan

The first step for the CRA Board and for the City Council is to adopt this Plan in Concept. This adoption in concept will give this plan official standing. It sends an important message to property owners and residents that political decision makers support this plan. The Planning Department would then instruct applicants to work under the auspices of this plan.

Promote Plan

Press coverage was key to getting the word out about this planning effort. Continuing to spread the word about this plan and successful initial projects is vital for implementation. A variety of media should be used: brochures, Internet, TV, and touring exhibitions at clubs or service organizations are examples. Most importantly, communicate the opportunities to potential developers. Promote the plan so it will start to take on a life of its own and continue to work for Downtown over the long haul.

Think Long Term

As momentum builds from successful initial projects and positive changes occur from this Plan, tough choices may arise between competing projects. This plan and the CRA Mission Statement will supply useful criteria when weighing costs and benefits. The crucial thing is to stay alert to the long term possibilities. Early projects should not preclude or prevent a longer term idea from being realized.

Overcome Obstacles to Redevelopment

Any type of development investment is potentially risky; redevelopment is no exception. Redevelopment risk is greatly reduced when there is a close partnership between the public and private sector. Having a plan such as this one may alleviate some of the doubts that builders and investors may naturally have about the future of the Downtown area. Other specific steps must include:

Change CRA Zoning to allow for Residential and/or Mixed-Use

A greater mix of uses and more housing type diversity is the only way to achieve a vibrant village atmosphere. Current regulations for Downtown do not specifically PROHIBIT residential dwellings, but it is not allowed by right. Residential and mixed-use <u>must</u> be allowed by right. Until they are, there is a palpable disincentive to build anything except commercial and office because to do so would require a special approvals process. A residential application might be approved without a problem, but there is a perception of complexity. The current regulations discourage Downtown residential uses effectively if inadvertently.

Create Incentives for Residential/Mixed-Use

Starting with the earliest promotional materials, Cape Coral has a history of showcasing various models of homes. Adding more variety, to match new lifestyle and housing preferences, should be the next phase of Downtown's evolution. Once residential and mixed use is allowed, the next step is to create incentives for those developers who follow this plan and construct rowhouses, live/work spaces, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings. A Residential/Mixed-Use Infill Incentive Program should be initiated. There are a variety of incentives that have

been successful in other cities. Incentives must be used only for projects that convincingly reflect the design vision in the plan. To begin the program, have a focus group with local Cape Coral developers and tap their expertise and experience in order to come up with workable ideas. This list is a start:

- Speed plan-compliant projects through the approvals process
- Remove strict parking requirements
- Work with property owners to consolidate lots or facilitate access
- Create an open forum to assist property owners with legal fees, mitigation, title clearance
- Reduce, eliminate, or reimburse fees, such as:
  - building permit fees
  - plan review fees
  - contractor licensing fees
  - processing fees
  - engineering review fees
  - impact fees
  - utility tap fees
  - zoning or land use change fees
- Give predevelopment grants and loans to explore project feasibility on tough sites
- Offer land acquisition and assemblage assistance
- Assist in land acquisition write-downs and loans
- Advance loans against committed, but not funded, equity or debt
- Fund developer reserves
- Offer loan guarantees
- Write letter of credit to enhance developer's ability to get a loan
- Provide rent subsidies for low-and moderate-income tenants
- Grant density bonuses

Simplify, Streamline, and/or Pay For Floodplain Regulations

Since Cape Coral is in a floodplain zone, the City is required by federal law to enforce floodplain regulations. Buildings and homes must be elevated to a certain height in order to receive federal flood insurance (a requirement for mortgages, most bank loans, necessary in hurricane zones, etc). The rule states that buildings must be protected from floods that rise to eight feet above sea level. It applies to new buildings as well as ones that undergo "substantial improvements" or anything that costs more than 50% of the value of the building over any ten year period. The streets in Downtown were built at an elevation of five feet for the most part, so the bottom three feet of a building is the area that must be made floodproof. Two options are generally used to meet these criteria: elevating or dry floodproofing. All relevant sections of the City of Cape Coral's Codes, Ordinances and Land-Use Regulations should be changed to insure that:

- Elevating is acceptable for rowhouses or other downtown housing.
- New commercial and mixed-use buildings must be dry floodproofed.

Also,

- Incentives should be offered to assist property owners with the costs of floodproofing:

  Best - CRA and/or City of Cape Coral pays for dry floodproofing expenses through grants, in a limited program for a limited time only.

  Good - CRA or City partially funds dry floodproofing expenses with low interest loans or partial grants.

  Okay - CRA and/or City of Cape Coral provides technical assistance, recommends contractors, speeds approvals, and gives other permitting bonuses.

- Dry floodproofing is more difficult for existing buildings so efforts should be made to streamline and simplify the "substantial improvements" rule:
  1. Current rules have the value determined over a ten year period. Change this to five (as proposed) or reduce it to three years.
  2. Grant landowners flexibility in determining the existing building's value. For instance, allow landowners to commission their own appraisals.
  3. Exclude certain improvements when comparing the improvements costs to the value of the building. For instance, do not count the costs of structural improvements (like stronger roofs, improved windows, storm shutters) as these mitigate future storm damage. Nonstructural interior improvements could be excluded as well.

Regulate Building Height

The scale of buildings and the resulting sense of place at the street level is of utmost importance. From a design standpoint, the ideal scale for buildings in downtown Cape Coral is three to five stories in height. A two story minimum and six story maximum should be enforced on the most important streets, especially Cape Coral Parkway. Six stories are more than sufficient to create a extremely intense, profitable use of the land. Buildings in Paris, for example, are for the most part six stories tall. When the land development regulations are retooled to implement this plan, new height regulations should be adopted for key areas:

- Allow heights between two and six stories.
- Allow civic buildings of any height.
- Encourage heights between three and five stories with incentives.
- Under a special approvals process and in certain places, allow buildings taller than six stories.

The regulations can also specify a process for the automatic approval of exceptions for certain taller elements such as cupolas, steeples, monumental features, overlooks, mechanical penthouses, and the like. A process for considering other exceptions on the basis of extraordinary architectural merit can also be included.

Buildings that are between three and five stories are tall enough to establish a well-proportioned, agreeable pedestrian scene, yet low enough to retain a human scale. Buildings in this height range will lend themselves to mixed-use development and the urban village character described in the CRA Mission Statement, yet for the most part the demands they place on parking and infrastructure will be more than manageable. With a shared parking approach, surface lots will often suffice for buildings in this height range.

However, current regulations allow any height in the CRA. To date this has meant mostly one-story buildings that provide neither the urban ambience nor economic muscle desired. Worse, there could eventually come an urge to build much taller buildings to capture views— a process likely to transform the downtown into a bland series of monolithic towers on top of parking structures, concentrating the market into small corners of the real estate, neutralizing the pedestrian experience along the sidewalks below, and overwhelming the transportation network. Therefore a delicate balance must now be worked to both respect private property rights and protect the CRA's vision for a livable community.

Be Smart about Parking

Revamping parking requirements in the zoning is another incentive to encourage development in the CRA and promote a walkable, pleasant scene. Currently, individual property owners are required to supply a certain amount of parking based upon their land use. (For example, a grocery store must provide 1 parking spot for every 200 square feet of space inside.) These high requirements discourage the efficient use of land and, cumulatively, promote unattractive car-dominated layouts in which low-slung buildings are set far apart in parking lots. This yields an environment unwelcoming to pedestrians, ill-suited to mixed-use development, and, in turn, uninspiring to the investor.

By contrast, the thriving downtowns of many cities are made memorable not by their parking lots but by the multistory buildings set close together— and in many of these downtowns, there are no minimum parking requirements at all. Parking is supplied in those towns, but in a market-driven response to private demand and as part of public infrastructure.

Today, many experts concur that the smart thing to do in an emergent downtown is to *deregulate*— to eliminate minimum parking requirements altogether from the area where one hopes to create a vibrant, mixed-use urban village. When the land development regulations for downtown Cape Coral are amended to implement this plan, minimum parking requirements should be abolished for the core areas, if not the entirety of the CRA. This does not mean that developers will forget about parking, but rather that the amount they supply will be calibrated to the real needs of their tenants and the demands of their bankers rather than the government. As property grows more expen-

sive and the pedestrian-oriented scene becomes more complete, the private investors will naturally fill in some of the lost space now occupied by surface parking lots to recapture valuable street frontage, and will shift to rear parking, shared parking, structured parking and so on.

There are, however, low-cost opportunities for the local government, businesses and property owners to act now to create a much larger parking supply in the public rights-of-way. A number of existing downtown streets are oversized, and could simply be re-striped to introduce narrower (but still functional, and even safer) travel lanes flanked by diagonal and parallel onstreet parking. Even more onstreet parking can be created along the new streets proposed to shorten blocks and form new valuable street corners. This onstreet parking will improve pedestrian comfort and business viability while enabling infill development of the sort illustrated in this plan at the same time.

Canal Dredging

The desire for commercial and public waterfront development is, and will continue to be, an important focus for Downtown Cape Coral. New canals and more canal connections have already been suggested in this plan, and that is the preferred solution. However, the reality of the canal dredging is that there are many unanswered questions: Can we? How much will it cost? Is it possible?

They are likely to remain unanswered until a proposal to dredge is made and officially processed through permitting agencies, Department of Environmental Protection and potentially the Army Core of Engineers. The City and CRA should initiate detailed discussions with those agencies about the proposed concepts. While the concepts are very grand, it is crucial to communicate the idea that the projects are part of a big-picture, public purpose, including the environmental benefits.

In the short term, the land that would be needed to create new waterfront canals can be acquired and used as greenspace, until the permitting questions are resolved. Using this approach of greenspace first, canal later, allows a public benefit, even if the canals are not dredged. Also, connecting the canals for boat access is the best, but the new canals would be beneficial whether they are navigable or not. People still enjoy walking and eating along the water. If it becomes necessary to prioritize funds for the new canals the order should fall along these lines: Bimini Basin and Bikini Canal, Club Square, and lastly the Viceroy Canal Connection.

As a last resort alternative, there is a way to create waterfront areas in Downtown through expansion of the boundaries. If canal dredging proves unfeasible, then expanding the CRA Boundaries towards existing canals to obtain waterfront property is another option. This option would come at a considerable cost, however as private properties and single family homes line nearly every canal.

Potential areas to expand are:
To southwest
To the bridge
To the south
To the east

Stormwater Management

A certain amount of flooding after a heavy rain is a normal and natural occurrence in coastal Florida. However, as more and more of the land becomes covered by impervious surfaces, such as pavement and buildings, stormwater has fewer and fewer places to naturally drain away. Current regulations leave the burden of stormwater management on the individual property owner. The simplest solution for many property owners is to place a large berm or grassy area near the roadway and allow water to collect there, eventually draining to the ground. The building at the northwest corner of Cape Coral and Del Prado Parkways depicts this situation.

Besides the underlying disincentive to redevelopment created by this rule, the large berm placed in front of the building detracts from the urban village and downtown areas by placing buildings further away from the sidewalk, and therefore the pedestrian.

Other cities are using a more comprehensive solution to stormwater management. Downtown Cape Coral can benefit from this approach. Using large, shared retention areas, either small ponds or green spaces throughout Downtown, may be just as effective in controlling stormwater in an urban area as leaving the burden to individual property owners. The new canals and greenspaces included in this plan can, and should be considered part of an area-wide approach to stormwater management.

Alleys & Dumpsters

In the short term, starting within 1 to 6 months of this plan's adoption, the CRA and property owners should work together to begin forming clear paths behind businesses that can be used as alleys. An alley should be paved, but does not need any curbs. Some lighting will be useful for parking. Once a clear path of the alley is made then dumpsters can be moved somewhere along the alley.

In the cases where no alley exists, or where it is unavailable, multiple businesses should combine their garbage into one dumpster and increase the frequency that trash is picked up. Obviously, these changes should be made in conjunction with the waste management company.

Existing Properties

The most immediate way for existing property owners to get involved is in the Downtown Business Organization. Also, they can follow the ideals of this plan in any future renovations.

For existing property owners who wish to redevelop their properties, their development proposals, as long as they fit the spirit of the plan, should be actively encouraged (even if it requires a variance or special exception.) The City Council and Planning staff should approve these projects, even if they "break the rules." The CRA should walk them through and help expedite the permits. After the code and proper permitting procedures are in place, this problem will go away.

The Next Steps

Creating a streamlined and illustrative development code for the CRA District is a likely next step in fully implementing this plan. A code can accomplish a number of things. It should detail street sections and on-street parking requirements; including alleys. It should specify pre-approved finishes, building materials, proportions, and architectural elements. It should specify the permitted Land Uses. It would also make clear the permitting and administrative rules for future development proposals.

Downtown Business Organization

Get Competitive
Physical improvements and policy changes are vital to enhancing Downtown, but there are other things that can be done that will bolster progress. Part of what makes a vibrant, economically functioning downtown is that it offers a variety of goods, services, and opportunities. Cape Coral is in a tough position because it must contend with a multitude of competitors that are more organized, have a longer history, or have more professional experience.

Form a Downtown Merchants Association
First and foremost, Downtown business owners, with help from the CRA Board and the Chamber of Commerce, should form a Merchants Association in order to work together to buy advertising and work on special events and other promotions. The Merchants Association would function to organize events and promotions, host small business seminars, serve as a resource for fledgling Downtown businesses, and coordinate shared maintenance activities. The Chamber of Commerce can assist with meeting space or logistics, but this Merchant Association should be focused on Downtown. These meetings can be as frequent as determined by the members. Membership should be voluntary, but all businesses should be encouraged to join. The Merchants Association should use the following ideas as starting points.

Beat the Mall at its Own Game
Markets, or places to buy and sell goods and services, have been a part of nearly every culture. It began with simple bartering and trading. The traditional pattern of the marketplace in the United States is the "Main Street." It includes shops, offices, and places to live and socialize. Main Streets functioned in much the same way for hundreds of years. Perversely, Main Street was abstracted into the model for the suburban shopping mall that revolutionized the way Americans shopped beginning in the 1960s. The common hours, climate-controlled interiors and novelty of the mall propelled its popularity, often sapping downtowns of retail activity and leaving main streets deserted. Malls were also able to offer a common landlord, standard rules, and stable rent schemes to lure operators. However, forty years later, in 2001, Main Streets are proving very resilient and are making a comeback, while countless malls are scrambling to reinvent themselves. Although it has been economically and socially disruptive, the mall era has been a period of spectacular retail innovation, both at the mall and back on the newly re-engineered Main Streets. Much has been learned about retailing and entertainment, and these lessons can be applied in Downtown Cape Coral.

Think about Tenant Mix
The blend of stores and restaurants is one of the aspects where malls have been smart. The common management system allows for a great deal of control over tenant mix. The idea is to place retailers and restaurateurs to make the most of pedestrian activity.* A clever tenant mix can lead customers to stay longer, roam farther, and spend more.

A similar strategy is used in convenience stores when high use items like milk and bread are placed in the back of store. This location forces people to walk past all the other items, like cookies, chips, sodas, that the customers weren't looking for originally, but are now tempted to buy.

Besides the increase in purchases, there can be reduction in the total number of parking spaces when the tenant mix creates shared parking benefits.

The basic application of a tenant-mix mindset to a shopping street is to place stores with heavy foot traffic in such a way that it guides people to walk past the other stores and restaurants. For example, pedestrians crave a natural "loop" to follow when window shopping; many Main Streets lend themselves to walking down one side, crossing, and then returning along the other side. (Hence the great urgency to make it practical to cross Cape Coral Parkway on foot.)

The CRA or even a Downtown Merchant's Association is unlikely to have the same control over tenant mix as a mall, but even the most basic information is useful when the time comes to locate a shop or when trying to recruit new merchants.

A more aggressive stance would be to use a central leasing agent who would negotiate rents, coordinate the tenant mix, put together deals, and court national tenants. While participation in such a program would have to be voluntary, some small towns have used this strategy with powerful results. The thriving downtown in Neehah, Wisconsin is one precedent.

More on Tenant Mix

In order to have a useful tenant mix, a combination of these types must be used:

Anchor Stores advertise heavily and give a business district drawing power. They are best located at the ends of the street, or in the middle of a block. They pull people to and through the environment. These are the "department stores" of the main street. They could be a bookstore, a gym, a smaller format department store, a grocery store, a cinema, or even a discount store (if willing to conform to the CRA's design standards).

Non-Anchor Stores are located on the same street as the anchor stores. These feature impulse buys, such as shoes, fashion, toys, jewelry, flowers or plant store.

Destination Shops are located on side streets. These feature specialty items, such as records, coins, out of print books, spas, or high-end hair salons.

Service Shops are located at outer edges in order to allow convenient automobile access. These include barber shops, unisex salons, shoe repair, bakeries, dry cleaners, laundromats, cards and gifts, video/DVD rental, and drug stores.

Restaurants are used to pull people through too. These include sandwich shops, restaurants with or without liquor licenses, and ethnic specialties.

Miscellaneous is everything else. There are many other store that don't fall into any of those categories and are not typically found in a main street or mall. Regardless, gas stations, pawnshops, mechanics, car washes, and liquor stores are viable businesses that contribute to both the financial bottom line and general street activity. These places often need extra attention to the details of their design (see Chapter 4).

Use Common Operating Hours

Another way for Downtown to beat the malls is to promote common hours of operation. Consistency and reliability are qualities that the malls always provide. Merchants should agree to a set of operating hours and then clearly advertise those hours. These hours should include night and weekend hours, especially Sunday; these are the times when most retail purchases are made nowadays. If the merchants are unable to agree to common hours, variations can be made. Staying open one night a week is an option if every night is cost prohibitive for some stores (but remember that additional operating hours can garner potential sales.) As many merchants and restaurants as possible should be persuaded to join in a common operating hours program. The CRA, Chamber of Commerce, and the Merchants Association should share the costs of getting the word out.

Improve Shopfront Displays & Storefronts

Mall stores are excellent at their window displays and much can be learned from their practices. Their initial appeal and their visual pattern are the very things that tempt customers to come inside. Shopfronts must be transparent, so that potential customers can see inside to the items that are for sale. Illumination at night is important, even if the stores are not open. Signage should be clear and easy to read. Fixtures should complement what is inside the store, not take a customer's eye away from it. Storefront treatments need not be overly ornate or expensive.

Before

After

Better Shopfronts, Better Sales

The art of effective visual merchandising is not complicated or expensive, and learning about it can be fun. The Chamber of Commerce or the new Merchants Association should sponsor a merchandising clinic; Gibbs Planning Group, Jon Schallert, and other consultants offer affordable seminars on this subject.

The necessary physical improvements to stores could be a joint effort between the CRA and the individual property owner. The Façade Program is an excellent start. The CRA should continue to offer financial assistance as a loan or grant (depending on need) in order to encourage owners to fix up their buildings and stores.

Keep up with Maintenance & Security

Merchants should share the responsibility of maintaining sidewalks and other street elements, like benches, garbage cans, newspaper machines, etc. Security should also be a shared cost. Well-lit stores and increased pedestrian activity from new housing in Downtown will produce natural surveillance. Security guards can assist with directions and keys locked in cars. Their purpose can be larger than catching shoplifters or preventing criminal activity. They can serve as main street ambassadors.

Best of Kind; Spread the Word

After a first round of improvements have been made to the stores and the Merchants Association is ready to exhibit the new and improved stores, a special event should be held. It could be in conjunction with a traditional event, or a special one could be organized. For example, Cape Coral has many locally owned restaurants and stores. Their uniqueness is something that should be recognized and marketed. This "best of kind" marketing has been successful for many other communities.

Coinciding with the big event, initial efforts should be made at group advertising. The basic idea is to encourage people who don't usually shop Downtown to give it a second (or first?) chance. People should be wowed and encouraged to come back. Using a small discount (10% Off or 10th Meal Free) that is given only to residents of Cape Coral is another promotional tool to entice repeat business. The main benefit to group advertising is that individual stores are able to increase their visibility but minimize costs since they are shared among the stores.

Besides the typical media outlets, newspaper and flyers, the Internet is now an essential media outlet where Downtown merchants need to be visible. There is a small web presence about Cape Coral, but it could be much more prominent. Traditional tourist guides that are found at hotels should include Downtown stores and restaurants as well. Boating and eco-tourism activities should be included too.
These initial efforts should be continued and then expanded upon over time. A one-time event or a one-time advertisement in the newspaper should not be expected to expand business overnight. Efforts need to be consistent and continuous.

Potential Development Programming - 2000 to 2020*

The Near Term Plan (See Chapter 4 - General Design) was translated into an immediate development period (2000 to 2010) and an intermediate development period (extending to 2020). The combined constraints of financial capacity of the City and the CRA as well as the natural market forces will tone these two near-term development cycles to merge with developments that offer an adequate return on investment to the participating private development interests. These development periods are not necessarily set in stone, but should serve as a tool for guidance and prioritizing public investment.

Immediate Programming, 2000-2010

It is suggested that a seven-block CRA area, identified as Blocks 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, and 24, is most realistic to begin revitalization efforts from a public viewpoint as these blocks represent the current "heart of downtown." Programming involves the provision of approximately 1,326,920 square feet of reuses. Of this amount, the first-floor uses would be mainly retail, specialty and restaurant and entertainment uses plus a Civic Space of about 31,500 square feet. Upper floors would shift as market conditions warrant between apartments/condos and offices, and about 54 units of transient lodging in the form of "bed and breakfasts" or, perhaps, a specialty lodging inn.

Of the total square footage being recommended, almost 71 percent would be on the second and third floors. Roughly, conceptual development costs for this initial phase by private interest, without accompanying public infrastructure improvements (trees, curbing, streetscape, etc.), would cost approximately $125,811,600 or about $95.00 per square foot. Tenant finishes beyond those provided in the leases by the developer are

excerpted from Development Opportunities within Cape Coral and its Community Redevelopment Area, ZHA, 2002

TABLE 25

IMMEDIATE DEVELOPMENT PERIOD 2000-2010

	Sq.Ft.of Reuse	Hard Costs [1]	Soft Costs [2]	Total Costs	Per Sq.Ft. Costs
		Total Development Cost Estimates(000)			
Block13 and Block 14					
Retail/Ground Level	109,050	8,415,060	2,795,094	11,210,154	$102.80
Upper Floors	141,300	9,513,809	3,769,292	13,283,101	$94.01
Total	250,350	17,928,869	6,564,386	24,493,255	$97.84
Block 15					
Retail/Ground Level	39,303	2,882,482	910,257	3,792,740	$ 96.50
Upper Floors	62,421	4,413,033	1,520,564	5,933,596	$ 95.06
Total	101,724	7,295,515	2,430,821	9,726,336	$ 95.61
Block 16					
Retail/Ground Level	32,862	2,422,587	765,027	3,187,614	$ 97.00
Upper Floors	57,310	4,109,700	1,678,610	5,788,310	$ 101.00
Total	90,172	6,532,287	2,443,637	8,975,924	$ 99.54
Block 17					
Retail/Ground Level	9,146	675,981	213,468	889,449	$ 97.25
Upper Floors	18,292	1,321,460	539,751	1,861,211	$ 101.75
Total	27,438	1,997,441	753,219	2,750,660	$ 100.25
Block 22					
Retail/Ground Level	30,268	2,254,361	711,903	2,966,264	$ 98.00
Upper Floors	75,892	5,435,210	2,220,016	7,655,226	$ 100.90
Total	106,160	7,689,571	2,931,919	10,621,490	$ 100.05
Block 23					
Retail/Ground Level	122,013	9,041,163	2,855,104	11,896,268	$ 97.50
Upper Floors	361,182	25,272,920	8,411,532	33,684,450	$ 93.26
Total	483,195	34,314,083	11,266,636	45,580,718	$ 94.33
Block 24					
Retail/Ground Level	7,821	573,592	181,134	754,727	$ 96.50
Upper Floors	260,050	17,952,770	4,955,681	22,908,450	$ 88.09
Total	267,871	18,526,362	5,136,815	23,663,177	$ 88.34
Grand Total					
Retail Restaurant/Specialty	318,963	23,743,966	6,447,255	30,191,221	$ 94.65
Office/Residential Space	937,547	65,932,992	23,095,446	89,028,438	$ 94.96
Hotel Rooms	38,900	2,085,910	851,992	2,937,902	n/a
Civic Space	31,500	2,521,260	1,132,740	3,654,000	$ 116.00
Grand Total for Uses:	1,326,910	94,284,128	31,527,433	125,811,561	$ 94.82
Parking Facilities:					
Block 13 -Garage (522)					

Bdrz-summImmedBlockTot

1 any construction related costs, e.g. brick, mortar, steel, wood, land

2 programmatic costs, e.g. financing, legal, design, interest on borrowed money

Numbered Blocks
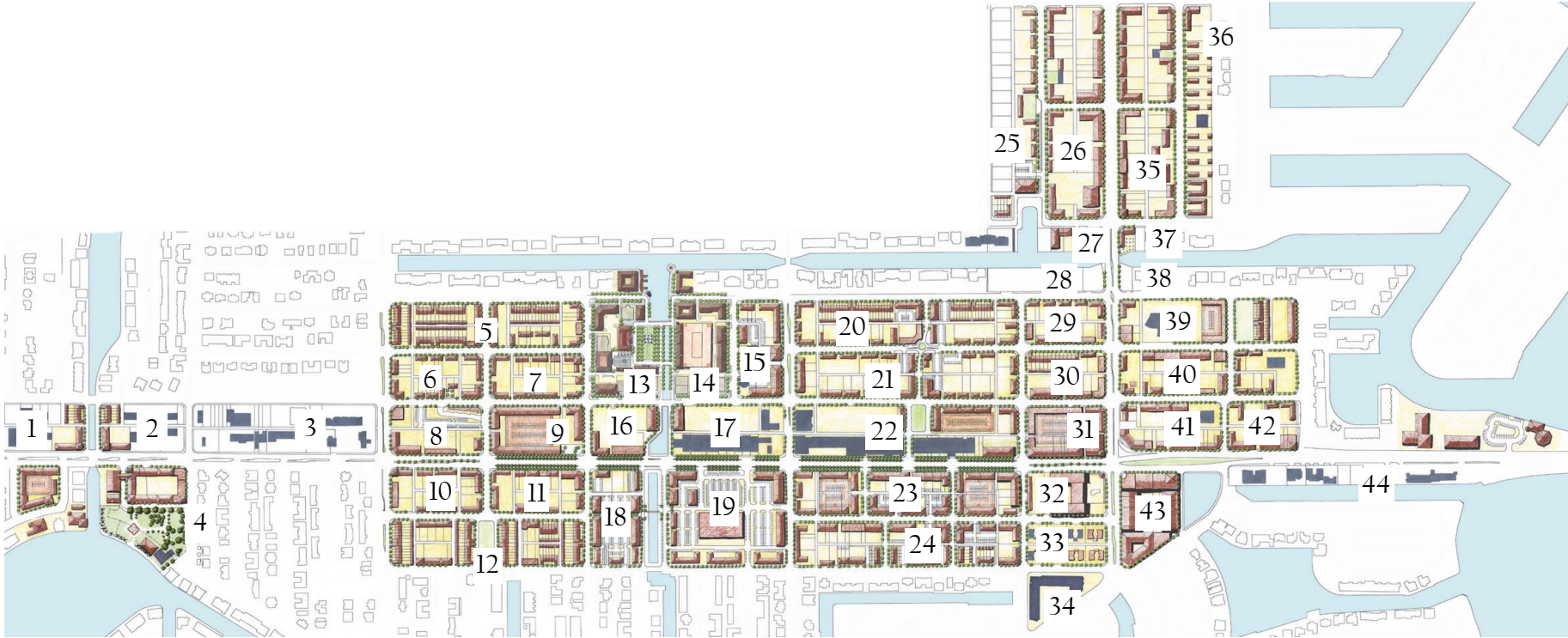
not estimated in these figures. The conceptual design includes one structured parking garage (Block 13/14) with approximately 522 spaces and will consist of about 187,920 square feet and cost nearly $5.0 million. It is assumed that this garage shall be publicly provided. Regulations for impact parking fees and surcharges against the developer for the provision of this public facility must be designed and publicly adopted as part of the negotiations of any applicable General Development Agreement (GDA) when solicitation/disposition process is launched.

Intermediate Programming 2010 to 2020

It is suggested that the CRA consider redevelopment of Block 4 and then Blocks 18 thru 21, 31, and Blocks 41 through 43. In this latter programming period after Year 2010, the density of uses would provide about 518,824 square feet of street office uses, retail specialty outlets, and restaurants and entertainment facilities. The provision of these reuses would cost approximately $50.7 million to construct including all soft costs of financing, architectural design and related construction costs. Supporting this pedestrian street level environment would be upper floor usage of apartments/ condos and offices of about 1,692,700 square feet during the ten-year programming period. An additional civic facility, about 19,400 square feet, is also proposed in Block 4.

Table 26 lists anticipated development by specific block and contains working figures for likely construction and development costs for the varying uses. A notable entry into this latter program is a 180-room hotel. For conservative programming reasons, it is assumed that the amount of office/apartment space reflected in this program segment will be reduced to accommodate the hotel insertion. A 180-room hotel should be sought and with adequate time and the maturity of the

Cape's market it will justify reserving space for this essential use. A finely functioning Downtown needs lodging accommodation as an essential ingredient of the reuse mix.

The plan for this intermediate phase has three parking garages required to handle the parking demands for these reuses. These include a 540-unit garage in Block 4, 39 spaces in Block 20, and a garage of 522 spaces in Block 31. At today's cost, these 1,101 spaces will cost about $10,460,000 for the public to construct, or roughly $9,500 per space.

TABLE 26

INTERMEDIATE DEVELOPMENT PERIOD 2010-2020

		Total Development Cost Estimates(000)			
	Sq.Ft.of Reuse	Hard Costs	Soft Costs	Total Costs	Per Sq.Ft. Costs
Block 4					
Retail/Ground Level	62,583	4,750,583	1,707,309	6,457,892	$103.19
Upper Floors	117,669	8,285,461	2,750,806	11,036,267	$93.79
Total	180,252	13,036,044	4,458,115	17,494,159	$97.05
Block 18					
Retail/Ground Level	56,400	4,200,672	1,326,528	5,527,200	$98.00
Upper Floors	166,800	10,641,060	4,525,740	15,166,800	$90.93
Total	223,200	14,841,732	5,852,268	20,694,000	$92.72
Block 19					
Retail/Ground Level	113,854	8,436,581	2,664,184	11,100,765	$97.50
Upper Floors	327,350	21,021,502	8,878,220	29,899,722	$91.34
Total	441,204	29,458,083	11,542,404	41,000,487	$92.93
Block 20					
Retail/Ground Level	26,675	1,986,754	627,396	2,614,150	$98.00
Upper Floors	235,190	15,173,663	6,418,767	21,592,430	$91.81
Total	261,865	17,160,417	7,046,163	24,206,580	$92.44
Block 21					
Retail/Ground Level	75,577	5,600,256	1,768,502	7,368,758	$97.50
Upper Floors	139,283	10,279,085	3,997,422	14,276,507	$102.50
Total	214,860	15,879,341	5,765,924	21,645,265	$100.74
Block 31					
Retail/Ground Level	40,955	3,050,328	963,262	4,013,590	$98.00
Upper Floors	139,486	10,294,067	4,003,248	14,297,315	$102.50
Total	180,441	13,344,395	4,966,510	18,310,905	$101.48
Block 41					
Retail/Ground Level	15,004	1,117,498	352,894	1,470,392	$98.00
Upper Floors	121,479	8,931,736	3,491,069	12,422,805	$102.26
Total	136,483	10,049,234	3,843,963	13,893,197	$101.79
Block 42					
Retail/Ground Level	9,371	697,952	220,406	918,358	$98.00
Upper Floors	118,800	6,967,620	3,130,380	10,098,000	$85.00
Total	128,171	7,665,572	3,350,786	11,016,358	$85.95
Block 43					
Retail/Ground Level	137,791	10,262,674	3,240,844	13,503,518	$98.00
Upper Floors	307,231	20,309,165	8,463,188	28,772,353	$93.65
Total	445,022	30,571,839	11,704,032	42,275,871	$95.00
Retail Specialty/Restaurant	518,824	38,551,643	12,174,203	50,725,846	$97.77
Office/Residential Space	1,692,674	111,903,359	45,658,841	157,562,200	$93.08
Civic Space	19,386	1,551,655	697,121	2,248,776	$116.00
Grand Total for Uses:	2,211,498	152,006,657	58,530,165	210,536,822	$95.20

Bdrz-summImmedBlockTot

Proposed Rendering for East entrance to Downtown

Caption for above image

Proposal for Cape Coral Parkway
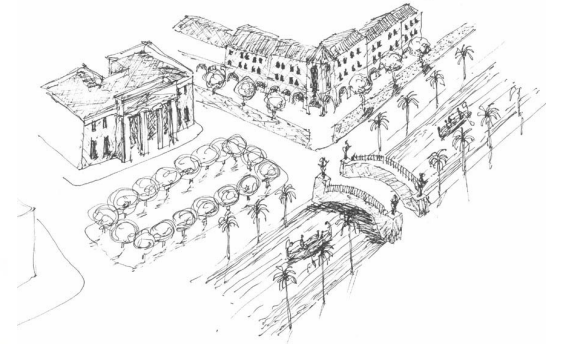

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Proposed Rendering for East entrance to Downtown

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Proposed Rendering for Cape Coral Parkway

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Proposed Rendering for Club Square

Proposed Rendering for Bimini Basin / Four Freedoms Park

Caption for above image