



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Cocoa Beach is emerging from a period of limited development and growth. The city wants to turn this around and encourage private investment throughout Cocoa Beach to attract more visitors, businesses, sales, and, ultimately, tax revenue. The city wants to let people know that they are “Open for Business.” At the same time, residents want to target those areas for new development very carefully so that they don’t lose their city’s character.

In a response to not wanting undesirable development, the City Charter, Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code have intermingling restrictions to development that caused the previous development boom to bypass the city. Once consensus on a desirable community vision is established, steps to revise the most stringent land development regulations can be revised, allowing the type of development desired by Cocoa Beach residents.

DESIGNING IN PUBLIC

The city wanted to expand the 2010 Downtown vision to include the primary tourism areas. The city selected Dover, Kohl & Partners’ multi-disciplinary design team of national and local experts to provide the necessary outside perspective for imagining possible futures for Cocoa Beach with the community.

A five-day design charrette in January 2014 brought together community members, community leaders, elected officials, property owners, and the design team to work together toward a common vision for Cocoa Beach.

As an important first step, the design team helped to establish local consensus and worked with the community to see the potential that Cocoa Beach has to offer through hands-on design exercises that included the general public and meetings with the community. The building of this general consensus was used to create a shared vision to lay the groundwork for future public support which is often necessary to erase roadblocks in the land development regulations that enable the kind of development desired by the citizens of Cocoa Beach.

THE BIG PICTURE

Through the public design process, community members and the design team worked together to develop the main objectives to guide the appropriate redevelopment of Cocoa Beach. Shaped from public input during the charrette, the “Big Ideas” embody the public’s vision for the future of the Gateways into Cocoa Beach.

Due to many variables and unknown factors, the plan must remain flexible to accommodate changing economic forces, developers’ pro-forma, existing businesses, land development regulations and unforeseen needs, changes, or uses. Although the physical design details of the built environment may evolve over time, the Big Ideas are intended to remain constant throughout implementation. The Big Ideas are to be used by city leaders, city staff, the business community, and residents to ensure that continued redevelopment and upgrades to the City of Cocoa Beach remain true to the community’s vision.

THE BIG IDEAS

KEEP IT COCOA BEACH BUT STRATEGICALLY UPGRADE

History – Rockets, Boards & Waves
Environment – Native Landscaping;
Reduce Surface Parking
Architecture – Improve Standards

CAREFULLY GROW 3 CONNECTED CENTERS OF DEVELOPMENT

The Pier; Gateway Tourism District; Downtown

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS

Become pedestrian & bicycle friendly
East-West Connections; Pedestrian & Bicycle Loops;
Calmer Traffic
Shape space: Connect Banana River to the Ocean
Upgrade Shepard Beach (Park) &
Increase Awareness of the Waterfront

UPGRADE THE ‘PEOPLE SPACES’

Meet, Greet, See, Be Seen
Shaded, Memorable Places to Go

CREATE A SIGNATURE GATEWAY EXPERIENCE

Sense of Arrival
Branding

PLAN DETAILS

The *Cocoa Beach Gateways Master Plan* provides a comprehensive strategy for creating well-loved centers and destinations that connect to one another and to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The plan is comprised of three distinct study areas, each of which has under-utilized spaces that have the potential to become great centers of activity. These areas include the Gateway Tourism District centered around the SR 520 and A1A intersection, including the gateway from the west into the city; The Cocoa Beach Pier area that includes the northern city boundary and the Pier; and the A1A Corridor Connector that connects the Cocoa Beach Pier and Gateway Tourism District to the Downtown.

The plan details go through the main opportunities for redevelopment and improvements throughout the northern portion of the city. These include the actual gateways into the city from the north and west as well as areas around the Cocoa Beach Pier, within the Gateway Tourism District and along the A1A corridor.



View over Shepard Park, one of the city's greatest undervalued assets, looking back towards "Broadway"



520 SECTOR AREA: GATEWAY TOURISM DISTRICT



Fundamental to the plan is the transformation of the Gateway Tourism District, located around the intersection of SR 520 and A1A, into a vibrant, mixed-use center with comfortable sidewalks, street trees, on-street parking, and mixed-use, street-oriented buildings. This is accomplished with a reimagining of SR 520 at the western edge as a multiway boulevard and at the eastern edge as a complete pedestrian environment with dining, areas to rest and shade within the central median.

520 GATEWAY



The vacant site at the northwest edge of the Gateway Tourism District presents an unprecedented ability to transform this sector of Cocoa Beach with minimal disturbance to existing businesses and infrastructure. This opportune site has sunset water views and access to the water for smaller boats. Where the new waterfront esplanade meets SR 520, a new green public square can be fronted by new mixed-use buildings, several of which feature tall, prominent corner towers that will be visible across the causeway for quite a distance. They will form a gateway into Cocoa Beach.

GETTING AROUND

Attractive and economically vibrant communities need transportation networks that offer a choice of mobility options, while still efficiently accommodating commuter and local vehicular traffic. A high level assessment of opportunities to improve mobility was explored with the community in concert with the larger effort of identifying the future vision for the northern portion of the city.

The purpose and goal of examining the multimodal transportation network was to identify potential improvements that work with the ideas for the future of Cocoa Beach. This included a review of recommendations for the A1A corridor study being completed by others, in light of the discussions for this visioning process.

Some of the key transportation recommendations include:

- Make SR 520 a Multiway Boulevard West of A1A
- Make SR 520 a Pedestrian Attraction East of A1A
- Improve Transit Stops
- Pedestrian Improvements, Including Improved Access Management
- Cycling Improvements (including a 5K loop around the northern portion of the city)

BROADWAY & BEACH



There are very few oceanfront sites in Florida with a major east-west connection and the opportunity to host so many visitors. Cocoa Beach is unique in that it has a potentially beautiful boulevard and established parallel grid of streets that terminate to a significant waterfront park, Shepard Park.

The key is to turn SR 520 into a destination public space, formalizing the area with regularly spaced street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting and connected sidewalks, and reemphasizing this grand entrance to the greatest asset in Cocoa Beach, the beach.



SR 520 becomes a multiway boulevard within the existing right-of-way and creates desirable street addresses for adjacent future development.

GETTING THERE

Revising the land development regulations to remove roadblocks and encourage the type of development residents would like to see in Cocoa Beach will require numerous steps. The first step includes the acceptance and approval of the Gateways Master Plan Report and vision. Acceptance will establish a clear direction in which the city wants to move. This is followed by a series of steps that will include changes to the city charter, the comprehensive plan, and various land development regulations.

Based on the vision established in the Gateways Master Plan Report, the main topics that should be addressed to encourage desirable development include:

- Generalize the city’s Future Land Use Map
- Create tourism overlay districts
- Allow mixed-use buildings in tourism districts
- Don’t force flat-top buildings
- Encourage shared parking
- Consolidate business driveways
- Create a form-based zoning district along SR 520

The comprehensive plan must be consistent with Cocoa Beach’s city charter. Because of specific provisions in the charter, the city commission must refer some decisions about the comprehensive plan, and even the land development code, to the voters. These decisions can be extremely complex due to the interlocking nature of Cocoa Beach’s charter, comprehensive plan, and land development code. Despite this complexity, voters could authorize important refinements in the near future.

Following the adoption of the vision, the most important steps are summarized to the right.

Full realization of this vision will require many additional steps, including physical improvements to public streets and parks, and possibly public-private partnerships where they would provide mutual benefits to both investors and the public.

Additional information on the Background, Designing in Public, The Big Picture, Plan Details, Getting Around, and Getting There can be found in the Cocoa Beach Gateways Master Plan Report.

CITY CHARTER

ALLOW MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

Add a new sentence to Section 6.01 regarding mixed-use densities

BUILDING HEIGHT LIMIT

Modify Sec. 6.04 to exclude roofs from 45’ height limit in tourism districts

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOURISM DISTRICT OVERLAY

Add tourism overlay map & description (similar to downtown overlay)

ALLOW MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

Amend Policy I.4.12 to address density in mixed-use situations

BUILDING HEIGHT LIMIT

Amend Policy I.4.11 to exclude roofs from 45’ height limit in tourism districts

SHARED PARKING

Add a policy supporting shared parking in all business areas

CONSOLIDATE DRIVEWAYS

Add a policy supporting consolidation of driveways & cross-access drives

FORM-BASED ZONING DISTRICT

Add a policy supporting form-based zoning for downtown & tourism areas

LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

TOURISM DISTRICT OVERLAY

Add tourism overlay map; describe effect on certain regulations

ALLOW MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

Adjust Article III regarding density in mixed-use situations

BUILDING HEIGHT LIMIT

Adjust design standards to exclude roofs from 45’ height limit in tourism districts

SHARED PARKING

Modify parking regulations to encourage shared parking in all business areas

FORM-BASED ZONING DISTRICT

Add a new form-based zoning district along SR 520