

OLD SAN CARLOS BOULEVARD – CRESCENT STREET
MASTER PLAN

Town of Fort Myers Beach, Florida

February, 1999

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Objectives of this Study

This design study was commissioned by the Town of Fort Myers Beach to begin implementing its new comprehensive plan in the downtown area near Times Square. The new comprehensive plan is organized around a “community design” theme that calls for specific physical improvements to the town, including buildings, streets, and other public places. Together, these pieces can create a coherent whole that reinforces the small-town character of Fort Myers Beach while continuing its comfortable coexistence with tourism.

The new comprehensive plan promotes the revitalization of the downtown core area, centered around Old San Carlos Boulevard and Crescent Street, as the nucleus of commercial and tourist activities. The plan calls for the concepts formulated by the Estero Island Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to be refined and extended, including:

1. Expand the Times Square pedestrian-friendly zone along Old San Carlos Boulevard from Times Square to Matanzas Pass, connecting the beach to the bay.

- ▶ Promote infill commercial activity to improve economic opportunities and create a sense of place without further interfering with traffic flow on busy Estero Boulevard.
- ▶ Improve the street’s appearance by providing comfortable sidewalks, burying utility lines, and adding landscaping.
- ▶ Improve public access to the bay at the north end of Old San Carlos Boulevard.

2. Improve the existing parking situation.

- ▶ Provide additional parking to offset current shortages and to meet the needs of redevelopment.
- ▶ Suggest management strategies to make the best use of the parking supply, consistent with other community goals.
- ▶ Propose a long-term parking strategy, including appropriate design parameters for any future parking garages.

3. Consider the future of Crescent Street and First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Streets.

4. Propose specific strategies that the town can use to implement its redevelopment plans.

Previous Planning Efforts in This Area

Extensive planning for the downtown core area around Times Square began in the late 1980s. As a result, Lee County undertook a multi-million dollar improvement to the area’s local streets around 1992, paving and widening streets, improving the drainage system, and adding some sidewalks.

The Estero Island CRA was established in 1991. In addition to its planning for other parts of the island, the CRA produced a “Core Area Master Plan” in 1995. Parts of this master plan have already been implemented: Times Square was converted to a pedestrian mall in 1996-97; wide

decorative sidewalks and street trees were extended from Times Square to the Lani Kai at the same time; and new development regulations for the core area were adopted in 1996.

Shortly after incorporation on December 31, 1995, the town began work on its island-wide comprehensive plan. The completed plan, which became effective on January 1, 1999, sets forth policies for the town to follow in its official actions and for the private sector to follow when redeveloping land. The comprehensive plan contains specific guidance for the downtown area in the following policies:

- Basic downtown redevelopment concept: *Policies 2-B-1, 2-B-2, 3-D-2, 3-D-4, 3-D-6, 3-D-9, 7-E-3*
- Burying overhead utility lines: *Policy 1-B-5*
- Landscaping along streets: *Policies 1-B-2, 1-B-3*
- Sidewalks: *Policies 3-D-3, 7-E-4(ii)*
- Plaza on Matanzas Pass: *Policy 3-D-4(v)*
- Parking improvements: *Policies 3-D-5, 7-A-2, 7-F-1, 7-F-2, 7-F-3, 7-F-4*
- Pedestrian crossings on Estero Boulevard: *Policies 1-A-1, 4-A-4, 7-B-3, 7-E-4(iii)*

The town also adopted a Downtown Redevelopment Plan and established a Downtown Redevelopment Agency (DRA) in 1998 to help finance and carry out these improvements.

Planning Process for this Study

This study began with a well-attended “Designing Our Downtown” workshop on November 7, 1998. This session was advertised in the local newspapers, and flyers were mailed to all area businesses and property owners and distributed throughout Fort Myers Beach. Participants are listed in Appendix B.

Victor Dover of Dover, Kohl & Partners opened the workshop with a slide presentation entitled “Creating Memorable Places.” Those attending were then divided into four working groups. Each group was provided with a large map of the entire downtown core area showing buildings, property lines, and streets. The groups worked together for 2½ hours, discussing and sketching ideas on how to improve the downtown area.

After lunch, a spokesperson from each group presented the major ideas their group had generated. The following list includes the major ideas from all of the groups; the first seven items reconfirmed previous planning ideas, and the last three were received after the workshop:

1. Storefronts on Old San Carlos should be closely spaced and dry-floodproofed at ground level, with wide sidewalks, street trees, and on-street parking
2. Parking behind buildings (at-grade if possible); private parking garage if needed
3. Public plaza along Matanzas Pass; incorporate water taxi landing
4. Parking garage could be built near gambling boats or at foot of bridge
5. Reduction (not necessarily elimination) of parking in Lynn Hall Park, addition of sand volleyball and/or an amphitheater.
6. Bike paths on Crescent from Estero to the bay and back along Old San Carlos
7. Place all utilities underground
8. Second and Third Streets — retain current one-way configuration, but add angle parking on one side?

9. Parking needed for the gambling boats could be accommodated in surface lots at the marina or, if included in a three- to four-story parking garage (between Third Street and Snug Harbor); it would allow a more natural development of park along Matanzas Pass
10. The Helmerich Plaza site is underutilized and a blighting influence on Crescent. Three redevelopment concepts were offered, each with two-story buildings fronting directly on sidewalks:
 - a. Add an L-shaped mixed-use, urban building at Estero and Crescent, including the area over the existing drive-through lane
 - b. Move all buildings to the perimeter of the block and add large awnings to protect pedestrians
 - c. Convert the area north of the east-west driveway to a public use, with commercial uses to the south reconfigured to face the exterior sidewalks
 - d. An interior parking lot or garage with landscaped courtyard
11. Several additional ideas for a public plaza at the Matanzas Pass end of Old San Carlos:
 - a. Reclaim the existing public right-of-way of Old San Carlos down to the water by relocating Snug Harbor parking and creating a pier similar to Mallory Pier in Key West
 - b. Acquire the privately owned land between Old San Carlos and the Sky Bridge, remove the freezers and sheds, move existing parking to nearby shared lots or garage, replace dumpsters with trash compactor at off-site location to serve entire core area, add amphitheater, farmers market, water taxi, and mini-rail transit landing stations
12. Add traffic-calming devices such as raised crosswalks, street trees, and narrower drive lanes on Old San Carlos and Crescent
13. Crescent Street ideas:
 - a. Add 12-foot sidewalk on east side
 - b. Preserve historic houses
 - c. Maintain canal frontage as strictly residential, but – in future – allow small retail uses on ground floor facing sidewalk and residential on the top floors
14. Old San Carlos Boulevard ideas:
 - a. All buildings built to the sidewalk, two- and three-story buildings required to build street space, all buildings should have pedestrian cover (arcades, colonnades, or awnings)
 - b. On-street parking and shared parking on rear of lots or garages
 - c. Street trees, lights, benches and 12-foot sidewalks on both sides of street
 - d. Raised crosswalks to define pedestrian area and slow traffic
 - e. Central location for a compactor with enclosure to reduce odors
 - f. Place street trees in bump-outs between each two parallel parking spaces
15. Trolley or tram to use clean fuel (propane or electric); its path would be from Matanzas Pass under the Sky Bridge to Bowditch Point to Santini Plaza and back to Matanzas Pass with stops on demand, with no charge for service
16. Hang tags for visitors' cars that would allow parking anywhere
17. Palm trees as street trees on both Old San Carlos and Crescent Street
18. Free bikes for the use of everyone
19. Some minimal area should be left open for storm surge on Old San Carlos
20. There should be an entrance feature at the bottom of the Sky Bridge
21. Recycling containers would help keep the area clean and provide revenue

22. Town should buy building at base of bridge and replace with plaza/fountain
23. Create a museum/visitor center
24. Develop a generalized request for proposals for a “downtown” parking garage; this would allow developers to propose different sites for a garage
25. Create a parking authority to provide consistency and uniformity in parking
26. Create a design review committee for architectural plans

After the public workshop, the consulting team performed technical analyses on many of the alternatives that had been discussed. Examples of later analyses include:

- ▶ Diagonal vs. parallel parking: For on-street parking, spaces entered diagonally are more efficient and easier to enter than parallel-parking spaces. However, a wider right-of-way is needed. Both alternatives were considered for Old San Carlos Boulevard, where the right-of-way is now 63 to 66 feet wide. The diagonal alternative would allow 24 additional spaces, but would require acquisition of additional right-of-way. The difficulty and expense of land acquisition was not deemed to be warranted given the other opportunities for increasing the parking supply.
- ▶ Pedestrian crossing on Estero Boulevard: The Town of Fort Myers Beach is considering a pedestrian overpass at Times Square to reduce the travel delay now caused by the button-actuated traffic signal. Other alternatives to serve this purpose were analyzed (see discussion further below).
- ▶ Alternative locations for parking garages: The advisability of a parking garage near Times Square has long been discussed. Various feasible locations for a parking garage were identified and analyzed, especially: the minimum land size needed, the travel patterns that would result, and the aesthetic impacts of a parking garage. Three feasible locations have been identified and are presented in this report.
- ▶ Parking garages vs. on-street parking: Parking garages are expensive and cannot be built incrementally, yet parking demand increases incrementally during the redevelopment process. An ideal parking strategy may eventually include a parking garage but would be achievable in small steps, either by government or private sector activity. This general concept has been carried out in the recommendations that follow.

Preliminary ideas were presented by the consulting team to a joint meeting of the Town Council and the Local Planning Agency (LPA) on January 7, 1999. Early drafts of two site plans were presented. One showed moderate infill development, at levels that can be supported with surface parking. The other showed more intense infill development, which would require one or more multi-level parking garages. Two perspective sketches were displayed, one showing a street-level view of Old San Carlos Boulevard and the other with a view of First Street and Old San Carlos from the top of the Sky Bridge.

The presentation to the joint meeting showed the “moderate infill” concept possibly evolving into the “more intense infill” pattern over time. The more intense plan depicts what happens when one or more of the large surface parking lots are redeveloped into parking garages and more new buildings are built to take advantage of the increased parking supply.

The initial concept for Estero Boulevard near Times Square was also presented, showing the medians widened, lengthened, and landscaped. These medians would then serve as pedestrian

refuges, allowing pedestrians to cross Estero Boulevard in two stages, rather than waiting for traffic to clear both directions or stopping traffic in both directions by using the traffic signal. Under this plan, no pedestrian overpass would be needed, and the existing traffic signal would remain only as a flashing caution light.

Town Council and LPA members asked questions and made comments on the ideas presented. At the conclusion of this session, public comments were also received. The consensus was to proceed with greatest attention to the moderate infill plan (with surface parking only). The consulting team then went forward with refinements to the plans and with preparation of this report, which contain the final recommendations, plan drawings, and completed perspective sketches. These ideas were presented to another joint meeting of the Town Council and LPA on February 25, 1999.

A View into Downtown's Future

From the earliest days, historic San Carlos Boulevard was one of the island's primary public spaces. The palm-lined Main Street created one's first and last visual impressions of Fort Myers Beach as visitors and residents arrived and departed via the old swing bridge.



Figure 1, "Avenue of Palms" [photo courtesy of Estero Island Historic Society]

During the next generation, Old San Carlos Boulevard and Crescent Street should be encouraged to mature, to once again play a part in setting the character and positive image of the town core. The neighborhood framed by these streets should be organized and redeveloped around a series of *high-quality public spaces*, including the street spaces themselves, to create an environment which promotes walking and neighborliness. The most important design idea in this plan is to focus on the *public realm between buildings*. The streets must evolve to be more than mere roads, but to be multi-purpose, people-oriented, inviting places.

Correcting the physical form of this public realm is key to motivating private investors to reinvest wisely in the properties in this important area. Changes will occur gradually over time, and if directed by good business sense, planning, and design, will transform the area into a vibrant, distinct part of the town. *Imagine Old San Carlos and Crescent a generation from now:*

The Future of Old San Carlos Boulevard



Figure 2

The street makes a strong spatial connection between the Bay and the Gulf. Private reinvestment has led to the infill of new buildings, with their eclectic storefronts positioned along the wide, shaded sidewalks. Apartments, hotel rooms, and even some offices occupy the upper floors above the shops and restaurants. On-street parking, curbs, and travel lanes are coordinated in a scene that provides for but is not overshadowed by the automobile. The intersecting streets allow easy turns to parking behind the buildings. Courtyards and pedestrian passages lead to special discoveries within the block, including a water taxi stop on the Third Street canal. With a character all its own, Old San Carlos has become the quieter, more intimate alternative to busy Estero Boulevard.



New “Bayfront Square”

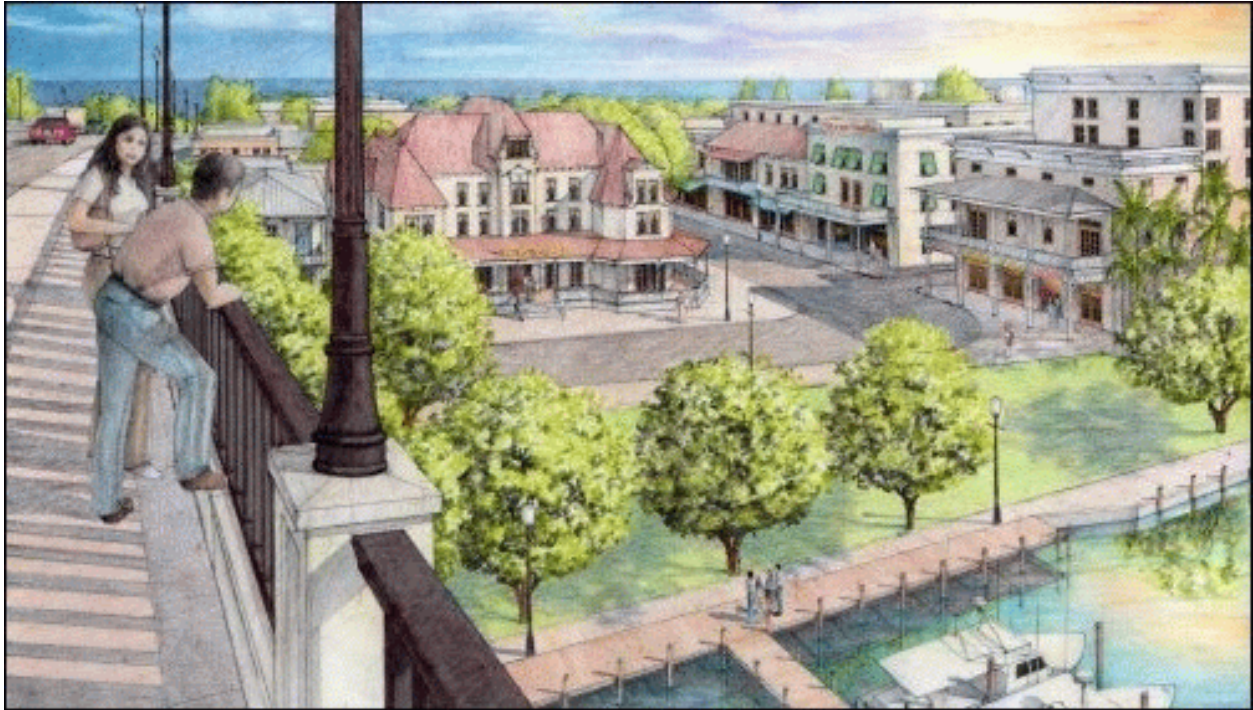


Figure 3

Where Old San Carlos Boulevard reaches Matanzas Bay on the north end, it leads to a new public park fashioned from the former parking lots and lost space. This is the town’s front door to the Bay, and is used for everything from public gatherings and festivals to casual lunch with friends. New and renovated buildings frame the square. While the park itself is a simple, modest green space and plaza, the scene is completed by the overlooking balconies, porches, and arcades. Outdoor dining is encouraged in this area. The working waterfront is celebrated and showcased here; the boats and fishing are part of the romance of Fort Myers Beach. The new hotel and the square are the first things one notices when arriving via the updated Sky Bridge. Bayfront Square has become a destination that gives pedestrians a new reason to walk down Old San Carlos Boulevard from the beach to the bay.



The Future of Crescent Street



Figure 4

Crescent Street now forms a second link between Bayfront Square and bustling Estero Boulevard. Sidewalk improvements have made Crescent part of a popular walking path around and under the bridge. While not as prominent as Times Square or Old San Carlos, Crescent has settled into a very natural mix of uses, combining modest commercial enterprises, lodging, and in-town residences. Several vacant or underutilized lots have been developed or redeveloped. Notably, the former Helmerich Plaza strip shopping center has been reconfigured as a street-oriented, charming part of the town core. The redevelopment features a mid-block parking lot with a “liner” of normal mixed-use buildings around it, providing windows, doors, and balconies overlooking the street. The parking lot is large enough to be converted to a parking garage that would be screened from view on all sides by the “liner buildings.” An intimate park has been created midway on Crescent Street, furnishing a unique neighborhood identity.

The Composite Plan

Figure 5 identifies the existing conditions in the Old San Carlos / Crescent area in January 1999.

Figure 6 shows the recommended composite plan for the same area, with moderate infill development served entirely by surface parking lots.

Figure 7 shows a more intense infill plan, which would require one or more parking garages at the locations shown.

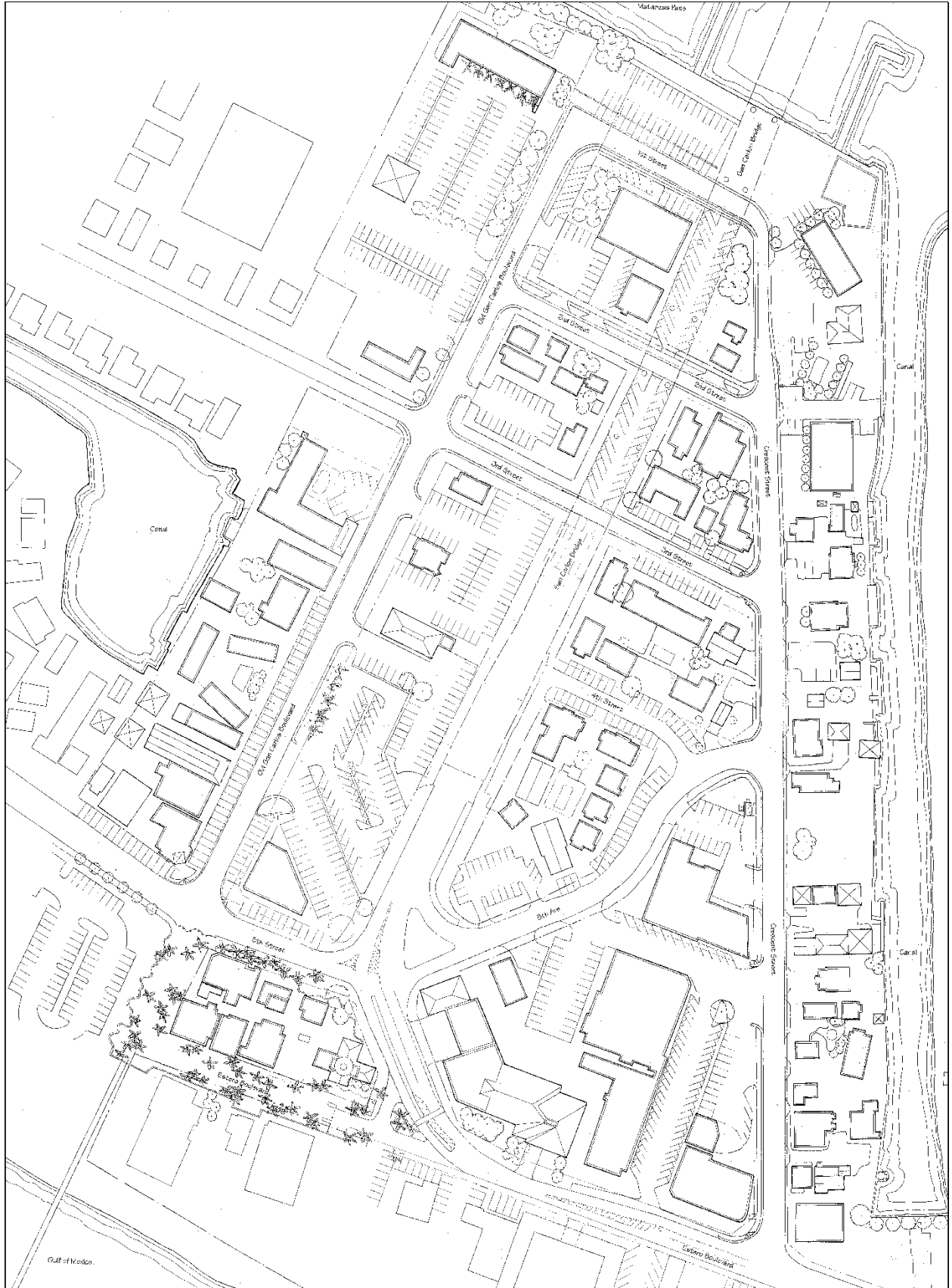


Figure 5, showing existing conditions (January 1999)

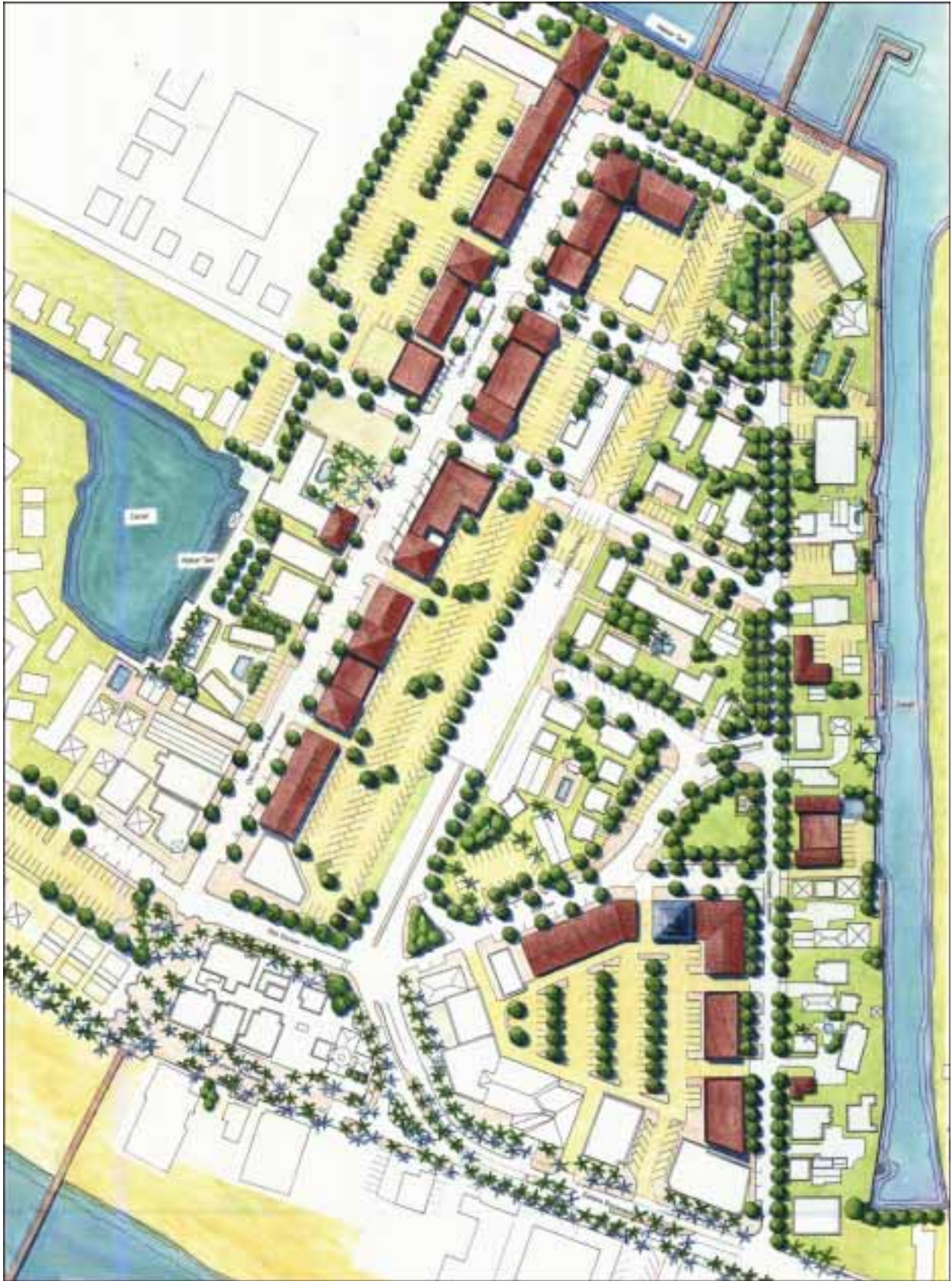


Figure 6, showing moderate infill plan with surface parking

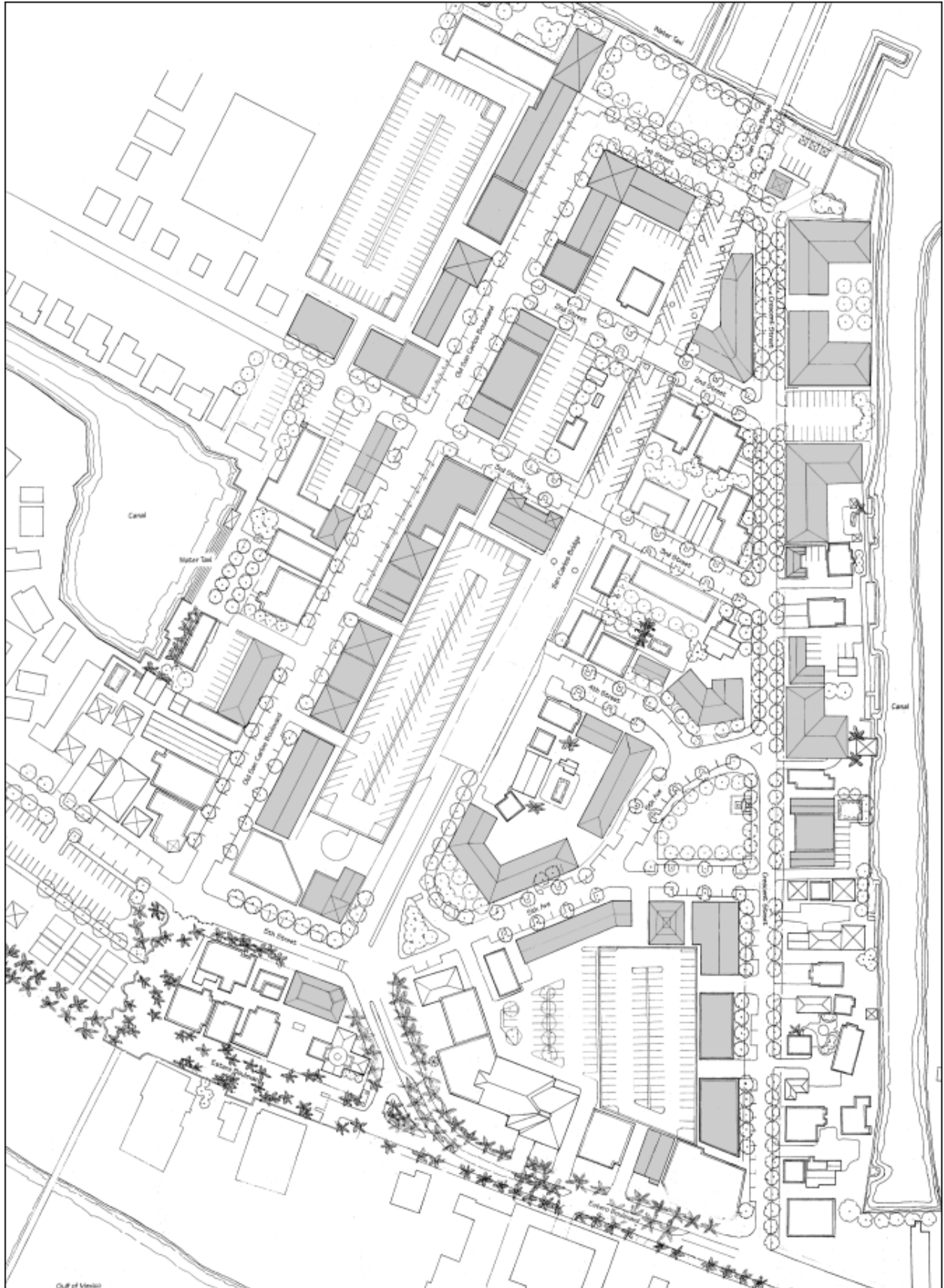


Figure 7, showing more intense infill plan with parking garage(s)

Specific Recommendations

Parking

At present, the downtown area has all the basics of a great pedestrian place: it is compact, attractive, economically vibrant, and has places worth walking to — all this, plus a great beach. Not surprisingly, its current popularity often surpasses its perceived ability to handle visitors. Local residents and tourists staying in island motels or condominiums often walk or bicycle around the island, but other Lee County residents and visitors staying off the island usually come in cars, clogging some key roads every winter.

There are several distinguishing characteristics of the downtown area that may help with the parking problem. The city blocks are small, with many streets having ample rights-of-way (other than Crescent Street, all are at least 50 feet wide). A great deal of public land is being used for private parking lots. Land parcels are small but expensive, making it difficult to provide on-site parking at all, let alone at the rate required for conventional development regulations.

A rudimentary public transit system is in place. A better transit system would make visitors more comfortable with parking their cars once without sacrificing mobility around the town.

Extremely valuable land is already being devoted to parking. For example, most of Lynn Hall Park adjoining the pier and Times Square, and potentially valuable land on Old San Carlos Boulevard and Matanzas Pass, are used as parking lots. Despite these parking lots and other public parking spaces underneath the Sky Bridge, parking conflicts are often felt. Many people park illegally in business lots which are designed for customers only; frequent towing is the unpleasant result. Pedestrians often have to walk through a maze of parked cars to get to the beach or while window-shopping; the west side of Old San Carlos is a prime example. Parking spaces that appear to be on public land are often marked as tow-away zones by individual merchants. Knowledgeable local residents may ignore these signs, but visitors continue to drive around, looking for a space where their cars won't be towed away.

Most visitors expect to pay for parking when visiting popular beaches, and are especially willing to do so when parking lots are safe and convenient. The Town of Fort Myers Beach does not need to purchase expensive land to provide parking; it already owns considerable rights-of-way. On-street parking is well-dispersed to serve beach visitors and local businesses, and it can be designed so that parked cars provide a barrier between moving traffic and sidewalks, making the walk from a parked car to the beach all the more pleasant.

Private landowners can also redevelop prime land with valuable storefronts up to the sidewalks and then provide additional parking in the less-valuable rear of their lots. If these rear lots are interconnected, much less land is wasted on parking aisles, and the total number of spaces is lowered since visitors need not move their car to each of their destinations. This redevelopment approach maximizes the value of private property while adding parking spaces, thus helping solve parking problems that harm Fort Myers Beach's reputation among visitors and which block healthy redevelopment efforts.

The recommended parking strategy for Fort Myers Beach, from the visitors' point-of-view, can best be described as "Park-Once." Those who must drive to Fort Myers Beach should park in a safe central location and enjoy their visit on foot or use the trolleys. This "Park-Once" pattern

can be seen in mature towns and in healthy historic communities all around the globe, especially in favorite vacations spots.

It is impractical, and undesirable, for the downtown area to meet 1960s-style “park-at-each-destination” expectations. If each destination is required to provide enough parking spaces for its maximum number of customers, the resulting parking lots would be so large that walking between destinations would be unpleasant, if not impossible. Fort Myers Beach needs a stronger *sense of place* to continue thriving, and this cannot be achieved with an urban pattern that has a few buildings set far apart in giant parking lots. Despite modern codes and a national obsession with automobiles, vacationers continue flock to places that can be enjoyed without driving from place to place.

To achieve the “Park-Once” strategy, parking providers and users must think in terms of “shared parking” rather than exclusive-use parking. These shared parking lots must be conveniently located, easily identifiable, safe, and connected to popular destinations in such a way that the walk is part of the attraction, not a hurdle to be overcome.

This last point means that the streets must be improved in order to make attractive the parking spaces that are farther from one’s destination. Today, some of the outlying spaces are underutilized except on the busiest days. Improvements that promote walking include wider, shaded sidewalks and interesting storefronts along the way. Efficient parking, redevelopment, and public street improvements go hand in hand. The street improvements are needed to unlock the potential of the entire surface parking supply.

Shared parking is completely compatible with efforts to improve the pedestrian environment. It also reduces unneeded traffic congestion and keeps landowners from wasting too much land on parking lots. However, it makes little sense to provide parking for more cars than the road network can handle; the extra spaces would remain unused, while motorists who previously avoided driving to Fort Myers Beach now add to the lines of cars that form during peak periods.

Shared parking is a concept that can take many different physical forms:

- ▶ On-street parking, usually metered, located on public land;
- ▶ Businesses offering parking spaces to the public for a fee (but not restricted to customers of a particular business); these spaces can be in surface lots or in a parking garage;
- ▶ Parking lots operated jointly by merchants for their customers (and perhaps to others for a fee);
- ▶ Public or privately owned parking lots on the mainland, connected by convenient transit, offered at fees below the cost of a parking space; and
- ▶ Various hybrids of the above, such as parking spaces partly on public and partly on private land, with the resulting parking spaces apportioned fairly (this approach may be suitable for Fourth Avenue between Crescent Street and the Sky Bridge).

The Town of Fort Myers Beach should endorse the use of shared parking as its primary parking strategy throughout the downtown area. Like all other parking lots, there are costs to develop shared parking lots, but the land-use impacts will be very positive and substantial revenue can be generated. The town’s new Land Development Code should be closely tied to this effort, providing incentives and regulations that will ensure a coordinated effort. In a few cases,

businesses have privatized public land for their own parking, but the town's efforts in expanding the total parking supply will offset the loss of private use of these spaces.

The recommended parking strategy has four major points:

1. On-street parallel parking spaces should be constructed by the Town of Fort Myers Beach as shown on Figure 6. This would create 226 on-street parking spaces (74 spaces on Old San Carlos alone). However, some existing "privatized" spaces — those that are on public land but which have been marked by private landowners for private use — would be lost at the time of constructing the parallel parking and widened sidewalks. In some cases it may be advantageous to continue use of some parking spaces that are on a combination of public and private land; for instance, along Fourth Street, about ten extra parking spaces could be provided if an agreement can be reached with the adjoining landowner; the agreement would specify how many of the spaces can be reserved for purely private purposes.
2. Large shared parking lots on private property should be created behind buildings at two locations on Old San Carlos; and a similar lot could be created by the reconfiguration of Helmerich Plaza. These parking lots are also shown on Figure 6. A total of 373 parking spaces are shown. Ideally these lots will be created and operated by the private sector through joint efforts of the property owners. However, the town has an important role through its new Land Development Code. The code should require, at the time a landowner chooses to develop or redevelop, that new buildings be placed to the sidewalk and parking spaces moved to the rear. Access to these parking areas can also be controlled through the new code, with flexibility provided for interim solutions. In rare cases, the Downtown Redevelopment Agency may need to use its eminent domain powers. The town should assist visitors in quickly finding parking lots through clear signage along public streets. As new parking spaces are introduced into the downtown area, parts of Lynn Hall park can be returned to true park uses, rather than remaining a parking lot.
3. Parking garages are not essential to serve the moderate infill plan, but a privately financed parking garage could be built at one of the three feasible locations if properly designed. Any parking garage must be placed on the interior of a block, or be built with a "liner building" that faces all streets and visible public spaces. A liner building can provide highly visible retail, office, or live/work spaces in as little as 25 to 30 feet of space between the sidewalk and a parking garage. Garage heights must be limited so that garages do not replace the Gulf as the first impression of those crossing the bridge. Access must be designed so that left turns in or out of the parking garage cannot cross Estero Boulevard. The details of these restrictions can be formulated while the town is reviewing a zoning request for a serious parking garage proposal, but the basic configuration is illustrated on Figure 7 for all three sites.
4. The town should develop a parking management strategy to operate its own parking spaces and those of cooperating private businesses. Parking rates can be varied by hours of the day, or by the season, for various public purposes (as discussed in Appendix A to the new Comprehensive Plan's transportation element). On-street spaces in front of businesses should be reserved for shorter-term parking so that these important spaces are not monopolized by all-

day visitors to the beach. As demand warrants, an electric tram can circulate throughout the area (and down to Bowditch Point and perhaps to the Main Street parking lot on San Carlos Island). Several new technologies for parking management are now available so that parkers need not have correct change or know exactly how long they will stay. Parking revenue can be used for many tourist-related purposes, but maximum revenue should not be the primary goal of the town's parking management strategy.

Old San Carlos Boulevard

This important street appears to have been long “orphaned” since the new bridge routed traffic away, and its future remains in the balance.

On one hand, Old San Carlos is poised for a renaissance. Some property owners have already undertaken modest upgrades and are interested in doing more. There is a sense that the vitality of Times Square could extend into this area. The newly incorporated town government is focused on the details of renewal throughout the core area. The street also has a unique beach-to-bay vista which gives it character, and opportunities for high visibility.

On the other hand, a commitment must be demonstrated to its improvement soon, or this street will further deteriorate. The altered lot layout and other impacts of the bridge have made redevelopment more difficult. Over the years, the fabric of buildings has unraveled, piece by piece, replaced by parking lots and lost space. The street's worn, ill-defined appearance gives all the wrong signals to visitors and would-be investors, and it pulls down the character of the town. Last, the uncertainty revolving around parking strategy further complicates the situation.

But this street *can* be dramatically transformed into a focus of pride for the community, a symbol of progress achieved under today's new local leadership.

Old San Carlos Boulevard should be improved, physically and spatially, as an urgent priority of the Town.

This improvement should include — *as soon as possible* — a reconditioning of the streetscape itself, including wider sidewalks, formalized on-street parking, and design for traffic calming. This improvement must also include the development of a pattern of mixed-use, multi-story buildings positioned along the sidewalks, to frame the space of the street; this is critical to give Old San Carlos life as an integral part of the town core.

These improvements will result in:

- ▶ an enhanced tax base;
- ▶ a more complete menu of shops, restaurants, places of business and other amenities for residents and visitors alike; and
- ▶ a more complete “park-once” environment, encouraging visitors and local residents to walk rather than drive.

The redevelopment of Old San Carlos should leave its basic alignment intact. In particular, the view corridor between Lynn Hall Park and Matanzas Pass should remain open; part of the power of this street's existing form is in its spatial connection from beach to Bay. Therefore the street should be visually framed but not “terminated” at either end.

The Town and CRA should promote the infill of new buildings and improvements to existing buildings, leveraging private investments with incentives and infrastructure projects.

Crescent Street

Vacant lots on Crescent should be targeted for infill with human-scaled, durable buildings. This street will see its land uses evolve slowly over time, and a flexible approach should be adopted with regard to regulating the mixture of commercial and residential uses. At the ground level, Crescent could become the “affordable commerce” street for small-scale, locally owned businesses and startup enterprises, as rising property values make rents more expensive on prominent frontages along Estero Boulevard, Times Square, and (soon) Old San Carlos.

While reconditioning here is somewhat less urgent than improvements on Estero and Old San Carlos Boulevards, Crescent should eventually be physically upgraded to better connect the sidewalks, improve the appearance, and expand the tree canopy.

For motorists Crescent will have an important role as a circulation route, particularly if a parking garage is ever built in the Helmerich Plaza area. Visitors looking for parking would be routed to the right at the foot of the bridge, along Old San Carlos, and along Crescent to the garage. This arrangement would minimize traffic conflicts on Estero Boulevard and at the same time “activate” Old San Carlos. Nevertheless a liberal dose of traffic calming is appropriate here so that these visitors will make their way slowly and safely, on the neighborhood’s terms.

For pedestrians and cyclists, Crescent should become part of an even more natural route around the core area, from beach to Bay and back again. With narrow lanes and other traffic calming features in place, however, note that separate bike lanes would be unnecessary and inadvisable.

Crescent is a more laid-back, eclectic street than Old San Carlos and should retain a more intact residential feel. The mixed uses and predominance of housing and lodging should be maintained even as nonresidential uses expand into this area. Canal-side property owners should be required to orient buildings and the uses within them to the primary public space of the street, but some may choose to focus *also* on the canal side with outdoor dining or patio spaces. In that event, care should be exercised to respect the residential neighbors on the opposite side of the canal by limiting nighttime noise, excessive lighting, or other disturbances.

Intersecting Streets

The interconnectivity of the street network is especially important for distributing traffic and promoting walking. Vacating or abandoning rights-of-way should be avoided. As visitors arrive and turn right at the foot of the bridge, then circulate in search of parking, it is important that they remain able to make turns into parking behind the buildings. While the design of these intersecting streets is important, they are less critical than the high-priority streets such as Old San Carlos. Therefore improvements to First, Second, and Third Streets and to Fifth Avenue should primarily focus on maximizing the connections for pedestrians and optimizing the parking supply.

Helmerich Plaza / Seafarer's Village

The Helmerich Plaza was developed under the auto-oriented, strip shopping center paradigm that was dominant at the time it was conceived, and as a result it is spatially disconnected from its surroundings. Today, the image of this bland center appears out of sync and out of scale with its vibrant context. Not surprisingly, the center shows signs that it is underperforming business-wise, including vacancies and rapid tenant turnover — despite the fact that a few hundred feet away, merchants and restaurateurs are thriving. (Note that the bustling Times Square scene is said to be notoriously deficient in parking, while this parking-oriented strip center, with large lots right in front of the buildings, appears less successful. Perhaps this gives credence to the notion that towns can better withstand a shortage of parking than they can a shortchanged sense of place.) The strip center as it stands today has such a weighty visual impact that it likely has had a chilling effect on the redevelopment prospects of properties all around it.

This area presents a significant opportunity for redevelopment that improves the neighborhood in several ways:

First, the visual blight can be replaced with a positive, engaging, skyline — an extension of the town's eclectic architecture.

Second, a pedestrian-hostile scene can be replaced with one that welcomes walking.

Third, an underperforming real estate asset and part of the tax base can be boosted to its real potential, improving prospects for other surrounding properties as well.

Last, its redevelopment can lead to new efficiency in a managed parking supply, which could help the perceived parking shortage in the area, provided the parking created here is shared under some form of cost-sharing and income-sharing arrangement with neighbors and/or the town.

The key here is to adapt this important commercial property to the present and future realities of the core area: a pedestrian-oriented, street-oriented “park-once” district which places priority on the sense of place.

This means, among other things, that when the property is redeveloped, buildings should be aligned along the block edge, facing outward, and that parking (whether at-grade or in a garage) should be located in the center of the block.

Redevelopment should be coordinated with the Seafarer's Village mall to insure safe and direct pedestrian connections and efficient use of the land. The relationship of Seafarer's Village to Estero Boulevard can be strengthened via street improvements and traffic adjustments at and around the Times Square intersection (see discussion below).

Seafarer's Village was elevated above the sidewalk level prior to the introduction of modern dry-floodproofing methods in Fort Myers Beach. Now that dry-floodproofing has been demonstrated to work, future commercial buildings should be expected to employ it rather than elevated catwalks in order to establish proper relationships of storefronts to the pedestrian public spaces.

Estero Boulevard Pedestrian Crossing

Estero Boulevard makes a sharp turn at Times Square, connecting the Sky Bridge (maintained by the state) with the continuous portion of Estero Boulevard (maintained by Lee County). This spot has one of the highest concentrations of pedestrian crossings in Lee County. A traffic signal was reinstalled for pedestrian usage after the Times Square improvements were completed in 1997. This signal is operated by a push-button on both ends of a crosswalk that runs between Seafarer's Village and the West Coast Surf Shop.

Traffic signals are designed to interfere with traffic flow to serve a specific purpose (usually cross-traffic, but pedestrians in this case). Actual experience with this traffic signal shows that many pedestrians push the button and then cross this narrow section of Estero Boulevard as soon as they see a break in the slow-moving traffic. The traffic signal then changes to red, often long after the pedestrians have gone.

To reduce the traffic signal's constant disruptions to traffic flow, the Town Council has been considering a pedestrian overpass at this location. However, since most people are going to be even more reluctant to climb stairs or wait for an elevator than they are to wait for a traffic signal, a pedestrian overpass would reduce pedestrian crossings substantially only if some type of intimidating barriers are built alongside or in the median of Estero Boulevard. But such barriers run directly against the principle of keeping people out of their cars by enhancing the pedestrian experience, and against the principle of keeping Estero Boulevard as a spine through the island rather than a figurative or literal barrier. Also, physical barriers may present extreme safety hazards if they trap pedestrians in the travel lanes, or if pedestrians try to climb them.

The recommended plan presented here would convert the existing traffic signal from its green–yellow–red cycle to a flashing caution light. A sheriff's deputy who is well-trained in traffic control would be stationed at this location during the entire peak season and during special events to keep traffic flowing smoothly and to break the flow occasionally for groups of pedestrians. The deputy could be stationed upon a pedestal for greater visibility. Wider sidewalks would be constructed on the Seafarer's/Helmerich side of Estero Boulevard. The existing 4-foot-wide traffic separator near the crosswalk would be widened, lengthened, and landscaped to create true pedestrian refuge islands, where pedestrians could safely wait until they see a break in traffic from the opposite direction. See the new configuration in Figure 8.

Figure 8



The extra space required by these refuge islands would come from slightly narrower traffic lanes plus the extra space gained by moving the existing sidewalk from its current location at the edge of the travel lanes to the actual edge of the right-of-way (which is closer to Seafarer's Village and Helmerich Plaza than the current sidewalk). Sidewalks that are even wider, or wider refuge islands, could be built if the owners of Seafarer's Village and Helmerich Plaza would grant sidewalk easements along the edge of their properties.

Further enhancements to this concept would include a different surface in the travel lanes that would provide an audible and tactile signal to drivers. This different surface could be provided by asphalt paver blocks; by conventional asphalt with a textured surface of coarse exposed aggregate; or with an imprinted surface. Another approach would be to raise the travel lanes several inches alongside the refuge islands. Any of these approaches would provide additional signals to drivers that they are passing through a pedestrian zone.

The net result of these improvements would be to create a more comfortable pedestrian environment at this key location, while avoiding the unnecessary interruptions to traffic that are now being caused by the traffic signal.

Bayfront Square

At the Matanzas Pass end of Old San Carlos Boulevard, existing public land should be combined with property obtained from private landowners to create the Bayfront Square (see foreground of Figure 3 and Figure 6). This represents an ambitious undertaking, but the payoff to both public and private interests would be substantial over a long period of time. Public access to the waterfront, and special public spaces which capture the "postcard" character over time are in short supply and will forever grow in importance. The Bayfront Square will be a unique public place; the noisy Times Square scene and the county park are inappropriate for certain kinds of gatherings that will be natural here. The private property which must be acquired to create Bayfront Square will only become more expensive over time, so this effort should begin as soon as practical.

Once the park is created, the resulting reshaped private properties will boast a unique address in the region. Bayfront real estate values (a product of waterfront views and the romance of the spot) will shift inland and increase, as long as open views across the Square to Matanzas Pass are maintained. New buildings, such as an urban inn, should be designed to front the Square in a traditional building type, with windows and balconies facing the waterfront.

The Bayfront Square would be located between the Matanzas Inn and Snug Harbor restaurants. This land is now used as a private parking lot, even though much of it is publicly owned. When the old swing bridge was replaced by the Sky Bridge in 1978, the original alignment of San Carlos Boulevard became Old San Carlos. The short stretch of Old San Carlos from First Street to Matanzas Pass was no longer used for traffic, and, over time, has become the entrance to the Snug Harbor restaurant parking lot. The core of that parking lot is private land, a 13,720-square-foot parcel between First Street and Matanzas Pass. Public portions include:

- ▶ a 9,865-square-foot parcel under the Sky Bridge;
- ▶ a 6,400-square-foot parcel from the original right-of-way of Old San Carlos Boulevard (which is 63 feet wide at this point); and
- ▶ a 890-square-foot parcel in the First Street right-of-way (north of the travel lanes).

The Sky Bridge right-of-way is about 81 feet wide at this point; it extends about 18 feet on each side of the bridge structure high overhead. The right-of-way was originally acquired by the Florida DOT, which has leased this land to Lee County since 1988. Lee County has turned over the parking lots and meters under the bridge to the Town of Fort Myers Beach. Lee County



Figure 9, Bayfront Square (existing private land is highlighted)

obtained the original lease at no cost for parking spaces, bus pickup/drop-off areas, and “related transportation facility uses.” The lease requires approval from Florida DOT for additional uses (it also needs to be renewed and changed to reflect the Town of Fort Myers Beach as lessee).

Including the Florida DOT land under the bridge, 55% of the Bayfront Square is already in public ownership. The remaining 45% would have to be acquired (the private parcel is highlighted in Figure 9). The

town will be creating considerable additional parking in the immediate area that will be available to customers of Snug Harbor, making public acquisition more feasible once the new parking is in place. The cost of acquisition and the owners’ willingness to sell have not been determined. Given the nature of the proposed public use of this plaza, grants for tourism-related activities may be available for its acquisition and development.

The Designed Relationship of Buildings, Streets, and Pedestrians

As redevelopment occurs, new buildings and additions to existing buildings should be positioned and architecturally equipped to frame the streets they face and form agreeable public spaces. Likewise, the rights-of-way themselves should have certain elements with proper dimensions. This designed *ensemble of public and private components* is key to establishing streets that are comfortable for pedestrians and economically vital. The following basic urban design conventions characterize virtually every memorable town, and are of paramount importance in a town which hopes to reinforce its resort economy in the new millennium:

Build-to Line:

The best streets take on a defined spatial form, sometimes compared to a public “room”; the buildings form the walls, the street the floor. When the proportion of building height to street width is sufficient to create a sensation of spatial enclosure, a stronger sense of place will result. When the proportion of building height to street width is too low, the environment is ill-defined; this creates an uncomfortable, “lost space” response. This basic idea has been understood since the founding of the earliest villages, and is part of our human way of seeing.

Fronts & Backs:

Similarly, the way the architecture forms the joint between the *private realm* inside the building and the *public realm* shaped by the building is critical to success. Almost every building has a front and a back — a public side and a private side. Great streets have street-oriented architec-

ture, in which the front of the building addresses the street with doors, windows, storefronts, balconies and so forth facing the sidewalk. These features give the building a human presence on the street and generate a feeling that the pedestrian is both welcome and likely to be observed. In one stroke, this approach creates an interesting scene and a safer one. High blank walls, on the other hand, can badly damage the pedestrian environment. (This is particularly important to keep in mind as one implements dry floodproofing.)

Encroaching Elements:

On traditional main streets, certain building elements reach out to embrace part of the public space, providing shade and protection from sudden storms, and reducing glare on storefronts. These include awnings, marquees, colonnades, arcades, and cantilevered balconies, among other devices. These practical elements also create a fine-tuned, middle realm that feels both private and public, and they give a human touch to the geometry of commercial buildings — the same way front porches do for houses. The arcades and colonnades can be permitted to have enclosed space above the sidewalk, which can generate extra income and helps further frame the street.

Sidewalks:

Sidewalks should be generous in these core area locations. Sidewalk widths of 12 to 15 feet should be considered minimal. Like the proportions of street widths to building heights, these dimensions stem from the physiology of the human body; studies show that pedestrians prefer places where the sidewalks are wide enough to allow two couples to pass. A width of 14 feet or more is sufficient to allow limited outdoor dining, which is very effective at creating the animated street presence that people enjoy.

Trees:

Street trees help establish the defined sense of space when buildings are not there, provide shade and visual relief, and help clean the air. Street trees in this context should be of similar species, should be aligned, and should have fairly consistent spacing. Note however that the full-blown use of street trees is not critical in the main street setting of Old San Carlos, where architectural elements should do much of the same job, and where the trees may interfere with clear views to signage and merchandise.

Parking:

On-street parking will be as important to creating pedestrian comfort, controlling speeders, and promoting redevelopment as it is to providing needed parking spaces! The on-street parking provides a buffer between the person walking and the moving cars in the travel lanes, and this effectively removes the fear that a motorist will lose control and hit the pedestrian. It also makes the motorist more alert, for a “traffic calming” effect.

Travel Lanes:

As part of the overall traffic calming approach, the travel lanes should be “right-sized,” at about ten feet per lane. This width is proven safe but is narrow enough to promote alertness and discourage speeding. Wider travel lanes invite higher speeds and promote carelessness. Old San Carlos Boulevard, Crescent Street, and the intersecting streets are *not* highways. They should be designed for slow-moving traffic.

Illustrations of Design Concepts:

The following sketches illustrate some of the principal design concepts discussed above. Figures 10 and 11 show cross-sections of Old San Carlos Boulevard for portions with rights-of-way at 63 feet and 66 feet respectively.

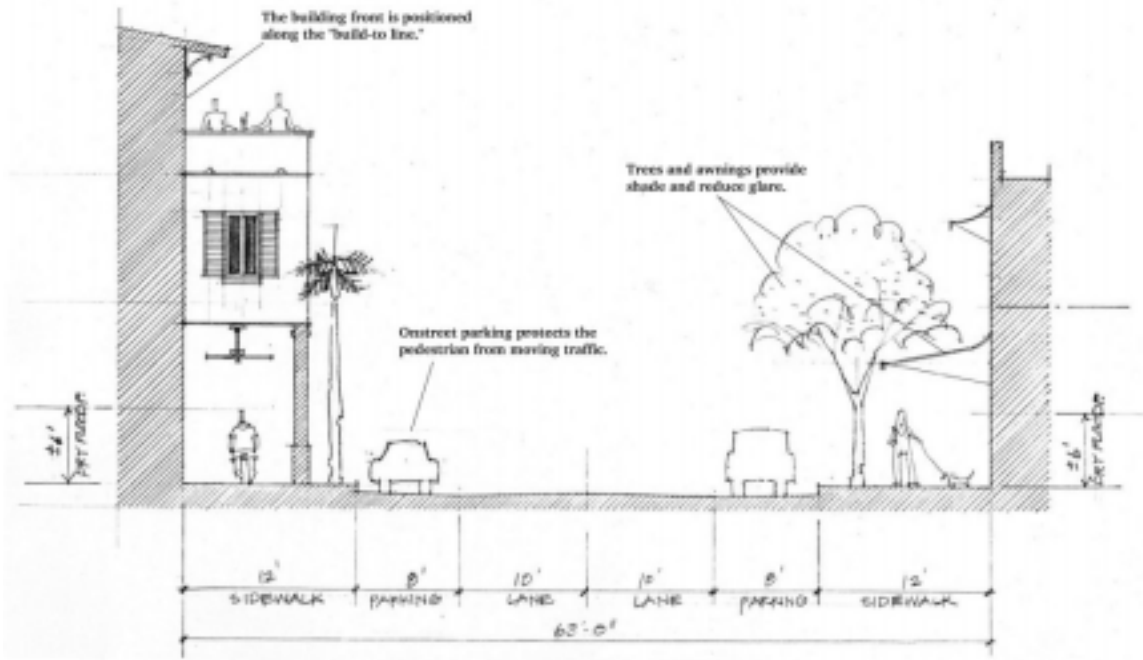


Figure 10, 63' right-of-way

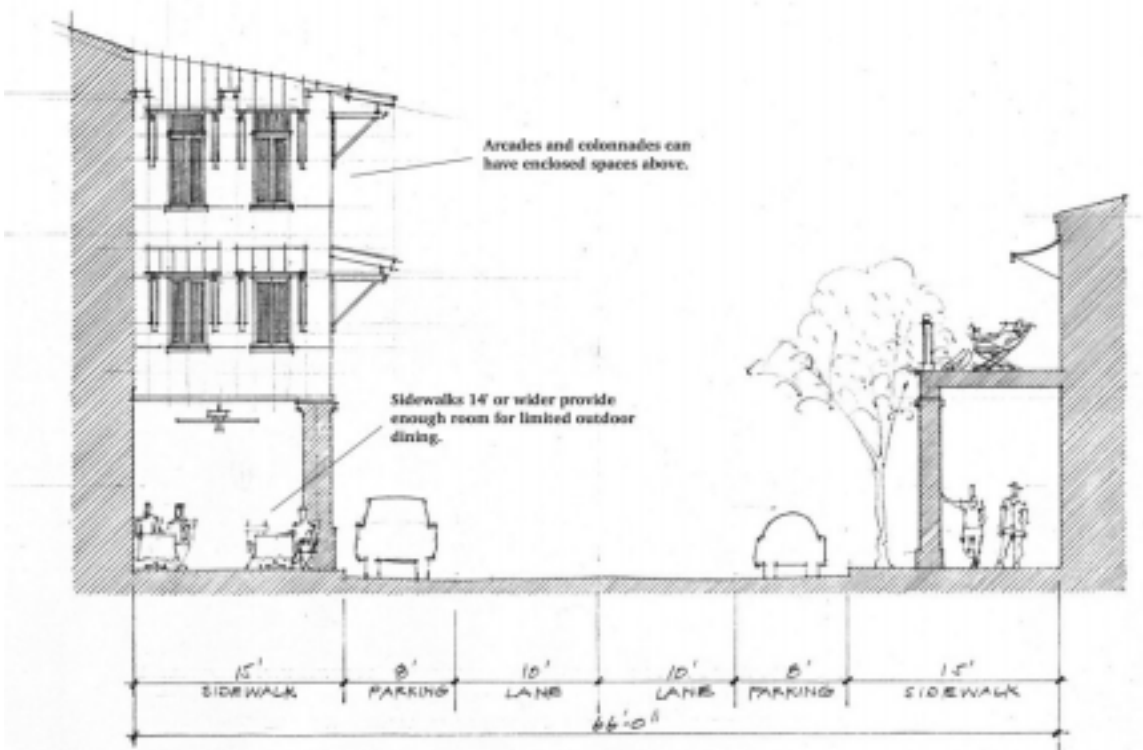


Figure 11, 66' right-of-way

Figure 12 shows a cross-section of Crescent Street with a right-of-way width of 42 feet. Figure 13 illustrates the “liner building” concept for separating parking garages from pedestrian-oriented streets. Figures 14 through 17 suggest the variety of building types that are compatible with these urban design principles.

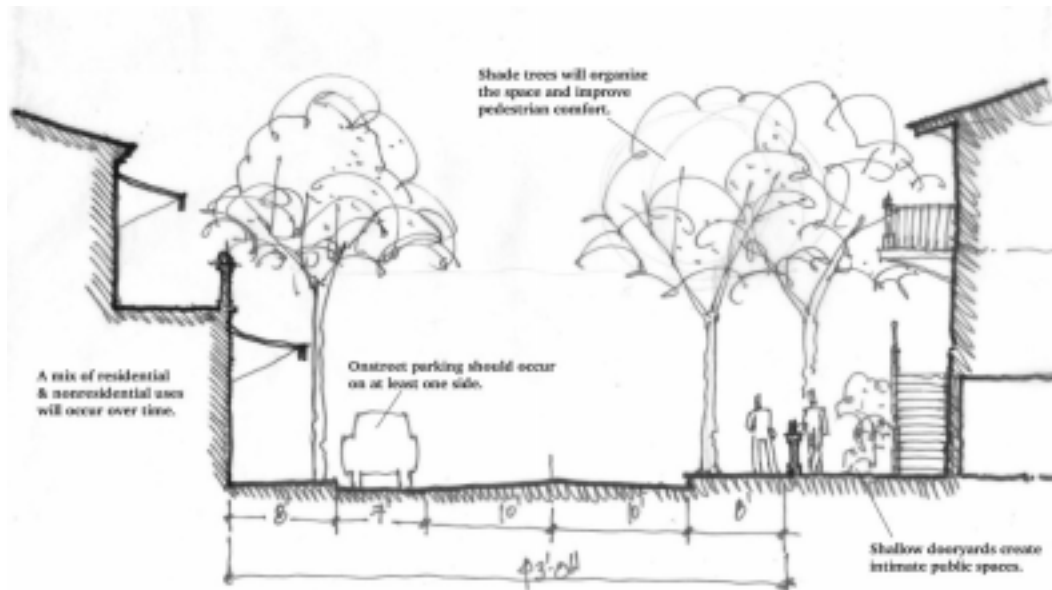


Figure 12, 43' right-of-way

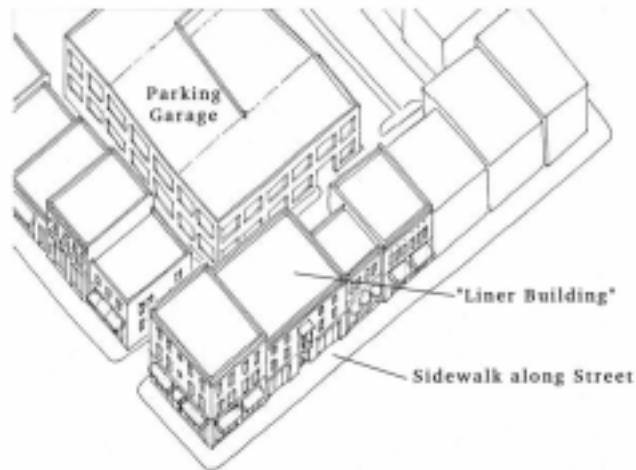


Figure 13, liner buildings surrounding parking garage



Figure 14



Figure 15

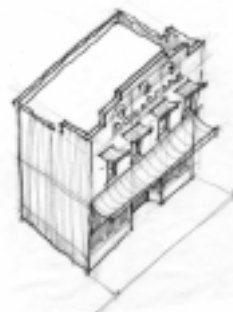


Figure 16



Figure 17

Strategies for Implementation

Phasing of Improvements

Construction in the public right-of-way always causes temporary disruption to the daily activities of the people who live and work in the area. The same will be true for the residents, merchants, and visitors in this section of Fort Myers Beach. The challenge is to reduce the impact as much as possible by selecting the proper sequencing of the various phases. This will allow areas to be improved, such as substitute off-street parking prior to the demolition of the existing head-in parking that now blocks the wider sidewalks shown in the plan. All construction work should be performed during the off-season to minimize the impacts on everyone. Six phases are proposed:

Phase I – Estero Boulevard from Crescent to Fifth Street

Design and construct changes to the median on Estero Boulevard from Crescent to Fifth Street to convert it to pedestrian refuges. The new textured crosswalk will signal motorists to use extra caution in this area. Sidewalks on the Bay side of Estero Boulevard will be widened and completed according to the original plan. Design work on this phase could begin as soon as state and county officials concur with the concept, and construction could begin either just before or just after the next tourist season.

Phase II – Shared Parking Lots

The town should provide regulatory incentives through the new Land Development Code for property owners to construct the shared parking shown on Figure 6. These lots should be improved prior to the construction of the streetscape on Old San Carlos Boulevard.

Phase III – Old San Carlos Boulevard

Once some of the new shared parking is in place, the streetscape for Old San Carlos can be designed and constructed. The improvements include new twelve-foot wide patterned and textured concrete sidewalks on both sides of the street. Shade trees will protect the pedestrian along the walk. The street section will contain parallel parking on each side of the street and two drive aisles. New street lighting and street furniture will provide amenities to the shoppers. An engineering firm will have to be retained to prepare complete construction documents and guide the town through bidding and construction management. Engineering should begin as soon as the town identifies suitable funding for construction.

Phase IV – Right-of-Way Acquisition

The town will need to acquire additional right-of-way for Crescent Street between Fourth Street and Estero Boulevard and acquire the private portion of the proposed Bayfront Square. Without these acquisitions, neither project can proceed. After land is acquired, the improvements can be designed and constructed, including the trolley stop and water taxi landing.

Phase V – Crescent Street and connecting streets

After the shared parking and major commercial street are completed, the design and construction of the streetscapes for Crescent, First, Second, and Third Streets and Fifth Avenue should be carried out. The design of this area is similar to the Old San Carlos Street except that smaller rights-of-way and lower pedestrian usage dictated a less ambitious layout.

Phase VI – Lynn Hall Park

Design and construction of Lynn Hall Park will include conversion of a portion of the existing parking lot into beach volleyball courts or other active organized activities. The sidewalks and coconut palm landscaping of Estero Boulevard should continue along the length of the park, along with improved pedestrian connections between the park and Times Square.

Potential Funding Sources

This report identifies seven sources of funding that may be applicable to Fort Myers Beach for this project:

Special Taxing District

A special taxing district for the Old San Carlos / Crescent Street Area could provide a revenue source both for the funding of bond sales and long-term maintenance. The basis of the tax could be related to the building frontage on Old San Carlos or to the lot area of each property. In this way, the property owners who will benefit most from these improvements can pay an appropriate share of its cost.

Downtown Redevelopment Authority

Residual funds from the Estero Island Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) could be an important source of funding, since this project is a direct extension of the CRA's planning efforts during the early 1990s. The town's new Downtown Redevelopment Agency (DRA) could use tax increment financing (TIF) as a pledge to repay bond debt if bonds are sold to advance construction. Or the town could loan funds to the DRA to be repaid from future TIF revenues.

Gas Taxes and Impact fees

The town collects road impact fees and receives a share of gasoline taxes that can be used only on the transportation system. The town could earmark some of those funds for this project.

Governmental Grants

Governmental grants from county, state, or federal levels could provide supplemental funds for certain components of the project. The Florida Communities Trust provides money for cities and counties to implement their Comprehensive Plans; a grant from this source was obtained by the town to purchase the Mound House on Connecticut Street. Other financial support could be available from the local and state sources that promote tourism; the town has already been successful in obtaining one such grant for improvements near Times Square.

Parking Revenues

Parking revenue or taxes on parking could also provide part of the revenue stream to reimburse construction loans. On-street parking spaces are proposed for 226 cars; parking meters on those spaces will generate revenue. If the town were to purchase land and develop one or more shared parking lots, additional revenue could be generated. The moderate infill plan proposes a total of 373 off-street shared parking spaces. If meters were installed in all of these parking stalls and each meter generated \$1,000 per year, then \$599,000 could be used to reimburse construction loans. However, all improvement costs would then be borne by the town.

Contributions

Another source of revenue could be contributions from individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundations. Several cities have used this approach to funding special attractions. New Orleans funded their new aquarium in part from contributions. Bricks that form the entry courtyard might have the name of a donor on them. Other cities give acknowledgments to contributors of benches or trees. This approach will never completely cover the construction cost but it can help, while donors gain a sense of involvement in the street improvements and take pride in showing friends and visitors their brick or area of contribution.

Tolls

A future source of revenue could be bridge tolls if the town were to take over maintenance of San Carlos Boulevard. This would be a long-term project with important fiscal impacts on the town.

Estimated Cost for Old San Carlos Improvements

To establish the construction estimate for Old San Carlos Boulevard, information from several different sources was collected:

- ▶ Experience from recent streetscape projects in South Florida
- ▶ Industry standards
- ▶ Preliminary cost estimate of the project site

Recent South Florida Streetscapes

During the past two years, several projects have been estimated, bid and/or constructed that give an indicator for estimating the costs of the construction work on Old San Carlos Boulevard. The following table compares the per-linear-foot construction costs of several recent South Florida projects.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>YEAR BUILT</u>	<u>COST PER LINEAL FOOT</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
South Miami, FL 500 linear feet \$1,000,000	1998	\$2,000	Includes A & E fees; contractor's general conditions; premium time, 12-foot-wide concrete sidewalks; parallel parking and 3 lanes of asphalt street paving; underground utilities; irrigation; street; trees, furniture, lights and drainage.
Winter Park, FL 625 linear feet \$1,434,300	1998	\$2,295	Includes A & E fees; contractor's general conditions; premium time, 12-foot-wide brick sidewalks; parallel parking and three lanes of brick streets; underground utilities; irrigation; street; trees, lights, furniture and drainage.
Fort Myers Beach, FL Est. Times Square to Lani Kai 1,000 linear feet \$847,681 (south side of Estero Blvd. only)	1997	\$847, or \$1,694 for both sides of Estero Blvd.	Does not include A & E fees, street furniture, irrigation, signs or 1/2 of the general conditions. Does include 10-foot-wide concrete sidewalks with fancy pavers, decorative light poles, landscaping (coconut palms)

Industry guidelines

In 1998, firms that specialize in urban streetscapes suggested using an average estimate of \$4 million per mile or \$757 per linear foot. All per-linear-foot costs assume building both sides of the street including the sidewalks. The high end of the cost range would be about \$6 million per mile or \$1,136 per linear foot. These figures do not include architectural/engineering fees. It is always difficult to estimate construction costs, especially without complete contract documents for material and labor take-off. Also, there are many site-specific factors that influence this cost. Such factors include:

- ▶ Building locations
- ▶ Utility locations
- ▶ Drainage improvements
- ▶ Soil conditions
- ▶ Topography
- ▶ Degree of accommodations with existing building access and traffic
- ▶ Availability of materials
- ▶ Quality of materials
- ▶ Construction environment at time of bidding

Preliminary cost estimate

To aid in developing a financing plan for the constructing the Old San Carlos Boulevard streetscape, a preliminary cost estimate was developed. Both the quantities and the assumed cost can be questioned and modified, and the spreadsheet modified accordingly, as information becomes more defined.

The considerations and assumptions for this estimate are:

- ▶ The length of Old San Carlos Boulevard is 1,270 linear feet.
- ▶ This street section contains two drive lanes and two parallel parking lanes.
- ▶ Sidewalks are twelve feet wide of color impregnated concrete with patterned banding and textured surfaces.
- ▶ Streetlights and furniture will be high quality and salt resistant.
- ▶ Street surface will be partial new base and complete asphalt topping with striping.
- ▶ Trees will be large native shade trees in planting wells with tree grates.
- ▶ Undergrounding of cable television and telephone utilities will be one-quarter of the electrical quote because of shared trenching and reduction in complexity and size of the materials.
- ▶ No sanitary sewer work will be required.

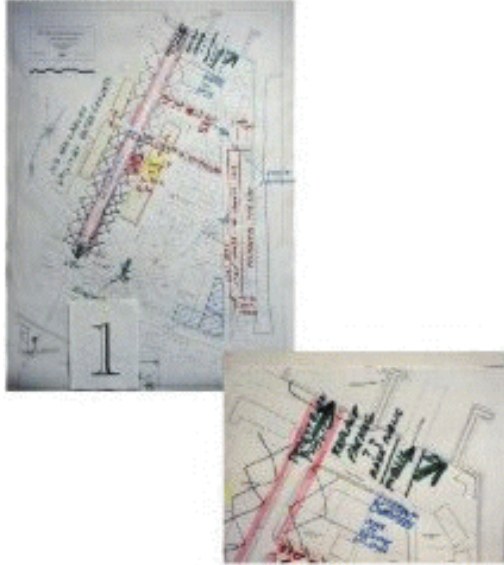
Using these conditions and assumptions the estimate for the streetscape for Old San Carlos Boulevard will be approximately \$1,483,000, or \$1,168 per linear foot of construction. The breakdown of this estimate into its components is found in Appendix C.

Conclusion

The preliminary cost estimate for the Old San Carlos Boulevard streetscape improvements is \$1,483,000. This figure could increase if major drainage improvements are required or could change due to other unknown factors. Most of these factors will become apparent during the engineering design phase of this project; construction costs should be re-estimated at that stage.

Appendix A — Workshop Drawings

Group 1



Group 2



Group 3



Group 4



This is a compilation of images from the November 16, 1998, workshop

Appendix B — Participants in 11/7/98 Workshop

Linda Beasley	Ron Himmelmann	John Richard
Johanna Campbell	Dan Hughes	Mike Roeder
Anita Cereceda	Keenan Johnson	Millee Roleb
George Crawford	Gretchen Johnson	Mohsen Salehi
Michel Dailey	Don Luppino	Axel Schulz
Julie Dattwyler	John Mulholland	Marsha Segal-George
Betty Davis Simpson	Ray Murphy	Roxie Smith
Skip Franklin	Dave Parilla	Doug Speirn-Smith
Bob Gaydos	Don Powell	Sandi Suter
Lena Heyman	Garr Reynolds	Bill Whittaker

Appendix C — Breakdown of Preliminary Cost Estimate

STREETS & SIDEWALKS					
Item	Item Description	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Item Cost
Mobilization & Traffic Control					
1	General conditions	1	LS	\$228,000	\$228,000
2	Traffic control - Vehicular	1	LS	\$20,000	\$20,000
3	Traffic control - Pedestrian	1	LS	\$15,000	\$15,000
4	A & E Fees	1	LS	\$73,300	\$73,300
Demo. & Construction of Roadway					
1	Remove curbing	3000	LF	\$7.00	\$21,000
2	Remove asphalt & base for c & g	1130	SY	\$10.00	\$11,300
3	Curb and gutter	3000	LF	\$12.00	\$36,000
4	Asphalt street & base	5640	SY	\$20.00	\$112,800
5	Concrete crosswalks (12)	240	SY	\$35.00	\$8,400
Demo. & Construction of Sidewalk					
1	Remove curb cuts, sidewalk, etc.	1400	SY	\$9.00	\$12,600
2	4" concrete sidewalk textured	3400	SY	\$35.00	\$119,000
3	6" concrete driveway	220	SY	\$27.00	\$5,940
Subtotal					\$663,340
UTILITIES					
Storm Sewer					
1	Storm inlet (estimate)	10	EA	\$3,500	\$35,000
2	Pipe (estimate)	800	LF	\$40	\$32,000
Electrical Distribution					
1	FP & L quote on undergrounding	1	LS	\$373,900	\$373,900
2	Cable conversion	1	LS	\$75,000	\$75,000
3	Telephone conversion	1	LS	\$75,000	\$75,000
4	Streetlight foundation	46	EA	\$350	\$16,100
5	Standard light pole/fixture	37	EA	\$900	\$33,300
6	4 globe light pole/fixture	9	EA	\$3,200	\$28,800
7	Junction box conduit system	1	LS	\$25,000	\$25,000
Subtotal					\$694,100
FURNISHINGS & LANDSCAPING					
Signage & striping					
					\$0
1	Remove exist./install new signs	1	LS	\$4,000	\$4,000
2	Furnish & install pole signs	12	EA	\$900	\$10,800
3	Striping	1	LS	5,000	\$5,000
Furnishings					
1	Benches	7	EA	\$1,000	\$7,000
2	Trash receptacles	16	EA	\$900	\$14,400
3	Bike racks	6	EA	\$600	\$3,600
4	Tree Grates	39	EA	\$900	\$35,100
5	Kiosks	3	EA	\$2,400	\$7,200
Landscaping					
1	Large shade trees- 200 gal.	39	EA	\$1,000	\$39,000
Subtotal					\$126,100
				TOTAL	\$1,483,540

Appendix D — Parking Computations

Parking count data

One objective of this study is to develop a downtown parking policy based on local conditions. Most individuals at the workshop stated that the shortage of parking was a problem. An early technical task was to gather accurate information on existing conditions.

Two types of information are required to understand whether the parking for this area is adequate. The first is the actual number of parking spaces, and the second is the size of the buildings and their uses. Buildings used for entertainment have a larger parking demand than those used for retail. Retail buildings have a more intensive parking requirement than residential.

Existing parking counts and building sizes were taken from 1996 aerial photographs. Although some changes have occurred since 1996, these tabulations give an accurate appraisal of parking in the downtown area.

Three charts have been developed with data on:

- ▶ Existing conditions (as illustrated in Figure 5)
- ▶ Moderate infill scenario with surface parking (as illustrated in Figure 6)
- ▶ More intense infill scenario with parking garages (as illustrated in Figure 7)

Each chart corresponds to one of the figures which show street configuration, building locations, off-street and on-street parking, and parking garages. The complete charts are available on request to Spikowski Planning Associates. The conclusions of these charts and the assumptions on which they are based are described below.

Existing conditions

Existing levels of development would require parking spaces for 1,605 cars under the most lenient published standard, the Urban Land Institute's 1983 publication, *Shared Parking*. Parking is presently provided for 769 cars. This means the existing parking supply for this area is only 48% of the theoretical requirement. There are however certain characteristics of Fort Myers Beach that alter the need for parking, including:

- ▶ "Park-once" area. People park once and visit the beach, eat in a restaurant, and purchase a gift before getting back into their car.
- ▶ Many people visiting these same stores, restaurants, and beaches have parked their car at their motel or cottage and walked. They do not need a separate parking space ready for them at each destination.
- ▶ Because of the difficulty in moving about Fort Myers Beach in a car, many people car-pool instead of driving separately.
- ▶ The mild weather makes walking pleasant during the peak tourist season.

It would not be proper to conclude that the parking ratio should remain at 48%; the current parking situation is clearly inadequate. It would be equally improper to conclude that 100% of the published standard is needed, as this would require the elimination of at least one-half of the existing shops, restaurants, motels, cottages, and houses from the area. The proper percentage for the parking ratio is perhaps 55% to 60% of the published standard.

Moderate infill with surface parking

This plan shows the development of the shared parking concept and new on-street parking as a result of the streetscape projects (see Figure 6). On-site parking is provided for 832 cars; on-street parking is provided for 347 cars. The parking ratio at this level of development is 57%. Building areas have increased by 236,996 square feet, or about double the present building area. This development can occur if all of the proposed parking improvements are constructed.

More intense infill with parking garage(s)

This final plan shows a 154,556-square-foot increase in building size over the moderate plan, with an 81% parking ratio achieved if all three parking garages were constructed. If a lower parking ratio is desired or less building construction is anticipated, smaller or fewer parking garages could be provided. Effects of this more intense buildout plan on the road network have not been analyzed.