
***ENVISIONING TOMORROW'S
FORT MYERS BEACH***

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT 2 - 1

MOBILITY 2 - 1

TIMES SQUARE 2 - 1

AVENUE OF PALMS 2 - 2

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS 2 - 2

A SECOND "MAIN STREET" 2 - 4

FORT MYERS BEACH, A LIVING PARK 2 - 4

ENVISIONING TOMORROW'S FORT MYERS BEACH

This chapter takes a peek into the future. The italicized text below provides an optimistic look at the future of Fort Myers Beach, the future that the town hopes to create by adding its efforts to all others that have shaped this community:

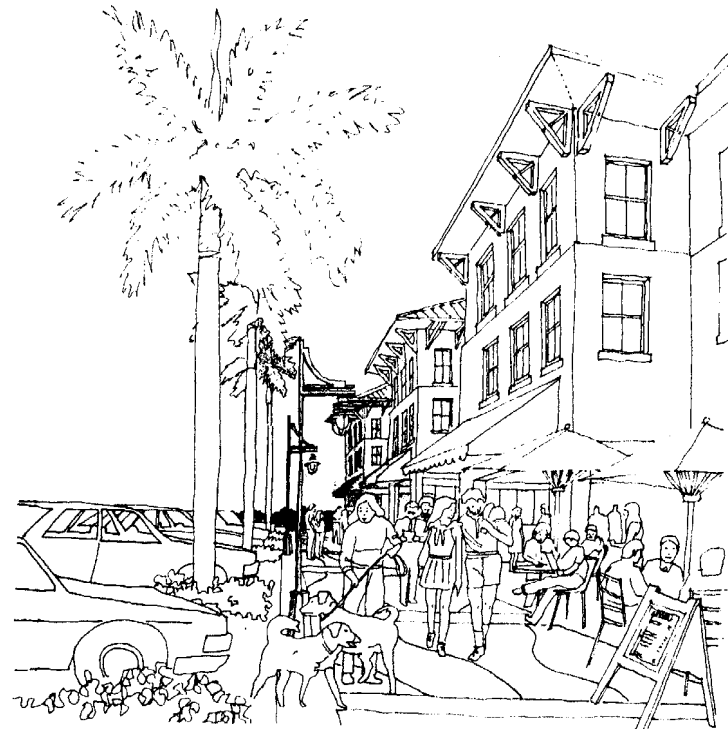
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: *“The natural features at Fort Myers Beach remain its primary yet most sensitive assets. The beaches are clean and regularly replenished with sand, and sand dunes have been recreated. The remaining mangroves and wetlands are healthy, with disturbed areas now fully restored. Little Estero Island and the Matanzas Pass Preserve contribute to the ecological integrity of the area, and are enjoyed by many residents on daily walks.”*

“Beach-going residents and visitors select their preference of quiet beaches at Bowditch Point or lively beaches near Lynn Hall Memorial Park. The degradation of water quality in Estero Bay has finally been reversed. Well-maintained channels allow the movement of a wide range of boats, operating safely in relation to one another and respecting the fragile nature of the surrounding environment and marine life.”

MOBILITY: *“A carefully planned and interconnected system of pedestrian and bicycle paths, shuttles from off-site parking areas, trolley routes, and water taxis, enables visitors, residents, and school children to reach all the recreational destinations on Estero Island and move easily from one to another.”*

TIMES SQUARE: *“The lively pedestrian scene at Times Square is fueled by those who have been swimming, strolling on the beach, or enjoying the pier, and is especially popular just before sunset. Just steps away, they enjoy the outdoor cafes, shops, and special entertainment events.”*

“The short blocks to the north along Old San Carlos Boulevard now have wide sidewalks, street trees, and mid-day shade provided by overhangs from the new shops and restaurants. At the north end, folks reach Marina Plaza, another “people-gathering place” that is the hub of activity for a fleet of excursion boats, dinner cruises, charter fishing and party boats, and water shuttles.”



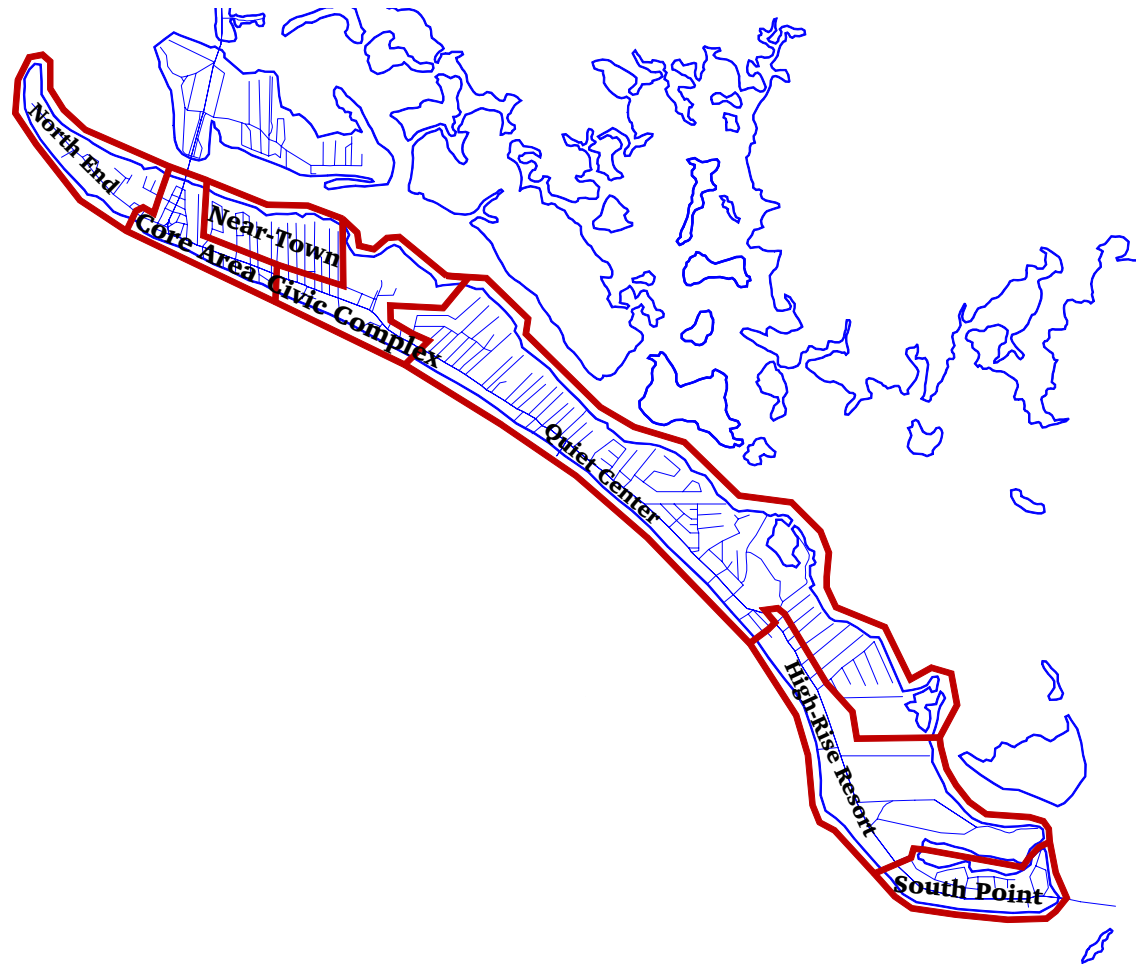
AVENUE OF PALMS: “Estero Boulevard has become the premier public space on the Island, shaped as a memorable “Avenue of Palms” and lined with new and refurbished structures which frame the street and contribute to the pedestrian scale and ambience of the community.

“The sidewalk and streetscape system has been continued beyond its 1997 terminus at the Lani Kai to the civic center and areas beyond. Motorists on Estero Boulevard during the peak tourist season move slowly but enjoy the beauty and interest of the public space, having learned to relax during the unavoidable season of the “beach crawl.” Bicyclists and pedestrians share the public space but can also find quieter alternate routes off of the boulevard to get to their shopping or recreational destinations. Traffic calming measures have been introduced in areas that used to invite speeding whenever congestion lessened. Pedestrians now cross safely, and many people use the expanded fleet of trolleys to move around the island.”

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS:

“School Street provides the primary entry into the heart of the island, the special place where the school, recreation center, ballfields, swimming pool, Playworks playground, Preserve, Historic Cottage, and Library are all centered. Existing and new infill development is in the spirit and scale of the Beach’s classic cottages, which can be used as homes or live-work spaces such as studios and galleries, or for small-scale retail uses consistent with the historic theme of the street.

“Detached houses or cottages are located near existing areas of single-family housing, with rowhouses, townhouses, or apartments toward the center. Mixed uses are found along the Bay side of Estero Boulevard. Neighborhood design is not dominated by garages and features porches on the front, walkable narrow streets with shade trees that double as view corridors to the Preserve and beach, and quiet internal street connections to the north and south.



Planning communities for Fort Myers Beach

“The north end of the island retains its residential and resort identity. Its motel rooms, older cottages and high-rises all benefit from their proximity to Bowditch Point and the downtown “core area,” yet are comfortably removed from seasonal traffic congestion and outdoor entertainment activities that many residents find intrusive.

“The older near-town neighborhoods across from San Carlos Island have shed the blight that had begun to appear in the 1980s. Their pleasantly varied housing types are just steps away from lively Estero Boulevard.

Apartments for tourists and local employees mix congenially with new homes, many of which contain quiet home-offices. A new urban code has ensured that renovations and new homes mix gracefully with the old in these now highly desirable neighborhoods. Neighborhoods have truly achieved a higher ambition, becoming places where the streets are shady and public spaces are friendly, unified in design by trees, with well-used front porches and little traffic.



“Renovations and infill development have borrowed from the design tradition of cottages, using porches and decks, with fronts of houses facing the street. Pedestrian and bicycle paths have been created which link to an interconnected network.



“The town’s historic past is memorialized through the designation of a large historic district. Visitors enliven the streets by strolling through revitalized neighborhoods with self-guided tour booklets pointing out buildings of historic and architectural merit.

“The quiet center of Estero Island remains peacefully between the bustling portions of Estero Boulevard and the high-rises further down the beach. Some condominiums and smaller resorts coexist with the predominately

single-family neighborhoods. This portion of the island remains low rise and residential except for a few existing towers and the big mid-island marina. Estero Boulevard now has continuous sidewalks on both sides, and the side streets have become even more walkable with the maturing of shade trees and links to the town’s “hidden path” system of neighborhood walkways.

“The high-rise/resort district is distinctly different in character. Panoramic views of Estero Bay and the Gulf of Mexico are widely available along with popular recreational amenities such as golf, tennis, and private swimming pools. The abundant wildlife on Little Estero Island are a continuing focal point for local residents and visitors alike. The town works with other agencies to provide public access and stewardship for this priceless resource.”

A SECOND “MAIN STREET”: *“The Villa Santini area has been fully redeveloped as a neighborhood-scale “Main Street” for this end of Estero Island. It also serves the needs of visitors to the vast beaches at Lovers Key. The town and the private sector have worked in partnership to bring about this*



revitalization. Tree-shaded sidewalks and bike paths link the surrounding neighborhoods to the new town center, making pedestrian trips comfortable and inviting.

“Estero Island’s south end faces the active boating along Big Carlos Pass and the popular state park at Lovers Key. Despite pressures of commercialization to serve park visitors, this area retains its strictly residential character and its mostly low-rise housing type. Sidewalks and landscaped entry features announce the arrival and departure into the town.”

FORT MYERS BEACH, A LIVING PARK: *“The Town of Fort Myers Beach, through the dedicated efforts of the community, has become a living park, existing for the comfort, safety, and quality of life of its residents and the peaceful enjoyment of its visitors:*

- *“An ecologically sensitive park where visitors have learned to enjoy the unique natural amenities and to take responsibility for protecting the natural environment;*
- *“An archaeologically significant park where people come to learn about the native cultures of this area;*
- *“An historic and livable park where residents are proud of the community’s heritage and place;*
- *“A family friendly park where parents and children are equally nurtured and where recreation is educational;*
- *“A semitropical island beach park where all ages enjoy the clean and safe waterfront;*
- *“A tranquil resort park where visitors relax in the warm island ambiance and atmosphere;*
- *“A vital community park where retired and working citizens share in a positive spirit of volunteerism to assure that future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy its magic and tranquillity; and*
- *“An economically sustainable park which protects and promotes its commercial interests and where a partnership with the past provides the focus for the future.”*