City of Fort Myers, Community Redevelopment Agency
May 30-31, 2013 Program Managers Meeting
CITIES, LIKE CURRENTS IN A RIVER, ARE EVER CHANGING

The River District is like the Caloosahatchee...
Tides, like the economy, ebb and flow...
Currents constantly mold the shoreline ... sometimes building, sometimes tearing down ...

The River District is a work in progress!
Map of Fort Harvie

Military outpost in the Seminole Wars (1850)
Union outpost in the Civil War (1865)
Parade on First Street
The river was the area’s main transportation route.
City Dock & Fort Myers Waterfront
Community Redevelopment Agency

Push to Develop Commercial District
Rebuilt Collin Terminal
Past...
Present...
Future...
Boundary for Waterfronts Program
Public Access to the Waterfront

City of Fort Myers is unique in that it owns:

- All the property directly along the river banks (between bridges), and
- The River bottom
View looking west
Public Access to the Waterfront

Both the City and the CRA have invested millions of dollars to construct:

- Centennial Park
- A Riverwalk
- Public Marina
- Public Fishing Piers
Centennial Park
Mangroves and Fishing Pier
The Yacht Basin has 3 commercial piers, a 295-slip public access marina and a mooring field.
Boat Ramp
Viable Traditional Economy

Recreational Waterfront—Primary Use
- People using ramp to launch boat
- Recreational boaters using amenities at Yacht Basin (docks, fuel, convenience store)
- Boat traffic passing through proposed area

Commercial Waterfront – Secondary Use
- Blue crab industry
- Sightseeing/dinner cruises
- Charter Boats
- Rumors Hair Salon
Approximately 5 acres of the riverfront was undeveloped land or used for surface parking.
2003 Downtown Plan (Duany Plan)
Preserve historic heritage
Utility Replacement & Streetscape Improvement Project

- Provided desperately-needed underground utility updates (80% of the work involved)
- Total budget: $54 million
- FMRA funded $12.5 million for the streetscape portion
- Streetscape improvements included brick streets, brick-trimmed sidewalks, historic lamp posts, upgraded landscaping, a signage program and street furniture
View down First St.
Come enjoy downtown...
Create an Event Destination

- Art Walk
- Bike Night
- Edison Festival of Light
  - Holiday Stroll
  - Car Cruise-in
- ArtFest Fort Myers
- Holiday House
- Music Walk
- Downtown Countdown

Community Redevelopment Agency
Create a Cultural Art Campus

Art Galleries
Create a Cultural Arts Campus

Florida Repertory Company
Create a Cultural Arts Campus

Art of the Olympians:
Celebrity guests include Prince Albert of Monaco and Olympic Champion Peggy Fleming
Increase the Downtown Population

1200+ new units constructed

• Beau Rivage
• St. Tropez & Riviera
• High Point Place
• Oasis (Towers 1 and 2)
• Alta Mar
Redevelop Edison Ford Square

Attract a grocer to support downtown residents and employees.
Create an Eastern Anchor

River District Library
Corner of First Street and Royal Palm
Create an Eastern Anchor

View of new library looking south from First Street.
Public Access to the Waterfront

The Question is…

How can we draw more people down to enjoy the waterfront?

Should we:
  Increase access for small boats?
  Add opportunities for shopping and dining?
  Put in an interactive water feature?
Community Identifies Needs

Since Acquest Realty Advisors was selected through the RFQ, public participation has included:

- Meetings with steering committee, stakeholders, elected officials and community (January 20-21, 2009)
- Series of public charettes with open design studio (March 24-26, 2009)
- Top 10 Priorities identified by Community & Stakeholders
Option C has several characteristics that are similar to the other options, yet provides the boldest move as far as the shoreline is concerned. A channel is cut into the site, returning a small piece of the Caloosahatchee shoreline back to its original location, which is roughly at Bay Street. This allows for views to the water from the retail and hotel development that is shown along the channel. Centennial Park is also reconfigured to allow for access along the waterfront. This effort is intended to begin to provide opportunities for locals and visitors alike who want to interact with the water, while bringing an explicit connection to the riverfront as close as possible to the First Street pedestrian corridor.

Rediscovering the River...
2009 Riverfront Development Plan

Fort Myers Riverfront Redevelopment Master Plan
Viable Traditional Economy

Any new development must support both recreational and commercial water-dependent uses.

Ideas currently being considered include:
- Retail/mixed-use commercial center
- Expansion of Harborside Event Center
- Addition of 250 convention quality hotel rooms
- Maintaining public access including a 60-ft wide riverwalk
Major Plan Elements

- Water Detention Basin (Public)
- Waterfront restaurants (Private)
- Convention Hotel (Private)
- Harborside expansion, Phase I (Public)
- Smith Block mixed-use (Private)
- Smith Block Parking Garage (Pub./Pri.)
- Harborside expansion Phase II (Public)
- Centennial Park expansion (Public)
Public Improvements
Environmental Resource Protection

Biggest concerns
# 1 - Water quality of the Caloosahatchee River and its effects on:

- Marine and plant life within the river
- Health of our mangroves lining the Park
- Effects on our commercial industry—sightseeing cruises, crabbers, etc.

# 2 – Maintaining water levels in the aquifer
SCHEMATIC DESIGN SITE PLAN

Art of the Olympians

Future Restaurant site
24,300 SF

Event/Dining Deck

North Detention Basin

Future development site
24,300 SF

Future Restaurant site
3,200 SF

South Detention Basin

Future Hotel

Sculpture Plaza

Harborside Convention Center
River Basin Project
River Basin Project
River Basin Project
River Basin Project
Past meets present
The Trolley is here... (finally)
Past... Present... Future...
“Success,” as Bobby Unser said, “is where preparation and opportunity meet,” and the downtowns that have succeeded are those that have taken steps to prepare themselves for redevelopment opportunities...

~Excerpt from the 2003 Downtown Plan