



Post-Charrette RESPONSE REPORT



A Brief History

In September 2008, the City of Riviera Beach Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), in conjunction with the external planning consulting firm of Land Developers Consortium, (LDC), LLC formally initiated the process of implementing the hopes and visions of both the 2001 Inlet Harbor Redevelopment Citizens Master Plan and the 2007 Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council Citizens Planning Charrette for the principal residential neighborhood within the boundaries of the CRA; the Inlet Neighborhood.



City of Riviera Beach CRA boundaries

Pilot Project Objectives

- to revitalize streetscapes within the principal residential area of the CRA;
- to work with residents, business & property owners, church leaders & parishioners to develop appropriate strategies for implementing landscape and hardscape improvements that benefit those living and working in the neighborhood; and
- to develop and refine a “plug-and-play” toolkit of improvement strategies that can be replicated in other areas of this CRA neighborhood and other areas.



Project Area: Australian Ave to Old Dixie Hwy./Alt A1A & W. 6th St to W. 10th St.

The Design Charrette

A random sample of residents, business leaders and church leaders were interviewed in the weeks leading up to the charrette to achieve two objectives:

1. to obtain necessary feedback and gauge interest from local participants via a customized questionnaire; and
2. to begin to raise awareness of the CRA’s initiative to fund improvements and to stimulate discussion in the community.

The neighborhood design charrette was held on Saturday, May 16th, 2009 at the West Riviera Magnet Elementary School. The West Riviera Beacon Center hosted the event which allowed it to be held at no cost to the CRA. The event was well attended by a diverse cross-section of interested persons and groups concerned about directing any proposed improvement program within the neighborhood (see inset for attendance statistics).

<u>Charrette Attendance Stats</u>	
Residents, business & property owners, church leaders & parishioners	..34
CRA Representatives4
City Department Reps.1
Elected City Officials (The Mayor)1
External Government Agency Reps.1
Out of Area Concerned Parties9
Design Professionals7
Total Attendees57

After a welcoming address by Mayor Masters, participants were provided an overview of the intent of CRA to revitalize its neighborhoods and the approval of the CRA Board to begin implementation of the project.

An open forum followed allowing participants to voice both local and broader community concerns. CRA Director Floyd Johnson was present to re-iterate the purpose of the pilot program ensuring the focus remained on issues in the community that are modifiable and within of the purview of the project; many participants expressed concern over the proposed widening of Martin Luther King

Jr. Blvd., a proposed future flyover bridge to the port, and water retention issues; these issues are external initiatives or pre-existing conditions that cannot be addressed directly through the pilot project, but, can be considered when implementing neighborhood improvement strategies. Once the scope was re-established, a presentation identified potential improvements that the CRA may fund and the ability of the design consultants to assist in developing the ideas.

The ideas that spring from the charrette process are useful tools for the Community Redevelopment Board to prioritize community issues and develop strategies through approved plans that will be implemented with allocated resources.

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Hard at work: the charrette process



After the presentation, participants were asked to provide feedback on general concerns and perceptions, both good and bad, about the neighborhood; this feedback was recorded. Most issues raised were consistent with the findings of the preliminary interviews conducted throughout the neighborhood prior to the charrette and include but are not limited to:

- job creation
- residential & business improvement funding
- property maintenance
- increased/improved landscaping
- pedestrian amenities

Participants were then asked to form groups at those tables set with aerial maps that best complimented their interest in the neighborhood, for example, the northwest area from Australian Avenue to Ave J and From MLK to W. 10th St formed a group. Design professionals were on hand to initiate the discussion, facilitate sketching, formalize resident issues on the maps.

Work Group Brainstorming & Design = "Toolkit" Basics

The issues identified by participants during the charrette will be combined with the findings of preliminary interviews to create categorized and workable data that will become the building blocks that form the "plug-and-play" toolkit; this toolkit will be formalized in an extensive report to be prepared by the planning consultants this summer.

Based on charrette discussion notes, sketching and work group presentations (see Appendix A), five (5) specific categories that effectively integrate participant feedback and existing neighborhood conditions observed in the field by CRA Staff and their external planning consultants have been defined below and potential solutions offered (see table on page 3).

- Economic Development
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Streetscape & Aesthetic Improvements
- Right-of-Way Improvements
- Private Property Improvements

Potential streetscape & aesthetic improvement opportunities exist to address sparse landscaping and create improved pedestrian connectivity.



Next Steps, Follow up & Deliverables

The solutions that have been proposed are not final by any means. The CRA will assess the feasibility of implementing each solution as well as combinations of solutions to efficiently and effectively address as many of the community's concerns utilizing available resources.

The next step in this effort is to work with the CRA Staff to finalize a working "toolkit" of viable strategies in response to the issues presented by all concerned parties and to begin to identify potential areas where improvements shall be directed.

Once potential pilot revitalization blocks (or areas) are identified, conceptual plans will be developed. These plans will be brought back to the residents for review and discussion and modified if necessary. The final conceptual plans for each potential pilot revitalization block or area shall be brought forward to the CRA Board for final approval and selection of the pilot area.

Upon selection of the initial pilot revitalization area, construction plans, drawings and specifications as well as incentive programs (if applicable) shall be developed for the purpose of implementing the necessary physical improvements in the selected area.

Upon completion and implementation of the working plans and incentive programs, respectively, the CRA shall periodically review and monitor the improvements established in the revitalization area.

It is important to note that the CRA intends to assess the success of the pilot revitalization block or area and the strategies used to resolve community issues and concerns and when deemed appropriate, replicate the plan in other areas of the residential community.

Special Thanks to:

Hon. Mayor Thomas Masters, Mayor of Riviera Beach
Mr. Floyd T. Johnson, Director, Community Redevelopment Agency
Mr. Scott Evans, Planning Director, Community Redevelopment Agency
Ms. Tocarra Thomas, Community Redevelopment Agency
Ms. Darlene Hatcher, Community Redevelopment Agency
Principal Gale Harper, West Riviera Beach Magnet Elementary School
Diedre Williams, Director West Riviera Beacon Center
Denise Bowen-Joseph, West Riviera Beacon Center

The Residents of the community and surrounding area for their valued time and participation in this event...it's your neighborhood, we need your voice.

POST-CHARRETTE RESPONSE REPORT

Table: Categorized Specific Issues & Potential Solutions

1. Economic Development:	
Resident Feedback	Potential Solutions
Create jobs for residents	Jobs program for such resident identified issues as security, litter pick-up and/or code enforcement
Youth incentives to participate in Revitalization efforts & post implementation	Volunteer and/or job program to engage local youth to participate in programs or work in the community
Increase police/security presence	Jobs program
2. Infrastructure Improvements:	
Resident Feedback	Potential Solutions
Housing improvements	Incentivize public/private partnership for home purchase refurbishment program
Increase parks/greenspace opportunities	Utilize existing vacant lots to develop greenspace or new parks for use by local residents
Drainage issues (spot flooding)	Analyze drainage system and troubleshoot problematic system components
Underground overhead power lines	Investigate where feasible and where most impact can be achieved
Enhance business district	Incentivize building & site modifications to attract and support local and other patrons to these local resources
3. Streetscape & Aesthetic Improvements:	
Resident Feedback	Potential Solutions
Sidewalk network improvements	Add new or repair existing sidewalks where necessary to complete the pedestrian network for unfettered access to other areas of the community and local services & institutions
Information Kiosks/Stations	Provide CRA information stations in key areas of the community for dissemination of information & upcoming events
Lighting (pedestrian scale)	Identify areas of the neighborhood that have deficient lighting and implement in association with other area specific modifications
Place marking/identification signage	Create a themed signage program that identifies the neighborhood (i.e. place markers, house address numbers/mailboxes, monument signage at neighborhood boundaries)
Street furniture	Provision of themed/decorative trash receptacles throughout the neighborhood to be fully maintained
4. Right-of-Way Improvements	
Resident Feedback	Potential Solutions
Speed of traffic	Introduce specific traffic calming measures most desired by residents (i.e. raised intersection tables, "humps not bumps")
Restrictive traffic flow	Modify existing restrictive medians and/or improve roadway connections where currently blocked
Additional on-street parking	Analyze existing Rights-of-Ways geometrics to seek opportunities to increase on-street parking without affecting private properties
Street trees and landscaping	Develop a landscape design theme for the neighborhood analyze existing planting conditions and design safe and Easily maintainable landscaping along selected streets
Improved traffic control signage (specific areas; day care; schools; churches)	Add additional warning signage where appropriate (i.e. in close proximity to community services such as day care or school) and where a need is established
5. Private Property Improvements	
Resident Feedback	Potential Solutions
Residential/commercial façade upgrades	Develop a funding program in which selected architectural elements would be improved with a joint public/private funding source Develop a design guidebook outlining the scope of fundable improvements
Maintain vacant and abandoned properties	Increase code enforcement efforts for litter, landscape violations and structural maintenance issues
Themed address signage	Develop a program that creates a neighborhood theme for addressing throughout the neighborhood
Reintroduce fruit trees on private properties	Develop a program to assist in the purchase of fruit trees to be planted on private property

OPEN FORUM – PARTICIPANTS ASKED TO DESCRIBE LOCAL AND BROADER CONCERNS:

Community Issues – A Wish List

- job creation for residents of Riviera Beach
- grant or assistance programs to assist with façade improvements
- ongoing maintenance by CRA, City and property owners
- noise and traffic – code enforcement
- youth incentive programs
- utilize/improve vacant lots, ie. infill housing, greenspace
- better sidewalks and landscaping within existing ROW)
- no increase in property taxes

What do you like about the neighborhood?

- Neighborhood has remained affordable – no increase in property taxes
- MLK should remain a pedestrian-friendly roadway
- commercial area – preserve and enhance

What issues/concerns do you have with the neighborhood?

- vacant, un-kept lots
- cleanliness – lack of litter control
- speed and flow of traffic
- more traffic control signage, eg. yield or children at play
- not enough street parking
- poor lighting
- overhead wires/technology underground
- incomplete sidewalk network
- speed bumps
- proposed changes to MLK are problematic
- worn facades, eg. paint
- noise/nuisance – commercial trucks idling, parking on MLK waiting late evening & early morning
- curbs/gutters/sidewalks at same elevation
- more green spaces needed

WORK GROUPS – BRAINSTORMING AND DESIGN – AREA SPECIFIC PRESENTATIONS:

South-East Area (Ave “J” to Old Dixie Hwy/ALT A1A & W. 6th St to MLK)

- develop a unique landscaping theme (eg. shade trees on # streets, palm trees on avenues)
- fruit trees on private properties
- neighborhood identification via street signage, custom house address signage, or mailboxes
- decorative trash cans
- Ave “I” landscaping and sidewalk improvements
- ROW modifications (ie. Ave “I” median removal)
- safe pedestrian crossing across MLK
- on-street parking
- use of vacant sites for “pocket” parking lots
- big truck storage/parking – no truck idling or parking on MLK
- home-owner incentive/grant plan (expansion of existing homes, multi-generational housing, first-time buyer assistance programs)
- grants for home improvements – paint and façade upgrades
- limit effect of proposed improvements on property taxes
- pedestrian level street lighting
- drainage concerns on roadways
- address vacant lots – clean-up and maintain landscaping
- youth job creation programs
- traffic calming – speed humps and tables not bumps (speed tables at 7th at Ave “H” and “I”; 6th at Ave “I”)
- underground power lines
- create landscape entry at intersections into neighborhood and throughout

South-West Area (Ave “J” to Australian Ave & W. 6th to MLK)

- correct/improve drainage (6th at West Riviera Elementary School)
- overgrown landscaping in vacant lots
- improved street lighting
- continuous sidewalks with landscaping (7th St)
- improve curbs in disrepair

- utilize vacant lots for greenspace/community parks
- mobilize code enforcement on abandoned houses
- increase police presence
- enhance/modify/landscape north-south oriented greenways (2 locations exist)

North-West Area (Australian Ave to Ave "J" & MLK to W. 10th St)

- underground power lines
- better traffic control signage (ie. children at play, school zone)
- improve street lighting
- neighborhood identification via street signage, custom house address signage, or mailboxes
- limit effect of proposed improvements on property taxes
- increase street trees (xeriscape)
- traffic calming (near school and day care)
- sidewalk flooding and maintenance issues
- enhance intersections - 10th at Ave K - traffic control and signage
- enhance/modify/landscape north-south oriented greenways
- high quality workmanship/high quality materials and solutions
- flooding gutters
- create community parks in vacant lots (10th at Ave K)

North-East Area (Ave "J" to Old Dixie Hwy/ALT A1A & W. 6th St to MLK)

- increase police presence around commercial district
- better pedestrian scale lighting along 9th
- underground power lines
- clean up/maintain landscaping in vacant lots
- neighborhood identification via street signage, custom house address signage, or mailboxes
- public bulletin/notice kiosks (ie. CRA news) in multiple locations
- more landscaping (on Old Dixie/ Hwy/ALT A1A)
- volunteer workforce program (assist the elderly to maintain/improve property)

Overall Neighborhood Generally

- improve existing sidewalks - 7th and 9th
- drainage improvements
- landscaping - shade trees
- pedestrian scale lighting
- better vehicular connectivity (open up Ave I)
- eliminate median (Ave I)
- develop a city park on vacant lots
- enhance commercial district - parking and landscaping
- incentivize purchase of vacant/derelict properties