

# 3 A BASIC CHOICE

## IF OR WHEN?

### THE QUESTION:

Should the Waste Water Treatment Plant be relocated?

*During the charrette, participants were asked to answer this but fundamental question.*

### THE CONSENSUS:

Yes.

*Planning for the area should be aimed at the eventual relocation of the Plant.*

### THE CONDITION:

**Not at the community's expense.**

*Relocation costs should not result in increases taxes or utility fees for residents, property or business owners.*

To that extent, this report analyzes and exposes the different alternatives and implications of this community decision, and recommends a process for its implementation.



# 4 THE GOAL

To **DEVELOP** a business strategy and Master Plan for the relocation of the Fort Pierce Waste Water Treatment Plant and surrounding areas that:

- a) announces arrival and sets a dignified stage for the island,
- b) preserves and enhances surrounding natural resources and compliments surrounding parks and beaches,
- c) allows public access to the waterfront,
- d) promotes connectivity,
- e) defines and enhances the existing greens and open spaces as a greenway system,
- f) implements a “blueway”,
- g) complements and supports the City’s existing retail and businesses,
- h) preserves and improves the residents’ quality of life, and above all,
- i) accommodates uses that will further job creation and economic prosperity for the community as a whole,
- j) ensures predictability.



# 5 THE CITIZENS' MASTER PLAN

THE CITIZEN'S MASTER PLAN IS A COMMUNITY-BASED EFFORT TO CREATE A VISION FOR THE NORTH HUTCHINSON ISLAND WESTERN PENINSULA AREA THAT PRESERVES, ENHANCES AND COMPLEMENTS THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS AND THE CITY, WHILE BALANCING THE AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THE COST OF RELOCATING THE WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT IS PAID OVERTIME BY DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPERTY, AND DOES NOT BECOME A COST TO BE ABSORBED BY THE COMMUNITY.

The Master Plan aims at **ENSURING PREDICTABILITY** not only for investors, but for the citizens and community as a whole. To do this, it sets a series of Goals that seek to:

- 1) **ANNOUNCE ARRIVAL:** Marking the entrance to Hutchinson Island and the Beaches with development and physical improvements worthy of the City and its residents;
- 2) **COMPLIMENT THE EFFORTS AND INVESTMENT IN EXISTING PARKS AND BEACHES:** by establishing a system of interconnected public open spaces and public beaches. This is a system of greens, parks, plazas and boardwalks (or Rambla) that connect to, and build upon the existing public park system in place in the area and honors and enhances existing civic and public facilities;
- 3) **PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE WATERFRONT:** Making the waterfront publicly accessible as is the culture of the City;
- 4) **ESTABLISH AN INTERCONNECTED NETWORK OF STREETS AND BLOCKS:** A system that can accommodate different increments of development and provide flexibility to house all necessary and complimentary uses in a variety of locations and in a manner that can be done over time and incrementally;
- 5) **DEFINE AN INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM OF GREENS, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES:** Connecting existing parks, greens,

and waterfront paths with new proposed ones to create one of the most extensive and unique public amenities in the region.

6) **IMPLEMENT A "BLUE WAY":** Establishing water connections between the City's special districts ( the island, downtown, and the port) that is both a means of transportation and a tool to enhance economic competitiveness.

7) **ESTABLISH COMPLIMENTARY COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL USES:** Located in a manner that supports those already in place in the City, and in an appropriate scale and direct relation to the location of new and existing development.

These Goals of the Citizens' Master Plan and the physical elements necessary to achieve these goals need to be adopted by the City's leadership, classified, valued and quantified. Achieving these Goals will result in the ultimate reorganization of land use entitlements for the area. This reorganization will provide a framework to modify or increase development rights to enable the relocation of the Waste Water Treatment Plant and fulfill specific community needs and desires, while preserving and enhancing the residents' quality of life.



This classification, value and quantification need to be determined and considered either at the time of reorganizing and changing land use entitlements (preferred), or when a clear set of development regulations (e.g. a form-based code or design regulations) is established to implement the plan. A matrix depicting both a classification and possible quantification is shown on this page.

Increases shall be considered only if necessary to enable the ultimate goal of relocating the Waste Water Treatment Plant, attracting a much desired resort hotel or job generator to the City, or achieving design-specific improvements such as the provision of public waterfront. To that effect, a final matrix with specific quantification (bonuses) needs to be developed.

For the purpose of applying increase bonus factors, design compliance with intended added values and degree of fulfillment of the Citizen's Master Plan Goals will be determined by staff and ultimately approved by the City Commission.

Finally, this plan *suggests increments to existing densities, permitted uses and height, but only to be awarded as a result of the direct provision of design and implementation of the Goals and physical elements outlined in this report.*

## VALUE AND BONUS MATRIX

Added Value	Description	Bonus Factor	Height Increase
Publicly Accessible Waterfront	- Minimum 50% - Every Addt'l 10%	1.75 1.1	Yes, <b>up to 1</b> addt'l story
Parks and Public Open Spaces	- Within fabric - Waterfront	1.1 1.25	No
Resort Hotel	- With public ground level that engages the street	2	Yes TBD
Blueway	- Within fabric - Waterfront	1.5	No
Civic Buildings and Infrastructure	- Within fabric - Waterfront	1.5 1.75	Yes, <b>up to 1</b> addt'l story
Public Parking (shielded)	- Surface - Structured	1.1 1.75	No

*NOTE: The bonus factors shown here are merely depicted as examples. Actual bonus factors need to be determined at the time of either amending entitlements (preferred) or creating specific development regulations for this area. Also note that height increases are offered "across the board". Extense of height Increments shall be determined in accordance to the value added.*



# 10 NEXT STEPS

The Next Steps towards the implementation of the Citizens' Master Plan are as follows:

## a) Adopt the Citizens' Master Plan

### b) Establish a "Plant Relocation Committee"

The proposed Citizens' Master Plan builds in flexibility to allow quick response to changes in market conditions. In order to properly track and adapt to these changing conditions and make the maximum use of federal, state and regional funding mechanisms, the City, County and FPUA need to establish a "Plant Relocation Committee". This committee shall be appointed by the board, or the City can rely on many of the already formed not-for-profit organizations that do similar work in the area. This committee or not-for-profit organization needs to be appropriately funded and staffed, and its purpose is to work towards the imminent relocation of the Plant, exploring and pursuing the different funding mechanisms, establishing general financing policies, updating and adjusting relocation costs to the time of sale and implementation, and serving as an additional review board for any proposed development in the area.

### c) Hire a retail/marketing/development specialist

The City seek needs to secure the services of a nationally-recognized retail/marketing/development specialist with proven experience and clients. This will contribute to appropriately position the City in a competitive negotiation level and effectively market the area and the Citizens' Master Plan.

### d) Secure An Agreement With Adjacent Privately-Owned Parcel

The City must work towards a sale Agreement with the adjacent property owner. This does not imply the a purchase agreement. It is a simple agreement that outlines procedures and compensation if the City or private land owner successfully secure an offer for the purchase and development of both parcels jointly in accordance with the Citizens' Master Plan.

### e) Amend Current Regulations As Follows:

- Amend the City's Comprehensive Plan to allow for the increased intensities and densities outlined in this report. This should be possible without the need to amend the Future Land Use Map Hutchinson Island Mixed Use designation if the language is modified to include the proposed matrix tying increases to specific improvements.
- Create simple, area-specific, form based regulations. An option to creating a new form based code is to adopt and simply calibrate the Smart Code available at <http://www.smartcodecentral.org>. The Smart Code is available for free to all local governments. Calibration is a simple process done by many qualified town planners.
- Establish architectural design regulations that simply but clearly outline the desired style for the area. It is also possible to adopt basic Design Guidelines created by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (available to local governments in the region for free for every vernacular architectural style), and amend them accordingly to establish as regulations.

It is important to note that given recent changes to Florida



Statutes Chapter 163.3177 and Chapter 9J-5.016 of the Florida Administrative Code, it is anticipated that, while the study area is in a Coastal High Hazard Area, many of the implications resulting from the proposed changes can be addressed at the local level. Additionally:

- Given the combined size and magnitude of the project, the City or developer could apply for a Development of Regional Impact. While potentially costly, there are expedited venues available for proposals consistent with the Regional Planning Council's Strategic Regional Policy Plan.
- No major capital outlays except for the obvious generated by the relocation of the Waste Water Treatment Plant are anticipated.
- No significant changes to Level of Service (LOS) on Seaway Drive is anticipated as this road and bridge have excess capacity today.
- All development and infrastructure (roadways, water, sewer), including proposed boardwalks and other civic and public improvements are designed to be privately funded, in exchange for increased development entitlements.
- The proposed program is such that impact to schools should not be substantive.

## ONE FINAL THOUGHT

The City of Fort Pierce should commend and be proud of its residents, business community, staff and elected officials. Planning "in the Public" is a lengthy and cumbersome process, but it is also a very rewarding one when a common vision is agreed upon. The predictability resulting from such process is a very powerful development tool that should not be underestimated, especially in difficult economic times. The experience that this City and its residents have creating, adopting, implementing and respecting a clear vision will be the guiding principle that make it possible to overcome the many challenges that moving the Waste Water Treatment Plan will certainly present.

The outcome will be certainly worth the effort, and the resulting built environment will not only be an asset to the residents, but a major component towards a more prosperous and resilient future for the City and the community as a whole.

