

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AGENDA ITEM

Memo Date: August 5, 2024
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Agenda Item:
Four Corners Visioning Update

In the fall of 2023, City staff found a number of parcels located along SR 520 and US1 that had incompatible zoning and future land use designations. This situation creates a consistency issue with the Comprehensive Plan and impacts property development. Given the scope of the impacted area, City staff requested that RVi review the impacted corridor and provide solutions.

RVi began working on this project shortly after the beginning of the year. The project consists of five stages:

- City Kickoff and Strategy
- Community Outreach
- Gateway Corridor Land Development Code (LDC) Amendments
- Zoning and Future Land Use Compatibility Strategy
- Public Hearings

The first stage of the project occurred during the first two quarters of the year and consisted of initial strategies for the study area and zoning and community outreach. Upon completion of that stage, it was determined that the initial study area would be limited to the “Four Corners”, which is generally described as parcels at the intersection of SR520 and US1. In addition, an in-person, with virtual option, Community Outreach meeting would be coordinated and held on Monday, June 17, 2024, at the Dr. Joe Lee Smith Recreation Center. In order to maximize community involvement, a multichannel marketing approach was utilized:

- Almost 1,800 public notice letters were sent two-weeks before the Community Workshop.
 - This included all parcels within both the Cocoa and Diamond Square CRAs.
- City staff created and published a Community Visioning Workshop flyer that was posted on the City website.
- City staff created a Facebook event on the City Facebook page promoting the Workshop.

Approximately 100 residents and interested parties attended the Community Workshop in-person, and approximately 2 dozen attended online. A team from RVI was present, as well as representatives from FDOT and the Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). The City of Cocoa Mayor and Councilmembers, along with the City Manager and staff were also present.

The team from RVI covered a 50-slide presentation that included background of the project, an overview of the City's LDC and Comprehensive Plan and how they impact the Four Corners, an existing conditions analysis, and design considerations in order to meet the intent of the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. Breakout sessions were held with those in attendance in order to gather feedback on ideas and solutions for Streetscape, Land Use, Mobility, and Urban Design.

Attendees were provided stickers to indicate positive, neutral, or negative feedback. Representatives from RVI, FDOT, and the TPO were also available for questions. Scans of those feedback boards are provided as part of this memo.

A variety of feedback and comments was gathered:

Ideal Land Uses:

- Encourage Mixed Use projects (residential above retail or office).
- Neighborhood based small scale retail and service-based uses are also ideal, i.e. barber shop/salon, medical office, small grocer, day care facilities, and the like.
- Idea for restaurant on 2nd or 3rd story overlooking the area with railroad theme (apparently there was a restaurant back in the 70's at the intersection with a rail theme).
- Some auto-oriented uses are okay if well-buffered and screened from the road, so they are attractive, and with enhanced building/architectural standards (see below).

Ideal Built Form:

- Max. 3 stories.
- Limited driveways/access from arterial frontages with access from "side streets" and interconnectivity between parcels.
- Old Florida desired architectural vernacular, beach, "Key West", Hemingway House was an inspiration of one group.
- Placemaking through public art, fountain, or feature on key properties.
- Enhanced landscaping and enhanced architectural codes to ensure the national chains build to a higher level/standard.

Mobility Improvements:

- Supportive of using ROW to move sidewalks further from travel lanes and adding landscaping to create pedestrian environment.
- Sensible to the fact that the roadways are arterial corridors that connect the region, so it will also need to be vehicle friendly.

- Work on finding funding for an overpass bridge to connect Stone Street across rail lines.
- Not supportive of pedestrian overpass due to aesthetics, practical issues of the trucks and transport through the intersection, could cut off pedestrian activity on street.

Visioning Boards:

- Enhanced design standards.
- Provide a variety of allowed uses.
- Improved access across US1 and train tracks.
- Have buildings front US1 and SR520 with entrances from side roads.
- Pedestrian safety improvements.
- Landscape buffering along right-of-way.
- Include representation of Diamond Square.
- Don't exceed three story building heights.
- Allow for rooftop entertainment.
- Encourage "Old-Florida" Architecture.
- Parking in rear of building not along US-1.
- Utilize Downtown St. Petersburg as a guide (walkable and public art focused).
- Provide street art.
- Area should represent the "Gateway to the beach & Merritt Island".
- Current design feels crowded and unsafe.
- Have the CRAs be involved.
- Pedestrian overpass to connect Stone St. to Cocoa Village.
- Extend visioning to the north side of SR520.

A summary of this feedback points to the City continuing to follow the vision detailed in the Comprehensive Plan for the Mixed Use Future Land Use designation. That being said, the current zoning districts that regulate the subject parcels are not structured in a manner to support these types of developments or improvements.

As part of the next three stages of this project, RVI will be presenting the Workshop information to the Cocoa CRA and Diamond Square CRA for input, as well as the City Council for direction on next steps related to potential LDC and Comprehensive Plan updates. RVI will be presenting this information in greater detail at these meetings and requesting feedback and direction.