

# v e r o b e a c h v i s i o n

*To identify and achieve the vision for Vero Beach it is important to continuously ask and answer three questions:*

***Where are we today?  
What do we want to become?  
How do we get there?***

c h a p t e r t h r e e

Sections 1 and 2 of the vision plan provide the foundation for answering these three questions. There are many different paths a community can take to accomplish its vision. The purpose of examining the alternatives in Section 2 was to further understand the potential direction that Vero Beach wants to take to address the issues and priorities described in Section 1.

In Vero Beach, the vision for the community has been framed in debates related to density and growth. By conducting a number of exercises and facilitating discussion through the visioning process, however, members of the community began to discover that there is much more to Vero Beach than these two issues. The vision for the future must be more encompassing.

### 3.1 VISION STATEMENT

To what does Vero Beach aspire in the future? In many ways the community desires to be what it always has been and remains today, but with all the advantages and conveniences of the future.

Envision a place where the best of "old Florida" is nurtured. A place that is filled with community pride, but not boastful or arrogant. That pride is reflected in well-kept private property and public land. That pride is embodied in the manner in which people treat one another and work together to address problems and issues. That pride embraces a respect for the natural environment and the unique history of the community.

Envision a place that is different from any other place in Florida. A place where spring training is a family event. A place that is made up of a variety of neighborhoods. A place that you can "fall in love" with on your first visit and, ultimately, make it your home. A place where the expectations and standards for quality and excellence are clearly stated in public policies, private actions, and community decisions.

Envision a community that values its location. A community where tree canopies are preserved and enhanced. A community that uses but does not exploit its natural beauty or geographic location. A community that both recreates in and respects sensitive environmental areas. A community that does not succumb to trends, but establishes its own image based on its vision for the future.

***"Vero Beach... the crown jewel of the Treasure Coast."***

This vision statement reflects the broad values and desires of the community to be the best place to live along Florida's Treasure Coast. It recognizes that there are other jewels along the coast, but that Vero Beach does and should continue to stand out among those jewels by retaining and enhancing its unique qualities and values.

Vero Beach will still change with time. It will continue to mature as a community and be influenced by outside actions, thus bringing new challenges. But its inherent qualities and values will continue to be prominent as long as citizens work diligently in a proactive manner. Vero Beach needs to be cared for like a precious jewel. Its brilliance will stand out not because of boastful pride, but because of diligent care, respect, and responsible action.

Vero Beach will, most likely, continue to remain the center of government and culture for Indian River County, as well as an important commercial and residential center. But central Florida is engaged in an era of profound change. Growth and demographic shifts are continually presenting opportunities and problems associated with that change. This vision plan seeks to determine both the cooperative and competitive position of the City within its larger context.

## 3.2 VERO BEACH CONCEPT PLAN

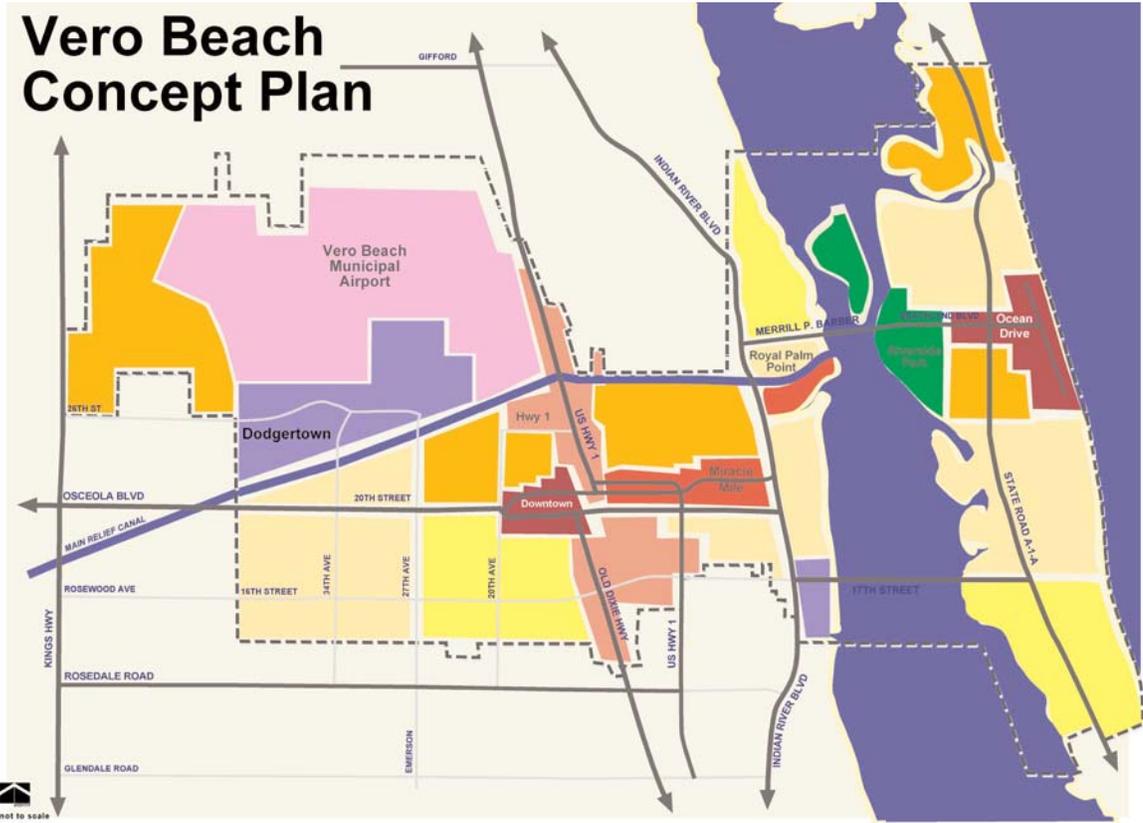
In pursuit of the Vero Beach vision, an important part of the vision plan is the formation of a concept for the future of the City. It is a necessary requirement to understand the relationships among the diverse elements of the community's commercial, residential, industrial, and recreational resources. It also facilitates a better understanding of the relationship between the natural and built environment.

The Vision Team reviewed the alternative strategies for the future development, as described in the previous section. These alternatives explored a range of options for addressing the City's basic physical structure. The Vero Beach Concept Plan illustrates a composite of the best or preferred elements from all of the explored options.

The concept plan recognizes that much of Vero Beach is built-out; with new, raw land development opportunities existing primarily in the northwest quadrant of the City, near the airport and Dodgertown. It also recognizes the strengths of existing assets, such as the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian River Lagoon, as well as parks, recreational, environmental, and cultural amenities. Important commercial corridors and districts like Ocean Drive, Beachland Boulevard, Royal Palm Pointe, Downtown Vero Beach, and the Miracle Mile are recognized for their ability for clustering community shopping and employment activities and enhancing the overall image and identity of Vero Beach. Finally, neighborhoods are recognized for the range and forms of lifestyle they represent and the market forces they create for retail and services in the community. The approach of the City and the citizens of Vero Beach to each of these areas is fundamental to implementing the visioning process.

The transportation network provides the framework upon which the city's physical form is based. A series of arterial roads form a web that links neighborhoods, commercial uses, services, jobs, and recreational and scenic opportunities. It also connects Vero Beach with its neighbors. Roadways each have their functional and design character that makes them unique. The vision process also makes recommendations regarding maintaining the intrinsic character of prime roadways and the districts they serve.

CONCEPT PLAN



SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

3.3 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

3.3.1 Downtown

Like many cities in the United States, Vero Beach has the legacy of a historic downtown core. For most cities, downtown was the center for retail commerce, government, and entertainment and culture. The passage of time, the economics of geography, and changes in living and shopping patterns have taken their toll on many historic downtowns. Downtown Vero Beach is no exception. Today, downtown Vero Beach must assume a new and complementary role with the City's other commercial centers. To accomplish this, downtown must be positioned as a destination, must recognize its history, must build on its role as a center of government, and must find creative uses that rebuild the attraction of downtown.

Goal

*Reinforce downtown as a mixed-use office, employment, and governmental center, as well as a unique cultural, arts, entertainment, and residential enclave, with shopping and dining opportunities that support the district and its surrounding neighborhoods.*

## Key Issues and Recommendations

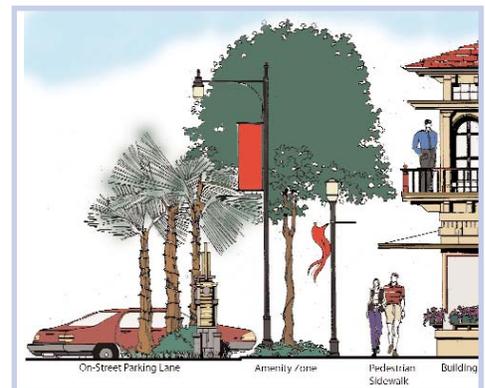
Downtown Vero Beach, generally located between 19th Street and 23rd Street and 17th Avenue and the Florida East Coast Railway tracks, is bisected by two major east west, one-way arterials, 20th Place and 19th Place. They are known in the community as the "twin pairs." These two streets allow traffic to efficiently pass through the downtown core, but also make stopping, parking, and pedestrian connections more difficult. Any rehabilitation of downtown as a viable center of activity must address the "traffic calming" of the "twin pairs."

In addition to traffic concerns, parking, pedestrian circulation and amenities, aesthetics, and the types of uses in downtown are important factors for future consideration. If downtown is to emerge as a more competitive and economically viable commercial district in Vero Beach, all of these issues must be addressed in a comprehensive and synergistic manner.

The strategies below support the creation of a unified, compact, more dense, and competitive downtown in Vero Beach -- one that builds on and supports its historic pedestrian scale. To accomplish this, a proactive approach of planning, development attraction, and organization is proposed.

## Strategies

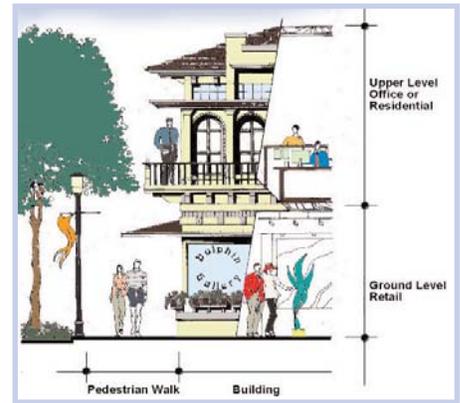
- a. Prepare a comprehensive master plan for downtown to address issues of urban design, land use, circulation and parking, parks and open space, public improvements and pedestrian streetscape, signage, building design characteristics, historic preservation, and development incentives. This process should actively involve business owners, institutions and government, property owners, surrounding neighborhoods, and the general citizenry as participants.
- b. Undertake a traffic engineering analysis of the "twin pairs" that bisect downtown, either as a precursor to the downtown urban design study or concurrent with it. The goal of this study would be to ascertain methods for making downtown a destination instead of a place to "pass through." Traffic calming measures, pedestrian friendliness, and parking, as well as the ramifications of two-way versus one-way traffic on the "pairs," must be investigated to assure downtown's future vitality. Work with the Florida Department of Transportation with regard to the configuration and other actions to be taken with regard to the "twin pairs."
- c. Maintain the street grid network in and around downtown Vero Beach. It is important to sustain a resilient street network, assuring both pedestrian-friendliness and vehicular access, respecting the historical transportation network, and providing stronger connections to surrounding neighborhoods.
- d. Maintain and enhance on-street parking in downtown Vero Beach. A competitive and pedestrian-oriented retail environment requires an active on-street parking concept.
- e. Prepare and implement a comprehensive landscape, streetscape, signage, and open space plan for downtown Vero Beach. This plan should address aesthetic issues, as well as functional and durability issues.



**DOWNTOWN STREETScape**

SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

- f. Promote retail businesses, restaurants, arts or cultural activities, or other pedestrian-related uses on the ground floor of all downtown buildings. Consider an array of incentives to entice appropriate ground floor development in downtown, particularly arts and cultural uses. Other cities in the United States have utilized incentives, such as tax abatement, zoning bonuses, and other financial and policy incentives to promote desirable development. Promote future governmental buildings in downtown.



**MIXED-USES**

SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

- g. Promote office and residential uses on upper floors of downtown. These uses support both daytime and nighttime retail and entertainment activities in the area, as well as support a greater "critical mass" of development in the downtown core. Downtown residential activities, including multifamily housing and townhouses, will help create a new and more vital urban neighborhood for Vero Beach and support amenities that enhance the attractiveness of existing neighborhoods that surround downtown.
- h. Establish a district-parking concept for downtown Vero Beach, rather than parking on a site-by-site basis. This will help create a more compact and pedestrian-friendly development. District parking may involve surface and/or structured parking solutions. If structured parking is proposed, it must be in the form of "mixed-use" garages that have a retail or similar pedestrian-oriented ground floor use.
- i. Increase downtown density to establish a viable and competitive mixed-use center. Current downtown buildings are generally below the capacity allowed by City ordinance. By allowing greater density, a more viable center may be created. If successful, a more competitive center can help relieve some of the developmental pressures that exist on the Barrier Island. Currently the height limit in downtown Vero Beach is 50 feet, but care must be taken to avoid the creation of "canyon streets." Consider density bonus incentives for development that conforms to downtown urban design and use recommendations.
- j. Support and engage an effective downtown advocacy organization. This organization should act as a "stakeholder" during the proposed urban design planning process, act to promote and attract appropriate uses in downtown, promote the preservation of historically significant structures, and coordinate the collective marketing and promotion of downtown activities and events.

**MIXED-USE  
PARKING CONCEPT**

SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES



### 3.3.2 Royal Palm Pointe

Royal Palm Pointe, as it is known today, was created when the Merrill Barber Bridge was constructed in 1995. At one time, Royal Palm Pointe was the roadway and bridge corridor connecting the Mainland with the Barrier Island. It was historically lined with automobile-oriented commercial activities. When the new bridge was opened, the old bridge was demolished and State Route 60 was rerouted, leaving a commercial corridor that had no through vehicular access.



ROYAL PALM POINTE

This created an opportunity for a new and unique commercial center for Vero Beach. As the northernmost of the finger peninsulas, Royal Palm Pointe has been transformed. This is due in part to public investments in common parking within an extensive landscaped median and the development of a terminus park along the Indian River Lagoon.

This transformation, however, is not yet complete. This district has the potential to become one of Vero Beach's and Florida's most innovative mixed-use districts. Accommodating parking and creating the appropriate regulatory environment for new development forms still loom as significant challenges.

#### Goal

*Complete the transformation of Royal Palm Pointe as a regional mixed-use residential, commercial, and entertainment district; focusing on restaurants, recreation, and boutique retail venues.*

#### Key Issues and Recommendations

Royal Palm Pointe is now well established in the minds of both visitors and residents, but the full potential of the district has not yet been realized. Although bordered by water on three sides, public access along the length of Royal Palm Pointe's waterfront is not common. Also, parking on this peninsula, with its limited available land, remains a significant obstacle to achieving true mixed-use development.

Strategies for the future development of Royal Palm Pointe involve solving the issues of parking adequacy and waterfront access to create a more innovative and integrated mix of land uses. Public improvements should also be integrated into the vision for Royal Palm Pointe in order to reinforce its unique character, public spaces, and recreational opportunities.

#### Strategies

- a. Prepare a comprehensive master plan for private property on Royal Palm Pointe that will guide property owners, as they redevelop or improve their properties, and assure consistency with improvements the City has made in the right-of-way. The plan should address issues of urban design, building design, façade, signage, landscaping, parking, pedestrian access, and access to the waterfront. The plan should also address the issue of mixed-use development. This process should actively involve merchants, business owners, property owners, and the general citizenry as participants.

- b. Create a single zoning district to replace the three existing zoning districts. The new zoning district should assure the creation of an active mixed-use area by requiring ground floor retail, commercial, restaurants (indoor and outdoor dining), recreational, and entertainment uses in all new buildings on Royal Palm Pointe. Residential uses are encouraged in upper floors of buildings. Assure that all new buildings address their orientation to the waterfront, as well as to the street.

- c. Reinforce the pedestrian nature of Royal Palm Pointe through the continued enhancement of the unifying streetscape and landscape concept. Future improvements should address pedestrian walkways, landscape, streetscape and median treatments, decorative lighting, and signage. As a part of this streetscape plan, public views to the Lagoon and waterfront access through a "boardwalk" along the entire shoreline of Royal Palm Pointe should be considered, along with its accompanying noise impact. Beautification of the entrance into Royal Palm Pointe must also be addressed through streetscape and landscape design.



PUBLIC ACCESS ALONG WATERFRONT AND STREET  
SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

- d. Prepare and implement a comprehensive landscape, streetscape, signage, and open space plan for Royal Palm Pointe. This plan should address aesthetic issues, as well as functional and durability issues.
- e. Establish a district-parking concept for Royal Palm Pointe, rather than parking on a site-by-site basis, which will better facilitate the creation of a mixed-use district. Coordinate the district parking concept with the Royal Palm Pointe Master Plan. District parking may involve surface and/or structured parking solutions, as well as solutions involving an enhancement of the current median parking concept. If structured parking is proposed, it must be in the form of "mixed-use" structures that have retail, entertainment, or similar pedestrian-oriented ground floor uses.
- f. Enhance water-borne access to Royal Palm Pointe through the creation of additional boat docks and, potentially, marina facilities. Utilize Royal Palm Pointe as a "gateway to the islands" through private boating and the incorporation of excursion boat facilities. Investigate the potential for enhancing navigation through dredging in cooperation with the Florida Inland Navigation District. Cooperate with other regulatory agencies for the protection of manatees and other wildlife.

### 3.3.3 Miracle Mile/US 1 Commercial Districts

Miracle Mile and US 1 both developed as automobile-oriented commercial centers in the latter half of the 20th Century. This development pattern was consistent with the national trends in lifestyle, shopping, and transportation that occurred after the Second World War. The changes in shopping patterns also profoundly influenced the viability of downtowns in America as well.

Both corridors reflect the shift from pedestrian-oriented commerce to an auto-dominated strategy. The emphasis moved from people walking along sidewalks to automobiles moving at much higher speeds along roadway corridors. Buildings and signage became larger and parking lots, not storefront windows, became the point of entry into the retail environment.



MIRACLE MILE

Many cities across the United States are attempting to deal with the next generation of auto-oriented shopping. As communities grow, the next ring of commercial corridors is typically developed in outlying locations. These new centers frequently draw economic vitality away from the earlier centers. Thus, communities are faced with creating strategies to stem deterioration and decline. Strategies have ranged from simple streetscape improvements to the introduction of new land use mixes, innovative regulation techniques, and different marketing approaches.

#### Goal

*Enhance the existing character, marketability, and long-term sustainability of the Miracle Mile and US 1 commercial corridors, while allowing for their future evolution in accordance with changing commercial development trends.*

#### Key Issues and Recommendations

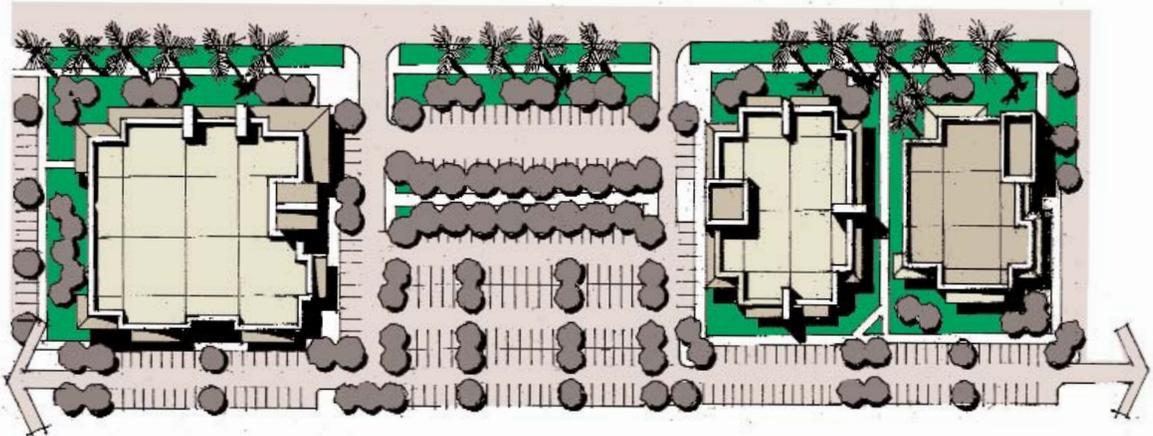
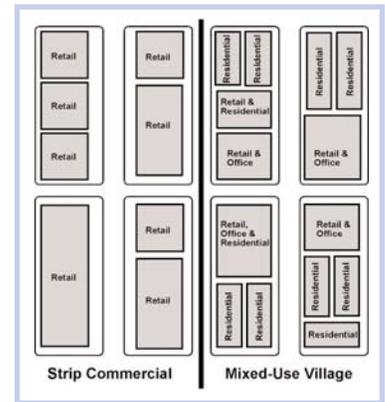
The recommendations for these commercial corridors seek to continue and expand the significant progress made in the landscape beautification of the Miracle Mile. It is clear, for the foreseeable future, that all US cities will have significant automobile-oriented commercial and shopping districts. In Vero Beach, strategies are oriented toward making their environment more pleasant and intimately scaled. Strategies include public actions, as well as anticipated private development initiatives.

In the future, it is also important to position both corridors to accommodate the next generation of development evolution.

#### Strategies

- a. Continue public streetscape improvements along the Miracle Mile, and extend an enhanced streetscape concept along the US 1 corridor. Provide landscaping to both enhance the corridors and buffer residential from commercial areas. Consider bonuses or incentives for enhanced landscape treatment.

- b. Along the Miracle Mile, limit the maximum size of any new, individual building occupant to 40,000 square feet, with larger occupancies allowed on US 1. Create design standards for new buildings and building renovations, along both corridors, that enhance the orientation of buildings toward the street, the relationship of parking to buildings, parking lot landscaping, better pedestrian connections between buildings and adjacent sites, building and site signage concepts, the articulation or scale break-down of larger buildings, and the relationship between commercial buildings and surrounding neighborhoods. Consider bonuses or incentives for "outstanding" design.
- c. Develop more innovative parking requirements that allow for parking reductions for mixed-use development in accordance with Urban Land Institute's parking formulas. Consider lowering the overall parking requirements to lessen the visual impact of surface parking lots. Require interconnectivity between adjacent parking areas, and consolidate required landscape treatments into larger, more contiguous planting areas that have greater visual impact
- d. Modify zoning ordinances to allow the creation of mixed-use and "village" character development in strip commercial corridors, including incorporating residential and other non-retail uses.



INNOVATIVE PARKING REQUIREMENTS - LANDSCAPING, INTERCONNECTIVITY, SHARED PARKING  
SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

### 3.3.4 Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive Commercial District

The Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive commercial district represents a "symbolic heart" to many citizens of and visitors to Vero Beach. Its quaint shops, hotels, and restaurants provide a pedestrian-oriented district that creates a quality image and pleasant activity center for the Barrier Island.

Cities change over time, and office development pressures in this district are beginning to alter its scale and land use character. Many long-term retail establishments are now threatened by the higher rents

that follow to these development pressures. Parking requirements to serve new development and the perception or reality of a lack of parking, particularly during the winter "high season," are issues that are paramount in the minds of business owners and customers in the area.

**Goal**

*Maintain the Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive Commercial District as a destination and quality-oriented boutique retail center for both residents and visitors, while accommodating a demand for office development and the desire for a quality residential environment.*



OCEAN DRIVE

**Key Issues and Recommendations**

On the Vero Beach's Barrier Island, the primary retail and commercial core is located along Ocean Drive and Cardinal Drive, between approximately Cypress Road and Flamevine Lane. It is a pleasant mix of shops, offices, restaurants, and services linked by a strong and well-landscaped pedestrian environment. Framed by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and a series of strong neighborhoods, this district has established itself as one of Florida's premier boutique commercial destinations.

Development pressures, however, are presenting a challenge to the continuation and success of retail in this district. Many banking and financial service establishments view Ocean and Cardinal Drives, as well as the adjoining Beachland Boulevard Corridor, as an ideal location to serve their customers in the region. This development has typically taken the form of relatively larger structures that many residents feel are out of character and out of scale with the district's historic scale and uses. Particularly, locally owned shops that have formed the unique character of Ocean Drive are under pressure to be displaced. The larger scale of these buildings has also placed parking demands on each development site that further contributes to larger scale solutions.

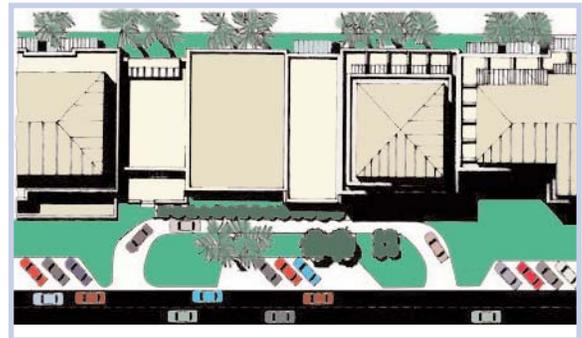
The strategies for the Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive Commercial District deal directly with the desire to maintain the retail nature of this important district, while maintaining the area's intrinsic scale and character. It is essential that Ocean Drive maintain its retail character, while it is desirable, but not essential for Cardinal. A cornerstone of the emerging concept is to solve traffic circulation, parking, and neighborhood interface issues on a district-wide basis.

**Strategies**

- a. Prepare a comprehensive master plan for the Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive Commercial District to address issues of urban design, land use, traffic and parking, Ocean access, open space, public improvements, a unifying pedestrian-friendly streetscape program, signage, and building design characteristics. This process should actively involve merchants, business owners, property owners, surrounding neighborhoods, and the general citizenry as participants.
- b. In association with the comprehensive urban design plan for the district, prepare architectural standards, along with creating a mechanism to review and enforce those standards. The emphasis of standards should not be the creation of a uniform architectural style or theme, but rather the creation of guidelines that better assure scale and form continuity.

- c. Ocean Drive must remain a mixed-use district. To support this objective, all buildings fronting on Ocean Drive must have a retail or restaurant dominated ground floor use. Office or residential uses are encouraged on upper floors. Furthermore, retail frontages must have a majority of transparent glass or "storefront windows" along the Ocean Drive façade. There must also be a direct relationship between the pedestrian sidewalk and the storefront entrance that is not separated by a significant change in elevation.

- d. There must be a consistent building setback established for each street in the Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive Commercial District. This setback should accommodate the pedestrian sidewalk, as well as a green median or planting area. Deviations from this setback may be allowed for uses such as outdoor cafes, but the setback line must be referenced by architectural or landscape elements. These elements may include a courtyard wall, a decorative fence, and/or a landscape feature.



**ON-STREET PARKING AND BUILDING SETBACK CONCEPT**  
SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

- e. There shall be no setback or side yards along Ocean Drive between buildings located on the same block. Building facades in the district should appear as a series of smaller scale structures. A single building that occupies an entire city block should have the appearance of a series of adjoining buildings.

- f. For new buildings or additions to existing buildings, heights shall be limited to two stories---a retail ground floor and an office or residential upper floor. A third residential floor may be allowed along the eastern Cardinal Drive frontage if it is set back from the main body of the façade, so as not to contribute to the perception of a "street wall" or be readily visible by a pedestrian from the adjacent sidewalk. No structure can exceed a thirty-five foot height limit as measured from the existing front façade sidewalk.



**MIXED-USE BUILDING**  
SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

- g. Encourage appropriate hotel redevelopment along Ocean Drive. If redevelopment occurs, the building configuration may change, but the density or intensity of the hotel development may not be increased. Hotels do not need to have a retail storefront, but their ground floor lobbies should be visible from the street, and facades should consist of a high percentage of transparent glass. Strong pedestrian connections should exist between hotels and Ocean Drive's sidewalk system. Hotels must accommodate all of their required parking on-site, and parking areas should be extensively landscaped. Hotels seawalls should be "softened" with appropriate or indigenous landscape treatment.
- h. Establish a district-parking concept for the Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive Commercial District. District parking, rather than parking on a site-by-site basis, will help create more compact and pedestrian-friendly development. District parking may involve surface and/or structured parking solutions. If structured parking is proposed, it must be in the form of "mixed-use" structures that have a retail or restaurant ground floor use. All hotels in the district must accommodate their own parking on site.
- i. Revise the Vero Beach zoning ordinance to allow density trade-offs for the use of district parking and compliance with the massing, design, and retail use standards.
- j. Prior to the preparation of a comprehensive urban design plan for the district, undertake quick action, interim measures to increase parking in the district, as well as address basic traffic and parking conflicts or problems. A parking strategy should recognize and distinguish between the different requirements and controls for winter and summer.

### 3.3.5 Beachland Boulevard

Beachland Boulevard, for most visitors to and many citizens of Vero Beach, represents the primary entrance corridor to the Barrier Island. From Mockingbird Drive to the Sexton Plaza terminus at the Atlantic Ocean, Beachland Boulevard is a commercial corridor that forms a significant "gateway" to the Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive Commercial District, the Atlantic Ocean beach, adjacent neighborhoods, and park, recreational and cultural amenities.

Like Ocean and Cardinal Drives, development pressures are changing the scale, intensity, and character of new buildings along Beachland Boulevard. Newer buildings with relatively smaller setbacks and smaller planting areas are sometimes replacing the characteristic "green spine," established by historic building setbacks and lush plantings. Over time, retail uses are also disappearing in favor of more office uses.

Beachland Boulevard, however, represents an area with some capacity for absorbing additional office demand, particularly from banking and financial institutions. And unlike the Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive Commercial District, Beachland Boulevard is more automobile-oriented than pedestrian-oriented. A retail ground floor use, therefore, is not essential to the future success of Beachland Boulevard.

#### Goal

*Reinforce Beachland Boulevard, from Mockingbird Drive to Ocean Drive, as a premier office corridor, particularly for professional services and banking and financial activities.*

## Key Issues and Recommendations

In considering its future development and physical form, Beachland Boulevard must respond to multiple forces. First, it must remain as a primary entrance corridor and gateway to the Barrier Island. Second, it must respond to the market demand for additional "Class A" office space in Vero Beach. In accomplishing that, it can help relieve some of the developmental pressures along nearby Ocean Drive. Third, it must serve as an "entry portal" to neighborhoods and recreational opportunities that adjoin the boulevard.

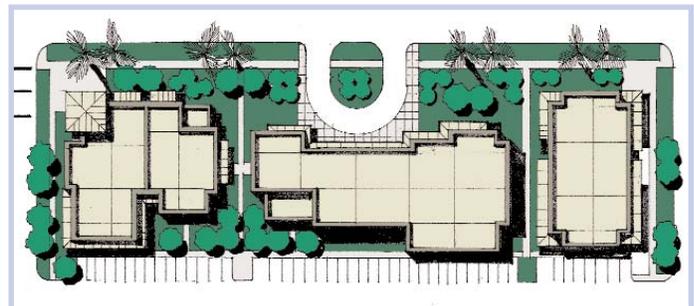


BEACHLAND BOULEVARD

Of particular importance is maintaining the "green spine" that has historically defined Beachland Boulevard's character. Appropriate building setbacks and massing, as well as a unifying landscape design concept, can enhance the spine. It is also important to consider the context and physical relationship between any new development located along Beachland Boulevard and adjacent neighborhoods.

## Strategies

- a. Establish the Beachland Boulevard Corridor as a prime office location in Vero Beach for professional services and financial and banking activities.
- b. Maintain and reinforce a common landscaped setback along Beachland Boulevard. Establish both a minimum and maximum building setback line, so that a relatively uniform front yard can be established along the length of the corridor.
- c. Prepare a corridor landscape plan for Beachland Boulevard and 17th Street in order to create a unifying landscape concept that includes elements such as vegetation, signage, public lighting, and street furniture.
- d. Maintain all significant native canopy trees. A limited number of trees may be relocated on site, in conformance with City ordinances, to accommodate new building development.
- e. Locate major parking areas behind buildings along Beachland Boulevard. Cross-connect all rear parking areas to allow for north-south access and egress, as well as for shared parking opportunities. Meet all parking requirements for new development on-site. Minimize curb cuts



SETBACKS, LANDSCAPE, AND PARKING CONCEPT

SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

to parking areas along neighborhood streets. Front yards may contain minor vehicular drop-offs and/or minor, short term parking areas.

- f. In many cases, commercial development already extends for the full block depth between Beachland Boulevard and Azalea Lane in order to accommodate on-site parking. The Vision Team recognized the validity of this concept, but it is a very sensitive issue with neighborhoods. Whenever the full block depth is used, significant landscape screening must be placed along the Azalea Lane edge of the site in order to shield parking areas from the view of neighboring residential areas.
- g. All new buildings shall have a "front" building entrance facing Beachland Boulevard. A parking lot entrance may be located along the rear building façade.
- h. Protect adjacent neighborhoods from light infiltration by using "baffled" or "cut-off" lighting fixtures for all rear yard site and parking lot lighting.
- i. Establish Sexton Plaza as an appropriate terminus for Beachland Boulevard at Ocean Drive. Plan and implement design, landscape and site amenities that heighten the sense of arrival and create a landmark for motorists and pedestrians.

### 3.4 NEIGHBORHOODS

Vero Beach is a community of neighborhoods - neighborhoods of all shapes, sizes, characters, and styles. From the Riomar neighborhood on the Barrier Island to the McAnsch Park neighborhood on the Mainland, neighborhoods represent more than mere places to live. They also tell us something about who we are - as individuals and communities.



VARIOUS NEIGHBORHOODS

Like most cities in the United States, Vero Beach has neighborhoods that fall generally within a range from those that require conservation or preservation to those that require revitalization or stabilization. Strong neighborhoods are located both on the Barrier Island and the Mainland. Neighborhoods that require revitalization or stabilization are located primarily on the Mainland.

**Goal**

*Reinforce Vero Beach as a "community of neighborhoods" by developing strategies for both neighborhood preservation/conservation and neighborhood revitalization/stabilization.*

**Key Issues and Recommendations**

Strategies for Vero Beach's neighborhoods consider a wide range of approaches. They generally fall into three categories. First, there are strategies that should be applied universally throughout the City, such as preservation of the native tree canopy, modifying requirements of all residential zoning districts, or requiring site plan review for all residential approvals. Second, there are optional strategies that are subject to request by an individual neighborhood, such as consideration of a zoning overlay or historic preservation district. Third, there are City planning and development issues regarding neighborhoods, such as strategies that deal with neighborhood markers or strategies that address revitalization of neighborhoods in decline.

**Strategies**

- a. Preserve the native tree canopy on the Barrier Island and Mainland. Institute a citywide program of tree planting to reinforce the City's tree canopy in all locations. Revise the existing tree protection ordinance to change the focus to preservation and/or relocation of the existing tree canopy, rather than removal and strengthen penalties for violations. A revised tree preservation ordinance should define the nature of "specimen trees," establish an administrative review process, specify a mitigation process for unavoidable losses or violations, address the issue of preserving the existing grade around specimen trees, and consider the implications regarding septic fields and tree impacts, where appropriate.
- b. Develop design standards, zoning modifications, and review procedures for housing construction in Vero Beach that preserves the integrity and character of neighborhoods. Standards and regulations should address size, bulk, massing, density, rooflines, site planning, landscaping, and lot replating for all residential zoning classifications.
- c. Limit all housing in residential zones to two occupied stories, not to exceed 35 feet in height, measured from the natural site grade to the top of the roof. Consider issues in the development of this limitation, such as ornamental roof top features like dormers or widow's walks.



**TWO OCCUPIED RESIDENTIAL STORIES**

SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

- d. Additional residential regulations/overlay districts (with stricter zoning standards or the regulation of architectural design issues) or local historic preservation designation may be considered on an individual neighborhood basis. Development of these regulations or designation should be considered only by a neighborhood request or petition representing a "super majority" of property owners. Issues that may be considered for additional regulations may include roof pitch, roof ornamental areas or decorative structures, façade articulation, and other design-oriented features.
- e. Require site plan review for all single-family residential development. Currently, if appropriate zoning is in place, residential development may take place without any planning, neighborhood, or policy review. By requiring the submission of a site plan, the preservation of specimen trees and the overall massing of structures on a site may be more easily examined.

- f. New subdivisions should, to the greatest extent possible, integrate with the existing roadway framework and adjacent residential development. Gated or walled communities are discouraged in Vero Beach. If gated or walled communities are proposed, a landscape and circulation plan must be submitted for site plan review that mitigates the visual impact of the wall to the broader community and allows vehicular and pedestrian connections to adjacent residential development.



**BUFFERING A GATED/WALLED COMMUNITY**

SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

- g. Create zoning ordinances and review procedures that allow and encourage mixed-use development, including residential uses, in appropriate commercial areas of Vero Beach. Issues that must be addressed are residential open space requirements that would be too onerous for mixed-use development that includes residential, building setbacks, and shared parking strategies.
- h. Institute aggressive code and public safety enforcement in the stabilization/revitalization neighborhoods of Vero Beach. This strategy may have personnel and budget implications for the City's code enforcement staff.

- i. Landscape treatment, walls, berms, or other solutions, from non-compatible uses, such as industry or busy highways, should buffer neighborhoods. The preferred method for buffering is a combination of landscaping and berms. Only in limited circumstances should walls be permitted. These requirements should be enforced through site plan review. Neighborhoods should not be "buffered" from each other, as they are not incompatible uses.

**BUFFERING BETWEEN RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL USES**

SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES



- j. Identify neighborhoods with gateways and entrance features wherever appropriate and practical. Neighborhood gateways should represent the "character" of their individual neighborhood. They should not be a generic design that can be replicated throughout the City.
- k. Prepare plans for stabilization/revitalization neighborhoods that encourage renovation of existing structures, as well as infill development and redevelopment as appropriate. Improve public parks and other capital investments, and eliminate open drainage ditches. Consider incentives for appropriate development and redevelopment in these neighborhoods.

### 3.5 INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT

Although Vero Beach is relatively affluent and has a high number of retired citizens, it is subject to the same economic forces of any US city. Cities across the United States have recognized that a sustainable municipal economy is a diverse economy. It is widely recognized in most cities that residential property is a net consumer of resources, such as public services and infrastructure. This is typically balanced by a diverse array of uses that overcome this deficit by generating non-residential tax revenues.

Retail and employment centers are typically positive tax-generating uses. Employment opportunities are also factors in retaining young people in the community. This was a significant issue in community visioning discussions.

**Goal**

*Create a diversity of good employment opportunities in Vero Beach for the benefit of workers, to support younger residents in their desire to remain in Vero Beach, and to create a more stable and sustainable tax base.*

**Key Issues and Recommendations**

Strategies for industrial and employment development primarily address actions in the industrial economy. The service economy is perceived as strong in Vero Beach, illustrating of a wide range of employment opportunities from financial services to food services. Districts and corridors in the City already exist to address these employment demands.

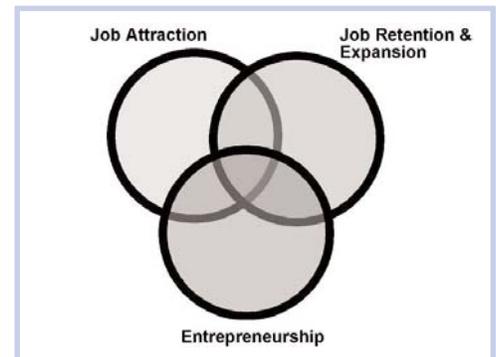
The industrial economy, however, is the subject of several recommendations. They range from the attraction and location of business opportunities to physical improvements for industrial districts.

**Strategies**

- a. Pursue the three primary activities of employment creation: new job attraction; existing job retention and expansion; and entrepreneurship. Build the local employment base on the community's intrinsic economic strengths, such as the existence of the general aviation airport and the health care industry.
- b. Support the development of a full-service business and light industrial park at the Vero Beach Municipal Airport. Reconsider the disposition of revenue streams from airport site private development that currently must be allocated to the airport.
- c. Promote new and infill industrial and business development along existing industrial corridors. Prepare landscape and parking plans to improve the quality and aesthetic appeal of existing industrial corridors.



**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

**3.6 ROADWAYS AND WAYFINDING**

Vero Beach's roadways provide a hierarchical framework for movement into and around the City. Major highways and arterials, collector streets, and local neighborhood streets, each with its own character, help establish this integral network. The network is supplemented and made legible by signage and perceptual cues that orient travelers.

**Goal**

*Create a roadway and supplemental transportation network that enhances the image of Vero Beach, while providing a framework for a multi-modal transportation system. Create an infrastructure network that serves the people of Vero Beach and presents a positive image.*

**Key Issues and Recommendations**

A transportation network of a city is continuously developed throughout the entire history of that city. It evolves with technological change, changes in engineering design standards, and changes in the public's transportation preferences. As a case in point, the nation's Interstate Highway system, which has profoundly impacted the growth patterns of urban America, did not even exist until the latter half of the 20th Century.



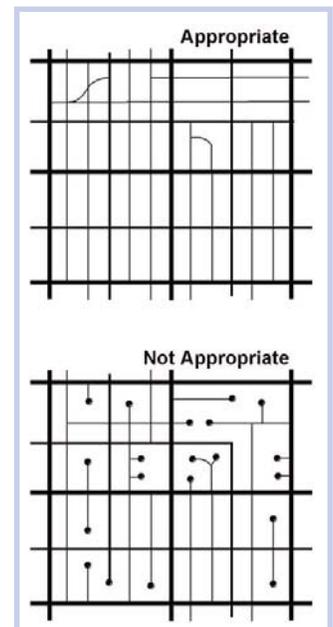
TYPICAL ARTERIAL

Although located several miles from the Interstate 95, the urban form of Vero Beach has been greatly influenced by that national network. What was once a federal and state highway system that served the heart of Vero Beach from a north or south direction, now delivers external travelers from the west, via the Interstate Highway system. The changes in this system, along with altitudinal changes in living and shopping patterns both inside and outside of Vero Beach, have profoundly changed the City's form. Highway-oriented commercial corridors have replaced the once thriving downtown shopping district of Vero Beach. Downtown's traffic pattern is now more "pass through" than destination-oriented.

The vision strategies for Vero Beach's roadway and transportation network directly address the need to capitalize on the unique nature of the City's roadway corridors, including the districts and neighborhoods that they serve. The strategies also recognize the need to develop alternative forms of circulation for the enjoyment of Vero Beach's residents and visitors, as well as to position the City appropriately for emerging patterns of development. The City's infrastructure network has served Vero Beach well. As future improvements are made, however, the network should be upgraded to meet contemporary service and aesthetic standards.

**Strategies**

- a. Maintain a system of roadways in Vero Beach that is interconnected at all levels, from arterials to local neighborhood streets. This creates a more resilient transportation system that can help alleviate traffic congestion on arterial or collector streets - and helps minimize the need to add capacity to arterials and collector streets through additional traffic lanes. The form of development adjacent to major roadways is a primary determinant of roadway interconnectivity. Walled or gated communities, cul-de-sac street neighborhoods, and commercial "superblocks" are the antithesis of a well-connected transportation system.



ROAD HIERARCHY  
SOURCE: GOULD EVANS

b. Prepare a master plan for the entire arterial network of Vero Beach. This plan should consider not only roadway capacity, but it should also address the intrinsic design character of each street. Elements such as landscape and streetscape treatment in the public right-of-way, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, lighting, directional signage, public art, and entrance and gateway monuments should all be addressed. Some of these streets have been addressed in the vision strategies for various districts.

c. Initiate a gateways plan for Vero Beach. The gateways map to the right indicates entrance points into Vero Beach, as well as suggests entrances to key districts within the City. These symbolic gateways, along with an appropriate signage system, form a framework to assist in "wayfinding." They enhance the image and identity of the City. The design theme of new gateway or wayfinding signage should be compatible with the existing Downtown Vero Beach and Royal Palm Pointe entrance signs. The Vision Plan also calls for the development of a series of markers that identify key neighborhood entrances (not show on this map).



SOURCE: GOULD EVANS ASSOCIATES

d. Maintain and appropriately identify all storm evacuation routes in the City. This is particularly important, for example, if changes in the capacity or directional flow results from an enhanced arterial urban design plan. Potential changes to the "twin pairs" through downtown is a prime example of the need for this strategy.

e. Enhance the bike and pedestrian trail systems throughout Vero Beach, so that they become a true alternative mode of transportation. Trails should link all major commercial districts with parks, entertainment venues, and neighborhoods. The system should also contain amenities and street furniture that is supportive of this mode of transportation. Work with the MPO bicycle committee to coordinate regional and local bicycle networks

f. Support mass transit as an alternative form of transportation. Public transit should be designed to link major residential districts with employment centers and shopping and entertainment venues. The provision of specialized district-oriented transit should be considered in more intensive, pedestrian-oriented environments. The Ocean Drive shopping district, and its potential linkages to district and employee parking, is an example of a location where this solution may be appropriate.

g. Investigate the feasibility of placing utility services below ground, particularly electric power lines in commercial areas.

h. Support the completion of the sewage plant relocation study. If the decision is made to relocate the facility, undertake a land use analysis for the site.

i. Anticipate and plan for the impacts on community facilities that are influenced by the area's

growth. The impact of growth of beaches and beach parking, museums, and cultural venues should be continually monitored. Consider the future economic viability and capacity of these venues, as well as methods for securing their future viability.

- j. Study the impact of the City's marina on the local economy. Consider the viability of marina expansion, as well as transit and pathway linkages between the marina and significant Vero Beach attractions.
- k. Continue to work with the Indian River Community College as a center for employment skills training, as well as a nucleus for county-wide entrepreneurial skills training.

### 3.7 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The Vision Plan suggests a number of physical changes that will require alterations to the City's planning and regulatory structure. Some of the strategies are not in conformance with previously prepared Vero Beach plans and ordinances. Other strategies represent new ideas that have not yet been anticipated.

#### Goal

*Align the City's plans and regulations to support the Vision Plan and follow through with appropriate training and public information programs.*

#### Key Issues and Recommendations

Although the Vision Plan suggests many physical and policy changes in Vero Beach, these changes are not necessarily reflected in the City's policy and regulatory process. Florida States statutes require, for example, that zoning decisions conform to comprehensive plan recommendations. Other suggestions, such as allowing the designation of historic preservation districts, are not covered in any existing Vero Beach ordinances. Additionally, mechanisms should be created to educate decision makers on these changes, as well as to provide for a continuing community planning dialog regarding Vero Beach's future vision.

#### Strategies

- a. Review, amend or update the City's comprehensive plan to align it with the adopted recommendations of the Vision Plan regarding land use, transportation, public policies, and other key factors.
- b. Revise the City's zoning, development, and signage ordinances to implement the recommendations of the Vision Plan concerning building massing and location, including recommendations that require more innovative "form based" zoning approaches, as well as signage regulations and standards for both the public and private sectors. Adopt an interim development code (IDC) to regulate the character and form of development in conformance with the Vision Plan, while the comprehensive zoning modifications are being prepared. Eliminate conditional uses in neighborhoods that undermine neighborhood stability.

- c. Create zoning "overlay" districts, when requested by affected communities, to regulate special design features that are unique to an area or enforce requirements that are more rigorous than those included in the underlying zoning regulations.
- d. Create a local historic preservation-enabling ordinance for the City of Vero Beach that allows neighborhoods, areas, or individual buildings and sites to request designation as a historic district. This will facilitate the preservation of significant historic buildings and districts.
- e. Create a training program for City officials -- elected officials, appointed commissioners, and staff members-- to inform them regarding the policy and enforcement ramifications of the Vision Plan and accompanying public policy changes.
- f. Conduct a public workshop or workshops on an annual basis to gain input regarding vision planning issues and implementation in Vero Beach. This public input may be used to amend or update the strategies on a regular basis.
- g. Coordinate with Indian River County with regard to vision planning and subsequent zoning or regulatory modifications.