

## **Deerfield Beach Northwest Area Second Community Workshop Summary**

### **Introduction**

On Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Florida Atlantic University Master of Urban and Regional Planning students alongside Deerfield Beach Planning staff hosted the second Northwest Area Community Planning Workshop. The meeting, part of the Planning Project capstone class taught by Dr. Louis Merlin, came about after months of coordination with senior planning staff Eric Power and Steven Graham at the City of Deerfield Beach. Together, they selected a study area geographically bounded by SW 10th Street to the south, the Gulf Stream to the North (just to the south of SW 18th Street in Boca Raton), The Florida Turnpike to the west, and Military Trail to the east. The first of these meetings occurred roughly one month prior on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in which the project's aim was to present the existing conditions observed from the planning students to the public and note any feedback on these findings given from the community as well as note any recommendations. The purpose of this meeting was to then present the issues and opportunities of the site with the existing conditions and first community workshop feedback in mind. This workshop was conducted via Zoom due to concerns over COVID-19, as was the case in the first workshop.

### **The Presentation**

After general introductions, housekeeping rules were established for the operation of the meeting. The session was recorded for academic and civil purposes by Florida Atlantic University's School of Urban and Regional Planning and the City of Deerfield Beach. Attendees were muted until the breakout group portion of the presentation, and a text chat box was operational for any questions or concerns attendees had during the presentation. The presentation's agenda covered the context of the process leading up to this workshop, the vision statement of the project, the issues and opportunities devised since the last meeting, the

recommendations map, the recommendations themselves, the breakout group portion of the workshop, and the next steps to be taken after the conclusion of this meeting.

The vision statement of this project is as follows: To bring a lush and eclectic entertainment district experience to Deerfield Beach, with exciting retail and unique, local dining options set amidst the City's lovely local assets. The intent of the project is to provide this northwestern section of Deerfield Beach with a community structure that allows recreational and economic opportunities. Parks, diverse lifestyle programming, public spaces, and improved connectivity across a variety of travel options are all at the heart of this project. The recommendations suggested by the team ultimately work toward this goal and are framed around several planning principles identified by the team. These principles include calming traffic through roadway design, connecting people through improved development patterns and access, programming and defining spaces through public and private mechanisms, attracting economic development, and planning for sustainability through community funding and engagement. The issues and opportunities and recommendations portions of the presentation were structured around these principles.

Next was the issues and opportunities portion of the workshop. In terms of traffic and transportation, park access was identified as being poor, public transportation lacking in access and quality, pedestrian and cyclist conditions were identified as being poor, and the area often experiences heavy traffic resulting in neighborhood cut throughs. Residents have also expressed a lack of community programming, in addition to a lack of safety in regard to Quiet Waters Park. The clashing architectural styles throughout the area was also identified as being a detriment to establishing a strong sense of place. In terms of economic development residents expressed a concern with the lack of retail and unique dining options, which mirrors the decline in jobs in the industry. Management positions have also declined. Generally, unemployment rates and median incomes are lower in the southern half of the subject area compared to the north. In terms of planning for sustainability, park maintenance was identified as being inadequate as well as in regard to workforce housing options.

The recommendations portion of the presentation presented general solutions to improve upon the issues and opportunities as well as the planning principles mentioned previously in the workshop. This portion also included the polling sections in which attendees voted on how they received these ideas in real time. To start, the calming traffic and connecting people recommendations were given. These recommendations included: Improve multi-modal access to Quiet Waters Park, increase mobility through public transit funding, improve bus station conditions, create interior streets behind commercial developments, divide blocks and add pedestrian crossings at Hillsboro & Powerline, and to utilize proven traffic mitigation strategies, especially within neighborhoods. Of the eight votes counted, the majority of these recommendations were received favorably, with only the creation of streets behind commercial development and dividing blocks receiving 13% unsatisfactory votes.

As for place making and community identity, the recommendations included: Appoint a body to create public space programming, create programs to cater to growing young adult population, reorient adjacent commercial development toward Quiet Waters Park, and to introduce design guidelines to new development, redevelopment, and refurbishment projects. Out of the eleven votes counted on these recommendations, the vast majority of voters were pleased with the recommendations, with 3% being unsatisfied with the appointing of a public space programming body, and 9% being unsatisfied with the introduction of design guidelines.

The recommendations for the economic development of the area are as follows: Leverage unique assets to attract new commercial investment, redevelop existing commercial areas and introduce mixed-use zoning, implement an “Economic Empowerment Element” within the city’s comprehensive plan, provide mixed commercial-industrial land uses by rezoning Quiet Waters Business Park, and to invest in public-infrastructure improvements to attract jobs and promote walking and biking. Of the nine votes counted, the vast majority were satisfied with the recommendations, with the only negative votes seen being 11% on the issue of redeveloping existing commercial areas and introducing mixed-use zoning.

The last set of recommendations given were on the topic of sustainability and community health. The recommendations on this topic are as follows: Fund parkspace

maintenance and create long term plans for upkeep and renovation, dedicate a percentage of all new housing development to affordable and workforce housing, promote housing programs from the Housing Authority and Subsidy programs, and to promote policies and practices that create affordable and workforce housing. **ADD FEEDBACK ONCE MERLIN RESPONDS HERE.**

## **Breakout Groups**

After the recommendations were provided and the voting closed, the final breakout group portion of the presentation began. From here, students on the project split into five separate breakout groups, each addressing a main topics yet also collected any comments, concerns, and answered as much about any topic as they could. These groups included Transportation, Housing & Schools, Economic Redevelopment, Recreation, and Redevelopment. Attendees stated which groups they wished to be present in based on where their primary interest in the project thus far lies. The Transportation group consisted of one longtime resident of the area as well as Commissioner Todd Drosky. Concerns about the cost vs. demand feasibility of the bus shelter improvements was discussed, potential cooperation issues with the county regarding improvements to Quiet Waters Park was addressed, reduction of speed limits of the Hillsboro & Powerline intersection area, and how to kickstart economic development in the area were all discussed.

As for the Housing & Schools group the Assistant City Manager of the City of Deerfield Beach, Angelia Adediran was the guest of this breakout group. Over the course of the session they discussed workforce housing, making aesthetic improvements to Quiet Waters Park, noise concerns of a fully utilized Quiet Waters Park, the development of the NW section of the Hillsboro & Powerline intersection, improvements to school technologies, community programming with the goal of engagement and entrepreneurship/mentorship programs, a community center, and an amphitheater component to Quiet Waters Park.

The Redevelopment group consisted of two members of the community as well as the director of Deerfield Beach Planning & Development Services, Eric Power. This group expressed that they do not have a problem with the way Quiet Waters Park currently is. They also

expressed concerns with redeveloping the Quiet Waters Business Park, as there are many independent owners that would have to be convinced to sell. The Hillsboro corridor was identified as being unsightly, with a desire to emulate SW 18<sup>th</sup> St. in Boca Raton being made. Efforts to connect Constitution Park to Century Village, as well as an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant connection to the neighboring farmer's market were discussed. Finally, programming public events to be less car dependent was identified as a concern.

### **Closing Information**

The presentation closed with the mentioning of a third and final workshop to be held in December before the end of the FAU fall semester. The date of this workshop has since been scheduled on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. Any questions that may have arisen after the workshop can be directed to Dr. Merlin's FAU email: [imerlin@fau.edu](mailto:imerlin@fau.edu). The project team has also developed a project website in which those who are interested in the project can visit for information, graphics, and updates to the project. This website can be found at <https://elyn2017.wixsite.com/deerfieldnwplan>.