



# Fort Myers Waterfronts Florida Partnership



City of Fort Myers  
September 2010



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## *Executive Summary*

In 2009, the City of Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) applied to the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for the designation of downtown Fort Myers as a Waterfronts Florida Partnership Community. The City was officially designated as a Waterfronts Community on August 26, 2009. The ceremony took place during the regularly scheduled CRA meeting with over one hundred members of the public in attendance.

Prior to its application, the City had hired a team led by Acquest Realty Advisors to create a financially and spatially feasible master plan and development strategy for the downtown riverfront area. This area was chosen because with the exception of the Yacht Basin and the commercial crabbers who use the boat ramp, the land along the river remains underutilized and unappreciated the majority of the week, unless an event is held in Centennial Park or in conjunction with Harborside Event Center.

The community's application to the DCA for designation as a Waterfronts Community and its first year of participation in the program overlapped with the City's efforts to master plan its downtown riverfront area. Since the Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program (WFPP) is designed to provide intensive technical assistance and limited financial assistance to its communities, Fort Myers was encouraged to widen its planning efforts from focusing solely on the large-scale, long-term projects identified in Acquest's master plan to also include small-scale, short term projects which address each of the four WFPP priority areas. The four priority areas include maintaining public access, preserving and protecting environmental and cultural resources, economic revitalization and hazard mitigation.

In response to this underutilization, the community has put great effort into creating a new vision and direction for this forgotten treasure of a riverfront. The creation of Acquest's *2009 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan* included multiple opportunities for community input during the period from January 2009 to August 2009. These opportunities were in the form of steering committee and stakeholder meetings, public charrettes, council workshops, and a two-day design workshop that dealt with questions such as: what would the community like to see on the river, what would they like to preserve, what activities/uses would bring them down to the river, and what concerns did community members have about the impacts of future development.

In truth, the planning process actually began in 2001 when the City engaged the internationally acclaimed architect and urban planner Andres Duany to create an updated master plan for Downtown redevelopment district. The plan proposed various site specific projects to kick-start the revitalization process such as new street reconfigurations; new streetscape standards; a "smart code" to formally integrate New Urbanist design principles into the City's land development regulations; and a land use

designation system based on the Transect planning model. Duany's plan was created and adopted as the new Downtown redevelopment plan in April 2003. It recommended activating the riverfront with expanded commercial, hotel, convention and public open space opportunities.

Following the success of many of Duany's ideas, the City hired the Acquest team to more fully develop the concepts in the *2003 Downtown Plan* into a comprehensive development plan and strategy. The end result of the community's more recent planning efforts, Acquest's *2009 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan*, was conceptually approved by the City Council in September 2009. The plan's recommendations included: the redesign of Centennial Park with an expanded riverwalk and pedestrian-inviting harborfront, an expanded convention facility, the addition of a new luxury hotel, the creation of a water detention basin which brings the water back to the historic river banks, and a public pier and docking facility. Prior to being designated as a Waterfronts community, Fort Myers began talking with the WFPP coordinators in April 2009, which was still early enough in the community visioning process with Acquest that the coordinators could guide our efforts. By inquiring which stakeholders were actively involved in the process, they were able to recognize any shortfalls and encourage us to round out the list of stakeholders involved in the process.

### **2010 Downtown Plan**

Since the *2009 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan* was a continuation of Duany's *2003 Downtown Plan*, the City chose to combine the two plans into one document, which would then become the new redevelopment plan for the entire Downtown district. A large portion of the WFPP grant funds were used to reimburse the CRA for services provided by Johnson Engineering, a sub consultant on the Acquest team, to merge the two plans into one amended redevelopment plan for the Downtown district. There was much deliberation between Johnson and the CRA about the best way to approach this task. The first plan of action was to omit the sections of Duany's Plan which had either been completed or which had been inadvertently duplicated. Trying to edit the plan in InDesign proved to be an unwieldy task and the planner felt that it compromised the integrity of Duany's plan as well if pieces were omitted. The route finally chosen was to include Duany's entire plan in one tab and Acquest's plan in a second tab. The CRA worked with the Johnson to create craft an introduction for the combined plan which explained the process the City went through with Acquest as well as the progress that had been made on the Duany plan leading up to this new riverfront development plan. On pages where Duany's broad recommendations had been refined by Acquest, text boxes were inserted into Duany's plan to make the reader aware that they should check the second tab for new recommendations before designing their project.

Amending the Downtown redevelopment plan to include Acquest's recommendations was critical to the CRA since tax increment funds (TIF) can only be spent on projects and uses identified in the community redevelopment plan. The merged document,

which has become known as the *2010 Downtown Plan*, went before the City's Historic Preservation Commission in September 2009, the Planning Board and then the CRA in February 2010 and then received final approval from the City Council on April 19, 2010.

### **Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map Amendments**

Proceeding at approximately the same time have been revisions to the City's Comprehensive Plan. Broadly, the City's revisions streamline the land-uses across the City. The amendment included a complete rewrite of the Future Land Use Element to create new land use classifications and a complete update of the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) based on the new classifications. The rewrite reduced the number of land-use designations from 28 to 10 and provided for more intensive development along major corridors to create conditions favorable to public transportation and remove barriers to redevelopment.

During the process of amending the Downtown redevelopment plan, Johnson Engineering was also asked to identify any places where projects recommended in the 2009 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan were in conflict with the City's land development code, Comprehensive Plan or FLUM. Johnson determined that the recommended height for the new hotel was, in fact, taller than that which could be permitted. After this discover, the Implementation team discussed this conflict and came to the conclusion that while the City was in the process of revising the Comprehensive Plan and FLUM, a new overlay could be created allowing for a height of 12-stories for a hotel built adjacent to the convention center.

Since a typical second year activity for a Waterfronts Community would be to incorporate a community's vision into its comprehensive plan, Fort Myers' first year activities of amending the Downtown redevelopment plan and revising the City's Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Element (FLUE) dovetail nicely with the objectives of the WFPP. The vision plan provides direction for additional revisions to respond to all four Waterfronts priority areas. The FLUE amendment continues to evolve as the City's responds to state's feedback.

### **Vision Plan**

Fort Myers has seen two very active committees develop out of the WFPP process. There is the Implementation Team which meets bi-weekly to oversee the large-scale projects recommended by Acquest such as the water detention basin, recruiting an hotelier, and applying for a variance from the South Florida Water Management District for the finished floor elevation of the proposed buildings. There is also the Partnership Committee which meets monthly and has been charged with creating a vision Plan. The Committee started with identifying small-scale, short-term projects in which the community can participate and directly benefit. From there, they created the Fort Myers Vision Plan which provides the history of the City, its efforts to revitalize the waterfront and includes the goals, objectives and strategies for the community as well as an implementation plan identifying the various steps necessary to achieve those

goals.

## **Outcome**

### **Public Access**

Public access to the waterfront has always been a major concern of the City Council and the community. Allowing for low-rise development with visible river view corridors is a priority of the Partnership Committee and Acquest development team. Following the recommendations of Duany, Council awarded bonus density to those high-rise developers agreeing to provide a riverwalk between their development and the river. They also voted against selling a section of land along the waterfront to WCI who wanted to build a residential condominium where the boat ramp was located.

During the 2009 planning efforts with Acquest, Council mandated that some type of public promenade must be located between the river and any proposed development. Council also said that if the water detention basin were going to be treated as a water feature, that a public walkway must be designed around the basin so that the public could stroll along the water without having their access blocked by new development. Included in the Goals section of the Vision Plan were two strategies in which the Partnership wanted to ensure that both a public walkway around the water detention basin and a public boulevard supporting diverse uses such as exercise and special events were included in the final design. The Partnership has taken steps to have the program manager participate in all Implementation team meetings to follow the process and ensure these items truly are included in the final design.

Interestingly, the development strategy proposed by Acquest in the amended 2010 Downtown Plan will help return the downtown waterfront area to one of its original roles in the community—a social gathering place and a commercial hub, where people came to purchase food and clothes. Returning the waterfront to such a role would not only fulfill one of the City's goals, but the WFPP's as well.

Other goals included in the Vision include installing benches, streetlights and markers at dead-end streets to provide a pocket park at which the public could come down and enjoy the river. The Partnership will also be working with the Implementation team to ensure that adequate restrooms, parking and signage are incorporated into the final design of this new riverfront development on which the City is working.

### **Protection of the Environmental and Cultural Resources**

Environmental and cultural resource protection is another key priority of the downtown master plan. Protecting our rich waterfront history, architecture and natural environment such as the mangroves is always a major consideration for the development team

Aside from the fact that the City and the CRA just completed a 54-block utility replacement project, which now ensures that the aging sanitary system no longer pollutes the river, efforts are underway to design a stormwater detention basin as part of Acquest's riverfront master plan and development strategy. This project will not only return a portion of the river to Bay Street, its original location, but is critical to improving and protecting the water quality in the Caloosahatchee River. Currently, the stormwater is collected and discharged to the river without any treatment.

In an effort to draw families and other members of the community down to the river, the Partnership Committee has turned its focus on Centennial Park and the riverwalk which runs between the two bridges. The Committee plans to work with students from Edison State College to inventory all forms of life found in and around Centennial Park, to design signs that depict these forms of life and provide an interesting fact about each one. This task will also require an inventory of the signage currently displayed in the park. There are also plans to work with an additional group of students or members of the public to inventory historic markers within the downtown area and identify and new ones which need to be added.

On the cultural side, the CRA together with the City's Community Development Department organized an event called The Anniversary, which celebrates the area's heritage and twentieth anniversary of being designated a national historic district and our twelfth anniversary of being designated a local historic district. The two organizations also worked together to create a "scavenger hunt" of architectural elements located in the core downtown area and a self-guided walking tour on the public art pieces located in the waterfronts area. A second brochure containing a self-guided walking tour of the historic buildings will be finalized in the second year of the program.

The CRA supported the arts by providing a \$50,000 operating subsidy and paying for the annual lease of the Florida Repertory Theatre and by providing a \$30,000 operating subsidy to the Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center. The City and the CRA also just completed a \$12.5 million streetscape project that includes historic bricks and themed lighting as part of the utility replacement project.

### **Hazard Mitigation**

Fort Myers became well acquainted with natural hazards and the damage they can inflict in 2004 when four hurricanes threatened the area starting with Hurricane Charley. Residents lost power, phone service, received damage to their homes and were even lacking water if they happened to live in a rural area where they got their water from a well. Not having been adversely impacted by a hurricane since 1960 when Hurricane Donna visited the area, our community was truly unprepared for such an occurrence. Local residents need to be educated on how to prepare for hurricane season. Workshops could include lessons on how to pre-cut plywood for one's home, how to recognize a diseased tree, boater preparedness, and business continuity.

The City falls under the Lee County Local Mitigation Strategy. The Lee County Local Mitigation Strategy is currently being updated. This vision plan affirms the partnership's commitment to participate in the current update of the plan as well as any future updates. Currently, the only project within the downtown area included in the Local Mitigation Strategy's project list is wind retrofits for the Edison and Ford Winter Estates. The partnership will recommend additional projects for inclusion in the Local Mitigation Strategy as necessary to address hazard mitigation needs in the downtown.

Additionally, as part of a broader attempt to protect historical resources through integrating historical preservation into hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness, the partnership will also work with the county to make sure that the inventory of historically significant resources in the Local Mitigation Strategy is comprehensive and that the Emergency Operations Center has sufficient information regarding the condition of local historically significant resources for their operations.

Hazard mitigation concerns are also expressed in the community's plans to enhance local public access to the waterfront. This vision plan expresses the partnership's support of the City's planned stormwater detention basin which will improve stormwater conditions in the downtown area.

### **Enhancing the Viable Traditional Economy**

Enhancement of the viable traditional economy is an important key to the success of the Fort Myers downtown waterfront. Making it more attractive to the public will allow it to draw more interest in the area from both locals and visitors, thus, assisting in the stimulation of Fort Myers' existing downtown economy. Making the public space more programmable for special events will assist in drawing more people to the downtown destination. Expanding the convention center will also serve as an economic stimulus and anchor to the waterfront.

Through the vision planning exercises, the Partnership Committee has also identified a need to integrate public access concerns and cultural and natural resource preservation into the CRA's promotional efforts. Every year, the CRA spends thousands of dollars on marketing, subsidizing the businesses, and organizing special events as part of its business retention and recruitment efforts. The projects proposed in the Fort Myers Vision Plan related to economic revitalization include: distributing information to the public concerning boater amenities, installing markers which identify historical points of interest and urban palm tree specimens, distributing brochures containing self-guided walking tours, and supporting and organizing special events.

A portion of the grant funds were used for a series of advertisements in the Happenings Magazine in which the downtown River District is promoted as an "event destination." In order to be easily recognizable, the general appearance of the page remains the

same each month while the information changes. The CRA chose this route not only to brand the River District as an event destination, but so the public would recognize these ads as a reliable source to which they could turn to see what was going on that weekend. Finding this approach successful, the CRA used a similar format for the holidays placing an advertisement in the Florida Weekly, which listed a whole calendar of events for the month. The public could then save this section of the paper and reference it throughout the month.

Other marketing efforts included Currents, a quarterly newsletter produced by the CRA, which was designed to make people aware of all the progress being made in the downtown area. Grant funds were used to insert the Fall 2009 newsletter into the Florida Weekly newspaper. This issue contained stories on Fort Myers' designation as a Waterfronts community and on progress of the community's work with Acquest to develop a strategy for development of the riverfront. However, the most successful promotion to date has been the creation of a map showing all the locations of all the businesses in the downtown along with a listing of their phone numbers and hours. Grant funds were used to print 21,000 of these maps, which have been distributed with the help of businesses and organizations throughout the community. The maps were placed in the library system, Lee Memorial Hospital, the county's jury rooms, the locals Edison Ford Winter Estates, surrounding hotels and all of the businesses in the area.

In concert with the CRA's advertising and event efforts, the City hired the firm of Crossroad Consulting Services to complete an economic and fiscal impact analysis of the proposed *2009 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan*. What Crossroads found was that the proposed master plan provides a unique opportunity to better serve the needs of local residents as well as to generate significant economic activity in downtown Fort Myers and Lee County. Crossroads reported that:

- Construction activities of the total development project are estimated to generate \$376.5 million in total spending in Lee County, of which approximately \$281.4 million is estimated to occur in the City;
- The spending is estimated to support 3,030 full and part-time jobs and create \$127.7 million in personal earnings in Lee County, of which 2,250 jobs and \$95.4 million in personal earnings are estimated to occur in the City during the construction period;
- On-going operations of the proposed development project are estimated to generate approximately \$75.9 million in incremental new total spending which could support 780 full and part time jobs and create \$25.2 million in personal earnings at the county level;
- The development project is estimated to generate new total spending of \$66.0 million in the City of Fort Myers and would support 680 jobs and generate approximately \$21.7 million in personal earnings; and

- Annual incremental new tax revenues generated from on-going operations of the overall redevelopment project are estimated to be approximately \$1.3 million at the City level, \$889,000 in Lee County and \$2.2 million at the State level. The majority (84%) of fiscal benefits result from on-going operations of proposed elements in Phase 1 of the master plan.

Grants funds were applied to the costs of the economic impact study. The results of the study were important to show the community and the elected officials that Acquest's master plan and development strategy are economically viable. Since Fort Myers and the WFPP share the goal of revitalizing and preserving the working waterfront, it is imperative to show that the development plan is economically feasible and worthy of the public dollar that will be need to be invested to get the revitalization started. Acquest believes that once the City starts construction of the water detention basin, that the hotel company will recognize the City's commitment and be ready to start negotiations.

### **Methodology**

As mentioned above, extensive community involvement has been utilized in development of the downtown riverfront project. In the fall of 2008, the City created the Riverfront Steering Committee to oversee and guide the riverfront redevelopment efforts. The committee consisted of the CRA Executive Director, the Chairman of the Fort Myers Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board, the City Manager, the Council person from the downtown ward, the Dockmaster, Public Works Director, Harborside Event Center Director, a downtown business owner, a downtown property owner, a member of the Conference and Convention Council and the Chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The Riverfront Steering Committee created a scope which would be used in a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to select a developer led team to prepare a comprehensive master plan and development strategy for the riverfront. After submittals from the RFQ were received, the steering committee reviewed the submittals together and ranked them. City Council and the steering committee heard the presentations from the top three teams and selected the team led by Acquest Realty Advisors. In 2009, the City contracted with Acquest Realty Advisors and the firm's partners to apply the New Urbanist principles established in the *2003 Downtown Plan* to create a more detailed master plan and development strategy for the riverfront area in partnership with Riverfront Steering Committee.

### **January 2009 Charette Series**

Acquest Realty Advisors started the public participation process by seeking community input during a three day charette series held from January 20 – 22, 2009. The three-day working session included fact finding and development of a vision for the Downtown

Riverfront Master Plan. The team sought input from the steering committee, the City Council, local landowners, County staff, the tourism community, the retail community, City staff, and citizens of the community which came in response to an advertisement in the paper. A summary of the information shared is shown below. This list represents holistic viewpoints that the citizens of Fort Myers believe are important for their waterfront.

- ❑ Waterfront is currently not a destination for visitors or residents
  - Is nice looking, but does not draw many users
  - Lacks activity and attraction such as a good restaurant/bar
- ❑ Yacht Basin
  - Well run clean, safe marina with over 200 slips
  - Generates revenue for the City
  - In the middle of a major \$4 million renovation program
  - Percentage of live aboard use is significant
  - Is not integral to downtown
  - Working on improving water quality issues
- ❑ Commercial Docks
  - Occupy a large area of river edge but have only limited use for river cruises
  - No commercial fishing and very limited recreational charter fishing
  - Limited other commercial uses
- ❑ Boating
  - Speed reduction zones imposed for manatee protection significantly increase travel time to the beach areas by boat
- ❑ Centennial Park
  - Is an event park, with very little daily use when there are no events
  - Is not well designed for event use
  - Area east of US 41 bridge is visually separated from the river by mangroves
- ❑ Utility Services
  - Municipal utility services can meet development needs
  - Code requires special stormwater management
  - Some storm sewers discharge within the yacht basin, possibly contributing to water quality issue

### **March 2009 Charette Series and Open Design Studio**

The Acquest team returned to Fort Myers in March and held a second series of charettes along with an open design studio from March 24 - 26, 2009. This Acquest visit included substantial public involvement with round the clock (day and evening) public input sessions as well as an open design studio during which any member of the public was welcomed to the studio to come see where the project was headed and provide feedback. One of the purposes of the design workshop was to answer questions such as: what would the community like to see on the river, what would they like to preserve, what activities/uses would bring them down to the river, and what concerns did

community members have about the impacts of future development. In addition to meeting with the Riverfront Steering Committee, members of the Acquest team met with representatives from such groups as Art of the Olympians, the boating community, several large event organizers, the Imaginarium and the Southwest Florida Historical Museum. At the end of the three days, the Acquest team presented their concepts to the City Council and the community during a council workshop in order to gather additional feedback concerning the direction the project was headed.

### **2009 Riverfront Development Plan**

The end result was the Riverfront Development Plan which was conceptually approved by the City Council in September 2009. The plan's recommendations included: the redesign of Centennial Park with an expanded riverwalk and pedestrian-inviting harborfront, an expanded convention facility, the addition of a new luxury hotel, the creation of a water detention basin which brings the water back to the historic river banks, and a public pier and docking facility.

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, the *2009 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan* was subsequently merged into the *2003 Downtown Plan* to create the *2010 Downtown Plan*. This amended plan went before the City's Historic Preservation Commission in September 2009 and the Planning Board in February 2010, both of which are made up of citizens. The Plan also went to the CRA Board in February 2010, was the subject of a City Council Workshop on April 5, 2010, and received final approval from the City Council on April 19, 2010.

### **The 2010 Visioning Process**

Utilizing the community input collected during the 2009 planning process and gathered during presentations of the 2009 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan to large groups and organizations as well as from one-on-one meetings the CRA staff held with individuals and small groups, the Partnership Committee identified goals and objectives for the waterfront area. The Partnership Committee members were chosen so that they could represent many segments of our community. Examples of the Committee member's background and interests include residents, property and business owners in the downtown area, educators, parents, boaters, and historic preservationists.

As mentioned earlier, since the Acquest plan focuses on the large-scale projects, the visioning conducted by the Partnership focused on identifying small-scale projects which could be completed with the help of the community. The visioning process addressed each of the four priority areas for the Waterfronts program as discussed earlier in the report.

## ***Revitalization Indicators***

Revitalization Indicators	(Type dates of reporting here)		
Number of Active Volunteers	98		
Volunteer Time (in hours)	993		
Volunteer Time (in dollars)	16,881		
Citizen Donations/ Contributions (\$)	300		
Public Funds Invested (\$)	530,699		
Private funds Invested (\$)	13,000		
Strategic Initiatives Accomplished (write out each initiative and date accomplished)	See Outcome Section above		
Total Number of Public Access points (incl. marinas w/50% or more first-come, first-served access)	<b>Motorized Boat Access</b>	<b>Non-motorized Boat Access</b>	<b>Beach/River Access Points</b>
	1	1	1

### **Descriptions of Indicators:**

Number of Active Volunteers	Total number of active volunteers that contributed time to activities associated with the WFP during this period.
Volunteer Time (in hours)	Total number of volunteer hours contributed to WFP activities during this period.
Volunteer Time (in dollars)	Total amount of volunteer hours estimated in dollars. Equals total volunteer hours X dollar rate value of volunteer's time.
Citizen Donations/ Contributions (\$)	Total citizen donations/contributions of supplies, equipment, rental space, misc. expressed in an approximate dollar amount.
Public Funds Invested (\$)	Total amount of public dollars invested in or around the Waterfronts Florida target area; including grant funds and infrastructure projects, etc.
Private funds Invested (\$)	Total amount of private dollars invested (developments, businesses) in or around the Waterfronts Florida target area or towards Partnership activities; this provides information on the level of increased economic activity resulting since designation.
Strategic Initiatives Accomplished (write out each initiative/strategy and date accomplished)	"Strategic Initiative" means any planning element that a community determines need to be achieved in order to reach revitalization goals. (Reference vision plan goal, objective or strategy number, if applicable).
Total Number of Public Access points in Waterfront Area (incl. marinas w/50% or more first-come, first-served access)	Total number of access points in the waterfront area; this will be used a base-line indicator for your community. <u>Motorized</u> = access for boats with motors; <u>Non-motorized</u> = access for canoes, kayaks, etc. <u>Beach/River</u> = access for the general walking/biking public; including piers, parks, and/or maintained street ends.

### **Further Recommendations**

In this last section, we will discuss Fort Myers' experiences during this first year in the Waterfronts Program along with recommendations for how our community can proceed forward.

#### **Fort Myers' Experiences**

As a 20-year old CRA, Fort Myers has found that we are in a different position than many of our sister communities that preceded us. Similar to our sisters, our experience with Waterfronts has been an extremely positive one in which we have made wonderful contacts with other WFPP communities around the state, have received valuable guidance and technical advice from the Waterfronts coordinators and have formed a strong local group of people with a vested interest in the Waterfronts project area who meet regularly to plan for the future.

However, being a well-established CRA that had already been working with the community to develop a vision for the riverfront when designated a Waterfronts Community combined with the facts the CRA and City enjoy a good working relationship and that the CRA has a dedicated funding source in addition to the grant funds has allowed Fort Myers to move quickly through the planning stages. Through this first year in the program, our efforts have progressed to the point where, in conjunction with the City, we have accomplished milestones that most communities would face in their second or third year of the program. The challenge the Fort Myers Waterfronts program is currently facing centers on the fact that because we are further along in our planning process than the typical Waterfronts community, the community is struggling to find projects which qualify for the grant funds in the second year.

At this stage, many of the projects identified in both the Riverfront Development Plan or in the Vision Plan are more design-oriented in nature as opposed to planning. In the future, should communities similar to ours be chosen for the program, it would help them tremendously if there was more flexibility in how the second year funds could be spent. A point worth noting is that even if grant funds were spent on design projects, a well-established CRA with a dependable TIF stream will continue to make progress long after the grant funds have been expended.

**Going forward**

Moving into the second year, Fort Myers will focus on implementing many of the goals and strategies identified in the Implementation Plan. As we embark on each task or project, we will look for opportunities to publicize the Waterfronts Program and recruit kindred spirits. We are proud of our community and its heritage, and only want to continue moving our efforts forward so that the Fort Myers Waterfront can grow into a thriving destination enjoyed by visitors and residents alike.

Efforts in this second year will focus on disseminating information through websites, press releases and publications designed for the Waterfronts program. We will work closely with the college students to expand our historic and wildlife marker programs in Centennial Park as with the downtown business to organize special events which will bring the public down to support their businesses.

Lastly, the Partnership will review the comprehensive plan for how well it responds to the four priority areas and will share suggestions with City staff of any revisions needed to implement the vision.