



# Final Project Report for the Second Year of Fort Myers' Waterfronts Florida Partnership



## City of Fort Myers CRA April 2012



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## **Executive Summary**

The Fort Myers Partnership spent the first year of its designation identifying small-scale, short-term projects in which the community could participate and directly benefit to complement those large-scale, long-term projects already identified in our 2009 Riverfront Plan. The culmination of our first year's efforts was 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.

The focus of the Fort Myers Partnership during its second year of designation has been on implementing a number of the small-scale projects identified in our Vision Plan while chipping away at the large-scale projects. In the case of the Fort Myers Partnership, many of the members participate in at least three or four of the sub-committees.

### ***Coordinating Partnership Activities***

One unexpected finding was that members observed they had less of a need for monthly Partnership meetings during the second year since they were frequently seeing each other in sub-committee meetings. They found the real work and decisions were being made on the sub-committee level rather than the Partnership level. This most likely resulted from the fact that the majority of Partnership members are CRA or City employees and so many of the Vision Plan's recommendations have been woven into their work responsibilities.

Where most communities probably use the Partnership meetings as an opportunity for members to receive updates on the committees with which they do not participate, Fort Myers has not experienced that need in the same way since the Partnership members participate in so many of the sub-committees together and in areas which coincide with their regular jobs. Interestingly, even the Partnership members who do not work for the City or CRA are working on projects which frequently coincide with their own business interests. For example, one Partnership member who used to work for Lee Trust has since opened her own tour business, featuring historic tours of downtown as well as ghost tours. So any work she does on the historic side supports her business as well as the Partnership.

### **Project Implementation**

Below is a list of the goals, objectives and strategies on which the Fort Myers Partnership has made progress on during our second year in the Waterfronts program.

#### **PUBLIC ACCESS**

Public access to the waterfront continues to be a major concern of the City Council and the community. During the 2009 planning efforts with Acquest Realty Advisors, 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.

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.

**Goal 2:** Preserve public access to the water, continuously at the water’s edge and from as many inland points as possible.

**Objective PA-2.1:** Support the creation of a public boulevard along Edwards Drive and a stormwater detention basin to preserve public pedestrian and visual access to the river as proposed in the 2010 Downtown Plan.

*Strategy PA-2.1.1: Ensure that the public boulevard included in the 2010 Downtown Plan supports diverse uses such as special events, exercise, etc. through participation in the bi-weekly Implementation Meetings.*

*Strategy PA-2.2.2: Support the creation of a public walkway around the new stormwater detention basin. Ensure through participation in the bi-weekly Implementation Meetings that there will be a suitable area from which the public can enjoy the view.*

Update: During the design phase for the detention basin and the surrounding public area, the Implementation Team met on multiple occasions with the various event organizers in our community to ensure that the necessary infrastructure was incorporated into the project. The design includes public walkways around the detention basin, shade canopies, lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and artwork. The special events discussions were instrumental in identifying such details as the best location for special event parking, hose bibs, electrical connections and maintenance of traffic during construction.

The committee is currently working on identifying funding for a fountain as well as NEA grants for the artwork.

**Objective PA-2.2:** Establish and/or maintain adequate facilities at public access points, such as restrooms, parking and signage identifying launching points, etc.

*Strategy PA-2.2.4: Utilize the wayfinding signage created for the Streetscape Project and ensure proper placement of directional signage to public access points such as the Yacht Basin, the ramp and parking for Centennial Park.*

Update: A design for the wayfinding signage has been approved by the CRA and City Council during our Utility Replacement and Streetscape Project. A

committee of volunteers identified signage locations radiating out from downtown to the interstate on three of the City's major roadways. The City is currently in the process of identifying funding for the first phase of the wayfinding plan which includes directional signs to public parking areas.

**Objective PA-2.3:** Enhance public access opportunities at city-owned street ends.

*Strategy PA-2.3.2: Create a design scheme that utilizes already purchased materials to create viewing platforms at select city owned street ends.*

Update: The Partnership created a design for the street ends during Year 1. This project is still important to the City, however, funding is a challenge. The Committee is trying to locate a grant to help fund this project.

**Objective PA-2.4:** Ensure the downtown riverfront area is hospitable to boating populations

*Strategy PA-2.4.1: Ensure that planned service directories described in "Enhancing the Waterfront Community" include information on the availability of public transportation, hurricane shelters and other services required by transient boaters.*

Update: The Partnership distributed boaters guides and other publications provided by Lee County to the local marinas, the library, the County's jury room and City Hall.

*Strategy PA-2.4.3: Monitor pedestrian and boating traffic peaks and work with public transportation services to support the increase of public transportation services during seasonal peaks.*

Update: The Partnership requested that Lee County monitor and alter their bus routes based on seasonal peaks.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PROTECTION**

Environmental resource protection is another key priority of our Vision Plan. Protecting our natural environment such as the mangroves and the river has continued to be an important consideration for the Partnership. The stormwater detention basin 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 at all, leading the detention basin to be a major step for the City towards protecting our environment.

**Goal 1: Protect and improve the water quality of the Caloosahatchee River.**

**Objective ERP-1.1:** Promote recycling to residents and businesses in the downtown riverfront area.

*Strategy ERP-1.1.1: Utilize the City's website, e-newsletter and television channel to advertise recycling opportunities, such as the Yacht Basin's recycling program for batteries, antifreeze and used oil, Starbucks's program for old cell phones, and Publix's program to recycle Styrofoam and plastic bags as well as the centralized recycling receptacles at Harborside.*

Update: Slides publicizing the available recycling options have been created and are currently in rotation on the City's TV channel. They have also been posted on the City's website as well.

*Strategy ERP-1.1.2: Identify a partner to maintain a monofilament recycling receptacle at the downtown boat ramp.*

Update: A Florida Gulf Coast University student has is currently coordinating this project. He is working closely with the City's dockmaster.

## **Goal ERP-2: Protect local wildlife and their habitat.**

**Objective ERP-2.2:** Promote low impact development practices within the downtown riverfront area such as the use of pervious surfaces, rain gardens, and rain barrels.

*Strategy ERP-2.2.1: Establish a display at the Edison Ford Winter Estates to distribute information on the benefits of rain barrel use and other water catchment systems, promoting examples of student painted rain barrels.*

Update: The Edison Ford Winter Estates currently has functioning rain barrels on display. They are attractively painted, which helps the public to see them as functional art. The Estates offer educational material as well as classes on the rain barrels.

*Strategy ERP-2.2.2: Inventory potential brownfield sites and discuss with property owners the effects of brownfield designation focusing on the land surrounding the Yacht Basin complex.*

Update: An inventory has been completed and an area along the riverfront has been officially designated as a brownfield area. The CRA and City have been discussing the economic incentives available through the City's brownfield program with perspective hotel and restaurant operators. The City is currently talking with approximately ten perspective hotel operators and a dozen interested restaurant operators.

*Strategy ERP-2.2.3: Support the creation of a stormwater detention basin called for in the Riverfront Development Plan through participation in bi-weekly meetings of the Implementation Committee.*

Update: Members of the Partnership committee have been actively involved in

the design, permitting and funding of the detention basin. The City Council approved selection of a construction manager for the project along with the gross maximum price. Mobilization for construction began in late March 2012. Weekly construction meetings are held every Wednesday morning at 7 a.m. Partnership members attending those include Saeed Kazemi (Public Works director), Don Paight (CRA director), Rose Rundle (Harborside Event Center general manager), and Kaye Molnar (who has been hired by the city to work with public on this project).

*Strategy ERP-2.2.4: Organize clean up of Centennial Park, Billy's Creek, the Caloosahatchee river banks and portions of the river bottom.*

*Update: This is an ongoing project. In Year 2, the City's dockmaster coordinated several clean-ups with a group of students from Florida Gulf Coast University.*

## **CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION**

Cultural resource protection is another key priority of the Partnership. Protecting our rich waterfront history and architecture will be one of the keys to a thriving, successful downtown in the future. 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.

**Goal CRP-1: Develop framework to promote downtown Fort Myers as a heritage tourism destination.**

**Objective CRP-1.2:** Create a system of historical markers recognizing important historical persons, events and places within the Waterfronts project area.

*Strategy CRP-1.2.1: Make arrangements to acquire pole for marker highlighting location of first cemetery and have it installed recognizing the occasion in a ceremonial event.*

*Update: The installation ceremony restoring the historic marker to its original location was held on June 3, 2011.*

*Strategy CRP-1.2.2: Based on an inventory of existing historical markers in the area, identify additional opportunities to commemorate historically significant places and events.*

*Update: A committee has begun inventorying the existing markers. Conversations have been held with representatives from Edison State about having this be a project for either a student intern or a class one semester.*

**Objective CRP-1.3** Create an information system to showcase the history of the area for visitors.

*Strategy CRP-1.3.1: Create and/or update coordinated print materials*

*including brochures containing self-guided walking tours on public art, historic buildings and locations, ecological information along with audio pod casts highlighting the history of the area that could be listened to as one walked around the River District.*

Update: During Year 1, printed self-guided walking tours brochures were distributed containing information on public art and historic buildings downtown. In Year 2, the information was placed on the City's website. In Year 3, the committee will be combining the self-guided public art and historic tours into one brochure that will go on the web. The committee will also be looking for grant funds to try and create smart phone applications that use GPS and will provide a narrated tour of the downtown.

**Goal CRP-2: Showcase the rich cultural heritage and history of downtown Fort Myers through annual festivals and events.**

**Objective CRP-2.1:** Collaborate with the Lee Trust for Historic Preservation, the Southwest Florida Museum of History, the River District Alliance, the City's Preservation Planner, and other related groups to celebrate the history of the area through annual events.

*Strategy CRP-2.1.1: Create event committee made up of representatives from above organizations to help organize next year's The Anniversary celebration as well brainstorm ideas for new events.*

Update: The Partnership elected to eliminate this objective due to the City's lack of financial capability in supporting this event. Another factor was that the population responded more to nighttime events as opposed to daytime cultural events.

## **PREVENTING LOSSES FROM DISASTERS/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.

**Goal DR-1: Promote community safety in an emergency/disaster situation.**

**Objective DR-1.1:** Educate local residents on how to prepare for hurricane season

*Strategy DR-1.1.1: Contact federal, state, and local emergency management agencies and obtain printed materials on emergency preparedness and recovery, including registration forms for evacuation assistance for distribution.*

*Strategy DR-1.1.2: Identify strategic locations throughout the community to post above materials such as City Hall, the Post Office, local marinas, etc.*

Update: The Partnership obtained printed materials regarding emergency

*preparedness form the County and distributed them at the local marinas, yacht basin, city hall, and chamber of commerce.*

*Strategy DR-1.1.6: Encourage a partnership between the city and the county in which they work together to update the Local Mitigation Strategy. Efforts would include characterizing the vulnerability of the downtown area to natural disaster and identifying hazard mitigation project needs in that area.*

*Strategy DR-1.1.7: Encourage the city to adopt the Lee County Post-Disaster Redevelopment Ordinance*

*Update: As part of our Second Year scope, Spikowski Planning Associates was hired to review the City's post disaster policies and recommend changes to be incorporated into the City's comprehensive plan and FLUM. During the process, Mr. Spikowski presented his findings to the City's Planning Board and invited the John Wilson from the county and Dan Trescott from the Regional Planning Council to review the materials and comment.*

**Objective DR-1.2:** Support the work of the Historic Preservation Commission to inventory historic resources in order to better integrate historic resource preservation in the local emergency management process.

*Strategy DR-1.2.2: Support the development of a photo library of historic resources integrate into an inventory system which will help recovery teams identify the extent of a damage following a disaster.*

*Update: Volunteers have started taking photos for the library. Work on this project will continue into Year 3.*

## **ENHANCING THE WATERFRONT ECONOMY**

The Partnership has a lot of synergy going as they work with the City, the CRA and the downtown businesses to activate and promote the riverfront area. The key to the long-term success of the committee's effort will be to make the riverfront a more attractive and inviting place that draws local residents and visitors alike downtown to enjoy the history, arts, culture supporting the local merchants in the process.

**Goal ECON-1: Promote the Fort Myers River District as a destination for dining, historical interest, art galleries, and entertainment.**

**Objective ECON-1.1:** Develop a marketing plan and campaign with a primary emphasis on attracting Lee County residents and a minor emphasis on Collier County residents.

*Strategy ECON-1.1.1: Develop press releases for distribution to local area newspapers and special interest publications.*

*Strategy ECON-1.1.2: Continue to promote the River District restaurants*

through a "Dining Destination" campaign advertised in publications such as *Happenings* and *Gulf Shore Business*.

*Update: This is an ongoing project for our Partnership. However, due to budget constraints, the ad has decreased to 1/4<sup>th</sup> of a page and promotes events, arts and culture, dining, history and shopping.*

*Strategy ECON-1.1.3: Update the brochure that contains a list of the River District businesses and a map showing their locations twice a year.*

*Update: This is an ongoing project. Distribution of the 2011/2012 issue began in November 2012. A new Summer/Fall 2012 issue is being created and distribution is expected to begin at the end of May 2012. The Partnership has been working on streamlining the distribution process in order to get the maps in the hands of the public as quickly as possible.*

*Strategy ECON-1.1.4: Obtain the specialized brochure with information on boater amenities from the County and distribute it at designated locations.*

*Update: The Partnership distributed boaters guides and other publications provided by Lee County to the local marinas, the library, the County's jury room and City Hall.*

*Strategy ECON-1.1.6: Explore feasibility of establishing a trolley service.*

*Update: As part of the City/CRA TCEA study, a trolley service will run from late March to mid-April to determine whether there is a demand for the a downtown trolley circulator.*

**Objective ECON-1.2:** Develop marketing pieces that can be distributed by River District businesses and that give the public a reason to spend additional time in the area.

*Strategy ECON-1.2.1: Create a self-guided walking tour containing all the public art pieces in the River District. Distribute the brochure through the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce, the Edison Ford Winter Estates, the library system, the River District businesses and website.*

*Strategy ECON-1.2.2: Create a self-guided walking tour highlighting historic points of interest within our downtown.*

*Update: The committee is in the process of creating a self-guided tour that combines both the public art and historic buildings. Improvements include modifying the route so that the tour can be taken as a day long journey, as separate public art or historical building tours, or as a point-by-point individual landmark informational piece so that people can look at whatever is already in their immediate vicinity. The revised tour brochure is expected to be completed by Summer 2012.*

**Goal ECON-2: Utilize special events as a business retention tool.**

**Objective ECON-2.1: Utilize special events as a business retention tool.**

*Strategy ECON-2.1.1: Organize special events to be held in the core downtown area so that the general public can support the downtown businesses.*

*Update: The CRA has entered into its second agreement with the River District Alliance (RDA) in which the CRA provides a subsidy of \$110,000. The RDA then determines which events will provide the most benefit to the downtown businesses and uses the subsidy along with money they have raised through sponsorships and dues to organize the desired events.*

*Strategy ECON-2.1.2: Partner with the River District Alliance to identify and organize a second monthly event similar to Art Walk to draw visitors down to the River District.*

*Update: The River District Alliance established Music Walk, which was originally held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month. The event has been successful routinely pulling crowds of 1000 people each month. The event has been changed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month to fall more in line with ArtWalk, which is the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month.*

*Strategy ECON-2.1.3: Identify some small scale events located outside of the local marinas, which would appeal to the marina population.*

*Update: On March 24<sup>th</sup>, the first Fort Myers Boat Parade of Lights was held. The sub-committee had tried to organize this event in time for the Christmas season, but it got off to a slow start.*

**Objective ECON-2.2: Develop a presence on the web.**

*Strategy ECON-2.2.1: Provide technical support to the River District businesses to create their own web page, list their menu, share a video, etc. and list their events on the newly-created [www.myriverdistrict.com](http://www.myriverdistrict.com) website.*

*Update: One of our committee members set up over 100 businesses on the [www.MyRiverDistrict.com](http://www.MyRiverDistrict.com) website.*

*Strategy ECON-2.2.2: Develop a webpage on the CRA's website promoting the Waterfronts Florida Partnership.*

*Update: The Waterfronts webpage has been created on the City's website.*

## **Methodology for Years 3 and 4**

As we have progressed through Year 2, we have found Partnership meetings moving towards a quarterly basis since Partnership members are frequently together in sub-committee meetings and discuss Waterfronts business in the context of those agendas. Typically, if another project comes out of the sub-committee meeting, the group will create an ad-hoc committee just for that one purpose. Samples of ad-hoc committees currently being considered are a soft kayak launch, a fitness trail, or providing a garden club with access to a small section of Centennial Park in order to create a bromeliad garden or something of that nature.

As the Partnership and the community begin Year 3 of our Waterfronts journey, the various sub-committees will continue to play a prominent role in fulfilling Fort Myers' strategic goals and objectives. Fort Myers CRA staff, including Leigh Scrabis, who also serves as the program manager, and Don Paight, will oversee the Waterfronts Program on a daily basis and will ensure that progress continues to be made on Fort Myers' strategic goals and objectives. Active sub-committees, organized by Priority Areas, and their focus for Years 3 and 4 are as follows:

### **Priority No. 1: Public Access**

#### Construction Committee

Weekly construction meetings will be held during the six-eight months the detention basin is under construction. Partnership members attending these weekly meetings will include Leigh Scrabis, Don Paight, Saeed Kazemi, Leif Lustig, Rose Rundle and Kaye Molnar.

#### Implementation Committee

This sub-committee will meet in smaller groups to focus efforts on identifying a company to build the hotel project. Ideally, the developer would build the retail and restaurant space in addition to the hotel. Partnership members working with Acquest and the City include Don Paight, Saeed Kazemi, Rose Rundle and Leigh Scrabis.

This committee will also focus on identifying grants and EB-5 funding opportunities to help construct the remaining phases of the project.

#### Trolley Committee

This sub-committee is in the process of establishing a pilot trolley service for the waterfronts study area. The committee is preparing to conduct a public survey in April 2012 to identify which locations and what type of frequency the community would like to see. Lee County Transit Services has received a grant of approximately \$150,000 to help cover operational cost over a three year period. Partnership members included in this effort include Leigh Scrabis, Don Paight, Saeed Kazemi and Kaye Molnar.

### **Priority No. 2: Hazard Mitigation**

Post disaster efforts

This sub-committee will take the recommendations submitted by Spikowski Planning Associates as part of our Year 2 scope and begin to take the steps to have those recommendations included in the City's comprehensive plan and future land use map elements. Partnership members involved will include Leigh Scrabis and Nicole DeVaughn, who is replacing Jared Beck.

**Priority No. 3: Environmental and Cultural Resource Protection**Sustainability Committee

This sub-committee meets monthly to identify sustainability initiatives that can be implemented on both City and community levels. One of the initiatives on which the group is currently working includes the Water and Energy Conservation Challenge. Partnership members included in this committee are Leigh Scrabis, Leif Lustig and Natalie Dunham.

Library Committee

This sub-committee has been meeting monthly to identify and solve design and engineering plan issues. The groundbreaking ceremony for this project is March 28, 2012. Construction is expected to be completed in December 2013. Partnership members include Don Paight and Nicole DeVaughn.

**Priority No. 4: Economic Revitalization of the Traditional Economy**Marketing efforts

Fort Myers will continue to market the waterfronts study area through advertising in newspapers, magazines and monthly periodicals as well as increasing our presence on the web. Encouraging people to come down and enjoy our historic riverfront area and support the businesses is an important component of our business retention and recruitment efforts. Partnership members will include Natalie Dunham, Rose Rundle and Jerry Miller, a new member joining the committee. Jerry is an active member of the community, involved in the leadership of Riverwatch and assisting our office with the [www.FilmFortMyers.com](http://www.FilmFortMyers.com) and [www.FortMyersBusinessDev.com](http://www.FortMyersBusinessDev.com). Mr. Miller has been very active at trying to get television coverage for the riverfront area. He is currently working on [www.RiverDistrictTV.com](http://www.RiverDistrictTV.com).

Leif Lustig, Partnership member and dock master, will continue to publish his newsletter for the marina.

Special Events

The River District Alliance (RDA) serves as the merchant-led sub-committee organizing special events for the River District. The Fort Myers CRA currently provides \$110,000 per year for the group to use as seed money for their special events. The group matches this with sponsorship money as well as funds contributed by the downtown businesses. Partnership members involved in the RDA include Michael Piggott and Gina Taylor.

### **Using knowledge gained from Urban Waterfronts Conference**

One of the big lessons learned from attending the Urban Waterfronts Conference was about the amount of public participation that occurred in some of the projects highlighted at the conference. Interestingly, this was an area in which our City/CRA actually felt that we had done well since during both the Duany and Acquest planning processes we held public meetings to solicit input.

During the Duany charettes, a total of approximately 1500 people participated in both the large public meetings and smaller charettes. During the Acquest process, attendance decreased to maybe 400 over the course of the three public workshops. It seemed that while the public had been eager to participate in the Duany process, by the time Acquest started planning the riverfront, people felt that they already had shared their thoughts. As a result, the CRA fell into the practice of sharing the information any time an opportunity presented itself, such as a council workshop, an impromptu meeting when someone stopped by the office unexpectedly, etc, but the efforts stopped there.

However, after three Partnership members attended the Urban Waterfronts Conference, it seemed to rededicate the Partnership's efforts to keep the public updated and involved in our riverfront process. Upon returning from the conference, three presentations were made in the month of November to a class of FGCU students, the Southwest Florida chapter of CCIM and the Inland Hotel Association. The presentation to CCIM went so well that Don Paight was asked to be a presenter at the 2012 CCIM Outlook Conference in January. While there was not much of a demand for public speakers in December, twelve speaking engagements were held during the first three months of 2012. Presentations were made to such groups as the Real Estate Investment Society, River Watch, Rotary, the 2012 CCIM Outlook Conference and the Horizon Council.

Going into Years 3 and 4, the Partnership will be continuing efforts to engage and educate the public. As construction is starting on the detention basin, the public's many concerns are coming to light. Their concerns range from the loss of parking to whether the detention basin will become a mud pit or a cesspool during dry season. The Partnership will work closely with the City and CRA to create marketing pieces which can be distributed to the public along with some frequently asked questions for the websites. We also will be changing the message we present at the speaking engagements to address these new concerns as they come to light.

### **Revitalization Indicators**

*All of the numbers below are estimates. Busy season in Fort Myers runs from approximately Thanksgiving to Easter each year. Some of the community's largest events take place in the January through March time frame. Three of the largest events, the Edison Festival of Light (and all of its associated events), ArtFest Fort Myers and the Lee County Reading Festival are organized all year long. Each organization*

*keeps their information somewhat confidential, so it is hard to estimate the actual dollars invested on a private level.*

Revitalization Indicators	(Type dates of reporting here)
<b>Number of Active Volunteers</b>	500
<b>Volunteer Time (in hours)</b>	2000
<b>Volunteer Time (in dollars)</b>	34,000
<b>Citizen Donations/ Contributions (\$)</b>	Unsure since the organizations do not release this.
<b>Public Funds Invested (\$)</b>	530,699
<b>Private funds Invested (\$)</b>	Upwards of \$1,000,000 (The budget for ArtFest alone is approximately \$350,000)
<b>Strategic Initiatives Accomplished (write out each initiative and date accomplished)</b>	<p>ECON-2.1.1.: ArtFest Fort Myers and the Reading Festival are both set up along Edwards Drive and inside Centennial Park. The Edison Festival includes numerous events, many of which are held within the downtown area ranging from First Street to Centennial Park. The Children’s Parade is held throughout the downtown and draws maybe 2000 people and the grand parade runs through the downtown and would have at least 2000-3000 people downtown out of the estimated 25,00 who attend it. Each of these events has a huge impact on the downtown businesses.</p>
	<p>PA-2.1.1, PA-2.1.2 and ERP-2.2.3 Construction plans for a 1.3 acre detention basin and the public space surrounding it were completed. The basin will capture the stormwater runoff from a surrounding 14.9 acre urban area that currently discharges untreated water into the Caloosahatchee River. This \$5.4 million public works project will treat stormwater run-off prior to discharging it into the Caloosahatchee River. The design includes fountains, landscaping, benches, shade structures and an innovative faux bridge which houses a culvert connecting the two sections of the detention basin where they straddle Edwards Drive. Details include a special railing with concrete pedestals that will have the design of a mangrove or underwater scene included in a relief or mosaic tile format. The design also included special features requested by the special event organizers with whom the committee met.</p>
	<p>DR-1.1.1, DR-1.1.6: Spikowski Planning Associates completed their review of the City’s post disaster</p>

	policies and recommended changes to the comp plan and FLUM. Mr. Spikowski worked closely with John Wilson, who heads up Lee County Emergency Management, Judith Hartwell with the Fort Myers Fired Department and Dan Trescott with the SW FL Regional Planning Council.		
<b>Total Number of Public Access points (incl. marinas w/50% or more first-come, first-served access)</b>	<b>Motorized Boat Access</b>	<b>Non-motorized Boat Access</b>	<b>Beach/River Access Points</b>
	1	1	1

**Descriptions of Indicators:**

<b>Number of Active Volunteers</b>	Total number of active volunteers that contributed time to activities associated with the WFP during this period.
<b>Volunteer Time (in hours)</b>	Total number of volunteer hours contributed to WFP activities during this period.
<b>Volunteer Time (in dollars)</b>	Total amount of volunteer hours estimated in dollars. Equals total volunteer hours X dollar rate value of volunteer's time.
<b>Citizen Donations/ Contributions (\$)</b>	Total citizen donations/contributions of supplies, equipment, rental space, misc. expressed in an approximate dollar amount.
<b>Public Funds Invested (\$)</b>	Total amount of public dollars invested in or around the Waterfronts Florida target area; including grant funds and infrastructure projects, etc.
<b>Private funds Invested (\$)</b>	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.
<b>Strategic Initiatives Accomplished (write out each initiative/strategy and date accomplished)</b>	"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).
<b>Total Number of Public Access points in Waterfront Area (incl. marinas w/50% or more first-come, first-served access)</b>	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.