

I. Downtown Vision

The most basic level of the Downtown Plan is its Downtown Vision. In its broadest and most general sense, this amended Redevelopment Plan establishes a long-term vision for Downtown Boca Raton - a plan for the future which reflects not only the development to occur there, but also the activities of the people who will visit, live and work there. A consensus vision for downtown Boca Raton was developed as a result of a Planning Workshop of citizens, downtown property owners and downtown merchants whose report served as the basis for the Action Plan adopted by the Community Redevelopment Agency in January of 1994. This Vision of the Downtown is that of a downtown which is memorable for its design, lush landscaping and mix of public, private and cultural uses. This vision is typified by the following vision elements:

- **Livable:**
 - sensitively scaled
 - comfortable
 - expanded role of residential uses

- **Convenient:**
 - full range of services/amenities
 - ease of access, circulation, parking

- **Choice:**
 - multiple modes of transportation
 - restaurants, shopping , entertainment

- **Connected:**
 - Strongly linked to the larger community by tri-rail, bus and trolley
 - A Strong North/South Linkage with a mid-block location between Federal Highway and Mizner Boulevard encouraged as a private activity
 - Palmetto Park Road - recognized as the major East/West link connecting downtown to Beach/Community

- **Unified Theme:**
 - harmonious leadership
 - consistent message
 - buildings, streets, public spaces of distinctive quality
 - each element of the downtown should be of visionary quality
 - all interests and areas in the downtown and the community as a whole should share in the benefits of redevelopment

These Vision elements are embodied in the Vision Statement and Design Elements provided as Exhibits 1 and 2. In achieving this Vision numerous designs and land use distributions are possible.

The synthesis of these elements produces a theme which can be best expressed by describing the typical day in Downtown Boca Raton in 2005.

The day begins with employees arriving at their destinations by car or transit. The streets will be busy but workers will find the walk from their parking garage pleasant since the streets are lined with lush vegetation. Some workers will walk to work from their downtown residence or adjacent neighborhoods.

Once the day has begun for office workers a new bustle occurs in the shopping areas downtown from Royal Palm Plaza to Mizner Park and along East Palmetto Park Road. Patrons begin arriving at the International Museum of Cartoon Art. Shoppers and patrons are aided in their visit to the downtown by a trolley system that links all areas of Downtown.

At lunch everyone converges on the Sanborn Square Plaza and Mizner Park. A concert announces the beginning of the May Day Fair and a new exhibit at the museum. Office workers and visitors from as far away as Palm Beach are here for this event.

Toward late afternoon some of the downtown employees begin to head home. Many, however, remain for dinner and a movie or a concert at the amphitheater. Many more come from other areas of the region for dinner, shopping, the concert, and relaxing strolls though the Downtown area.

The next day the process begins a new.

The Amended Downtown Plan is about making this day the future for Downtown.

EXHIBIT 1

DOWNTOWN BOCA RATON VISION

Boca Raton is not a "hard edge city." The Downtown needs to reflect this fact and function as the larger community functions. The Downtown should be a community resource -- a "real downtown"; providing a rich mixture of uses, not just office and retail, but a full array of residential, commercial, civic, cultural, and institutional uses linked and orchestrated by a renewed focus on the street and pedestrian experience.

The great cities of the world offer lasting continuity and unexpected joy. It is in the mix of buildings, the unity of the landscape, the tight streets and broad plazas that we derive our notions of beauty of the civilized city. Many of the tests of a city's civility are rather simple ones: Can you walk on the sidewalk? Can you stop for a drink? Is there shade? Is there sun? Can you cross the street? Is there a reason to cross the street?

Some elements which aid in transforming a city from an ordinary workplace to a work of art are these: sidewalks, curbs, trees, hedges, flowers, shops, restaurants, cafes, benches, fountains, lamp posts, awnings, signs. It all goes together.

Streets and open space systems will provide the organizational framework for the Downtown. A strong simple concept for the public spaces will allow for future development in the Downtown to take place while providing flexibility in changing market conditions.

Design a city that is beautiful and people will respect it, but build a city that bows to the lowest common denominator, or disregard the fundamentals of good design, and it will never rise to greatness.