

Community Design Manual

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INTRODUCTION

This Manual is the backbone of the Community Character Plan. Collier County has a wonderful variety of urban and rural settings that should be planned for in different ways. Development in Golden Gate Estates is not the same in type or intensity as that in Naples, nor should it be. Successful development and revitalization in Collier County requires guidelines specifically formulated for these settings.

A map of Collier County has been prepared that identifies six primary types of settlement areas, ranging from urban activity centers to rural crossroads. These areas are defined as existing neighborhoods, new neighborhoods, corridors, activity centers, transitional lands, and rural lands, based on the unique characteristics of distinctive areas of Collier County. For the purposes of this plan, each of Collier's communities can be considered to be in one of these six types of settlement areas.

Collier County's existing growth management plan can be seen as breaking the county into three basic areas: urban, rural, and pre-existing Golden Gate Estates lots. A north-south line generally running a mile east of Collier Boulevard (CR 951) separates the urban designated areas (toward the coast) from the rural areas. This line has held for many years, but its importance is diminishing, in part because many recent developments in the urban area have been built at very low densities. At the same time, Twin Eagles and other proposed developments to the east (in rural areas) have suburban rather than rural characteristics even though their densities are extremely low. These suburban characteristics are not compatible with agriculture, rural communities, or habitat preservation, and they will also conflict with healthy urban development patterns should Collier County grow to the point that these formerly rural areas need to be urbanized.

The zoning tool of choice for implementing the Collier growth man-

agement plan has been the planned unit development, or PUD. This is a catchall zoning classification that replaces compliance with standard regulations with a negotiated approval process that is closely focused on a single development project, rather than on how that project will integrate with adjoining neighborhoods or add to the character of Collier County. The PUD approach has been successful in many ways, but Collier's reliance on this planning tool has cost many other opportunities for creating or ensuring character.

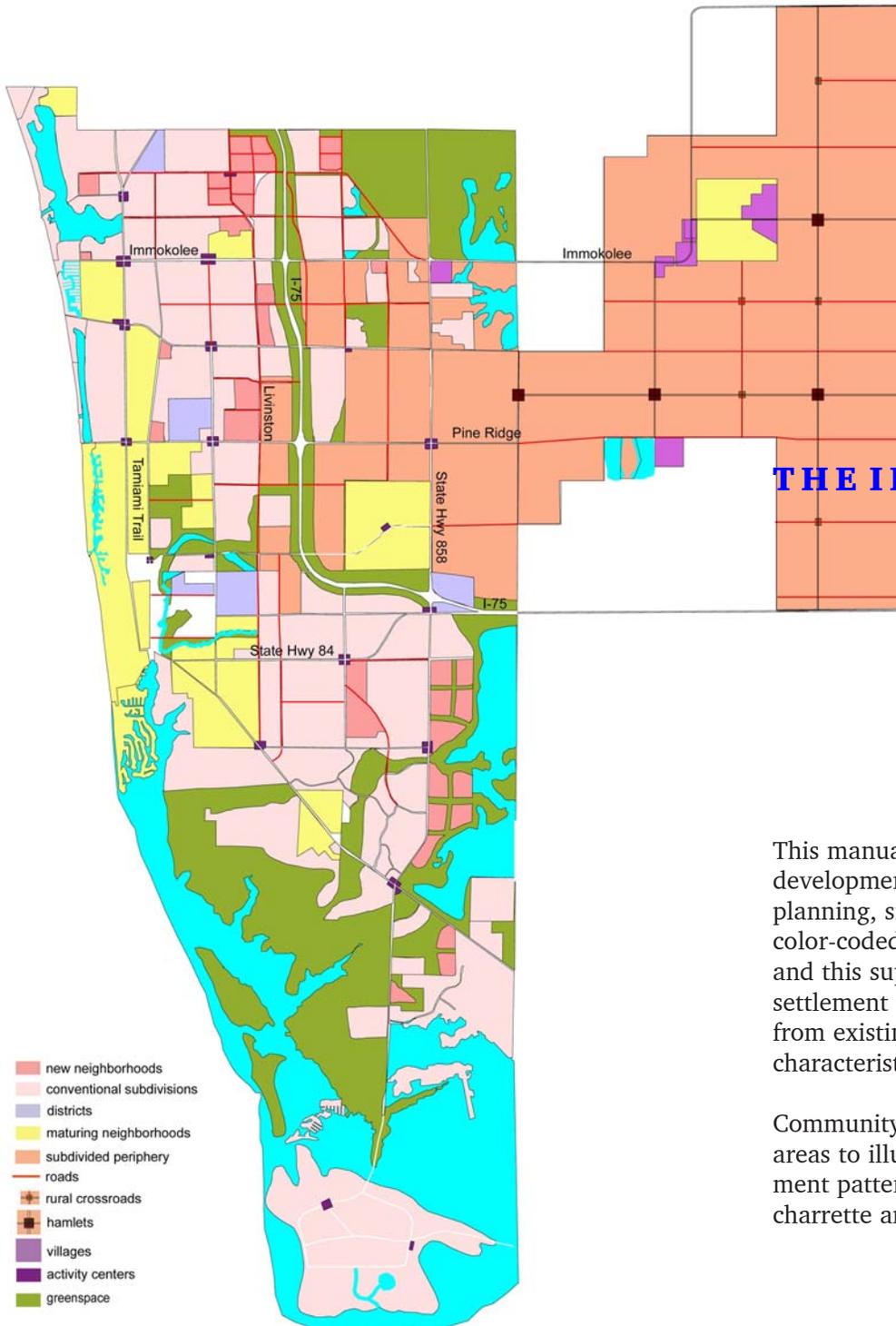
PUD zoning had been viewed as the solution to the failures of rigid conventional zoning, especially its promise of mixing uses in compatible patterns. After 25 years of use in Collier County, it is apparent that the PUD approach has not achieved this promise either, delivering mixed uses only very rarely.

Without clear character guidelines for land at various points along the urban/rural transect, a project-specific PUD negotiation cannot achieve the goal of having each new neighborhood become an important building block that adds to Collier County's constantly improving character.

Rather than viewing the county as being divided simply into urban and rural areas, or as a series of disconnected PUDs, this chapter recognizes the character variations along the entire spectrum or transect of human activities, from the most urban to the most rural. Individual design features have their places at various points along this transect. Even the most useful and beautiful design feature can be used incorrectly if these distinctions are not recognized.

Each settlement pattern illustrated in this chapter contains specific goals for development in these archetypal situations, and is followed by implementation steps that show how to start realizing its goals and designs. The result is a guidebook for creating a more memorable and livable Collier County.





THE ILLUSTRATIVE SETTLEMENT MAP

The goal of this manual is to assist Collier County in enhancing its character by:

*revitalizing maturing neighborhoods,
transforming conventional subdivisions,
growing new neighborhoods,
fixing aging corridors and commercial strips,
growing activity centers, and
evolving the subdivided periphery.*

This manual proposes a new framework for generating character in new development and redevelopment in Collier County, addressing urban design, planning, site design, and architecture. This framework is reflected on a color-coded map of the entire county called the *Illustrative Settlement Map* and this supporting document. Every area in the county is delineated on the settlement as having a particular settlement pattern; these patterns range from existing neighborhoods to rural lands, each exhibiting distinct typical characteristics.

Community input led to the statement of goals and the selection of specific areas to illustrate the preferred settlement patterns. Designs for the settlement patterns were informed by community wide input from the April 2000 charrette and the Community Image Survey.

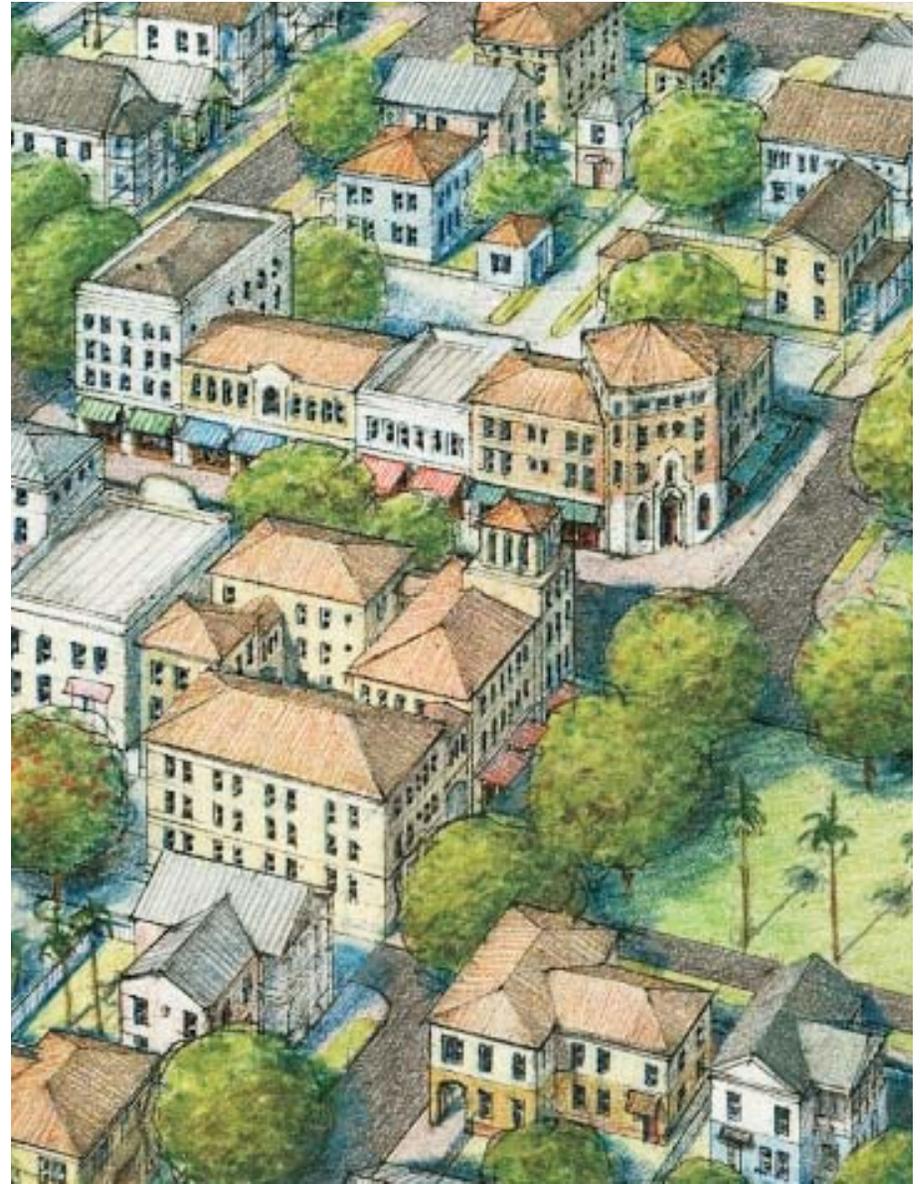
THE IMPROVED MODEL

Collier County must upgrade several aspects of its development patterns to improve character. The primary ingredients in this “new and improved” way of generating character are:

*Great Neighborhoods,
World-Class Streets,
Memorable Centers, and
Evolving the Subdivided Periphery.*

This Manual is a companion to the illustrative settlement map and explains general concepts and illustrates them with detailed case studies. Each chapter includes a primer on fundamental concepts of urban design or related background. Following the primer are one or more case studies based on actual Collier locations. These examples show desirable solutions to common difficulties encountered during the land development process and provide step-by-step implementation guidelines for creating neighborhoods and communities of character.

These examples are not intended to serve as finalized designs for their sites or as precise solutions for other similar sites. Rather they illustrate how the primary ingredients for generating character can be applied in different settings. Many aspects of each example are directly transferable to other sites; others can be interpreted and adapted to achieve similar results in a wide variety of situations.

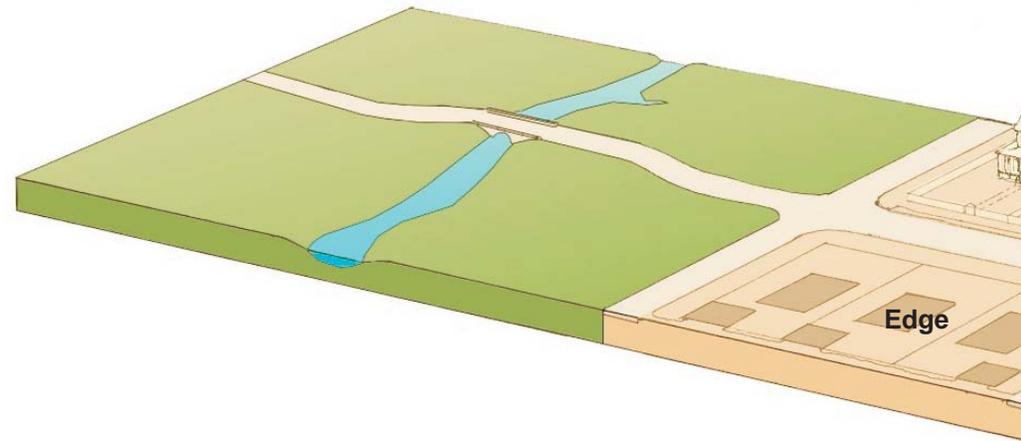


GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS

WHAT MAKES A GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD?

Portions of Old Naples were mentioned frequently during public participation events as good examples of neighborhoods in Collier County. These were often contrasted with gated PUDs and *cul-de-sac* subdivisions that proliferate in Collier today. The difference between these two development approaches is subtle when viewed through regulatory eyes, but profound in the three-dimensional results.

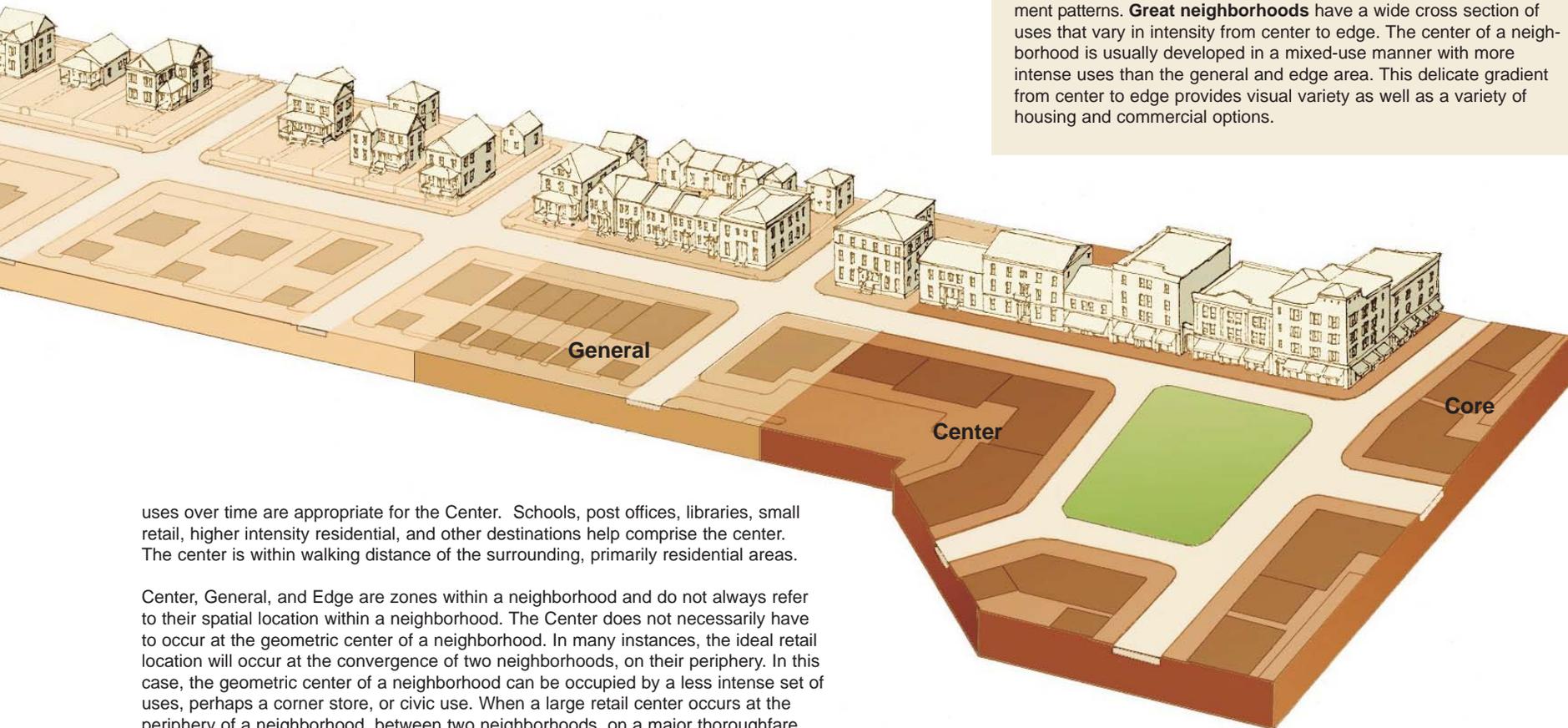
There is no single litmus test for neighborhood quality; neighborhoods of strong character are created through a variety of techniques. The most successful neighborhoods generally exhibit design conventions that are absent in conventional sprawl. These include: a legible **center and edge** to the neighborhood, an **integrated network of walkable streets**, an overall **size** to the neighborhood suitable for walking, buildings set close enough to the streets to **spatially define** the streets as public spaces, and opportunities for **shopping and workplaces close to home**. Developing and redeveloping settlements based upon a model of traditional neighborhood design principles is the first step towards great neighborhoods. These design standards and conventions have withstood the test of time. Discussed in more detail below, these ideas help create livability, a sense of community, and ultimately community character.



The **Edge** areas have the least activity and are single-family residential in character with a lower density than the other areas, and may even include mansion-sized houses on large lots. Edges are identified by a distinct change such as a natural feature like a river, forest, or greenway, or a man-made feature such as a thoroughfare. These features provide a physical change that forms a psychological boundary, giving each neighborhood identity.

The **General** areas are mixed use in function but are primarily residential in character. There is a mixture of single-family homes, rowhouses, apartments, and 'live-work' units for small businesses. The general area is usually the largest area of a neighborhood.

The **Center** areas are places where a greater range of uses is expected and encouraged. Day cares, post offices, libraries, small neighborhood retail, live-work spaces, and places of worship are located here. The Center is typically more spatially compact and is more likely to have some attached buildings. Multi-story buildings in the Center are well-suited to accommodate a mix of uses, such as apartments or offices above shops. Lofts, live/work combinations, and buildings designed for changing



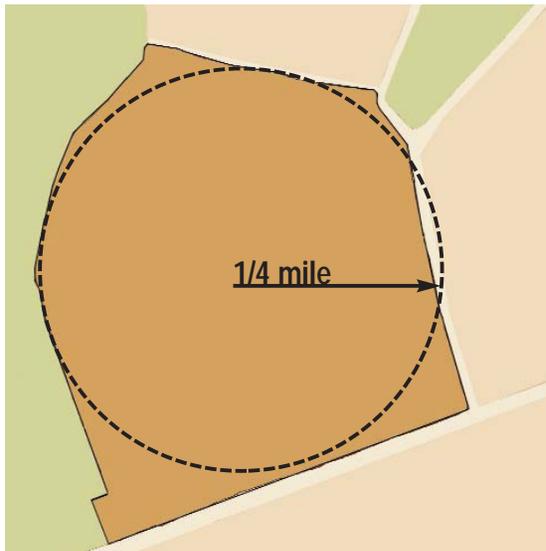
These neighborhood zones are based on the “transect” found in the *Lexicon of the New Urbanism* created by Duany, Plater-Zyberk & Company. The Congress of the New Urbanism is promoting the use of the Transect among its members to standardize sustainable development patterns. **Great neighborhoods** have a wide cross section of uses that vary in intensity from center to edge. The center of a neighborhood is usually developed in a mixed-use manner with more intense uses than the general and edge area. This delicate gradient from center to edge provides visual variety as well as a variety of housing and commercial options.

uses over time are appropriate for the Center. Schools, post offices, libraries, small retail, higher intensity residential, and other destinations help comprise the center. The center is within walking distance of the surrounding, primarily residential areas.

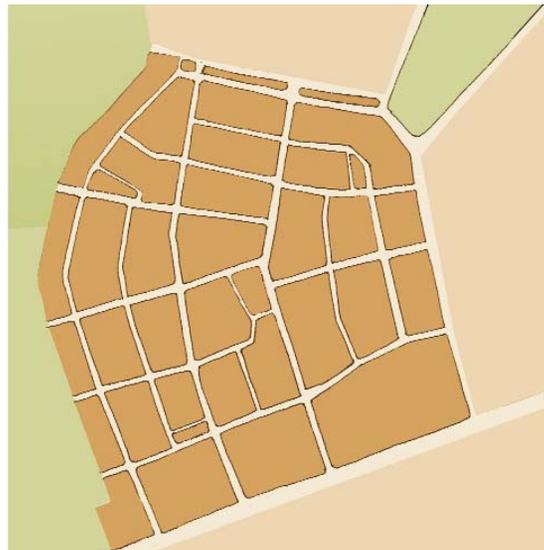
Center, General, and Edge are zones within a neighborhood and do not always refer to their spatial location within a neighborhood. The Center does not necessarily have to occur at the geometric center of a neighborhood. In many instances, the ideal retail location will occur at the convergence of two neighborhoods, on their periphery. In this case, the geometric center of a neighborhood can be occupied by a less intense set of uses, perhaps a corner store, or civic use. When a large retail center occurs at the periphery of a neighborhood, between two neighborhoods, on a major thoroughfare, this is referred to as the Core Area.

The **Core** areas are the densest in a neighborhood, occupied by institutional, business, and service uses. The character of the core is more urban than the center and is almost always shared by two or more neighborhoods and occurs on a major thoroughfare. The Core is usually within walking distance of several residential areas.

In traditional neighborhoods, the physical details are important. The following images and text demonstrate the main concepts and how they should be combined to create great neighborhoods.



1. Make the neighborhoods the right size. Typically, neighborhoods are a 1/4 mile radius across, from the center to the edge. This is a 1/2 mile or 2,640 feet from one edge of the neighborhood to the other. Natural features and thoroughfares create the boundaries to the neighborhood. Because of natural features and boundaries, there is no perfectly shaped neighborhood, so actual distances within different neighborhoods will vary.



2. Create walkable block sizes. Create a hierarchy of streets based on the transportation network. The perimeter of blocks should be an average of 1,400 linear feet. In the more intense Core areas, the blocks perimeters can be average of 1,800 linear feet.



3. Designate areas within the neighborhood for different intensities of use. Neighborhoods have different areas: Core, Center, General, and Edge. These names do not refer to a single use. Instead they dictate a range of uses, building types and intensities of development allowing for a wide range of flexibility.

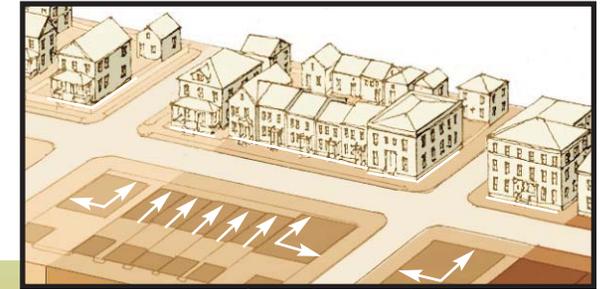




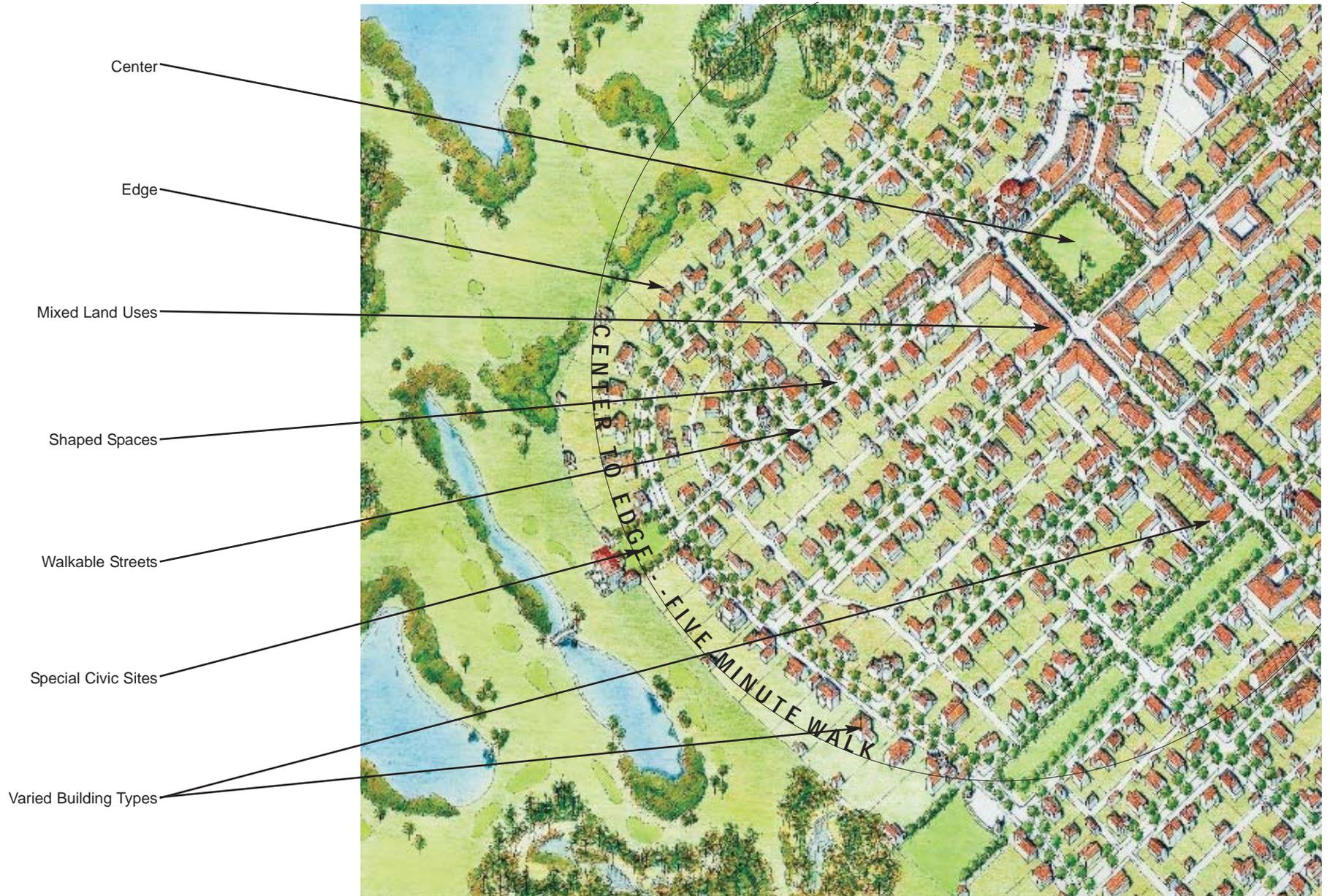
4. Provide for common green space. Designate general locations and sizes of public spaces for community use and enjoyment. These spaces can vary in size and shape and should not be limited to a specific minimum size. (These parks and green spaces can be coordinated with the goals of the Collier County Community Character Plan.)



5. Designate special sites for civic buildings. Prominent locations, like the end of a street or the top of a hill, should be set aside for civic buildings. Civic buildings provide 'community infrastructure' and daily needs and services.



6. Orient buildings properly. The fronts of buildings should have doors and windows facing the street. Rather than "setting back" buildings and allowing them to be located anywhere behind a line, establishing a "build-to line" determines where buildings are constructed, thus defining the street "wall." This wall, along with the floor (or street), is what makes the street space feel like a public room and helps define the sense of place. On-street parking should be provided, with additional parking and garages located behind the buildings. In the diagram, the darkened lines indicate the front side of the lot, where the build-to line would occur.



Identifiable Center and Edge – Neighborhoods generally have an identifiable center and edge; one can tell when one has arrived in the neighborhood, and one can tell when they have reached the heart of the neighborhood.

Walkable Size – Most people will walk a distance of approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile (1320 feet) before turning back or opting to drive or ride a bike rather than walk. This dimension is a constant in the way people have settled for centuries. Most neighborhoods built before World War II are $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from center to edge. This distance relates to the manner in which people define the edges of their own neighborhoods. Old Naples is just 1.5 miles long by $\frac{3}{4}$ mile wide. A $\frac{1}{4}$ mile radius from 5th Avenue shopping in old Naples would include Central Avenue south to 9th Avenue and 4th Street east to Tamiami Trail, for example.

Of course, neighborhoods are not necessarily circular in design, nor is that desirable. The $\frac{1}{4}$ mile radius is a benchmark for creating a neighborhood unit that is manageable in size and feel and is inherently walkable. Neighborhoods of many shapes and sizes can satisfy the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile radius test. It is also important to note that larger developments or master planned communities can satisfy the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile radius by establishing several distinct neighborhoods or quarters within the community.

Proper Building Placement – Character-rich neighborhoods often have houses within a conversational distance of the sidewalk, producing a neighborly environment that promotes social interaction. This is an excellent strategy for overcoming the isolation and disconnectedness of which suburban householders often complain. Buildings and trees positioned fairly close to the street also yield an environment

which feels very comfortable for pedestrians; this is because a degree of spatial enclosure is agreeable to the human eye. In both residential and mixed-use settings, spatial enclosure results from the proportional relationship between the width of the space and the height of the buildings that frame the space. Houses that are built close to the street offer another fundamental benefit for a neighborhood, by providing a sense of safety through what Jane Jacobs termed “eyes on the street.” Having front porches, balconies, and windows that overlook the sidewalk and street creates a feeling of safety because one can sense that if something were to happen, someone might see or hear the event. This apparent closeness and supervision may sometimes only be a perception, but it is a potent deterrent to crime nonetheless. Security specialists and law enforcement officers call this concept “crime prevention through environmental design,” and it is especially important in a time when security concerns have driven householders behind gates and bars. Lastly, positioning buildings forward on their lots makes the householders’ private spaces more generous in size, both indoors and out.

Integrated Network of Walkable Streets – A network of streets allows pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists to move safely and comfortably through a neighborhood.

A network forms blocks that are an appropriate size for walking, and provides multiple routes. The network of streets also provides non-automobile alternatives to the two largest segments of Collier’s population: those under the driving age, and senior citizens.



Walkable streets are characterized by the separation of sidewalk and curb and/or roadway to protect pedestrians from moving traffic, they are also shaded by street trees that are usually placed between the roadway and sidewalk for added pedestrian / vehicular separation. Walkable streets also provide adequate lighting and “eyes on the street” for added security. Walkable residential streets and commercial streets differ in design and character as is illustrated in the Mobility Manual.

Special Sites for Civic Purposes –

Prominent locations, such as the terminated vista of a road or at the top of a hill, should be reserved for civic buildings. These locations include building sites at the end of a long view, terminating the view down a street, and anchoring a prominent street corner or neighborhood square. These unique settings within the neighborhoods are opportunities for community pride. Civic buildings, because they serve the entire community, should be accessible and located in areas with greater activity. Similarly, special sites should be set aside for squares, parks, and plazas. Each neighborhood should have one special gathering space at its center, such as a village green.



Mix of Land Uses and Building Types – Great neighborhoods have a fine-grained mix and variety of uses and building types. A assortment of uses gives residents the ability to live, work, play, shop,

and find daily needs and services within walking distance. An assortment of building types allows for people with diverse lifestyles and incomes to live in the same neighborhood without a diminishing of the character or quality of that neighborhood. For instance, in a shopfront building, the business owner or employees could live in a second floor apartment, or the upper floors could be rented as office space. Nearby, rowhouses and cottages can be located very close to detached homes and even mansions. Naturally this requires substantial design discipline; designers must work to make sure that compatible building types face one another across unified streets. Most transitions between substantially different building types should occur at the rear lot lines.



It is understood that the amount of non-residential uses will vary from neighborhood to neighborhood. In many cases, business uses will need to be located near the edge along an important traffic route, rather than the center. Some neighborhoods may have only a tiny commercial presence, but the key is providing great flexibility in land use even while tightening design controls. This shift — from focusing on land use to emphasizing design, from single-use, single-design “pods” to mixed-use, variety-rich neighborhoods — has benefits in three key areas. First, in transportation, the mixing of uses is the most powerful way to reduce unnecessary traffic congestion because many auto trips are either shortened or eliminated. Second, the mixed use scenario is far better socially, since it makes it feasible for householders to put

down roots in the community and come to know their neighbors, and housing for families of modest means is included and therefore need not be segregated into concentrations (or pushed to the next county). Third, the occupancy of the neighborhood by households with varied schedules and interests not only adds vibrancy to the place (as compared to suburbs that are deserted at certain times of the day or days of the week) but adds security, as well.

HOW COLLIER COUNTY BUILDS NEIGHBORHOODS TODAY

Almost thirty years ago, Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) were written into the Land Development Code in response to the development boom in Collier County. Based on a national development trend, PUDs were legalized “to encourage ingenuity, innovation and imagination in the planning, design, and development or redevelopment of relatively large tracts of land under unified ownership or control” (Collier County Land Development Code, 1999). But as the next sentence in the Code indicates, this new PUD approach allowed developers to vary from the standard regulations, “PUDs produced in compliance with the terms and provisions of this code and the growth management plan may depart from the strict application of setback, height, and minimum lot requirements of conventional zoning districts...” (Collier County Land Development Code, 1999).

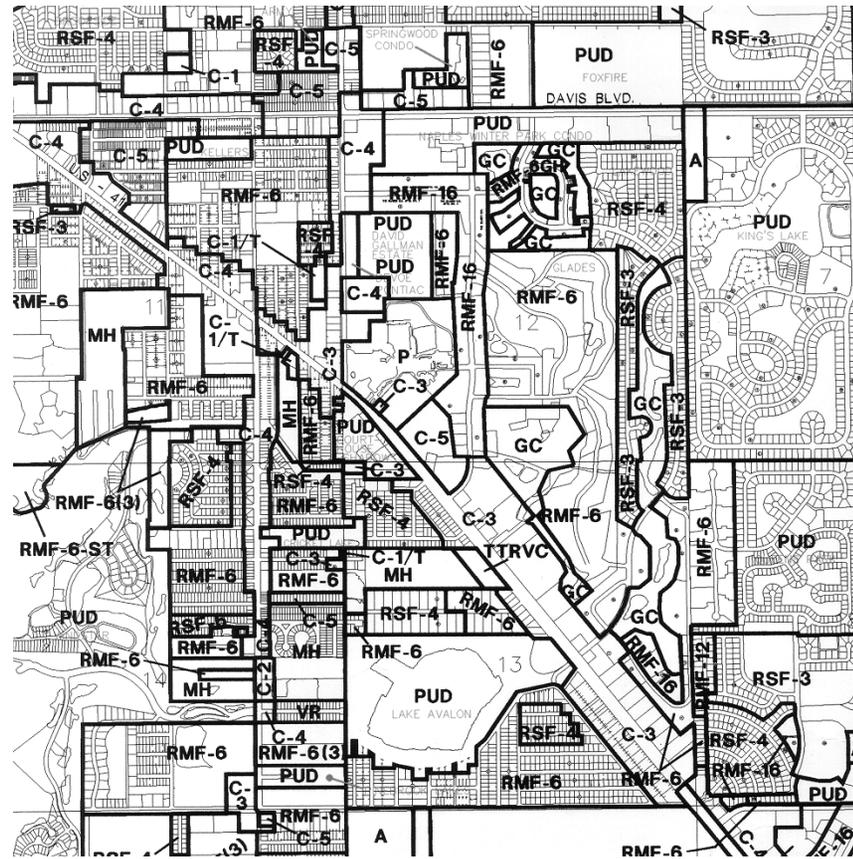
The intention of PUD zoning was to give the developer greater flexibility to provide innovative solutions to large-scale projects such as master planned communities. Although the code calls for a mix of uses, the result is usually quite homogeneous, one or two uses per PUD.



Construction begins on a golf course

Most importantly, the design conventions that generate livable communities— like walkability and interconnectedness— were applied only occasionally and haphazardly even then. Commonly the individual uses are separated in a manner consistent with conventional zoning, thus negating one objective of the PUD. In several cases the distances are too great or the access between such mixed uses is improbable or impossible for a pedestrian or bicyclist to navigate. The County has experimented with density incentives in exchange for interconnecting streets, in an attempt to reintroduce a basic norm lost to the very flexibility for which the PUD process was conjured, but the sheer marketability of low-density sprawl meant few developers, if any, opted to pursue the incentives.

The unintended consequence of the PUD trend was to create an easier approval process for pedestrian-unfriendly, disconnected, and essentially homogeneous large scale developments. Eventually, the combination of easy approvals under the PUD process and the large tracts of land under private ownership led to nearly all the developable land in the urbanized area being designated as PUDs. As these PUDs began to accumulate, so did a host of problems with traffic, disappearing open space, and loss of identity. Eventually, a public backlash, uniting environmental activists and aggrieved neighbors as critics of the PUDs, emerged in Collier County. Today, almost all PUD approvals burden



Collier County zoning map

the County Commission with a decision that causes political turmoil and engenders rancor among leaders and constituents alike. Politicians feel pressured to approve projects that resemble comparable peer projects to maintain an appearance of fairness and equality. The County needs to set reasonable standards and guidelines by which to judge PUD projects, to determine whether the design has merit and if it creates character. The yardstick for design success in Collier has become quite short.

What Lies Ahead?

Collier County has several futures from which to choose. The least sustainable is the business-as-usual model. Left to operate within the existing rules and habits, development in the recent manner and at the current rate will cripple the road network and decimate any remaining character in Collier County. The Community Character Plan was undertaken at the urging of citizens who foresaw such a future and sought to alter it.

The currently approved PUD projects, if built out to the intended design capacity, would have a profound impact on the Collier landscape. Approved PUDs alone include 42,792 new dwelling units. This number multiplied by a 65.66% occupancy rate and the 1990 census allocation of 2.41 persons per dwelling unit produces 67,549 new Collier residents. These new residents must live somewhere. The rampant consumption of undeveloped land for sprawl-type communities coupled with current policies on density, affordable housing, and urban form will lead to a collapse of Collier County's prestige and desirability. This scenario is often compared to the disastrous change

in character experienced during the last forty years in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. Many residents spoke during the planning process about how they did not want Collier County to turn into a Gulf coast equivalent of those struggling places, and yet the development pattern exhibited in recent Collier sprawl mirrors the worst of those counties' disappointing growth patterns.

The alternative is clear. The culture of community-making and spirit of responsibility demonstrated by the County's pioneers and town founders can be reestablished. Community character should be placed at the forefront of planning decisions, not contemplated as an afterthought. Housing density must be rethought, especially in core areas and activity centers; the bias against higher density and toward planning by the numbers – with an assumption that lower density is better density – needs to be replaced with an emphasis on design. Affordable housing needs to be addressed in bricks and mortar, not lip service. Streets of such quality that they are genuine amenities in the neighborhoods they serve, instead of just utilitarian “traffic sewers,” should be customary.

Eight Factors Supporting Traditional Neighborhood Development

From the developer's point of view --

1. *Relatively higher densities enable a lower land cost per unit. Public spaces created by traditional neighborhood planning- the trade-off that allows higher densities- also serve as substantial amenities for the community.*
2. *Lower up-front infrastructure costs are required prior to building and selling the first units compared with a conventional master-planned community. The first construction phase can offer the full range of housing types in one area, rather than in separate "pods" for each housing type, each with its own associated infrastructure.*
3. *Greater product flexibility throughout the neighborhood enables quick response to changing market demand characteristics.*
4. *The market can be deeper than just "new home buyers." TNDs offer a new construction alternative that conveys the diversity and pedestrian orientation of typically highly-valued older neighborhoods. Many resale buyers find these aspects of community lacking in conventional subdivisions and master-planned communities.*

From the investor's point of view --

5. *Residual value is enhanced. Once the TND is established, appreciation of remaining dwelling units- particularly in later phases- should occur at a higher rate than within conventional master-planned communities in otherwise similar circumstances. Appreciation is manifest as some combination of escalating sales or rising prices.*
6. *With little or no privately-owned retail common areas, neighborhood and "main street" shopping districts do not require periodic refurbishment to maintain market appeal. The environment is constantly renewed as the shopfronts change, upgrade, and evolve.*

From the municipality's point of view --

7. *Integrated-use development creates a broader, more balanced tax base for municipalities.*
8. *Public maintenance and infrastructure costs are lower for higher-density development because of the greater economies of scale, shorter runs of lower tech infrastructure.*

-Excerpted from [Development Feasibility and Implementation of Traditional Neighborhoods](#) by Todd Zimmerman, Laurie Volk, and Peter Katz. (reprinted with permission).

REVITALIZING MATURING NEIGHBORHOODS

Collier residents identified several neighborhoods in the region as being among their favorites, such as Old Naples. Old Naples has recently benefited from several years of reinvestment focused on the well-coordinated revitalization of Fifth Avenue, with its spectacular infill development and redevelopment.

Making Good Neighborhoods into Great Neighborhoods

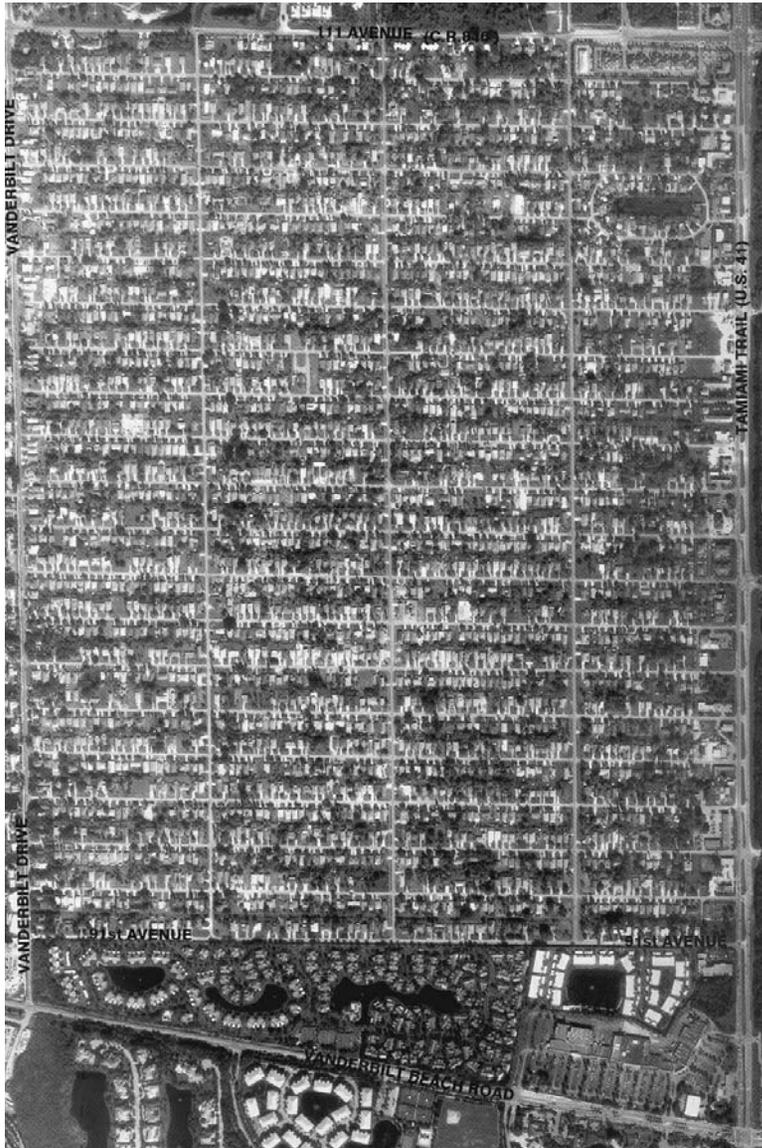
How can other neighborhoods benefit from these characteristics? Naples Park is an excellent example to study. On one hand, Naples Park enjoys an organized, diverse citizenry determined to improve the neighborhood, a close-to-the-Gulf location, a relatively connected layout, and underutilized real estate that has begun to attract the attention of builders. On the other hand, the public realm in Naples Park suffers from years of disinvestment; the tree canopy is inadequate, streets appear worn and unfinished and invite speeding, and overall the suburb is not aging as gracefully as it should. Naples Park has reached a threshold in its history. It will be either re-energized and transformed for the better or its character will continue to decline.

Naples Park is one of the older first-ring suburbs in Collier County. It is located along the U.S. 41 corridor and stands out compared with the newer developments surrounding it. Real estate here is still relatively affordable, at least for the time being. While not exactly the “inner city,” Naples Park resembles many of the older neighborhoods in cities across the US that were rediscovered by home buyers during the past twenty years and now fetch higher prices than new sprawl development. If that pattern holds true here, a strategic policy and physical

improvements designed to impart a sense of predictable return on investment will attract new generations of residents to Naples Park, and their contributions will be beneficial. (Absent such a strategy, haphazard redevelopment— in which older, smaller homes are incrementally knocked down and replaced with tracts of disappointing character— is likely, given the scarcity of land in the western parts of the county.)

Naples Park should have an officially sanctioned plan, with its details generated through the grassroots involvement of the neighbors; this plan should promote the area’s intrinsic strengths, including its openness and its connected street scene. This plan would be used to guide public and private improvements but also to reposition these neighborhoods in the marketplace as the county’s premier alternative to sprawl. Interestingly, the basic bone structure of Naples Park shows evidence of some of the same ideas underlying the latest “New Urbanist” neighborhoods that have proven so marketable around the country. In the Naples Park of the future, homebuyers should find the sense of community and authenticity lacking in the corporate, slickly packaged subdivisions built in the 1990s further east.

The key to this lies in getting the physical details right. The transformation of Naples Park from neglected older suburb to premier neighborhoods will not occur overnight. Several steps to aid the transformation are outlined below. These essential steps can be used for most older neighborhoods in Collier County. For example, these strategies should be applicable to Golden Gate City (see *Evolving the Subdivided Periphery*.)



Naples Park - Aerial plan view, 1999

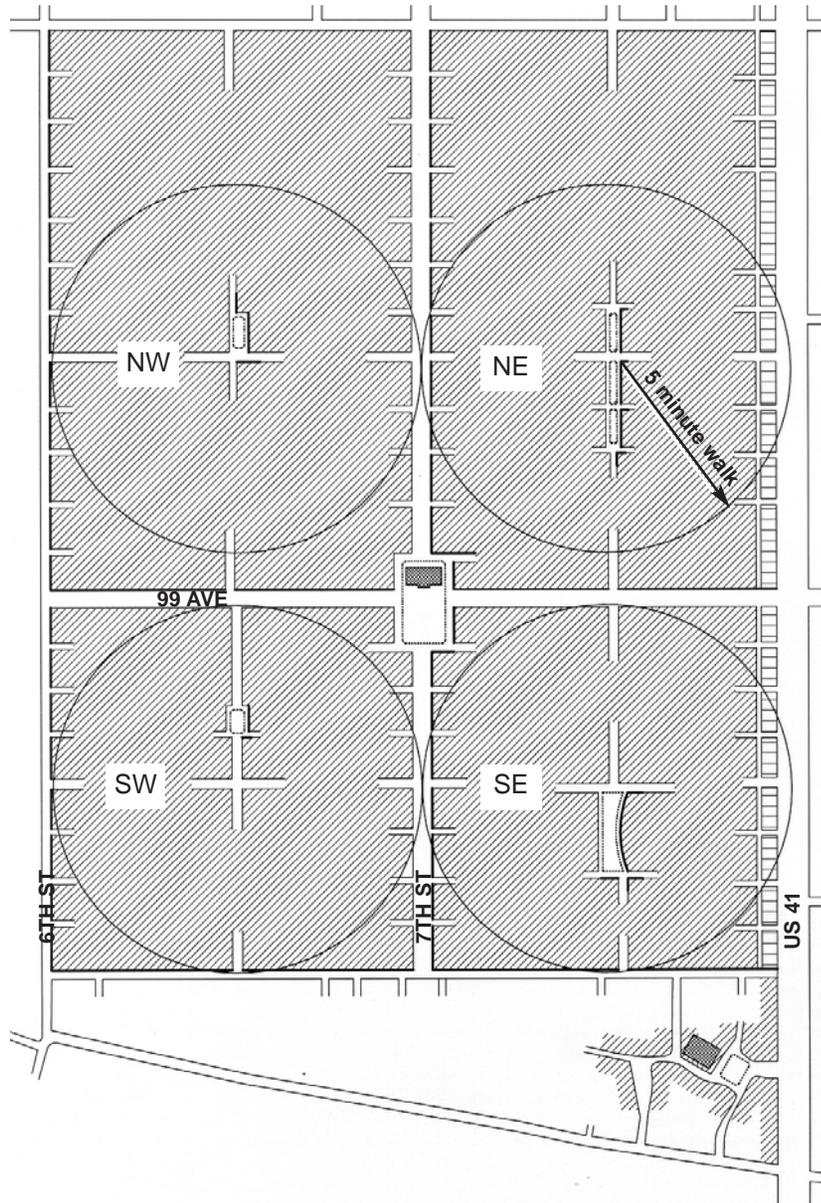
Steps for Revitalizing Naples Park

To illustrate some of the key ideas for improving existing neighborhoods, the area where 7th Street meets 99th Avenue, Naples Park is shown as an evolving scenario. Because Naples Park is roughly one mile square, the area was conceptually divided into four neighborhood units, each with a center feature, and each with an approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile radius.

The center could grow to include recreation facilities, a neighborhood store, a bandstand or meeting hall, or other useful amenities. The square should become an important place for civic activities, the psychological heart of the community. With this surgical sort of redevelopment comes the opportunity to diversify the neighborhood, accommodate growth, reduce trips on the regional road network, and create a badly needed sense of identity all at the same time.

1. Conceptually divide Naples Park into four identifiable neighborhoods, and approach each as its own planning task.

Scaled for the automobile, Naples Park is very large, as big as four traditional neighborhoods. The sense of identity suffers from a lack of discernible territories, and the area is too big to be served by only one neighborhood center. The diagrams illustrate how the larger area can be divided into a series of four neighborhoods that approximate the ideal of $\frac{1}{4}$ mile radius. These neighborhoods should then serve as the physical and social organizing principle; each neighborhood should have its own citizens' organization or leadership group, its own plan for physical improvement and completeness, and its own spatial cen-



Four Neighborhoods

Conceptual breakdown of Naples Park into four neighborhoods, each with small neighborhood squares at their centers.

ter. Although the neighborhoods should not be gated off from one another, key entrances to each neighborhood could be marked with monuments or other expressions of pride and identity. The streets which form the boundaries between the neighborhoods should be treated as the most important streets in Naples Park, the shared “public face” of all four neighborhoods.

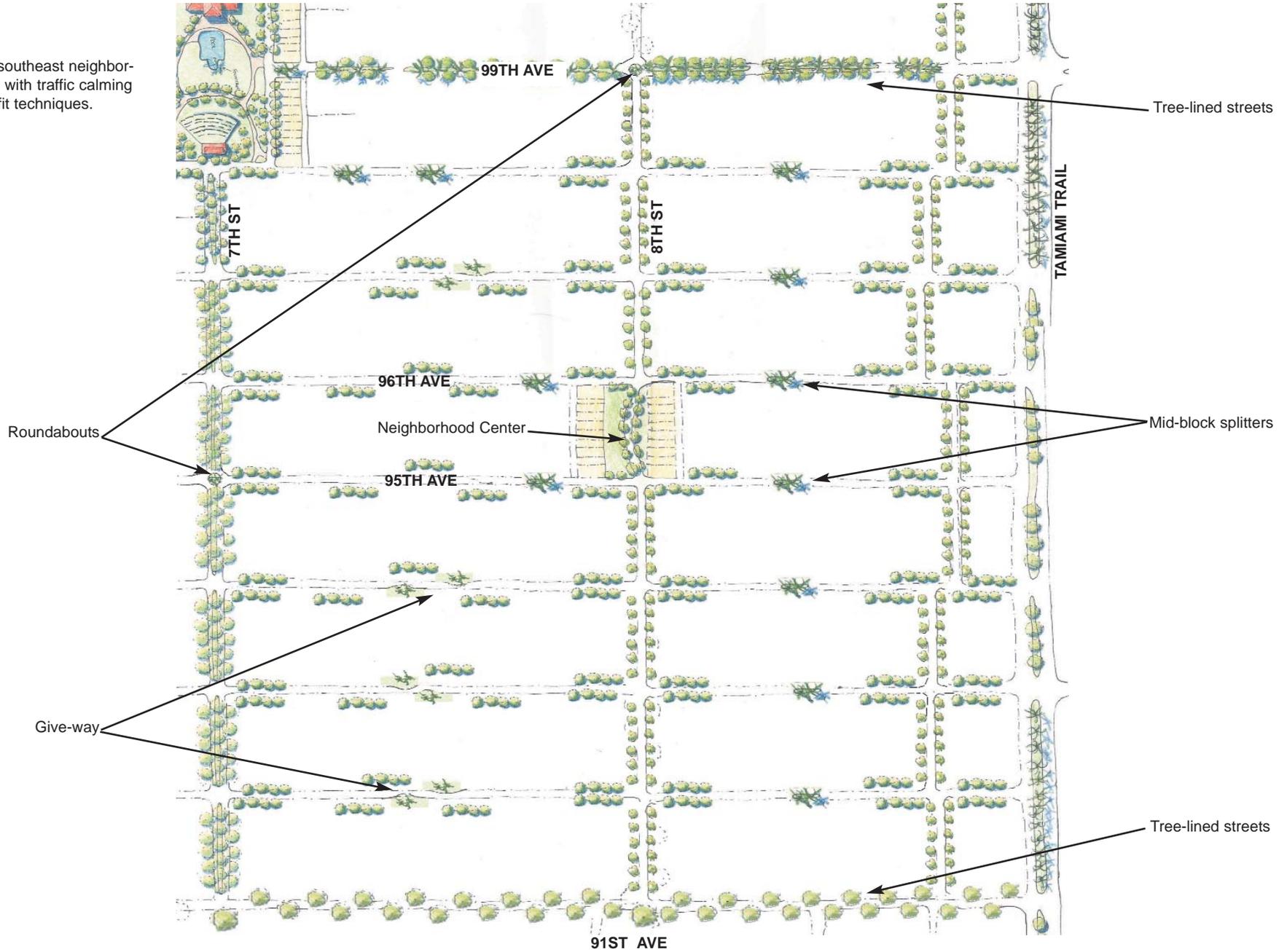
2. Designate a center for each of the four neighborhoods.

The center should ideally be characterized by a mix of uses, the potential for higher-intensity uses at a pedestrian scale (four stories maximum), and community space in the form of a park or square that encourages gathering at the center. It may be possible to initiate the park or square by creatively using the generous rights-of-way and/or existing vacant lots.

3. Plant street trees.

All the streets in Naples Park should undergo a tree-planting and maintenance program. Street trees should be aligned and planted with regular spacing. Consistent species should be used on a given street; neighbors might choose “signature” species to distinguish certain streets. Homes on shady streets with canopy trees enjoy substantially higher property values than identical homes on treeless streets, especially in tropical Florida. (In the early 1990s, national realtors’ organizations conservatively estimated the difference at more than \$15,000 per house in average situations; an even greater increment would probably be observed in the prestigious neighborhoods of Old Naples, Coral Gables or Winter Park, all of which have trees. With approximately 3200 homesites in Naples Park, a coherent street tree program could result in a boost of more than \$48 million to the county tax base in this small area alone, an unquestionable return on investment.)

The southeast neighborhood with traffic calming retrofit techniques.



Tree-lined streets

Roundabouts

Neighborhood Center

Mid-block splitters

Give-way

Tree-lined streets

91ST AVE



Existing Conditions (typical)



Phase 1



Phase 2

Existing Conditions (typical)

Drawing depicts scattered single family housing in Naples Park. This location marks the center of one of Naples Parks' four neighborhoods. These diagrams illustrate a sample technique for uniting the neighborhood and enhancing its identity.

Phase 1

Adding street trees; just this simple and gentle change causes dramatic effects on any given neighborhood's character.

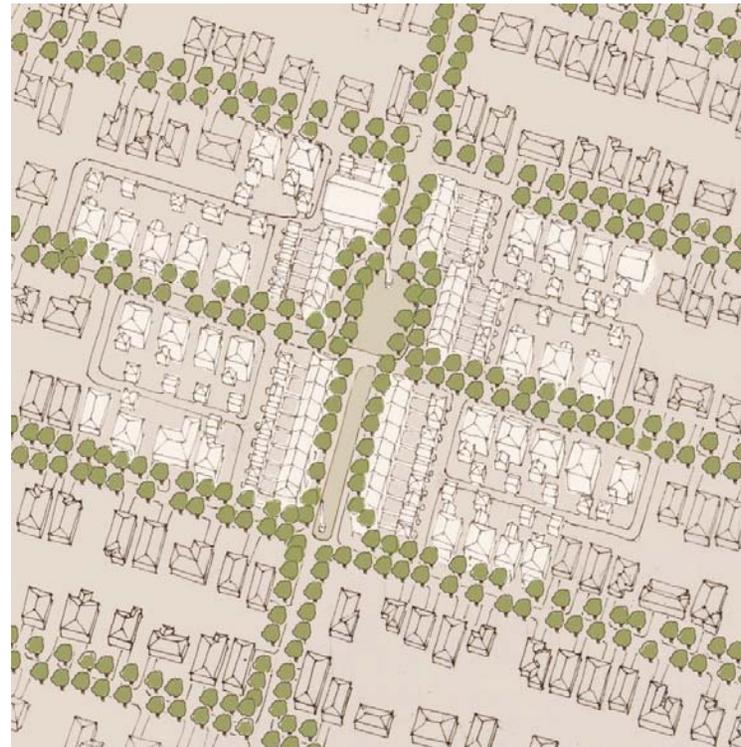
Phase 2

A carefully planned square is added at the neighborhood center; the square is both a public space and a traffic-calming device.

Phase 3

Over time, redevelopment can be focused around this center, diversifying the neighborhood uses. This step is considerably more involved and requires assembly of land to create a small neighborhood square; this could be accomplished with a community land trust, county purchase, assistance from an organization like the Trust for Public Land, or by other means. Lots would have to be acquired over time, in a natural process, as they become available.

The long term step would be to add buildings or redevelop the adjacent properties with new buildings, so that architecture of town scale and of the highest possible quality faces the square. This could include perhaps one or more modest mixed-use buildings, a small apartment house, cottages on smaller lots, elegant rowhouses, or any combination of these.



Phase 3



Naples Park: a new central park, where the four neighborhoods converge at 7th Street and 99th Avenue.



Before Traffic Calming

The existing conditions at 99th Avenue and 8th Street are similar to most intersections in Naples Park. Long, straight roadways with minimal impedance make the neighborhood ideal for cut-through traffic and speeding.



After Traffic Calming

The same intersection with the addition of traffic calming devices. The roundabout forces traffic to slow to a safe speed, as opposed to stop signs which can easily be ignored. The addition of street trees along the length of the street makes it appear narrower, and thus causes most drivers to proceed more cautiously. The addition of a curb at the intersection provides a similar perceived narrowing.

4. Liberally apply traffic calming techniques.

Naples Park's great strength— its connected street grid, which disperses substantial amounts of traffic compared to the snakelike maze of the typical PUDs— also imperils the neighborhoods with cut-through traffic, at least in its current form. The volume of traffic is manageable, but the long straightaways invite speeding and other recklessness. "Traffic calming" refers to a whole menu of programs and physical changes that simultaneously discourage motorists from driving too fast (and to some extent dissuade cut-through traffic), beautify the streets, and enhance pedestrian mobility. The urgent need for traffic calming coincides with an opportunity to improve the appearance of highly visible streets and express the conceptual structure of Naples Park as four neighborhoods; 7th Street and 99th Avenue should be the first priorities for traffic calming enhancements. Starting with these

more traveled streets but eventually including all or nearly of them, sidewalks and street trees should be introduced. Street trees clearly augment the physical beauty, but they also add the necessary traffic calming effect. They assist in perceptually narrowing and framing the street, thus causing drivers to slow down instinctively. Terminating the straightaways by placing the parks or squares in the abundant right-of-way is an even more obvious traffic calming device. The roadway would flow one way around the square in most such circumstances. In this way the street network may remain open and permeable but the motorists will have to behave on the neighbors' terms in Naples Park. See the *Mobility Manual* for other traffic calming techniques.



Naples Park today - a vacant lot at the intersection of 6th Street and 105th Avenue, an ideal candidate for a neighborhood center.

5. Create pedestrian and bicycle connections.

There are too few reasons to walk anywhere, and given the lack of street trees and sidewalks, walking for pleasure is also discouraged. In recent public meetings, residents of Naples Park expressed a desire to be able to walk comfortably in their neighborhood, but because of cut-through traffic, speeding cars, and a lack of shade trees, people are often hesitant to walk, especially with children.

6. Sidewalks should be provided on all streets.

Streets within the neighborhoods need not have dedicated bike lanes (although this is an option for perceptually “narrowing” the pavement for traffic calming reasons, if no other option is achievable in the short term on a given road). However, the streets in Naples Park can easily be optimized by cycling by the addition of a tree canopy and traffic calming devices.

7. Connections should be provided to existing commercial areas such as those on Vanderbilt Beach Road and US 41.

The existing commercial along US 41 and on Vanderbilt Beach Road should be made more accessible for pedestrians and local car trips. Rather than having to go out on to these regional roads, residents of Naples Park should be able to access these stores and services from the alleys, from neighborhood streets, or pedestrian paths. Entrances from the alleys should be clearly marked and have sufficient lighting in order to create a safe and pleasant area.



Adding Street Trees - Public open space can be provided by acquiring vacant or available lots in strategic locations. The first step in transforming such a property into a park or neighborhood green is the extension of curb and sidewalk and the addition of street trees, as well as the provision for maintenance of the space. Even in this raw state, it can be used as a park.

8. Reorganize blocks and lots in the immediate area around centers.

Naples Park, although based on a grid of streets, suffers from the unrelenting nature of the grid. As discussed above, while a network is a necessity, the combination of an unending gridiron, curbless streets, and the low densities and detached building types of suburbia is undesirable. The lack of variation in the pattern or appearance of the streets discourages pedestrian activity and actually encourages cut-through traffic, since the clear sight distances and straightaways incite faster driving. As the existing aerial photograph reveals, the grid of Naples Park streets is virtually uninterrupted.

9. Create some smaller lots through subdivision and reclamation of vacant lots at the center of each new neighborhood; this will allow graceful densification over time (in much the same way the memorable parts of Savannah or St.

Augustine were densified historically). Occasional alleys would allow some narrower lots, reducing the per-unit land cost and making redevelopment feasible. This approach also allows the creation of more affordable dwellings that are nevertheless very dignified, makes efficient use of existing infrastructure, and encourages more activity at the center. The approach also improves safety, while adding texture and interest to the neighborhood center.

10. Create new parks or greens in existing or enlarged rights-of-way.

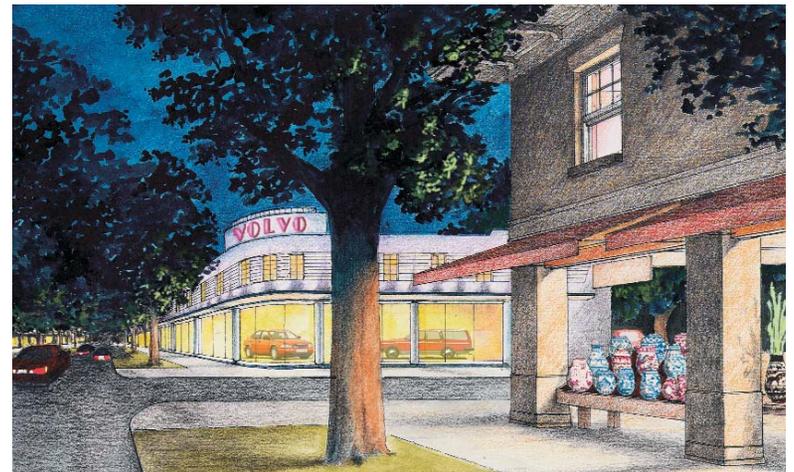
Citizens in Naples Park expressed a desire for more opportunities to know their neighbors and to venture out into the public realm without their vehicles, but there are few spots to do this. These improvements to the right-of-way will serve a triple purpose. Not only will they add to the physical beauty and add traffic calming, but also they will create an open public place for civic activities or simple recreation. Places



Neighborhood Center - More long term additions include reorienting neighborhood lots and adding a street on the backside of the park. These modifications will help create “eyes on the street” and make the square more pedestrian friendly. Such moves are also designed to encourage other homeowners in the area to create enhanced public faces on their homes instead of surrounding them with privacy walls and fences.

for a picnic in the park or for small children to play safely are basic equipment in livable neighborhoods, and add to our human enjoyment of the built environment. In the long term, these public places will become even more successful when the lots that surround them are turned and oriented towards the center. These lots could be filled in with, for example, townhouses with their front doors and windows facing the squares.

The planning approach illustrated above for Naples Park could be used in other neighborhoods even where there is no formal homeowners’ association or other legal entity to carry out the improvements. Collier County should declare that it wishes to assist neighborhoods in this kind of planning and set out a process for individual neighborhoods to request assistance, and also establish a cost-sharing formula to pay for planning and later implementation.



US 41 - Adding alleys parallel to Tamiami Trail will make it possible to redevelop commercial properties on the corridor’s west side in Naples Park with street oriented buildings. Note the importance of trees even on the busy thoroughfare.

REVITALIZING MATURING NEIGHBORHOODS

SETTING THE COURSE

Some of Collier County's neighborhoods aren't aging as gracefully as they should be and need to be re-energized. These neighborhoods should have officially sanctioned "community plans" generated through direct involvement of local residents. These plans should promote each neighborhood's intrinsic strengths and identify their deficiencies, and then be used to guide public and private improvements.

GETTING THERE

Growth Management Plan

- a. In the Future Land Use Element, adopt a new goal #2 stating that county planning efforts shall recognize the variations among Collier County's diverse communities and the special characters that are created by their physical settings, including roadsides, natural features, memorable buildings, and the public realm between buildings.
- b. Add an achievable objective #1 under goal #2 about Collier County's commitment to revitalize older neighborhoods.
 - i. Add a policy describing typical improvements for maturing neighborhoods, such as adding sidewalks and street trees, creating focal points within walkable portions of neighborhoods, improving street connections, improving pedestrian access to shopping, and traffic calming.
 - ii. Add a policy that would allow a greater variety of housing types in maturing neighborhoods, such as accessory apartments, live-work units, or townhouses.
 - iii. Add a policy that describes the various levels of involvement that Collier County can use to improve or redevelop existing neighborhoods, including a municipal service taxing or benefit district, a community plan, a community redevelopment agency, or a dependent special district.
 - iv. Add a policy under objective #4 of goal #1 adding "community plans" as a new Collier County planning process that can be requested for existing neighborhoods or commercial/industrial developments. Community plans could include the following steps:
 1. Collier County would declare that it wishes to assist neighborhoods in community planning and set out a process for individual neighborhoods to request professional assistance.
 2. The process would typically include:
 - a. neighborhood meetings to gather input and develop design and implementation ideas;
 - b. preparation of a master plan;
 - c. acceptance of this master plan by Collier County, as part of the community plan;
 - d. adoption of any amendments that are needed to the growth management plan or land development code;
 - e. determination of cost-sharing requirements for capital improvements; and
 - f. initiation of any capital improvements through normal county channels.

Administrative Code

- a. Adopt an administrative code establishing guidelines for community plans.

Land Development Code

- a. Allow single-family lots to be split when a continuous alley can be provided behind the lots to allow vehicular access from the rear.
- b. Modify the required minimum depths of lots in situations where right-of-way acquisitions have reduced lot depths.
- c. Make other changes to the land development code that are found necessary during the community planning process.

Financing Issues

- a. Allocate \$250,000 annually beginning next fiscal year from the unincorporated municipal service taxing district to fund community planning studies.
- b. Allocate \$750,000 from the same source beginning in the following fiscal year to be used in the capital improvements program as matching funds to implement community plans.

TRANSFORMING PLANS FOR CONVENTIONAL SUBDIVISIONS

Much of Collier County is zoned PUD and although some PUDs are commercial and industrial, the vast majority of PUDs are “gated communities,” “golf course communities,” and cul-de-sac subdivisions. These PUDs sometimes take up entire sections (square miles) of land and, when blocked off as isolated pods, are the root of the transportation network problems outlined in the Mobility Manual. Most of the land between Tamiami Trail (US 41) and I-75 for the entire length of Collier County is either existing PUD, or approved PUD zoning, so this settlement type is here to stay. The existing PUDs sometimes have sparse street networks that lead to only one way in and one way out of entire communities, and this one location is often gated and entry by the general public is either blocked or discouraged. The predominance of large isolated pods is a deterrent to mobility and provides the biggest challenges to the successful preservation of character in Collier County.

It is recognized that transforming these PUDs and gated communities into something better is profoundly difficult, and that many of them will remain exactly as they are for several lifetimes. There is not a strong economic imperative at work today compelling investors and government to rush out and fundamentally change these subdivisions, whatever their flaws.

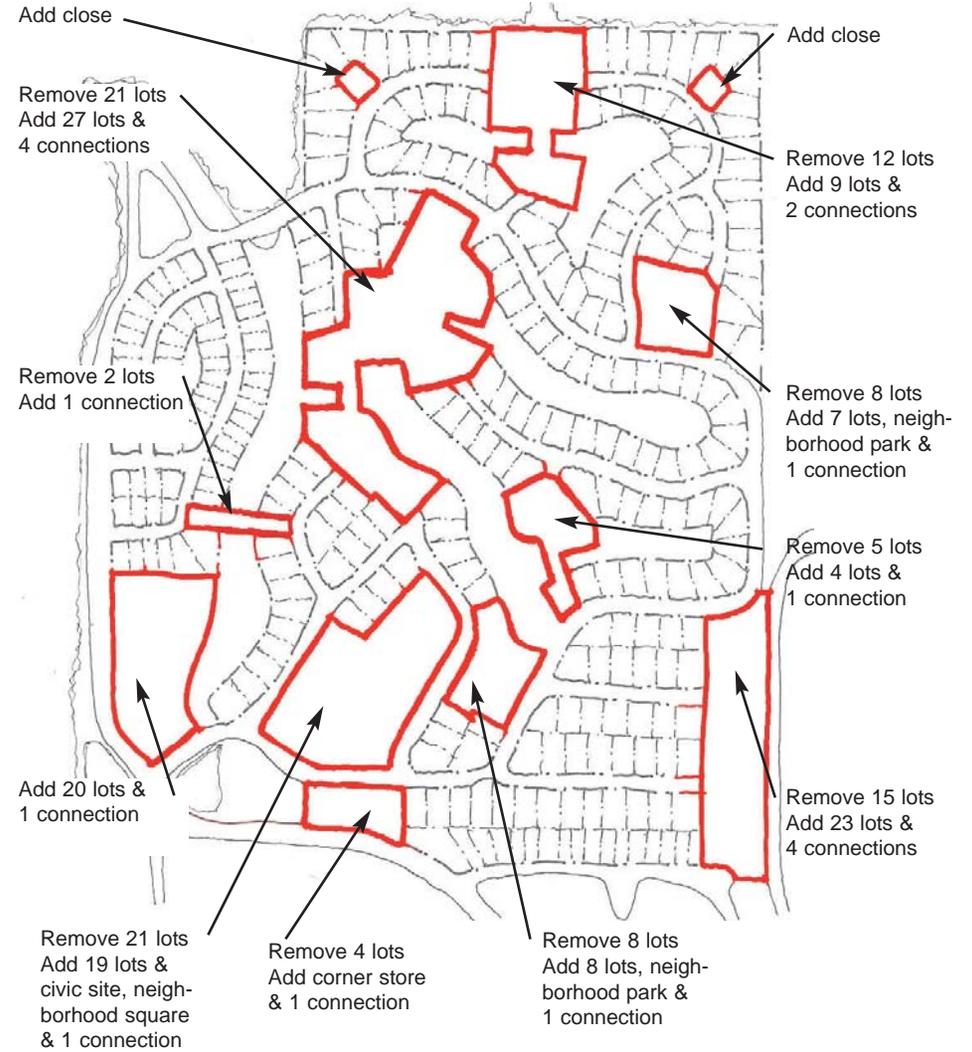
The illustrative exercise undertaken as part of the Character Plan has pointed out the many obstacles to fixing these disconnected subdivisions, and underscores the importance of ending the practice of approving disconnected subdivisions in the first place. The fundamental shift in thinking that is required is to replace the emphasis on *isolation* with an emphasis on *community*.



A conventional subdivision in Collier County



Typical PUD - A disconnected street network with many dead ends.





Areas modified - New street connections and replatted lots with diversified housing types.



Resulting neighborhood - A connected street network; these interventions provide opportunity to diversify housing types and uses and create features such as neighborhood parks.

STRATEGIES FOR RETHINKING P. U. D. PLANS

The diagrams illustrate one method of improving the current land development practiced in Collier County. The redesign of expiring PUDs into great neighborhoods is a very real issue that Collier County will face in coming years. These techniques can also be employed as a means of upgrading existing PUD approvals as they expire.

It is also predictable that others of these subdivisions will eventually experience a decline, as they fall out of fashion, the housing “products” age, or lifestyles evolve. In some cases, there may even occur a precipitous decline in property values in a subdivision, accelerating the impulse to reposition the real estate in the marketplace by reinventing the character of the neighborhood. In a few cases in the distant future, the desperation over traffic congestion may even rise to the point where neighbors, government and the motoring public agree that the difficulty of creating vital connections across conventional subdivisions is outweighed by the benefits.

- 1.** Remove the gate; provide security at the block level or lot level; instead of an off-putting guardhouse or “entry feature” that is really just glorified signage, use substantial architecture to frame the entrance.
- 2.** Create additional connections to the surrounding road network and to adjacent neighborhoods.
- 3.** Create a neighborhood center or focal point, with a park or square, and possibly civic and small-scale commercial uses.
- 4.** Create an internal network of streets and blocks, by connecting missing links and street segments.
- 5.** Encourage a range of housing prices and types; where new street connections are made, single-family lots can be reconfigured for rowhouses or apartment buildings.
- 6.** Liberally apply traffic calming, street tree planting, and sidewalks to make the streets more livable and attractive.
- 7.** Improve the image of the neighborhood by modifying houses, employing front porches and de-emphasizing garage doors by moving them away from the facade of the houses to de-emphasize garage doors.

<p><u>Isolation Model:</u></p> <p>sprawl experimental, since 1945 segregation of uses into pods car is a prerequisite to survival measurable in car trips consumes wildlife habitats and farmland horizontal zoning confusing, ambiguous form financed and constructed all at once has "developers" forgettable and disposable</p> <p><u>Certain to Increase:</u></p> <p>traffic pollution infrastructure costs sameness crime</p> <p><u>Certain to Reduce:</u></p> <p>community character affordable housing diversity choice</p>	<p><u>Community Model:</u></p> <p>neighborhoods field tested, for 5000 years mix of uses in streets and blocks car is an option measurable in walking distances conserves wildlife habitats and farmland vertical zoning legible public spaces financed and constructed incrementally has "founders" memorable and lasting</p> <p><u>Certain to Reduce:</u></p> <p>traffic pollution infrastructure costs sameness crime</p> <p><u>Certain to Increase:</u></p> <p>community character affordable housing diversity choice</p>
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TRANSFORMING PLANS FOR CONVENTIONAL SUBDIVISIONS

SETTING THE COURSE
 Collier County's large pods of isolated development are a deterrent to mobility and a primary cause of traffic congestion. Making changes to newly built neighborhoods is extremely difficult. However, some isolated neighborhoods have been approved but not yet built; their site plans should be modified to increase the connectivity with existing and proposed roadways before Collier County extends the prior approvals.

GETTING THERE

Growth Management Plan

- a. Add an achievable objective #2 under goal #2 about Collier County's commitment to improve typical subdivision techniques.
 - i. Add a policy establishing stricter terms before extending the life of unbuilt development approvals that are no longer consistent with the growth management plan. This policy should also describe the type of modifications that are anticipated: moving gates away from major roads; improving connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods and within new neighborhoods; creating neighborhood centers or focal points within walkable portions of neighborhoods; adding sidewalks; and increasing the range of housing prices and types.
 - ii. Add a policy that requires a technical evaluation of expiring PUD rezonings as to the spacing and connectivity of local streets, percentage of land behind gates, and interconnections with adjoining neighborhoods (see the *Mobility Manual*).

Land Development Code

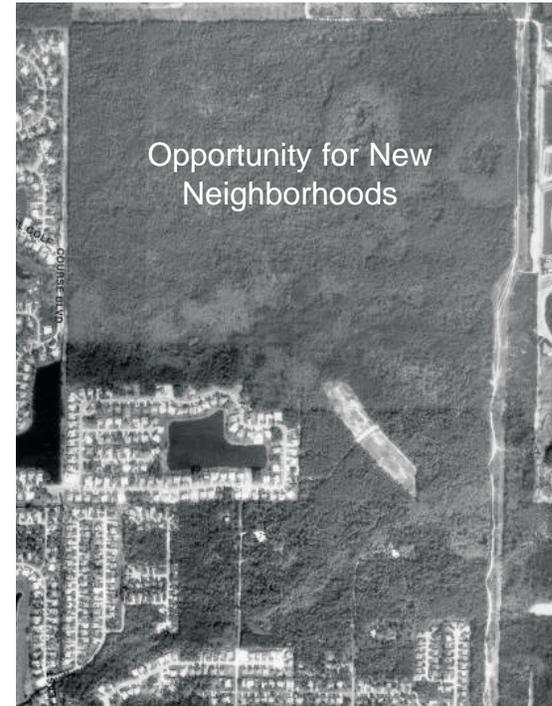
- a. Amend §2.7.3.4 to shorten the period that unbuilt PUD approvals remain valid from five years to three years, and to substantially increase the amount of continuing progress that is required to retain PUD approval for unbuilt or partially built PUDs that are no longer consistent with the growth management plan or land development code. The purpose of this change is to require the design of unbuilt portions of PUDs to be modified to comply with regulatory changes before the PUD approval can be extended.

GROWING NEW NEIGHBORHOODS

In the twentieth century the advent of air conditioning and large-scale drainage projects paved the way for rapid population growth in the Florida peninsula. Collier County has been a hotbed of growth and development. As aerial photographs reveal, however, there is still a fairly large amount of land left in Collier County that has not yet been urbanized, even after subtracting federal, state, and locally preserved lands, regulated wetlands, and already platted land. Much of the remaining agricultural land is under intense pressure for development. With increased population projected for the near future, the present generation of developers will undoubtedly continue to build new projects in “greenfield” locations, and the debate over their character is unlikely to wane. Despite success in infill development and redevelopment east of US 41, the greenfield sites are where the action is today and in the near future. New neighborhoods will be the fulcrum upon which rests the character of Collier County.

Breaking the Cycle

Creating new neighborhoods with interconnectivity and greater density is the only way to avoid the worst-case scenario presented by the sprawl approach. New neighborhoods must focus on both on quality and more completeness. As additional land develops in Collier County to house the increased population, development standards will become the most important aspect in creating and maintaining community character. The road congestion plaguing Collier County, further described in the Mobility Manual, is due in a large part to the type of development that has become common in the last 20 years.



Aerial view of existing conditions in 2000 of the area east of Willoughby Acres, west of I-75, and north of Immokalee Road, 1999.

Continuing with this pattern of isolated, gated, golf course subdivisions will only aggravate these troubles. New development has the benefit of starting from scratch and the ability to adhere to some simple guidelines for creating character. The extension of Livingston Road provides an excellent model development opportunity that shows how to accommodate new growth while enhancing character.

Strategies for Creating New Neighborhoods

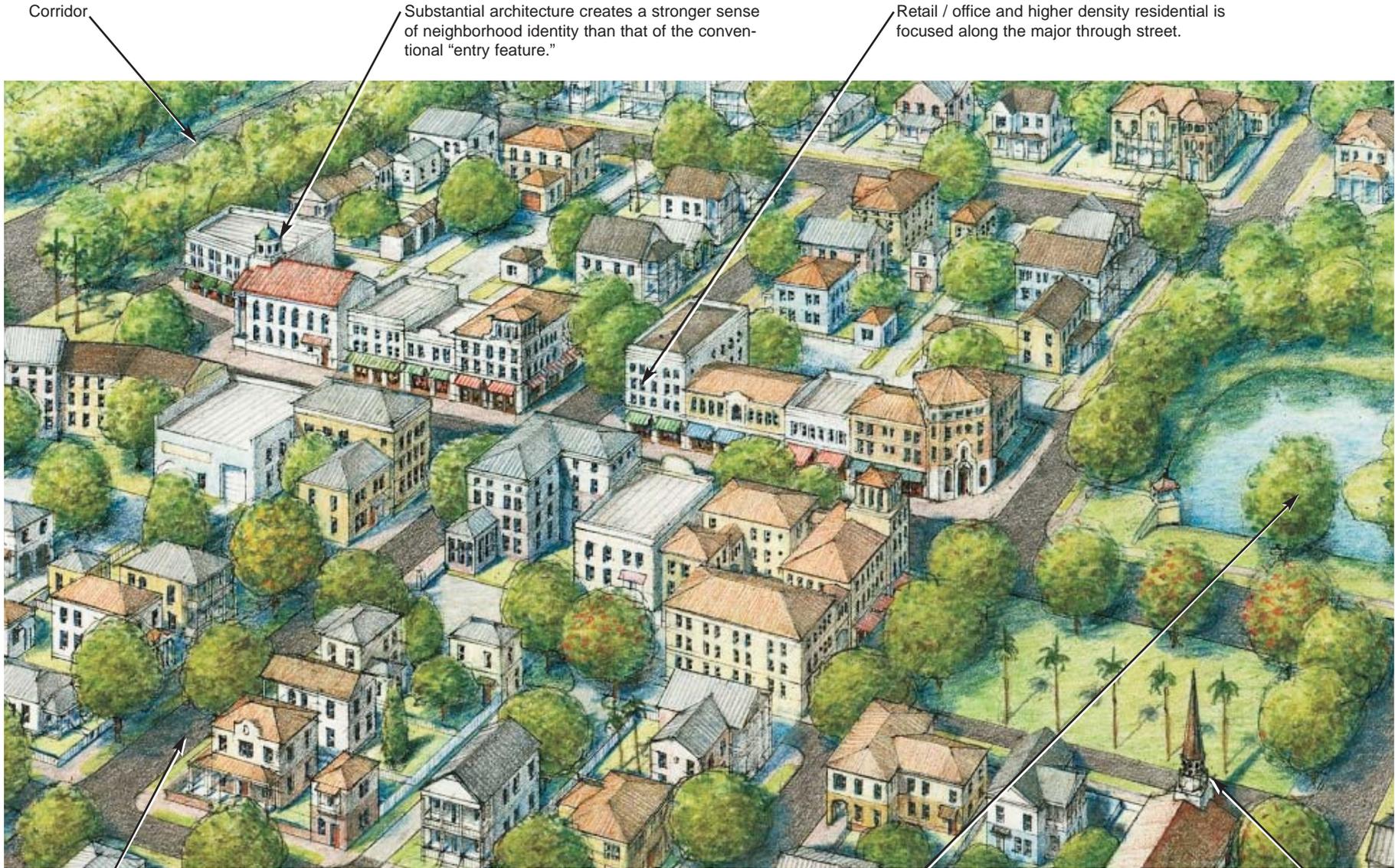
1. Begin with neighborhood centers
2. Connect center and edge with a true street network
3. Connect with existing neighborhoods
4. Provide security at the block level
5. Place houses close to the street edge
6. Provide a mix of uses
7. Provide sidewalks and bike paths

Proposed development straddling the new Livingston Road alignment. This new development illustrates the 1/4 mile neighborhood unit as a building block for larger master planned communities. The edge of these neighborhoods are connected, where possible, to the neighboring communities. Each neighborhood has center, general, and edge zones that provide a variety of housing types and sizes and a true mix of uses. A core area is also suggested at the top of the illustration, along a proposed new thoroughfare. This core area provides services and commercial uses shared by several adjacent neighborhoods.



- Center / Core
- General
- Edge

Livingston Road - where several neighborhoods converge. Connectivity, a mix of uses, and a gradient in density from center to edge.



Corridor

Substantial architecture creates a stronger sense of neighborhood identity than that of the conventional "entry feature."

Retail / office and higher density residential is focused along the major through street.

Neighborhood streets lead directly to the mixed-use "Main Street."

The neighborhood is focused around green, public, open spaces fronted by buildings.

Special sites are reserved for civic buildings

GROWING NEW NEIGHBORHOODS

SETTING THE COURSE

The culture of community-making demonstrated by Collier County's pioneers should be reestablished. New neighborhoods should be based on a sound pattern of streets and lots. A wider variety of housing choices should be made available by reintroducing traditional neighborhood concepts as an alternative to balance the many gated subdivisions that have been built over the past 20 years.

GETTING THERE

Growth Management Plan

- a. Add an achievable objective #3 under goal #2 regarding standards for planning new neighborhoods.
 - i. Add policies endorsing the strategies for creating new neighborhoods as stated in this plan, including right-sized neighborhoods with walkable blocks, differing intensities, common public spaces, and sites for civic buildings.
 - ii. Add a policy that requires master plans in proposed PUD rezones to show a conceptual street and block pattern for the entire site.
 - iii. Add a policy that requires a technical evaluation of proposed PUD master plans and site development plans as to the spacing and connectivity of local streets, percentage of land behind gates, and interconnections with adjoining neighborhoods (see page 1-9 in the Mobility Manual).
 - iv. Add a policy that requires street connections to all fronting collector and arterial roads, except where no such connection can be made without violating intersection spacing requirements of the land development code.

- v. Add a policy clearly supporting neighborhoods with a fine-grain mix of housing types, densities, and costs.
- b. Amend the description of the "Urban - Mixed Use District and related subdistricts" (pages 18-23 of the Future Land Use Element) to reflect the county's new strategies for creating neighborhoods.
- c. Amend the description of the "Traditional Neighborhood Design subdistrict" (pages 21-22 of the Future Land Use Element) to convert this subdistrict into an option that can be used throughout the urban designated area without need for rezoning, provided a proposed development plan complies with specific regulations to be placed into the land development code.
- d. Amend Policy 9.3 of the Transportation Element to strengthen its requirement for interconnection of local streets between neighborhoods.

Land Development Code

- a. Amend the land development code to require newly approved developments to:
 - i. Include collector roads that are open to the public and not blocked by gates;
 - ii. Incorporate any road links shown on the thoroughfare map; and
 - iii. Provide detailed criteria for evaluating the connectivity and spacing of local streets in proposed developments.
- b. Amend §3.2.8.4.16 and §2.2.20.3.11 of the code to delete the ambiguity as to when street interconnections will be required.
- c. Require newly subdivided neighborhoods to establish a connected street pattern with only a minimum of cul-de-sacs.
- d. Adopt specific regulations to implement the revised "Traditional Neighborhood Design subdistrict."

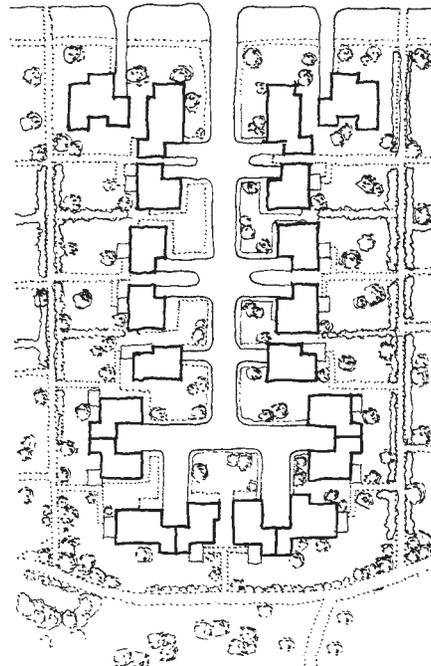
When Public Space is Behind the House

The best layout is for public spaces (parks, golf courses, greenways) to be faced by the fronts of houses, across streets that are designed for both pedestrian comfort and vehicular access. Optimally, place an alleyway along the rear side of lots, especially on blocks with relatively narrow lots, so that garage doors do not detract from the image of the street. With wider lots, it is possible to have driveways enter the house lots from the front, as long as garage doors are pushed back well behind the principal plane of the house front.

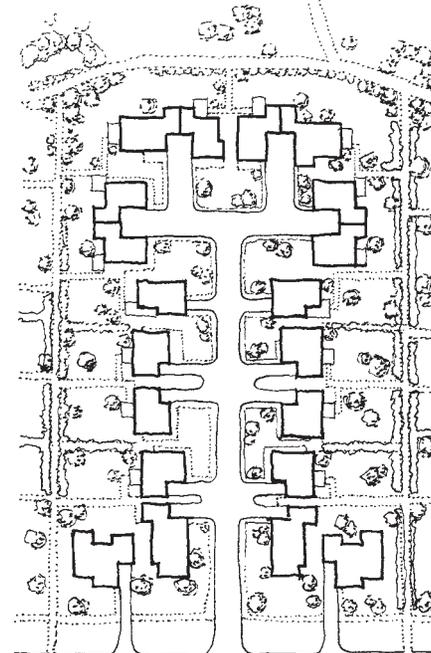
This respect for the grammar of “fronts” and “backs” is a hallmark of traditional neighborhood design and can be seen in many classic Florida communities. In Coral Gables, for example, the elegant houses on North Greenway Drive *face* the golf course instead of backing up to it.



There is another pattern, prominently introduced in the 1920s at Radburn, New Jersey by designers Clarence Stein and Henry Wright. In the Radburn model, the neighborhood's greenspace serves as the main organizing element for addresses while the streets are more like utilitarian service courts for motor vehicles. This pattern emerged from a desire to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic and provide safer places for children to play. In Radburn's “superblocks,” the fronts of



Radburn Plan



the houses face the fingers of greenspace instead of the streets, which in turn do not connect to one another.

The Radburn social experiment, since harshly discredited by Jane Jacobs and others who objected to the lack of “eyes on the street,” nevertheless gave rise to many variations in the PUDs that came later. Gradually developers abandoned the practice of making the greenspace-side the house front, expanded the garages and moved them streetward, and replaced the finger-like parks with fairways (hence the phrase “golfing between barbecue grills”). The *cul-de-sacs* themselves, shady and orderly in their spatial geometry in Radburn, became the excessively wide, treeless, loopy, bulb-headed roads that snaked into the PUDs of the 1980s and 1990s.



Despite the limitations and traffic problems, PUDs with watered-down Radburn techniques have been popular in Collier County. There are good ways to adapt some of the features of the Radburn model (while dropping others) for parts of modern neighborhoods:



golf course

porte-cochere

Don't give up on the street being the front of the dwelling. The houses clustered on Santa Maria Street in Coral Gables are both street-oriented *and* back up to the public space of the Riviera Golf Course.



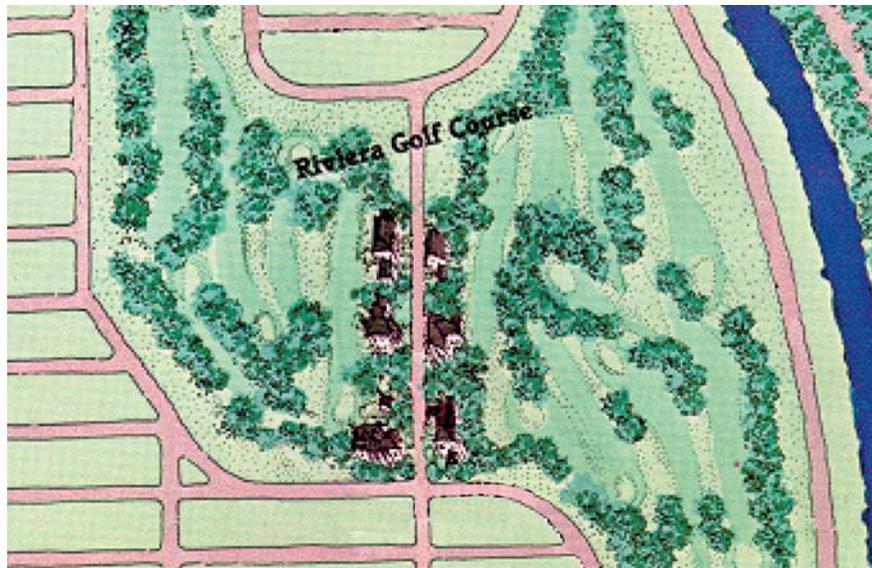
Get the garage door back behind the house. Run the driveway down the side of the lot, preferably to a detached garage/outbuilding. If the garage must be attached to the house, push it behind the principal plane of the house front, a car length or more, or even attach the garage to the rest of the house.

Add a porte-cochere over the driveway. This way the garage can be detached and pushed toward the rear, yet unloading of groceries is no problem in inclement weather, and results in a second shaded parking space to boot.



Newpoint Green

Newpoint "Ramble"



Map by Lombard & Spain (reprinted with permission)

Streets can still connect. Narrow and tree-lined, Santa Maria Street is not part of a block pattern, yet it connects to the surrounding street network on both ends.

the Newpoint Green

the "Ramble"



Newpoint Plan

Vary the block pattern, and incorporate both midblock greenspace and normal parks and squares. Newpoint is a Traditional Neighborhood Development that nevertheless has one scaled-down Radburn block. In the center of the block, the "Ramble" is a shared greenspace where kids play and neighbors gather.

REGARDING "GATED COMMUNITIES"

Gated subdivisions have been a prevalent housing choice in Collier County for a few years, and there is little point debating their popularity. Although places like the prestigious neighborhoods of Old Naples feature completely open streets – and homes there resell year after year for exceedingly high prices – developers staunchly maintain that gating is essential to sales in new development. They cite the fears of Florida crime that stem from the national media reports out-of-state buyers hear, and the tendency of seasonal residents to leave their homes unattended, as reasons why the walled compounds have become common.

The security impulse in real estate is not all that new. People have been coming together in communities for their collective security (among other reasons) for as long as there have been towns. Some of the oldest, most cherished places in the world have walls or were walled at some point in their history; think of the Bastides in France or the "private places" built by wealthy industrialists in 19th century St. Louis. The territorial impulse to mark the entrances and boundaries of one's community is also grounded in history; monumental entrances were among the first features incorporated in George Merrick's "City Beautiful" design for Coral Gables in the 1920s, for example. But like other lost arts, there are major problems with the physical way subdivisions have been gated in the recent past. It is completely feasible to provide security and identity – and yes, even gates – without the level of disruption to the street system or the anti-social imagery associated with the current practice.



Gated communities are prevalent throughout Collier County

The Community Character Plan recognizes the pervasive nature of the gate trend and does not mandate that gates should be outlawed in new development nor demand that they be removed from existing subdivisions. Instead, the urgent need is to reinvent the way gates and other security features are employed, to avoid the many negatives linked with the way gated communities were built in the 1990s.

1. First among the problems with gated communities was impact on *traffic circulation*. A number of PUDs simply walled off too big an area, sometimes enclosing a square-mile section of land or even more. Motorists from outside the subdivision have to go all the way around it (and, perhaps the next one and the next, too); this is basically why a relatively manageable amount of population growth has resulted in so much traffic congestion heaped upon so few roads. Commuters from within the gated PUDs tend to all crowd through the sole entrance at peak hours. Last, the disconnected and loopy street systems of the gated PUDs make it hard for public safety vehicles to find their way quickly, costing precious minutes when the need is most urgent. The practice of cordoning off a square mile section or quarter section of land ($\frac{1}{2}$ -square mile) must end. A street connection to the surrounding street system at intervals of every quarter mile, at a minimum, should be expected in new development (see Mobility Manual for more information).

Solutions: Instead of walling the whole planned community, the perimeters of each urban quarter or ward ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the neighborhood), or just portions thereof, can be secured. Open street connections would remain about every quarter mile, if not more frequently. Even better, the interior of each block itself can be secured in the traditional architectural manner, with garden walls, hedges and attached buildings; this creates privacy and security for the private indoor and outdoor spaces of each home, rather than blocking off the street. Where alleys are employed behind houses, these can be made private with electronically controlled gates, so that access to garages is restricted but the streets in front of homes remain open. Outbuildings can be allowed to span the alley, and balconies and bay windows incorporated upstairs, so the occupants of accessory dwellings above garages have a direct line of sight down the alley, adding more natural surveillance.



Monuments which mark the entrance to the community— but do not block off the street— are hallmarks of Florida's classic 1920's neighborhoods.



Above

Clearly defined public and private realms, coupled with “eyes on the street.” Garden walls and gatehouses at the block level provide security while enhancing community character. By placing homes close to the street, security is enhanced both for the pedestrian and for the homeowner, and more room is available for outdoor private space behind the house. High quality architecture and a dignified street scene are basic ingredients of upscale, exclusive neighborhoods all around the world. These factors can impart more value and market appeal than any security feature.

Top Right

Security at the block level. Continuous garden walls and fences, along with gated alley entrances completely enclose the block perimeter while maintaining open, connected, public streets.

Far Right

Security at the block level is an effective way of balancing security issues and pedestrian friendliness.

Right

Security at the house level, low garden wall instill a sense of safety and of privacy for the residents





This kind of "garagescape" inherently lacks security.

2. Designers of the walled compounds have an unfortunate tendency to *back the rear sides* of buildings up to the major streets going by at their edges, then surrounding the whole with a wall. This has disastrous consequences for community character and does not help marketability, either. Everyone sees these streets, and the aggregate visual effect is unworthy of Collier County's affluence and sophistication.

Solutions: Design the neighborhood with proper front-back relationships between all streets and all buildings. The fronts of houses or other buildings would therefore face the streets at the edge. With the right setbacks and design, this can be accomplished even along the heavily traveled collector streets. This approach is consistent with the way many American small towns were designed; often some of the grandest houses are located along the most prominent streets that lead to the town center, in a "Bankers' Row" or "Millionaires' Row." One can see this principle in effect in brand new Florida development, too. In the new town of Celebration, some of the finest homes are aligned on Celebration Avenue, the primary collector street. (When asked why Celebration Avenue isn't gated, the developer replied, "Real towns don't have those gates.")



On Celebration Avenue, grand homes face the major collector street.



Gates and walls are common throughout Collier; they may prevent some criminal activity, but negatively impact the roads and overall sense of community.



Conceptual drawing of a "millionaire's row."

3. For all the hype, the walled subdivisions are probably not even all that *safe*, given the manner in which they are typically designed. From a crime prevention point of view, one gets the impression that once the street system is blockaded and a wall is erected at the edge, the designers of these PUDs let their guard down. Most other fundamental concepts of crime prevention through environmental design are absent. There is little or no natural surveillance (eyes on the street); instead garage doors are the prominent features, so a miscreant could walk down the road in the middle of the afternoon on a weekend without being noticed. Lighting is often weak. Houses back up to the golf course, despite the much-discussed technique in which burglars enter the upmarket houses by walking right off the fairway.

Security consultants often point out that a common type of suburban crime is easy to commit in the gated subdivisions. In "walk in / drive out" crime, petty criminals leap the wall in an inconspicuous place, then raid a house, then drive away in a stolen car. Even at manned guardhouses, exiting motorists are rarely challenged, particularly when others are waiting (to use that lone exit!) at peak hours. Last, the mass-produced "monocultures" of similar households in similar houses— as opposed to the diverse communities envisioned by this Community Character Plan— tend to result in long periods of time in which no one is at home, a clear invitation to crime.

Solutions: With or without a wall and a gate, basic design conventions for safe neighborhoods should be incorporated in each new development. The natural surveillance gained from front porches, balconies, and people walking on sidewalks creates safety without being a visual announcement of fear and suspicion. Instead, these *add* to the sense of community and fellowship among neighbors.

4. For all the expense lavished on entry features, which grow more elaborate each year, numerous citizen participants expressed disdain for the slick, overwrought follies and fountains added to offset the typical guardhouses at the entrance to PUDs. Meant to add character, these items have become a hackneyed symbol of advertising and theme parks, and are having the opposite effect. (One called it "the Stalag thing.") On the other hand, using monuments and landmarks to delineate territory and celebrate passage into a community is a normal instinct.

Solutions: Wherever possible, eliminate the guarded gatehouse. This becomes feasible under the scenario of securing the block instead, described above. At key streets, traditional monuments alone can serve to mark entry, without impacting residents' and visitors' ability to travel in a desired direction or imparting the wrong emotion. These can be elaborate or low-key. The best way to create an impression of both dignity and conspicuous territoriality is with real architecture, that is, framing the entrance with substantial and occupied buildings instead of fake little follies. If there must be a guarded entrance, the guard booth should be integrated with the surrounding architecture if at all possible. One awkward but common design approach is to split traffic with a median (on which the single guardhouse often sits, like a tollbooth) at the neighborhood entrance; instead, try arching over the street or framing it on both sides for a less automotive-looking effect.



The "fortified compound" look



The majestic Douglas Road Entrance in residential Coral Gables

REGARDING GATED COMMUNITIES

SETTING THE COURSE

Most recent developments provide only one way in and out, and install a security gate at that point. Newly approved developments should instead have open street connections along spine roads about every quarter mile. Multiple gates can be used to secure individual blocks or portions of neighborhoods, provided these gates do not block access to adjoining neighborhoods.

GETTING THERE

Growth Management Plan

- a. Add a policy that requires newly subdivided neighborhoods to limit gates and other access restrictions to individual blocks or portions of neighborhoods so that even communities with gates can have street interconnections with adjoining neighborhoods. Open street connections would remain about every quarter mile, if not more frequently.

Land Development Code

- a. Adopt specific regulations to implement the county's new policy on gates in newly subdivided neighborhoods. Interconnections to the surrounding public street network should occur at approximately 1/4 mile intervals, even if portions of the neighborhood are gated.



REGARDING STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND THE CREATION OF TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Some planners and engineers object that traditional neighborhoods cannot be built today because of state and federal requirements. It is true that certain requirements pose barriers to some design features, especially in flood prone areas.

For instance, the federal government mandates minimum floor elevations along the coastline and near rivers to protect new buildings from flooding. Residential buildings absolutely must comply with these elevations; however, commercial buildings may be placed at sidewalk level if they are "dry-floodproofed," a structural process that allows the building to withstand the effects of flooding.

Florida's stringent water management rules require on-site detention of rainwater expected over the rainiest three days during a 25-year period. This strenuous requirement is usually met by creating large lakes spread throughout a new development, an aesthetically pleasing solution but one that interferes with a traditional street and block pattern and often reduces walkability.

This problem is easier to resolve in larger developments because a comprehensive surface water management system can be designed simultaneously with the street pattern and greenway system such that it provides minimum interference with streets and maximum aesthetic enjoyment. the best strategy is to locate required ponds at the neighborhood edges and inte-

grate them with coherent parks, greenbelts, and other useful open spaces, faced by the fronts of buildings. The worst strategy is to force retention ponds into canal-widths and wind them through the development, lined by the backs of houses.

In smaller developments and while retrofitting existing neighborhoods, other techniques are available such as pervious pavement, dry detention areas, exfiltration trenches, and other direct recharge concepts. These techniques return rainwater directly to the ground rather than routing it through highly engineered conveyances to drainage canals. Dry soil has much greater capacity to absorb water than a pond has; maintaining infiltration capacity throughout a site can replace the storage capacity of conventional ponds. These techniques,

REGARDING STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

SETTING THE COURSE

Technical regulations can inadvertently block ideal development practices. Collier County should encourage stormwater management techniques that return rainwater directly to the ground whenever those techniques can reduce runoff that would otherwise be routed to drainage canals.

GETTING THERE

Growth Management Plan

- a. Add a new policy under objective 1.6 in the Public Facilities Element (drainage sub-element) to encourage the use of stormwater management techniques that return rainwater directly to the ground, such as pervious pavement, dry detention areas, exfiltration trenches, and other direct recharge concepts.

Land Development Code

- a. Amend any provisions of the code that inappropriately restrict the use of stormwater management techniques that return rainwater directly to the ground.
- b. Add a policy encouraging most new lakes or ponds to be located at edges of neighborhoods so as to minimize interruptions to pedestrian connectivity.

New Traditional Neighborhoods: The Financial Outlook

Investment in traditional neighborhood development (TND) was on of the fastest growing segments of the real estate industry in the late 1900's. The TND Fund estimates that cumulative investment in this sector rose to \$2.1 billion in 1998, up 75 percent from the year before.

TND investments fall under six subcategories:

- 1) Corporate owners of large properties have funded some of the larger new towns. Examples include Disney's investment in Celebration (Orlando, Florida) and Weyerhaeuser's Northwest Landing (Dupont, Washington).
- 2) Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) have made sizeable investments in a handful of projects. Examples are Post Properties' investments in Addison Circle (Dallas, Texas) and Federal Realty investments in neighborhood centers.
- 3) Life insurance companies have made loans to developers. One example is Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company's debt financing of Haile Village Center in Gainesville, Florida.
- 4) Bank and mortgage companies were a source for such projects as Amelia Park in Fernandina Beach, Florida (First Union National Bank) and Daniel Island in Charleston, South Carolina, (National Bank of South Carolina).
- 5) Government credit agencies have put capital into projects such as Southlake near Orlando, Florida (Florida Housing Finance Agency).
- 6) Life insurance companies have contributed equity, e.g. Leucadia National Corporation (Colonial Penn holding company) financed Rosemary Beach.

Why is TND a fast growing segment?

The New Urbanism offers economic and practical benefits to developers, buyers and local government. For the developer, walkable neighborhoods usually means higher density which can mean lower land cost per home. TND's typically attract a broader range of buyers, because they offer a wide range of housing types and prices with neighborhood commercial and retail. Developers of TND's believe that the product will have a higher value - a study by the Urban Land Institute, [Valuing the New Urbanism](#), has shown that this assumption is well founded.

TND investments likely will continue to grow, for the following reasons. First, institutions are expected to have at least some of their portfolio in "specialty investments," including mixed-use properties. However, institutions require higher yields from such investments. Second, successful investors want to be on the next bandwagon - early and in a big way. To all appearances, the next bandwagon is TND.

Furthermore, TND will grow because it fulfills the needs of a growing number of people who see suburbia as dysfunctional and dislike sprawl. This market segment wants to break free from automobile dependence and seeks community. "Sample the attitudes of suburbanites today and you'll find a growing number who think their lifestyle is becoming more difficult and less appealing," reports ERE/Yarmouth's *Emerging Trends in Real Estate: 1998*. "And for the first time they are beginning to consider alternatives."

At the current rate of increase, the total invested in TND will rise to more than \$10 billion by 2004 - a scenario that is not unrealistic given the number of projects that are planned, financed and just beginning construction.

Investment in TND may, in fact, increase faster. One reason is that TND investment is a hedger against risk. The principles of

investment diversification found in Harry Markowitz's classic concept, Modern Portfolio Theory (MPT), argue against allocating all of a real estate portfolio to conventional development. By imposing constraints on conventional investments and by diversifying into TND and New Urbanism, the portfolio risk is reduced, according to MPT.

Short term versus long-term investments

By their nature, TND's are a longer-term investment. Although some have done well in early years, they are generally structured to yield higher returns later than conventional development. TND's are designed to be more than the sum of their parts, and it takes many years to develop all the elements, i.e. retail, mix of housing types and community amenities, which add to the value of the neotraditional projects. Also, TND's generally have no market comparables nearby - therefore little data is available upon which to base house and lot values in early years of the project, delaying the time when peak yields are achieved. The exception is Rosemary Beach, only 12 miles from Seaside, where buyers have an easily understood point of reference. Rosemary Beach in all likelihood had the best first-year financial return of any TND to date.

Financial returns from selected TND's

Information on financial returns of TND's is sketchy, but there have been some published reports, including an analysis by Robert Chapman in the January 1998 issue of *New Urban News*. Chapman gathered data and estimates on annual returns of six projects. The returns ranged from 25 percent to 45 percent, measured by the annual increase in market value of developed property as determined by sale and resale prices. The TND returns substantially exceed the real estate investment returns reported in the National Council of Real Estate Investment Fiduciaries Property Index (just under 9 percent average annual return over the last 10 years).

The figures come from published reports and interviews with developers. The six TND's listed are not a representative sample (although they do comprise nearly 20 percent of all U.S. TND's that were far enough along to be analyzed financially in late 1997) and these figures may differ significantly from the industry as a whole. All six are located in the Southeast. More study is required to obtain defensible figures for TND's generally.

...At Newpoint, in Beaufort, South Carolina, the 130-lot, 54-acre property was purchased by developer Vince Graham for \$1.3 million, and \$1.15 million was spent on roads and infrastructure. Total development costs were estimated at \$14,600 on interior lots and \$60,000 on waterfront lots. Interior lot prices began at \$20,000 in 1992, and recently have sold for \$85,000. Some waterfront lots have sold for as high as \$369,000. "We generated a pretty hefty return in the first year," Graham told the *WSJ*.

The project features homes close to the street, wide and deep porches, traffic calming devices and architecture based on the historic town of Beaufort. Graham estimates that the project is performing 30 to 40 percent better than expected, from a pure financial standpoint. Moreover, Newpoint has become a local civic amenity, with neighboring subdivisions advertising their proximity, and youngsters from surrounding suburbia overrunning the place on Halloween.

By Robert Chapman III, partner of the TND Fund, an equity investment group for neotraditional developments

Excerpted from "New Urbanist Projects Attract Investment," [New Urban News Comprehensive Report & Best Practices Guide](#). Reprinted by permission.



Newpoint, a highly successful traditional neighborhood development (TND) in a growing coastal region where golf, retirees, and resort lifestyles are big factors in real estate



TND¹ returns (selected projects)

Project/ Location	Developer	Annual return (%) ²	Term (yrs)
Haile Village Center Gainesville, FL	Robert Kramer	25	4
Newpoint Beaufort, SC	Vince Graham, Robert Turner	45	5
Seaside Walton County, FL	Robert Davis	35 ³ 25 ⁴	14
Rosemary Beach Walton County, FL	Leucadia National Corp.	273	1
Southern Village Chapel Hill, NC	D.R. Bryan	12	3
Tannin Orange Beach, AL	George Gounares	26	7

¹Traditional neighborhood development

²Based on published reports, discussions with developers and best available estimates

³Same type lot, weighted average

⁴Same type house, weighted average

PRECEDENTS: Traditional Neighborhood Developments

Around the United States, successful TND housing is emerging in many forms.



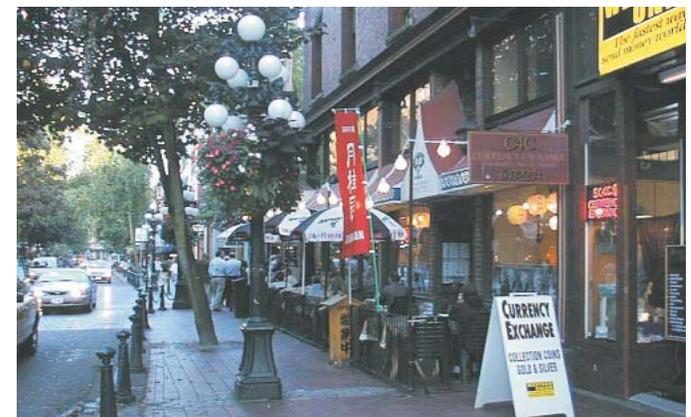
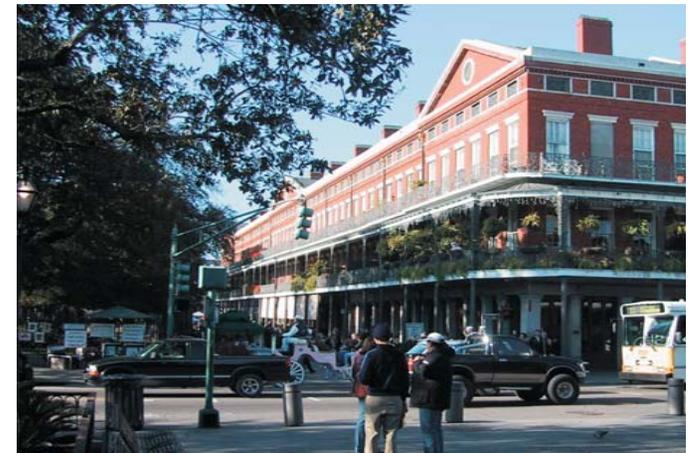
I'On, South Carolina
Single family house



Abacoa, Florida:
Attached townhouses



Miami Lakes, Florida
Multi-family housing



WORLD CLASS STREETS: A PRIMER

It is not surprising that, given their multiple roles in urban life, streets require and use vast amounts of land. In the United States, from 25 to 35 percent of a city's developed land is likely to be in public right-of-way, mostly streets. If we can develop and design streets so that they are wonderful, fulfilling places to be, community building places, attractive public places for all people of cities and neighborhoods, then we will have successfully designed about 1/3 of the city directly and will have an immense impact on the rest.

– Allan Jacobs, *Great Streets*



WHAT MAKES A GREAT STREET?

Much of the Character Plan is devoted to transportation issues such as enhancing and improving the street network and creating access management standards. There is, however, a second way to think about streets, as the backbone of urban design. Great streets are environments that, more than any other, define a community's sense of self.

In recent years, some folks in Collier have defined 'great streets' as those that are wide, uncongested, and move traffic efficiently, period. Roadways, especially key routes, are commonly seen as conveyance systems for automobiles only, not as a viable human habitat capable of more. This purely utilitarian view is understandable given the traffic tie-ups that occur during parts of the peak season. But in light of the amount of time people spend on these thoroughfares, it seems reasonable to ask why they cannot provide a more pleasing experience on top of performing their traffic circulation duties.

Memorable primary streets provide good addresses for sustainable commerce, and convey the lasting images required to maintain the loyalty of tourists and seasonal residents so crucial to the Collier County economy. Streets in Naples such as 5th Avenue and 3rd Street exemplify this use of public rights-of-way as high-quality urban habitat. High-quality secondary streets, as the residential avenues, are key to livability in neighborhoods.

There are various ways to judge the quantitative effectiveness of

Beauty and This Beast

Editor, Naples Daily News:

"It's a shame to see the creeping development as you go north on U.S. 41. We have been coming to Naples for three years and have watched the destruction of beautiful, scenic land. We wonder if the Collier County commissioners realize how ugly this is becoming. It is hard to understand how more strip malls are allowed to be developed, especially when the seedy ones, such as those from 93rd through 109th Avenues north, are allowed to continue to deteriorate.

Soon Naples will look like Fort Myers along the 41 corridor. Makes one want to go somewhere else, where good building codes are in place and followed. It really is a shame."

-- Bob Bauer / North Naples

Letter to the editor, *Naples Daily News*, February 3, 2001

streets; their size, capacity, and levels of service are often discussed. But how does one judge the subtle *quality* of a street for human habitat and visual character? This section will help judge the character and quality of existing and proposed streets in Collier.

The Basics

Great streets provide for the well-being of those who use them, and the formula for this is simple. Safe, comfortable streets are *shaped, shaded, naturally surveilled, traffic-calmed, connected, and interesting.*



Big Sur, Pacific Coast Highway, Northern California

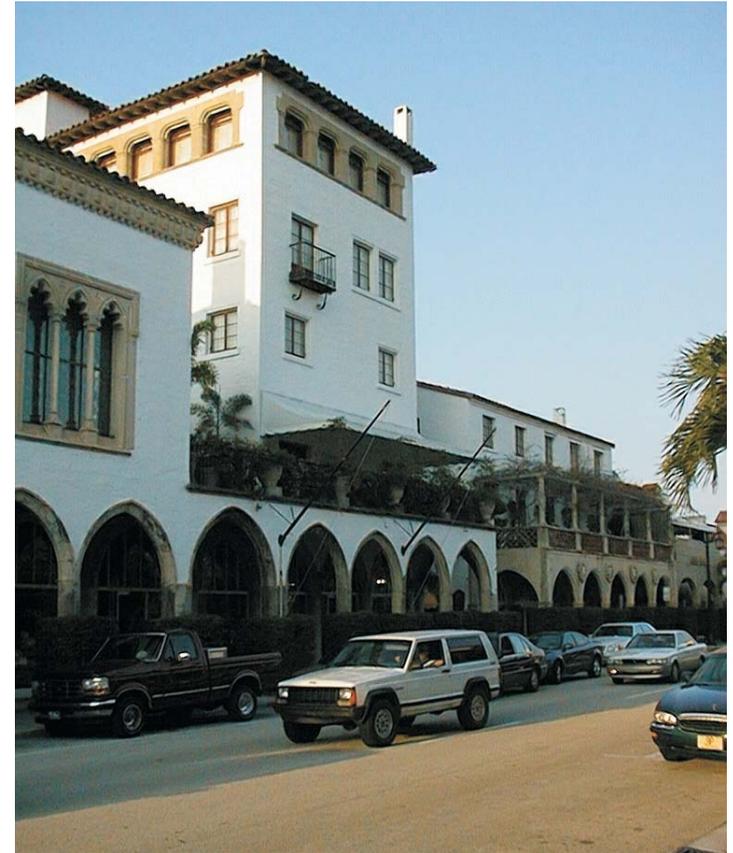
WHY STREETS MUST BE MEMORABLE

The best streets are those that leave a lasting positive impression on visitors and residents alike. Worth Avenue in Palm Beach is one such memorable street, perhaps the most remarkable thing about Palm Beach. Fifth Avenue is often cited as the most memorable location in Collier County. Great streets gain special acceptance and are even cherished by the people in their communities.

The Community Image Survey results show marked dissatisfaction with the quality of the pedestrian experience on Collier thoroughfares, especially along arterials. Following successive road widenings, these arterials have become the most hostile pedestrian environments and the worst streets in Collier County.

Why not make urban arterial streets so attractive and compelling that they become landmarks in themselves?

This is **not** simply an aesthetic idea or a luxury item. Collier County's economy is inextricably bound to its character, and it must continually improve its image to remain competitive for the dollars of seasonal residents and tourists. In an interview about the Character Plan, one elected official worried aloud about what might happen to the local economy should freedom return to nearby Cuba, with its supe-



Worth Avenue, Palm Beach

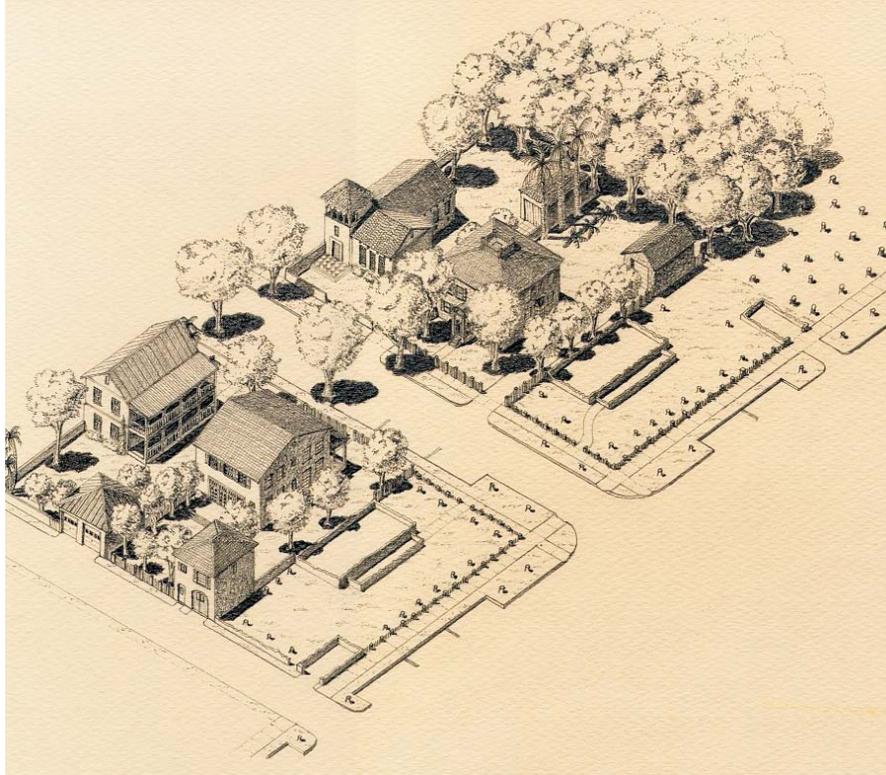
rior beaches, history, and cultural pizzazz. As for permanent residents, groups like the Greater Collier Economic Development Council stress the importance of high-wage, high-knowledge jobs in the new economy. Technology is evolving to make it possible for information-based businesses to locate where their workers want to live; the indelible quality-of-life impression left upon a visitor by arterial streets can make all the difference. Collier County's blighted arterial corridors are out of sync with the goal of attracting the best workforce and, in turn, retaining successful, growing employers.



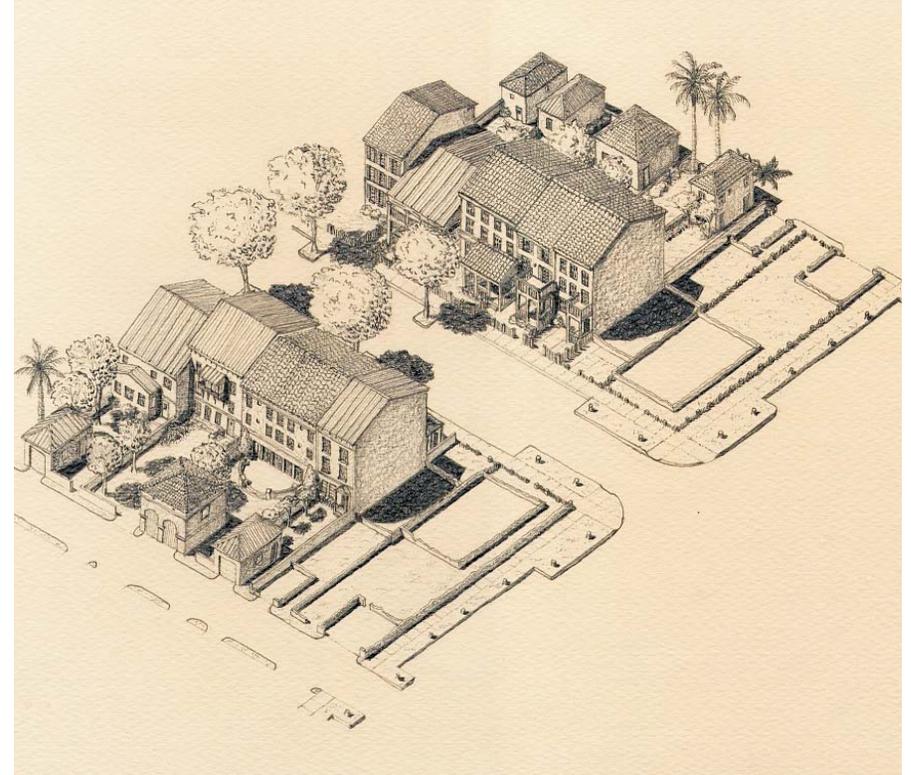
Beverly Hills: Why not make urban arterial streets so attractive and compelling that they become landmarks in themselves?



Coral Gables: Why not design streets as good addresses, public space amenities that add value to the real estate?

**A Street of Detached Houses**

Note that on one side of the street, lots are served by alleys, and no garage doors are in front of the houses.

**A Street of Attached Houses**

Note that the rowhouses sit forward on their lots, spatially defining the street, and creating private gardens behind the houses.

STRATEGIES FOR DESIGNING GREAT STREETS

1. Design for pedestrians first

The configurations of great streets consistently provide a high-caliber experience for pedestrians as a base-line obligation, and go on from there to accommodate all the other required modes of travel.

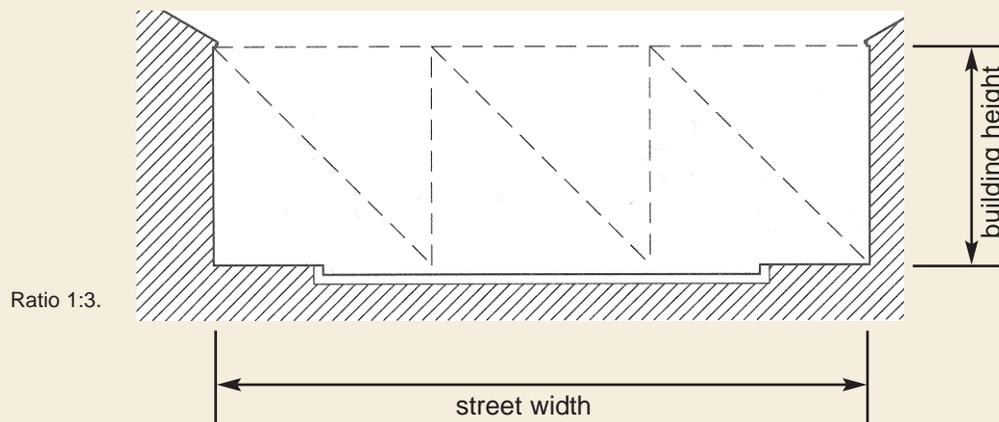
2. Scale Matters

A street should function as a three-dimensional outdoor room, surrounding its occupants in a space that is welcoming and useable, especially for pedestrians. A ratio of 1:3 for building height to street width is often

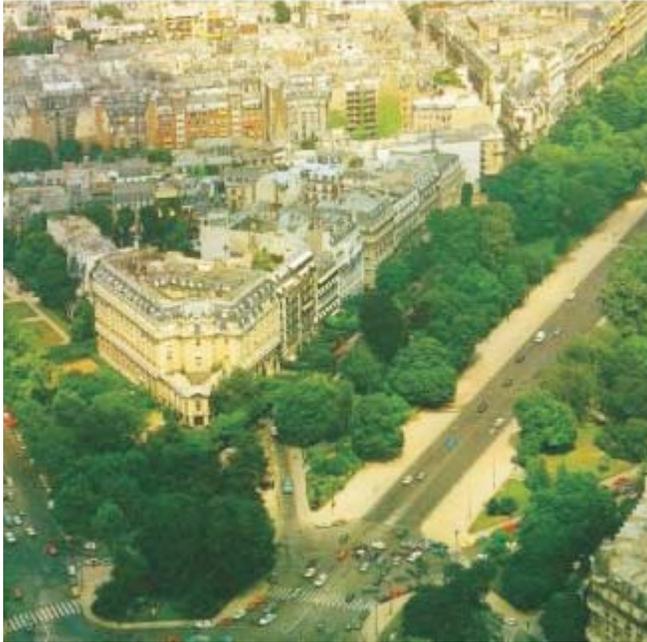
Proportions of Street Space

The height-to-width ratio of the space generates spatial enclosure, which is related to the physiology of the human eye. If the width of a public space is such that the cone of vision encompasses less street wall than sky opening, the degree of spatial enclosure is slight. The ratio of 1 increment of height to 6 of width is the absolute minimum, with 1 to 3 being an effective minimum if a sense of enclosure is to result. As a general rule, the tighter the ratio, the stronger the sense of place and, often, the higher the real estate value. Spatial enclosure is particularly important for shopping streets that must compete with shopping malls, which provide very effective spatial definition. [emphasis added]. In the absence of spatial definition by facades, disciplined tree planting is an alternative. Trees aligned for spatial enclosure are necessary on thoroughfares that have substantial front yards.

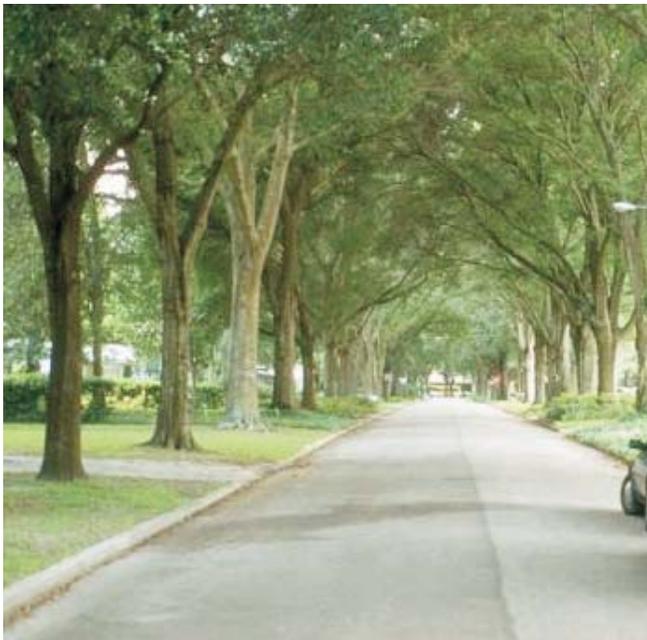
Excerpted from *AIA Graphic Standards*



Pedestrian mobility in Collier County should become the first priority.



The Champs-Élysées, Paris



Winter Park



Town planners and developers from all over the world study Church Street in Charleston, which is very narrow.



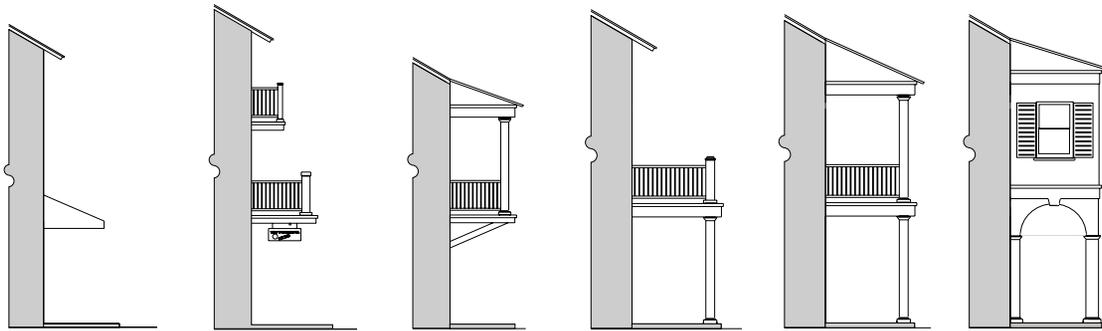
Myers Park

cited as a benchmark of success.

Although pedestrians are invariably more comfortable on narrower streets, great streets vary in size and shape and are successful in many different configurations. Width is only part of the recipe. From an urban design point of view, there are extremely successful eight-lane roads just as there are miserable failures two lanes wide. Streets need to be sized properly for their use and matched in proportion to the architecture and/or trees that frame them. The Champs-Élysées in Paris, for example, is 230 feet wide, wider than any right-of-way in Collier County, but it is considered a “great street;” the scale of the boulevard is defined three-dimensionally. Buildings on the Champs-Élysées are 75 to 80 feet tall, creating an effective sense of enclosure. By contrast, intimate residential segments of Church Street in Charleston have a right-of-way only twenty-two feet wide -- just seventeen feet curb-to-curb, plus a sidewalk -- and the houses that line both sides are two stories tall. Classic streets in American streetcar suburbs feature shallow front yards, broad planting strips for trees, and relatively narrow pavement; the trees on both sides enhance the spatial definition. The designed ratio of height to width is followed on most great streets around the world.

3. Design the street as a unified whole.

An essential distinction of great streets is that the whole outdoor room is designed as an ensemble, including utilitarian auto elements (travel lanes, parking, curbs), public components (such as the trees, sidewalks, and lighting) and private elements (buildings, landscape, and garden walls). As tempting as it may be to separate these issues, by for example leaving building placement and orientation out of the discussion when planning new thoroughfares, all the public and private elements must be coordinated to good effect. For example, the best city streets invariably have buildings fronting the sidewalk, usually close



Diagrams of architectural treatment for encroachments over Main Street sidewalks: awning, balcony(s), colonnade(s), arcade.

to the street. The random setbacks generated by conventional zoning only rarely produce this effect, so the land development regulations along a given corridor must be rethought in conjunction with any road improvement (especially widenings). In some cases, *minimum* height of buildings should be regulated to achieve spatial definition, almost impossible to attain with one-story buildings. Similarly, the old routine of widening roads but citing last-minute budget problems as the reason to leave street trees or sidewalks “for later” is unacceptable, comparable to building a house with no roof.

4. Include sidewalks almost everywhere.

Without sidewalks, pedestrian activity is virtually impossible. The design matters, too. One of the simplest ways to enhance the pedestrian environment is to locate the sidewalk at least 5 or 6 feet away from the curb, with the street trees planted in between. Pedestrians will be more willing to utilize sidewalks if they are located a safe distance away from moving automobile traffic. The width of the sidewalk will vary according to the location. On most single-family residential streets, five feet will usually suffice, but more width is needed on rowhouse streets to accommodate stoops. On Main Streets, fourteen feet is usually most appropriate, but the sidewalk must never fall below an absolute minimum of eight feet wide.

5. Shade!

Motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists all prefer shady streets. No higher priority exists in the pursuit of community character. Street trees should be placed between automobile traffic and pedestrians, for an added layer of psychological security for pedestrians. (As basic as this principle sounds, many arterial roads in Florida are still designed with the sidewalk attached immediately back of the curb and gutter, as if the pedestrians were expected to



St. Augustine (photo by Dan Burden)



Fifth Avenue

Regarding Trees and Overhead Utility Lines

Overhead utility lines and possible conflicts with street trees have concerned utility companies for the past 30 years. The companies have generally discouraged the use of large shade trees on urban streets where there are power lines. This does not seem justified. In many towns the large trees and utility lines co-exist in close proximity, with the wires running through the crown, close to the main tree trunk.* Sometimes the tree trunks provide additional support for the wires. A more objective look at this condition may show that the air-conditioning effect and other benefits of large trees more than justify whatever additional maintenance costs are incurred. Recent evidence shows that large spreading tree canopies can provide substantial cooling by reducing the “heat island effect” in cities and towns. (Sampson; Akbari) Studies also suggest that the more severe practice of clearing, sometimes used in the past to make wires safe from trees, is not necessary. A less costly practice of selective pruning may be the preferred option. It has also been suggested that the practice of planting small street trees popular in many municipalities be reexamined. (McPherson)

...Trees growing under the utility lines. Where the tree trunk is directly beneath the wires, the tree can actually provide support for the wires, with the wires running through a crotch. There are very few overhanging branches, and the largest possible area of pavement is shaded.

*The open nature of most deciduous tree crowns poses very few points of potential conflict between wires and falling branches. Few branches on a tree growing close to the wires run exactly parallel to and immediately above the wires. These are the only branches that would pose a conflict if they fell. Healthy, closely spaced street trees growing almost centered on the utility lines offer the least risk and the most benefit. Older individual trees and trees growing 10 to 20 feet away from the lines pose the greatest hazard of occasional falling branches. Therefore, planting trees on the sidewalk opposite the utility lines offers less protection to the wires and less shade from the trees. For streets with above-ground utility lines, it is best to plant the trees directly under the wires.

Excerpted from *Trees in Urban Design*
by Henry F. Arnold (reprinted by permission)



Aix-en-Provence, France



Old Naples

protect the trees instead of the other way around.) Pedestrians are unwilling to walk long distances without some protection from the sun, especially in Collier County’s hot climate. In traditional Caribbean towns, the narrow streets and relatively tall, attached buildings combine to make shade, and this technique can be employed here in a few circumstances such as activity centers and snug new villages. This idea is illustrated by Aviles Street in St. Augustine, for example.

For the rest of Collier’s thoroughfares, street trees with fairly continuous canopies that extend over the travel lanes and the sidewalks should be the norm. This is especially vital on arterial roadways or other wide streets that contain expanses of concrete and asphalt and depend on trees for spatial definition.

The Character Plan repeatedly refers to “street trees” and “shade trees,” not just “landscaping.” While engineering practice has been gradually reintroducing green elements, and there is greater acceptance of street trees today among transportation officials than was the case a generation ago, the county needs to make it completely clear that the goal is to grow substantial trees alongside its roads and in its medians, not just ground cover or diminutive ornamental species here and there. Even parts of the median along segments of US 41 in Naples demonstrate why cultivating substantial trees is both desirable and achievable under modern standards. Do not take no for an answer.

Main Streets are a special case, in which excessive tree plantings can interfere with clear views to signage and merchandise. In areas like these where continuous plantings of street trees are undesirable or inappropriate, architectural encroachments over the sidewalk like awnings, arcades and colonnades, and cantilevered balconies can be used in



The Esplanade, Chico, California

This scenic boulevard is perennially ranked by Chico citizens as their favorite street in the city, even though it is wide and carries a lot of traffic. The center through-lanes (left) provide for fast-moving regional traffic, while the slow-moving side access lanes (right) handle local trips in an attractive setting, great for real estate. (Photos by John Anderson)



place of trees to protect pedestrians from the elements and shield storefronts from glare. The taller buildings and tighter height-to-width ratio on Main Streets also produce some shade. In downtown areas, streetlights, bus shelters, benches, and other street furniture occupy the wider sidewalks and provide the appropriate separation between pedestrians and the curb.

6. Make medians sufficiently wide.

Where divided thoroughfares are unavoidable, the medians must be generous enough to serve as a community character amenity. For street trees to thrive and for pedestrians to have adequate refuge when crossing streets, the medians need to be sized accordingly.

7. Plant the street trees in an orderly manner.

Great streets are not the place to experiment with random, romantic, or naturalistic landscaping. Urban trees should be planted in aligned rows, with regular spacing, using consistent species. This will not appear rigid or mechanistic, for trees do not grow identically; rather, the power of formal tree placement is that it at once shapes the space, reflects conscious design, and celebrates the intricacy and diversity within the species. More importantly, the shade produced by the trees will be continuous enough to make walking viable, and the spatial impression of aligned trees also has a traffic calming effect.

8. Use smart lighting.

Streets should be well lit at night both for automobile safety and pedestrian safety.



Landscaped, wide median

On-street parking is a common sight on streets with character. It creates a positive pedestrian environment and aids sidewalk-oriented retailing.



Main Street, Miami Lakes

Pedestrians will avoid streets where they feel unsafe. “Cobra head” light fixtures on tall poles spaced far apart do not provide for pedestrian safety and are universally unpopular (see Community Image Survey results). Shorter fixtures installed more frequently are more appropriate, and can provide light under the tree canopy as street trees mature.

9. Allow on-street parking in suitable locations.

On-street parking provides further separation between pedestrians and moving cars and also serves as a traffic calming device because of the “visual friction” and alertness it triggers. Parallel parking is often better than head-in or diagonal parking because it requires less space. Parking near the fronts of buildings also encourages people to get out of their cars and walk, and is essential to leasing street-oriented retail space.

10. Resist parking lots in front of buildings.

The bulk of a building’s parking supply should not be up against the sidewalk or facing the street but should occur behind the building instead (or in a few cases, beside the building). The acres of surface parking between storefronts and the street are responsible for the negative visual impact of the typical commercial “strip” (see Community Image Survey results). Such a disconnected pedestrian environment is in part due to bad habits on the part of auto-oriented chain stores, but also reflects the large setbacks and high parking requirements in conventional zoning. If the rules are changed to provide “build-to” lines rather than mandatory front setbacks for commercial buildings, it is possible to grow streets in Collier County with real cachet, like Park Avenue in Winter Park.



Parking lots in front



Parking lots behind

STRATEGIES FOR DESIGNING GREAT STREETS

SETTING THE COURSE

Great streets are the backbone of a well-designed community. Streets are critical conduits for vehicles but they are also important public spaces that should be designed as a unified whole, with sidewalks and street trees never being mere afterthoughts. Streets should be of such quality that they are genuine amenities to the neighborhoods they serve.

GETTING THERE

Growth Management Plan

- a. In the Future Land Use Element, establish a new goal #3 promoting "great streets" for Collier County and memorable commercial centers that combine resilient traditional buildings, customer convenience, diversity of offerings, and a complementary mix of uses.
- b. Add an achievable objective #1 under goal #3 of the Future Land Use Element regarding the design of great streets and adjoining buildings.
 - i. Add policies that endorse the basic strategies for designing great streets as stated in this plan.
 - ii. Add a policy that recognizes the following features as desirable for development along roads: buildings fronting sidewalks with little or no setback; parking lots moved behind or aside buildings; and buildings more than one story tall.
- c. Add a policy in the Transportation Element that commits to include the following basic amenities in the design and construction of all new roads to be built by Collier County: ample sidewalks away from curbs, street trees in uniform rows; attractive lighting fixtures that will not conflict with mature trees, and on-street parking along boulevards and collector roads and in other locations where buildings are (or are planned to be) close to the road.

Land Development Code:

- a. Amend the code wherever conflicts are found between its current provisions and the new growth management plan policies regarding great streets.
- b. Amend the code to provide "build-to" lines rather than mandatory front setbacks for commercial buildings.

RETHINKING THE CORRIDORS

Collier County is highly regarded throughout the United States as a destination for golf, beaches and natural beauty. The glossy sales brochures and marketing material sell the area as a heaven on earth, an affluent and exceptional community. Collier County is all of these things. But a first-time visitor from out of town is forced to ask “Where is it?” Any entry into Collier by automobile (including arrivals from the airport) forces visitors and residents alike to view the most unpleasant environments anywhere: US 41, Airport Road, Collier Boulevard, Davis Boulevard, Pine Ridge Road, and so on. These are the hard-working major arterials in Collier County, the roads that go from somewhere to somewhere else; everyone that drives, drives on these roads. Yet these are the ugliest places in the county.

These corridors cut swaths through Collier County, housing most of the area’s businesses in the kind of ordinary strip development found in nearly every US city. There is no reason that they cannot be beautiful, functional, “signature” corridors that residents are proud of and visitors envy. Without harming their important commercial mobility function, these roads can be transformed into grand boulevards, from visually blighted areas to premier public places. Over time, they can be improved by adding street trees, medians, sidewalks, new buildings closer to the street, and, in some cases, side access lanes with parking.



A forgettable corridor



A memorable corridor



Tamiami Trail

US 41 at the Naples Town Center Mall, existing conditions. The newly widened Trail is a failure as a quality human habitat with character. The road in relation to the buildings' setbacks appears too wide, and the buildings are spaced too far apart to be a viable, pedestrian-friendly area.

THE EVOLUTION OF A CORRIDOR

The future of the corridors in Collier County can follow many different paths. The options are one or a combination of the following:

The **Business As Usual** approach would continue the development and road building standards used in the recent past. The main corridors, useful for little else as addresses, would continue to be commercialized strips lined with the asphalt of parking lots. Traffic may improve for short periods of time after each successive road widening, but there comes a limit where more rounds of widening can't be sustained. Pedestrian quality on the business-as-usual streets will be abysmal, attracting only those that have no other choice but to walk.

The **Traffic First** approach will eventually lead to an urge to construct several grade-separated interchanges, in effect superhighway design elements on city streets, with hardly any city around them. This expensive process was used at the intersection of Colonial Boulevard and US 41 in Lee County. This approach will prove most detrimental to the areas immediately surrounding the interchange. Ramping and bridges for the intersection can extend for nearly a mile and cost many millions of dollars per interchange. The leftover chunks of unusable land at the intersection will become vacant through neglect and attrition, leaving an intractable blight on the community at the



Grade-separated interchange in Lee County



Tamiami Trail

The first step is adding street trees along the sides or in the center median. The trees add character to the street while providing shade.

key intersections.

The **People First** approach is also the approach that creates community character. This approach helps to generate more quality on the corridors without marginalizing their capacity as major arterials to carry traffic. It seeks to balance transportation requirements, without sacrificing public or commercial space and at the same time, begins encouraging a true mix of uses, including retail, offices, and residences. This approach is outlined below using the Naples Towne Centre strip mall and US 41 as an example.

Naples Towne Centre was chosen for this case study because of its location in East Naples and its current semi-vacant status. Many residents of East Naples were disappointed to see that most new development is occurring to the east and north of them. Many expressed the desire to be able to walk to suitable places to shop and work but discussed the terrible perils that face pedestrians who dare walk along US 41, let alone cross it. This road corridor performs its auto traffic function but not its character function.

This location is ideal for the creation of a mixed-use node along the corridor though not all locations along the corridor need be, or should be, developed at the intensity that is suggested for this one. The scenario illustrated on these pages calls for intense revitalization of the strip center parcel and a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile stretch of the corridor. The ideal future development of the corridor would be to create such nodes of activity and higher intensity uses at one or two mile intervals. The remaining stretches of corridor in between can be developed at a lesser intensity while still incorporating character-inducing traits as outlined below.

The evolution of a corridor is slow and additive. The ultimate goal is to create a true mix of uses, and a truly pedestrian-friendly environment.

This commercial area illustrates the short life cycle of a strip mall. At first, newly constructed or widened



Tamiami Trail

The next step in humanizing the corridor strip is to transform the 6-lane road into a true boulevard with 4 through lanes and 2 local traffic lanes. The boulevard separates local traffic from the high speed interior travel lanes, easing turning movements off Tamiami Trail and reducing speed on the side access lanes to a rate more conducive to pedestrian activities.

roads bring people. Increased traffic counts on the road mean initially high customer traffic in the stores. Then (usually following more roadbuilding downstream or on another nearby corridor) a newer or more convenient shopping center is built, cannibalizing the customer base, and after a short duration the process repeats itself. As strip centers obsolete and are replaced by newer and more convenient centers, customers are drawn away. Discount stores move in as the higher revenue producing stores migrate to new centers. These market shifts make the standard strip mall configuration cyclically obsolete, which owners combat through repeated façade renovations. Once the location becomes less desirable, though, no amount of façade renovations will bring back business. The end result is a shell or a half-used symbol of decay. The Naples Towne Centre / US 41 case study illustrates the recycling of such a key commercial parcel that has become obsolete.



The short life cycle of strip malls and big boxes.



Tamiami Trail

Allow on-street parking along the side access lanes, offering motorists convenience. The parking provides a physical and psychological barrier between pedestrians and moving traffic.

STEPS FOR TRANSFORMING THE CORRIDOR AND ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT:

1. Install street trees.

The first step to make these corridors more attractive and functional for all modes of transportation is to change their character. The easiest way to begin doing this is to add street trees to the central median. Pedestrians will never consider using a street such as US 41 if they find it a hostile environment while driving. Adding street trees to the central median already present will beautify the street somewhat and spatially define two separate sectors, a step toward creating the “public room.”

2. Change the traffic pattern; convert to a boulevard cross-section.

The road is currently carrying three lanes of traffic in each direction at an officially posted speed of 45 miles per hour, though designed for a much higher speed. Presently the regional traffic making longer trips must compete for lanes with neighborhood traffic making local trips . It is necessary to re-enter the regional roadway just to travel a block or two. An excessive number of oversized curb cuts along the sidewalk make walking and biking a hazard.

Using surplus right-of-way to create a second median, between the curb and center lanes of traffic on both sides, a



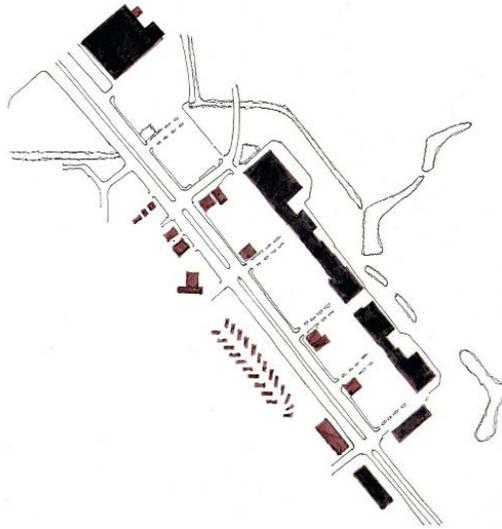
street with two motoring profiles will result. The boulevard cross-section created will have four interior lanes to move high-speed traffic along, and a slow-moving side access lane on each side for local traffic. After the side access lane is created by the additional median, on-street parking can be added to facilitate walking and support businesses. Street trees will be incorporated on the boulevard medians and along the sidewalks.

3. Construct buildings along the sidewalk on the side access lane.

Ensure that buildings are built at the street edge. Sidewalk dining and retail will be viable along the corridor. (This requires a significant policy shift to embrace build-to lines instead of setbacks.) Apartments, condominiums, hotels, and office spaces can occupy the upper floors, thereby fostering additional vitality and pedestrian traffic without displacing valuable commercial space downstairs. Parking lots will be principally located midblock, in parking structures if need be, screened from view.

Tamiami Trail

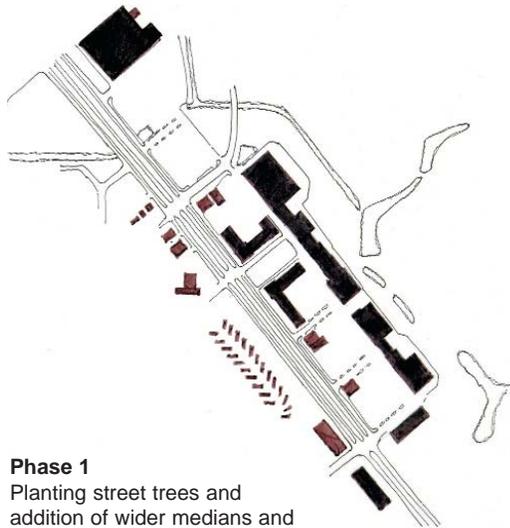
This final step, a long range one, is to bring the buildings close to the street edge. The on-street parking and a viable pedestrian environment must come first for retailers to succeed. Businesses will benefit by the proximity to the street and new visual prominence.



Naples Towne Centre
Existing conditions



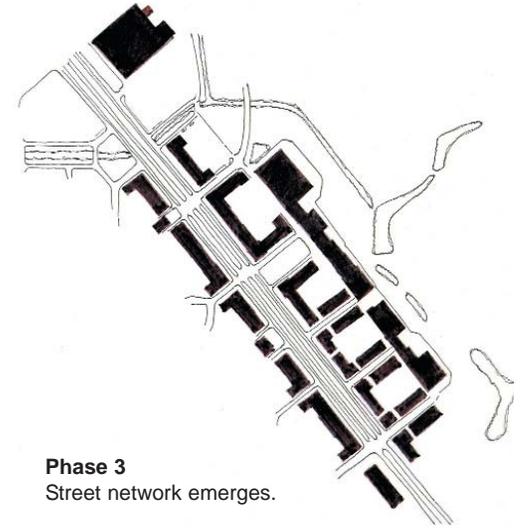
Naples Towne Centre in 2000: one of the three lowest-ranked photos from the Community Image Survey.



Phase 1
Planting street trees and
addition of wider medians and
side access lanes.



Phase 2
Buildings along Tamiami Trail are
positioned close to the street,
framing it.



Phase 3
Street network emerges.



"Liner building" added to blank side of big box retailer

Street network established

Through-lanes flank tree-lined median

Side access lanes with parking and sidewalks

Good site for anchor tenant or civic building

Central square

Buildings closely aligned at street edges

Midblock parking; appropriate locations for garages

Phase 4

Midblock parking structures facilitate development along the street edges; liner building added to big store.



Tamiami Trail as a signature boulevard, pride of the region.

RETHINKING THE CORRIDORS

SETTING THE COURSE

Collier County's major roads can be functional yet beautiful corridors that residents are proud of and visitors admire. Even failing commercial strips can be transformed into grand boulevards – converting visually blighted areas to premier mixed-use public places. Partnerships with adjoining landowners, and public / private development partnerships, are a key to such transformations.

GETTING THERE

Growth Management Plan

- a. Add an achievable objective #2 under goal #3 encouraging the transformation of aging commercial developments into mixed-use neighborhoods.
 - i. Add a new policy stating that activity centers or aging shopping centers may qualify for "community planning" assistance as potential "town centers" as described under objective #4 of goal #3.
 - ii. Add a policy describing steps for transforming an aging commercial corridor as described in this plan.
 - iii. Add a policy specifically encouraging aging shopping centers to include moderate-cost housing that can reduce travel demand by those currently priced into remote locations for housing.