Fort Myers Downtown & Riverfront Redevelopment

Brought to you by the
Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
The Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was established in 1984 to combat deteriorating conditions in Fort Myers through use of Tax Increment Funds (TIF) to upgrade public infrastructure and stimulate redevelopment.
Redevelopment Districts

The CRA originally coordinated redevelopment in just the Downtown district. Over the years, services expanded to cover an additional 14 redevelopment districts within Fort Myers. Redevelopment is a long-term process, typically taking decades from establishing a district to completing revitalization.
The CRA uses redevelopment plans to chart the course of action and goals for the districts. In the 1980s, the Downtown District was guided by the 1986 BRW Downtown Plan. While many of the plan’s goals were met, community needs changed over the next 15 years and a new plan was required. In the early 2000s, the 2003 Duany Downtown Plan (Duany Plan) was created with several specific, new goals for the entire Downtown District. By the end of that decade, all but one of its projects were completed or underway. The 2010 Downtown Plan combines the 2003 Duany Downtown Plan with a 2009 plan from Acquest Advisors detailing specifics for riverfront development, the final portion of the Downtown District to be revitalized.
1986 BRW Downtown Plan

The following projects were completed from the 1986 BRW Downtown Plan:

- Comprehensive Government Center - City, County, State & Federal Offices (1.5 million sq. ft. total)
- Centennial Park & Riverwalk
- City of Palms and Main St. Parking Garages
- Harborside Event Center
- Local & National Historic District Designation
- Boat ramp and commercial piers
The 2003 Duany Downtown Plan contained several goals for the area. Several of these projects are highlighted in the next several pages.
Preserving Historic Heritage

Before

After

Downtown (River) District
Utility Replacement & Streetscape Improvement Project

• Provided desperately-needed underground utility updates (80% of the work involved)

• Total budget: $54 million

• CRA funded $12.5 million for the streetscape portion

• Streetscape improvements included brick streets, brick-trimmed sidewalks, historic lamp posts, upgraded landscaping, a signage program and street furniture
Creating a Pedestrian-Friendly Environment
And an Event Destination

- Art Walk
- Bike Night
- Edison Festival of Light
- Holiday Stroll
- Car Cruise-in
- ArtFest Fort Myers
- Holiday House
- Music Walk
- Downtown Countdown
Establishing a Cultural Campus

Art Galleries
Public Art

Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center
Theater

Florida Repertory Company
Attracting new hotels – *Hotel Indigo*

- The CRA provided a tax increment rebate for this infill project, since it would support the Harborside Event Center and the court system.

- Hotel Indigo opened in March 2009 and includes a hotel and two restaurants
Increasing the Residential Base

1200+ new units constructed at these high-rise developments:

• Beau Rivage
• St. Tropez & Riviera
• High Point Place
• Oasis
• Alta Mar
Redevelop Edison Ford Square

Attract a grocer to support downtown residents and employees
(Publix Supermarket on McGregor Boulevard)
Create an Eastern Anchor

Fort Myers Regional Library at First Street and Royal Palm Avenue
Completed Duany Plan Recommendations

- Adopt the Downtown Plan, Smart Code, Comp Plan, Streetscape Plan, Regulating Map
- Implement Street Reconfiguration
- Implement Streetscape Plan
- Private Development of Private Land
- Historic Building Restoration
- Private Development of Public Land (underway)
- Restoration of Retail Canopies
- Anchor for east First Street
- Preservation of the Sailing School
- Cultural Campus
- Redevelopment of Edison Ford Square (Phase 1 complete)
- Grocery Store
- Eastern Riverfront Development
- Southern Approach Improvements
- Riverfront Redevelopment (underway)
Final Step: Riverfront Development

The final step for Downtown redevelopment in 2003 Duany Downtown Plan is developing the underused riverfront. The Acquest Team of advisors designed a plan, described in the 2010 Downtown Plan, to address this need.
Major Plan Elements

• Water Detention Basin (Public) $5.4 million
• Waterfront restaurants (Private) $4 – $5 million
• Convention Hotel (Private) $36 - $44 million
• Harborside expansion, Phase I (Public) $6 - $8 million
• Smith Block mixed-use (Private) $33 – $40 million
• Smith Block Parking Garage (Pub./Pri.) $8 – 10 million
• Harborside expansion Phase II (Public) $28 – 35 million
• Centennial Park expansion (Public) $7 - $9 million
New Development
Phase I Complete: River Basin Project

The most innovative and unique feature of Riverfront Development is a 1.4 acre multi-functional Water Detention Basin, completed in December 2012. The fully-seawalled Basin provides storm water mitigation for 15 acres of vacant land; adds waterfront property for hotel, retail and restaurant development; and symbolically returns a portion of the waterfront to its historic shoreline, 2 blocks south of the present day shoreline. Basin design features create an attractive public space along the water’s edge, thereby promoting a community-centered riverwalk.
Next Steps: Riverfront Development

• Next to the Riverfront Basin, an expandable, 175-room nationally-branded hotel will be built and integrated into Harborside Event Center (HEC) to allow convention business along the riverfront. HEC will be expanded and updated, a parking garage and a 3-meal restaurant will be added, and the hotel will provide professional management of both the hotel and convention facility.

• Following completion of the new convention hotel, unique restaurants and retail locations are planned around the Basin.

• Currently, a private company is redeveloping the Ambassador Hotel into high-rise senior citizen housing.
For More Information, Contact:

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