

Creating Inclusive Partnerships

Downtown Delray Beach Master Plan



A Case Study In Community Participation

CITY OF DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA
2002

INTRODUCTION

The City of Delray Beach is a thriving coastal community. It is a premier resort destination located in Palm Beach County in South Florida. Diversity has always been an integral part of the development and growth of Delray Beach. Prior to the arrival of white settlers, black settlers had already purchased land, built a one-room schoolhouse and obtained a teacher for their new school. By 1901, an equal number of blacks and whites comprised what was then Delray Beach. The subsequent development of the black and white business and residential areas resulted in the establishment of a railroad corridor, creation of an agricultural industry, land booms and tourism.



In the mid-1980's the same spirit of involvement, cooperation and mutual need that helped build Delray Beach came together to effect changes to revitalize downtown business areas and neighborhoods that were experiencing high crime rates, illegal drug problems and deteriorating infrastructure. Citizens and businesses recommended the creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and a visioning process to plan for the future. In 1988, "Visions 2000" brought together citizens representing all ethnic and geographic areas of the city in a day-long workshop to develop a shared set of goals for the City's future. A number of specific objectives resulted from that session, focusing on topics such as community character, land use, community and cultural resources, and downtown revitalization. At the heart of the effort was the

decision to save the 1913 Delray Beach Elementary and 1925 Delray Beach High School buildings from demolition and turn them into a cultural center in the heart of downtown. Now known as Old School Square, the facility serves as the community's gathering place, enriching the lives of all people by offering diverse experiences in the visual and performing arts, educa-



tion and entertainment while preserving a National Historic Site. The visioning exercise also resulted in the issuance of a \$21.5 million dollar bond referendum to improve public safety, recreational and educational facilities, local streets, and water systems, with a major emphasis on the downtown area.

The central business district experienced a major renaissance after these initiatives. Buildings have been renovated and nearly all of the storefronts along the downtown's main street, Atlantic Avenue, are occupied. Rents have risen substantially, and the sidewalks are crowded with pedestrians both day and night. It has evolved from a long strip of blighted buildings and vacant storefronts to a beautiful, active destination point for residents and tourists alike.



The success of the visioning process enabled many citizens to realize that they had created positive change in their communities. Newly elected officials encouraged neighborhoods to organize and speak out on issues affecting their community. Citizens began to work together to develop plans to enhance their business areas and neighborhoods. As a result of these collaborative efforts, Delray Beach was recognized as an All-America City in 1993. In 1994, Delray Beach conducted its second community visioning process: Visions 2005. This time, citizens addressed a variety of social issues such as crime, neighborhoods, employment needs and youth involvement. The Policy Statement prepared by the participants included the following directive:

“Although Delray Beach takes pride in its diversity, residents need to identify a common set of goals to strengthen the overall sense of community rather than dwell on what distinguishes one area of the City from another.”

The city continued its visioning and planning efforts with development of the West Atlantic Avenue Redevelopment Plan. West Atlantic Avenue is the traditional African American business district and serves as the physical gateway from I-95 to the downtown. This area had experienced a decline since desegregation. Desegregation created consumer alternatives for minority residents, and the businesses that were traditionally patronized by those residents no longer



thrived. The minority community that lives and works in this area wanted to see redevelopment occur, but they also wanted to ensure that local businesses and residents would reap the benefits of the area's resurgence. The West Atlantic Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 1995, followed by a marketing component that outlined the types of businesses and services that would best serve the local area.

A Climate for Change

While there was a sense of accomplishment over the success of the efforts to revive downtown, there was also a growing concern over "how much is too much?" How much growth could the downtown sustain while still maintaining its small town character and charm-those very characteristics that attracted people and investments in the first place? There was also a concern that the growth that is being experienced is primarily in the entertainment/tourism sector. What elements need to be in place to attain a stronger employment and residential base to complement the numerous retail and restaurant tenants? Are the current mix and intensity of uses capable of sustaining the downtown in an economic downturn? How can Delray Beach remain competitive as nearby towns and cities revitalize their own downtowns and attract people seeking something new and different? How can the City build upon the current successes, and have the right elements in place to, if possible, avoid another devastating cycle of decline?

To address these issues a re-examination of the downtown was needed-a comprehensive analysis of the area, as well as the applicable policies and ordinances that affect the rate and pattern of growth. This would require input from the various sectors of the community-business, residential, government, and others to evaluate the changes that have occurred to date, and decide what works and what doesn't. This evaluation would then lead to recommendations for the appropriate future mix of uses and intensity of development to sustain the economic vitality and charm of downtown Delray Beach, in short, a Master Plan for the area. The parameters for the plan were initially to include only the area surrounding East Atlantic Avenue, which had traditionally been referred to as the "downtown". Because a plan had already been adopted for West Atlantic Avenue, that corridor was not included in the original proposal.

City and CRA staff began pursuing funding sources to assist in the development



of the downtown plan. Their exploration led them to interact with David Harris, Director of Florida Philanthropy for the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The MacArthur Foundation was already involved in Delray through the funding of a plan for the Southwest Neighborhood, a neighborhood adjacent to the West Atlantic Avenue corridor. Mr. Harris felt that the goals behind the formation of a downtown plan were consistent with the foundation's objectives of revitalizing urban areas, influencing good public policy, and bringing together disconnected elements of a community. Part of the grant would also be used to continue working on the Southwest Neighborhood Plan. The Foundation wanted the Downtown Master Plan to have an inclusive approach that could serve as a national model linking economic development in a business district with community development in the neighborhoods. At an informal meeting with the Foundation at City Hall, Mr. Harris invited members of the West Atlantic neighborhood to participate in the discussion.

Although the Redevelopment Plan for West Atlantic Avenue had been adopted in 1995, the West Atlantic community was concerned over the length of time that had elapsed with no substantial progress being made. Redevelopment efforts were spotty, consisting of several governmental projects at the east end of the corridor and small-scale renovations by minority business owners. Underlying the concerns was a lack of trust between the City/CRA and the residents and property owners in the area. Residents were concerned that the adopted Redevelopment Plan would be ignored in favor of larger scale development, and that residents would be forced to move to accommodate expansion of the commercial corridor. They also predicted that minority business owners would be driven out by chain stores and white-owned businesses.

The offer of a grant and a promise to make other Foundation grantees available to provide expertise enabled the City and the CRA to expand the downtown planning area to include the West Atlantic Avenue neighborhood, and to address underlying social issues affecting the redevelopment effort. A critical component to be included in the planning process was an examination of the factors that led to the existing lack of trust. A new approach was needed to provide members of the community with greater access to the decision-making process. In addition, new strategies were necessary to promote the long term involvement of stakeholders in the redevelopment process, so that there is a deeper understanding of the plan itself, and continuity in its implementation.



This report chronicles how community leaders, business interests and residents collaboratively created an economic development plan that also enhances the community's social growth. The willingness to work together to improve the city for everyone is the essence of what makes Delray Beach unique. The planning process fostered positive communications, understanding, and mutually beneficial plans for the many diverse participants.

DEVELOPING A VIABLE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

In April 2000, a grant application was formally submitted to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to support the development of the Master Plan. The application was submitted as a collaborative effort by the City, the CRA and the Village Foundation, [formerly known as MAD DADS (Men Against Destruction Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder)]. The main characteristics of these three partners are as follows:

[The City of Delray Beach](#) has a population of about 60,000 residents, with a racial mix of approximately 67% white, 27% black, 1% Asian and 5% other. Approximately 7% of this population is of Hispanic origin, of which Mexicans are the fastest growing segment. The City has a Commission-Manager form of government, with a Mayor and four Commissioners.

[The Community Redevelopment Agency \(CRA\)](#) was created in 1985 to guide the City's redevelopment efforts within the older central core of the City, which had become deteriorated due to age, obsolescence, and the lack of investment. The Community Redevelopment Area covers more than 1,900 acres of land or 20% of the City. Seven Commissioners who are appointed by the City Commission govern the agency.



[The Village Foundation](#), originally founded as MAD DADS in 1991, is part of a national grassroots movement of local autonomous organizations. The national vision is to help youth of all backgrounds, particularly those from disadvantaged circumstances, develop the qualities needed to become responsible citizens and to protect and maintain a safe environment for their families and neighbors.



Charles "Chuck" Ridley and Ben Bryant founded the Delray Beach Chapter. The academy's programs have the three major components of Neighborhood Stabilization, Family Strengthening and Youth Development. The academy serves the area defined by Lake Ida Road to the north, Swinton Avenue to the east, Linton Boulevard to the south and I-95 to the west. This service area is also known as the Delray Beach Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) target area.

In July of 2000 the MacArthur Foundation awarded a grant of \$150,000 to the project partners, which included \$30,000 for the completion of various elements of the Southwest Neighborhood Plan. The grant was matched by contributions of \$20,000 from the CRA, \$10,000 from the City, and \$10,000 in in-kind services. In addition to the above named entities, several other institutions and organizations participated in the development of the plan and associated support documents. The University of Florida College of Law's Center for Governmental Responsibility received a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to work with Delray Beach to develop and implement sustainable public policy. The Florida Atlantic University/Florida International University Joint Center for Environmental & Urban Problems also received a MacArthur Foundation grant to address means of accommodating growth and Development without Displacement. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) was selected to conduct a design charrette and do the actual production of the Master Plan.

Inclusive Steering Committee

Everyone in the City has a great stake in what happens to the downtown business area. In addition to the obvious economic and social implications, the success or failure of this area determines how others view the city and how its citizens view their town. In the process of planning for this area, the city brought the many diverse stakeholders together to work on the issues and reach consensus about the future of their community. It was acknowledged from the very beginning of the process that the program to develop a plan for this area should set a new standard for community participation and support. The process started with the selection of a project "Steering Committee". The purpose of the Steering Committee was:

- *To guide the development of the Master Plan for Delray's core business areas.*



- *To promote active citizen participation in the process.*
- *To assist in the development of understanding and appreciation among the diverse stakeholders so that they could identify a common set of mutually acceptable goals that would strengthen the overall sense of community.*
- *To guide the implementation of the Master Plan after adoption by the City Commission*

Thirty-one members were selected, representing the various facets of the community from both the project area and the City at large, and included residents, businesses, youth, the development community, religious institutions, service providers and government. The intent was to enable city residents to identify with at least one member of the committee and to feel that their point of view was being represented. Steering committee members represented the interests of the various organizations to which they belonged. They also interacted with the public and brought the ideas and concerns of the people back to the committee for discussion. By getting the message out and generating community interest in the process, they were able to bring a wide range of ideas and perspectives back to the committee. This resulted in the program being widely accepted by city residents as sensitive to their needs.



The Steering Committee met on a monthly basis to guide the plan through the various stages of its development and to ensure that their various constituencies were kept informed. The committee was co-chaired by Delray Beach City Commissioner Jeff Perlman and Village Foundation Director Chuck Ridley. City and CRA staff provided technical and logistical support. Resource persons from Florida Atlantic University, the Treasure Coast

Regional Planning Council and several local nonprofit agencies provided information and input as needed. A neutral facilitator guided the committee's dialogue sessions and proactively reached out to community members within the project area.

The first meeting of the Steering Committee members was held on November 6, 2000. Committee Co-chair, Commissioner Jeff Perlman, welcomed the commit-



tee members to the rewarding and important experience that they were about to undertake. He commented that *"this was a historic occasion in that it was the first time in the history of the City of Delray Beach that the downtown area was defined as stretching from Interstate 95 to the ocean, creating a business corridor that unifies the diverse stakeholders who live and work in the area."*

The first task of the steering committee was to finalize the details and schedule of the Work Program that had been devised for completion of the plan. The final Work Program was then divided into six elements with sub-committees assigned to each element. To expose members to different points of view within the group and force them to forge new relationships, staff grouped them into the sub-committees through a random selection process. As the teams got to know each other, members felt more at ease expressing their opinions and their enthusiasm in the project increased. The free flow of information led to some real insights into the perspectives of the various racial and ethnic groups within the city. The six work elements and the accomplishments of each sub-committee are as follows:

1. Facilitator Selection: This sub-committee selected a professional facilitator in December, 2000 to help conduct future meetings of the committee and assist in outreach efforts to key stakeholders.
2. Race Relations: This sub-committee organized and arranged for a workshop to address issues of race and power, to be held February 23-25, 2001. The "Undoing Racism" workshop is described in more detail in a later section of this report.
3. Charrette: This sub-committee met several times from November, 2000 through April, 2001 to organize the logistics of the Design Charrette. Assisted by the Steering Committee Facilitator and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council staff, it used a consensus approach to create an implementation plan that included a mission statement, site selection and date for the charrette. The mission statement was finalized in December, 2000 and is stated as follows:

"The mission of the Downtown Delray Design Charrette is to engage the entire community in creating a unified vision for the residential and commercial renaissance of Downtown. The vision aims for



Delray to recognize and embrace the merging trends that will shape the Downtown, to remain competitive in the marketplace and to prepare the area to receive future growth gracefully and creatively.

With community involvement, the Charrette will identify infrastructure needs and resources necessary to achieve the vision by promoting employment opportunities and economic growth with emphasis on a greater degree of parity and equity as well as a clean, safe, attractive environment for residents, business, and tourists.

This vision will be the guiding force for all actions taken to redevelop Downtown Delray."

The Charrette was held on April 27th and 28th at the Pompey Park recreation center, chosen because of its location within the West Atlantic neighborhood.

4. Community Participation: This sub-committee's tasks were to ensure that property owners, residents, the business community and other stakeholders were kept informed of the activities of the Steering Committee, and to encourage their involvement and participation in the charrette and other planning processes. The group developed a marketing plan to proactively reach as many business interests and neighborhood residents as possible. The plan included the following elements:
- Press releases and one-on-one meetings with newspaper editors;
 - Flyers and announcements at neighborhood associations and community meetings;
 - Flyers sent home in students' backpacks;
 - One-on-one meetings with representatives of local religious institutions;
 - Flyers, letters and announcements to the business community;
 - Notices regarding the upcoming charrette included on the water bills;
 - Notices in the form of door hangers for affected neighborhoods, delivered by City staff;
 - Notices mailed to all property owners within the study area; and,



- Special event signs posted along the main roadway, Atlantic Avenue.

The sub-committee created the flyers, press releases and “talking points” for the charrette. Staff from the schools and the Chamber of Commerce assisted in the outreach efforts. The Haitian-American Council and Hispanic members of the sub-committee translated the outreach material, which was made available in English, Spanish, and Creole.

5. Development Without Displacement: This sub-committee addressed the issues of gentrification and displacement that can occur when a neighborhood or area is being redeveloped and property values increase to a point where existing residents can no longer afford to remain. Assisted by the Florida Atlantic University/Florida International University Joint Center, the sub-committee examined the reasons for displacement in the downtown area, and worked to ensure that the community had an understanding and awareness of the issues of gentrification and displacement. It was recognized that the West Atlantic neighborhoods have value and their residents are beginning to receive offers to sell since their current homes are in close proximity to highways, schools, shopping and green space. The subcommittee members explored ways that development and redevelopment can occur without gentrification and displacement. They developed the following approaches that should be used when the Master Plan is designed and implemented:



- Involve the affected residents in the redevelopment process.
- Offer residents equity in the redevelopment and development projects.
- Identify the needs and preferences of each homeowner.
- Educate the residents on their options.
- Let the private sector as well as the CRA be involved in land banking.

All members of the Steering Committee were given the FAU/FIU Joint Center Handbook, “Development without Displacement”. This handbook was also distributed at the Undoing Racism Workshop and at the charrette.



6. Consultants Selection: The sub-committee finalized the tasks for the traffic/parking and the market study consultants and began the selection process in December of 2000. The tasks for the traffic/parking study consultant were to compare current parking demands and general traffic and circulation issues in relation to the demands generated by the Downtown Master Plan. The market study consultant's tasks were to inventory existing uses in the entire study area and project future land use types with particular attention to the needs of ethnic groups within the study area. The consultants were selected in March, 2001. Preliminary reports were provided as background information prior to the charrette.

The Steering Committee took several steps to become educated about planning and design and to learn as much as they could about the study area. At one of their first meetings they heard presentations by the City's Community Improvement Director Lula Butler, CRA Executive Director Diane Colonna, and MADDADS (Village Foundation) Executive Director Chuck Ridley. The presentations provided a summary of previous planning processes that had been undertaken within the study area and the City as a whole, including Visions 2000 and Visions 2005, Visions West Atlantic, Phase I of the Southwest Neighborhood Plan, and Pineapple Grove Main Street. This summary brought committee members up to date on the goals and objectives that had been formulated for the area, and the issues that remained to be addressed.



In January 2001, the Steering Committee heard a presentation by the Executive Director of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC), Michael J. Busha, AICP. Mr. Busha discussed various urban design principles and explained the charrette process that the TCRPC would use to develop citizen options for the Downtown Delray Beach Master Plan. He explained that the charrette would enable residents, business owners, community youths and others to jointly design, with the assistance of design professionals, the ultimate growth and form of the downtown business area and surrounding neighborhoods.

In February 2001, members of the Steering Committee went on a bus tour of the downtown business area and surrounding neighborhoods. The tour was nar-





rated by CRA Executive Director Diane Colonna and Planning and Zoning Director Paul Dorling, who explained the opportunities and challenges that the business areas and neighborhoods face during development and redevelopment. The members felt that this trip enabled them to increase their common understanding of the current needs for all sections of the planning area.

Undoing Racism and Healing the Community Workshop

In order to enhance Delray's social growth and development, particularly in the area of race relations, the Steering Committee engaged the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond to hold an Undoing Racism Workshop from February 23rd to the 25th. The workshop's thirty-seven participants (which included Steering Committee members, project facilitator, residents, City, CRA and MacArthur staff) spent twenty-one hours exploring the issues of racism, community empowerment and individual healing. The workshop goals were to:



- Understand how racism operates in the United States of American and how it perpetuates white privilege and the oppression of people of color.
- Explore the forms of racism (individual, institutional, cultural, linguistic, militarism, environmental, health care and economic) and do a power analysis of the community and how institutional power is being used to oppress persons of color.
- Explore the impact of racism on the social group identities of whites and people of color.
- Share personal examples related to the social group identities of the workshop participants.
- Explore how leaders must be accountable to their constituents and the attributes of a community leader.
- Identify how the workshop participants can work to eliminate disparate



treatment of all members of the community by the CRA, the City and other public entities and create development plans that are equitable.

- Ensure that the appreciation of diversity is one of the underlying premises for the community's policies and practices.

The workshop explored the key concepts of racism and other forms of social oppression and how networking, leadership and empowerment can begin to undo the impacts of racism on communities and on persons of color and whites. Many participants were moved to the depths of their hearts and minds, and tears were shed. Journalists in attendance wrote articles that described the “joys and sorrows” that were experienced during the workshop.



At the March meeting of the Steering Committee, Co-chair Jeff Perlman shared his perspectives about the workshop, which he described as an instructive albeit difficult weekend. He said,

“The experience broadened my insight and made me more aware of the challenges and problems that we must face together. And together is the key word. We cannot continue to be two communities divided within the same city. We cannot continue to forge ahead, business as usual. We are at the crossroads and I believe we can and we must work on the problems and explore the promise of West Atlantic Avenue and its surrounding neighborhoods. We may or we may not be ready and we may or may not trust each other, but I think we all want to face the sensitive issues that have built up over time.”

Steering Committee co-chair Chuck Ridley asked the committee to continue to confront the issues that needed to be addressed. He felt that the Undoing Racism Workshop had increased the understanding and awareness of the participants and that they could apply this understanding to the creation of a fair plan for the businesses and neighborhoods of Atlantic Avenue.

Design Charrette

The Design Charrette took place April 27th through May 4th, 2001. The char-



rette began on April 27th and 28th with a Citizens Design Workshop. More than 200 residents representing the City's diverse neighborhoods and businesses attended the charrette. During the Friday evening Opening Presentation, TCRPC Director Michael J. Busha gave an overview of the charrette processes. He explained that the charrette would:



- *Bring people together to solve community problems;*
- *Respond to different special conditions in the community;*
- *Advertise and unify the intentions for the City's future growth;*
- *Protect the character and charm of the City; and,*
- *Bring about wide citizen support and a feeling of "ownership".*



The design workshop and citizen presentations occurred on Saturday. Attendees were divided into 10 teams, including a children's team, each working with the assistance of the TCRPC design professionals to create a unified vision for the commercial and residential renaissance of Downtown Delray Beach. After

lunch, members of each team presented their designs to the group. When they finished, it was evident to everyone that the schemes had many more similarities than differences.



Following the weekend workshop the design professionals remained in Delray Beach for one week to develop the first draft of the plan. They set up headquarters in the former CRA office building, located in the center of the project area. The team worked day and night and kept the building open almost the entire time to allow the public to see and comment on what was happening. A constant

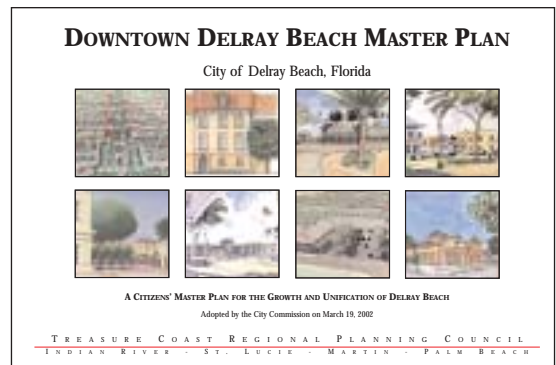




flow of citizens provided additional perspectives to the design staff. A PowerPoint slide show on the draft Master Plan was presented to interested residents on May 4th, 2001. The feedback from this and additional informal meetings with the professional staff of the City and CRA was used by the design team to refine the Master Plan.

Downtown Delray Beach Master Plan

The *“Downtown Delray Beach Master Plan”* represents the citizens' plan for the unification and future growth of the downtown area. The Plan provides a blueprint for the development of the City's oldest business districts and the surrounding neighborhoods. It encompasses the entire Atlantic Avenue commercial corridor, east of I-95 and includes the West Atlantic Neighborhood from Interstate 95 to Swinton Avenue, the Central Core District, from Swinton Avenue to the Intracoastal Waterway and the Beach District, east of the Intracoastal Waterway to the beach. The plan incorporates the proposals of the recently adopted West Atlantic Redevelopment Plan as well as the outcomes of the City's 2010 Vision Process.



The goal of the Master Plan is to create a framework that will facilitate development and investment in private land as well as in public infrastructure, preserve the city's heritage, enhance its livability and sense of unity and maintain its design quality, both architectural and urban, in a manner that achieves the following objectives:

- To promote unity and a sense of continuity throughout the downtown business area and the entire City.
- To encourage local ownership of properties, businesses and development.



- To create building forms of a character and scale that reinforces the citizen's vision of a "city of urban amenities with a small town feeling."
- To facilitate economic development and ensure that the downtown business area and its immediate surroundings remain the City's economic, cultural and governmental center .
- To improve and include vehicular circulation, citywide parking and mass transit in a manner that is functional, economically feasible, and promotes pedestrian use.
- To create attractive public plazas, neighborhood pocket-parks and pedestrian friendly streets complemented by well designed buildings and enhanced by public art.
- To increase the range and affordability of housing types.
- To promote diversity and areas of special character and preserve heritage in the development process.
- To improve street furniture and signage whenever necessary and to identify these as opportunities to express the city's history through public art whenever possible.



Implementation Partnerships

City, CRA and TCRPC staff met with technical consultants, the State Department of Transportation and property owners to refine the Master Plan during the spring and summer of 2001. In August 2001, the plan was presented to city officials and residents. After additional review and modification, the Downtown Delray Beach Master Plan was officially adopted by the City Commission on March 19, 2002.

The City, CRA and the Village Foundation will continue to be partners during the implementation of the Master Plan. The Steering Committee has been transformed into an Implementation Committee comprised of Steering Committee members who wished to continue with the process, and new members who had participated in elements of the process and wanted to become more involve.



The mission of the Implementation Committee will be to oversee the implementation of the various projects and tasks that are recommended in the Master Plan. Committee members will assist in making decisions on project priorities or schedules. They will be advocates for the plan and when appropriate, will help to lobby governmental agencies, foundations and others on behalf of the plan. It is estimated that the committee will remain active for approximately three to five years.

Following a recommendation in the plan, the CRA hired an Urban Designer in December, 2001 to assist in the implementation of the Master Plan. The Urban Designer is the lead staff person for the Implementation Committee. As with the original Steering Committee, much of the Implementation Committee's work will be done by sub-committees. Sub-committees have been created for the following project categories:

- Transportation modifications
- Neighborhood parks and public open space
- Finance and funding
- Infill housing
- Development of urban design guidelines
- Marketing and promotions
- Development without displacement

In order to enhance the ongoing partnerships between businesses and residents directly impacted by the Master Plan and to continue the racial healing that began during this process, the City appointed two representatives from the West Atlantic Avenue area to the CRA Board. In August 2001, the City Commission, CRA Board, and the West Atlantic Redevelopment Coalition (WARC) met to share their current action priorities for the business district and the surrounding neighborhoods and to enhance their partnership.

CONCLUSION

The result of the project was the development of a master plan for the growth and development of the downtown area. However, in the end, most people involved in the project got much more out of the process. The population of the



City of Delray Beach is very diverse. The consensus building techniques employed in this program enabled the participants to learn from and gain a deeper understanding of each other. The experience has begun to forge new relationships among these diverse groups, lessen feelings of alienation and powerlessness, and provide a foundation for meeting future challenges together.

The Master Plan and the collaborative processes used to produce it were a success. It will take hard work and dedication to implement the Plan and to maintain the unity achieved between the West and East Atlantic Avenue communities. However, at this important point in its history, Delray Beach is celebrating its accomplishment. By involving groups that have typically been underrepresented in the process, a renewed sense of trust in the city's efforts has emerged and the lines of communication have improved. The program has helped to foster an atmosphere where city residents are willing to come forward to discuss their problems, express their point of view and become involved in the decision-making process. This will inevitably lead to a greater understanding of its residents, thereby enabling the city to more effectively deal with problems in the future and ensure equity in prioritization of public improvements and City services.

As one member of the Steering Committee put it,

"The most significant outcome of the plan was that we have finally begun the process of erasing the division between East and West Atlantic. When the history of Delray Beach is written, local historians will be able to point to this process as the moment in time when residents made a decision to expand Delray's traditional downtown to include West Atlantic. This is hugely significant because of the decades of racial division that has existed in Delray Beach. The entire community came together during this process and made a decision that our "downtown" truly runs from A1A to I-95. I am very proud of the broad participation we have had during the process. And I am equally proud that people who have never spoken to each other before have begun to work together on healing relationships and that we all realize that West Atlantic and our residential neighborhoods need to be engaged. The evolution of the downtown plan has brought the community together and has started a dynamic process that will change the future of Delray and how this community makes decisions."



Credits and Acknowledgements

The preparation of this report required the time, cooperation, and collective effort of many individuals. Appreciation is extended to all those who participated:

Co-Authors:

Pat Bidol-Pavda
The City of Delray Beach
Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency

Funded By:

John D & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Participants:

Anthony James Cantanese Center for Urban & Environmental Solutions at
Florida Atlantic University
Village Foundation
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council

- City of Delray Beach, Florida, 100 NW 1st Avenue, Delray Beach, Florida 33444 •
- Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency, 124 West Atlantic Avenue, Delray Beach, Florida 33444 •

