Adapt to Thrive
Transforming West Palm Beach from Shore to Core
MARCH 2017
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(A) INNOVATION FRAMEWORK
(B) DESIGN CONCEPTS
(C) IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
In the coming decades, cities will face many inevitable social, economic, and environmental changes. Populations will grow or shrink, communities will be pulled apart or pushed together, and economies will respond.

Coastal cities, like West Palm Beach, are especially vulnerable. The likely impacts of climate change — frequent powerful storms and sea level rise — will be felt by coastal cities first.

Change is a certainty of the future. How our cities navigate change, however, is not certain.

West Palm Beach will define what it means to be a model coastal city by embracing change with hope and ambition and making smart investments that enhance the quality of people’s lives. The formula for progress is to:

1) Think differently about infrastructure
2) Respond incrementally with investment
3) Dream big about the city you want to live in

This proposal transforms West Palm Beach’s waterfront into a dynamic social and environmental space, rethinks the city’s streets and alleys as destinations in their own right — not just conduits for cars — and envisions mundane architecture, like parking structures, as opportunities to create community.

When West Palm Beach adapts, it thrives.
Objective: Maintain the atmosphere and amenities of the Downtown, which make it pedestrian-friendly and conducive to walking, shopping, entertaining, and socially interactions.

Objective: Strengthen the brand and image for Downtown West Palm Beach by capitalizing on its amenities, history and location to communicate a positive identity for the area.

Objective: Ensure that Downtown West Palm Beach is economically vibrant by capitalizing on its resources and assets, enhancing its amenities and strengthening the business environment.

Objective: Ensure that Downtown West Palm Beach is an engaging and thriving district for our residents.
02. RESEARCH
02. RESEARCH
EXISTING SURVEY INFORMATION

HOW DO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS DESCRIBE DOWNTOWN WPB?

Per the 2016 WPB DDA visitor survey, when asked to describe downtown West Palm Beach, visitors tend to be very positive using such words as:

- paradise
- alive
- beautiful

When asked specifically to provide the area’s strong points, the downtown visitors most frequently mention:

- atmosphere
- scenery
- restaurants

When asked what would be important additions to the downtown area, the most often mentioned elements were:

- art shows
- food festivals
- art galleries

02. RESEARCH
EXISTING SURVEY INFORMATION

HOW CAN CITIES COLLECT INFORMATION THAT INFORMS FUTURE ADAPTATION AND GROWTH?

SURVEY RESULTS

Strengths continue to be its atmosphere, scenery, restaurants, and events

Weakness continues to be parking

Top draws to downtown area continue to be special events and dining

Visitors want more events, more free events, and more family events

Opportunity exists to draw in more people by appealing to families with children
What will transform West Palm Beach in the coming century?
Sea level rise and demographic growth are two of the primary transformative pressures facing West Palm Beach. The two graphs below illustrate the alignment between projected sea level rise and projected population growth.

**Global Mean Sea Level Rise**
![Graph](source: Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)

**Palm Beach County Population Growth**
![Graph](source: Projections of Florida Population by County, 2020–2045 BEBR / Bureau of Economic and Business Research (University of Florida))

How can West Palm Beach respond?
West Palm Beach can begin planning now for its long-term future, harnessing environmental, social, and economic change to create value and community.

Fearful Responses To Change
Walls and engineered defenses are fearful responses to sea level rise that address one problem without creating environmental, social, and economic opportunities associated with connecting people to water.

Hopeful Responses To Change
Natural systems should be used to adapt to sea level rise, create wildlife habit, and connect West Palm Beach’s two greatest assets: its people and its waterfront.

How can West Palm Beach monitor its progress?
A strong and vital city is resilient in the face of change.
For West Palm Beach, decision-making should be measured by the total amount of environmental, social and economic value generated by each investment. Infrastructure intended to respond to sea level rise and stormwater should also create value for people and the city at large.

Every dollar must serve three purposes!
National Science Foundation scientists project future effects of sea level rise on storm surges will transform today’s “once in a century” storm surges into “once in a decade” storms in the future.
03. SOLUTIONS
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A) INNOVATION FRAMEWORK

WATERFRONT CITIES ARE DEFINED BY THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND WATER

The design of the waterfront is grounded in two concepts, Adaptability, to provide new user experiences along with strategies for adjusting to future sea level rise and projections of increased storm surge; and Integration, to provide continuity along the waterfront and connectivity among the many waterfront elements and on into the city.

Together, integrating existing spaces to the redesigned and new urban places will create a dynamic urban waterfront, with increased cultural, social, and opportunities for new recreational activities.

In understanding the relationships between water, people, and the city, we’ve located an opportunity to build resilience.

Today’s Relationship

The Opportunity

CREATE A ZONE OF
TRANSITION TO EASE FROM WET TO DRY, TO EMBRACE WATER!

SEPARATION BETWEEN CITY AND WATER

The opportunity zone should grow overtime to respond to increasing water levels.

Phase 1
Completed by 2022

Future Phase
Completed by 20??

Future-Future Phase
Completed by 20??
The "opportunity zone" is a transition area between two communities, the mostly public, waterfront corridor and the more private, urban community abutting it to the west; each community developed in a quasi-independent way over the years. The most prominent connection between these two communities is the existing network of streets and alleys. By integrating climate change adaptation strategies into them, they can become catalysts to improve the connections between the city and the water.

The primary component of the upland connectivity strategy is to create and integrate new water retention and detention corridors that are capable of storing the increased volume of water that is expected during peak storm and tidal events. These corridors will mitigate the effects of tidal events, while serving as community parks that can be used by residents and visitors throughout the year. This new infrastructure will create a new open space network connecting the urban core to the waterfront and its unique habitat.
THE BANYAN GARAGE

The underutilized Banyan Garage will be transformed into a new civic icon for the city. The building and its site continue and incorporate the overall project theme of Adaptability by providing new and unique spaces that are flexible enough to fit the social, economic and environmental needs of the community.

This civic building will become a magnet for social interaction by creating a ground level “public social space”, “flex-space” floor plates (providing +/- 300 parking spaces or +/- 100,000 gsf of event space) and a rooftop public “sky garden” - each creating a wealth of new opportunities for residents and visitors to experience downtown and the waterfront.
03. SOLUTIONS
(B) DESIGN CONCEPTS
THE BANYAN GARAGE

- Vertical Circulation
- Flexible Space
- MULTI-PURPOSE
- VISIBILITY & ACCESS
- PUBLIC SOCIAL SPACE
- CORE
- OPEN TO VIEWS
- NATURAL VENTILATION
- CLIMATE STRATEGIES
- WIND ACTIVATED
- FABRIC PAVING

LEVEL 7 (c. 850)  
Sky Garden
LEVEL 6 (c. 470)  
Civic Uses
LEVEL 5 (c. 450)  
Multi-Purpose
LEVEL 4 (c. 450)  
Multi-Purpose
LEVEL 3 (c. 330)  
Multi-Purpose
LEVEL 2 (c. 220)  
Reception
LEVEL 1 (c. 220)  
Public Social Space
LEVEL 0 (c. 220)  
Public Social Space
BASEMENT  
TRASH & RECYCLING SYSTEMS

SOLUTIONS
The New Banyan Street Garage + Civic Building with the New Banyan Alley

B. Design Concepts
Eroding the vertical and horizontal boundaries of the alley and incorporating available adjacent vacant spaces allow for “pockets” of open spaces and create conditions for increased interaction opportunities.

Today
There is a need for affordable space in downtown to help support the arts and smaller-scale entrepreneurial commercial opportunities.

The Opportunity
Consolidate and restructure alley service functions and provide new access into smaller, more densely programmed spaces to incentivize business and breath new life into downtown.
Downtown West Palm Beach’s waterfront extends approximately one mile along the Intracoastal Waterway from the Royal Park Bridge to the Flagler Memorial Bridge. This stretch of urban public waterfront is both unique to WPB yet also shares many issues common to other southeastern Florida coastal cities. Our proposal reimagines the city’s downtown waterfront and reconnects it into downtown while maintaining and respecting its existing character and local history.
Today
The current bulkhead resists water, while the public spaces of the waterfront function as single objects.

The Opportunity
A new gradient from wet to dry provides space for social, economic and environmental program, creating a more resilient waterfront that systematically stretches from the intercoastal into the urban fabric of West Palm Beach.
At the scale of the downtown core, our proposal envisions a continuous public waterfront, connecting the many and varied downtown elements — the water’s edge, Flagler Street, the Meyer Amphitheater, the Great Lawn, Clematis Street and its shops and restaurants — to each other and from the water to the urban edge.

The proposed continuous waterfront is reimagined with a two-lane, shared-use Flagler Street expanded and redesigned as a pedestrian promenade interwoven into a series of existing and new civic spaces that range in scale from small and intimate islands to large and open great lawns.

In addition to the multitudes of visitors that descend upon downtown for its many, much-loved events and activities, these new and revitalized places are designed to draw residents and visitors to the waterfront throughout the year — days, evenings, and weekends.
03. SOLUTIONS
(B) DESIGN CONCEPTS
THE AMPHITHEATER

The Meyer Amphitheatre (with its +/-10,000 sf band shell and +/-1 acre sloped lawn) is host to a handful of special events throughout the year. Although the band shell’s size is not readily suitable for either large or small events, its prominent location and open lawn space provides downtown residents with a place to sit, picnic, and enjoy a more passive downtown park that complements the more active, event friendly great lawn a block away.

New views into the amphitheater and out to the waterfront are created by removing the existing berm along Flagler Street and extending the range of the amphitheater out toward the waterfront promenade.

Regrading the amphitheater grounds to more seamlessly integrate into the redesigned waterfront experience – sloped along Datura Street and open to Flagler Street and the waterfront.
The Great Lawn, West Palm Beach’s most prominent public space, is shaped by its surrounding buildings and is utilized for a wide range of activities and events on a daily basis and throughout the year. By reenvisioning Flagler Street, the great lawn can be “extended” toward the water’s edge, where a series of innovative and sustainable design elements may be implemented. In order for downtown to grow and thrive, the Great Lawn must grow, connect to the waterfront and become a conduit for people between the core and the water.

Relocation of the existing Visitor Center and removal of a portion of N. Clematis Street, the Great Lawn extends to the north all the way up to the “Florida Crystals” arcade, where newly-activated ground floor spaces will then front the park and provide much needed amenities including a new Visitor Center.

The Great Lawn is extended to the east (across a pedestrian-friendly and easily-closeable two-lane Flagler Street) to the waterfront promenade and its many proposed amenities: an over-the-water boardwalk, a community pool, waterside restaurants, and seating and gathering areas that engage the water in a variety of ways.

A new park pavilion along the south end of the park directs and connects Clematis Street visitors to the Great Lawn and to the waterfront.
The waterfront is WPB’s connection between land and sea. Today’s waterfront users include boaters, residents and tourists that come into the city from the waterside - its docks and piers - as well as, local residents and thousands of visitors who descend on the waterfront for its signature events, SunFest and Palm Beach International Boat Show. The goal of our proposal is to make the waterfront an even more attractive place to stroll, jog, cycle, boat, and enjoy.

New floating waterfront amenities include over-the-water boardwalks, restaurants, and additional day-docking that is integrated into and between the existing floating piers. A redesigned waterfront with a new waterfront pavilion located on land acquired from the redesigned Flagler Street unites the formerly separate downtown spaces: waterfront promenade, amphitheater, and Great Lawn.

Waterfront dining options are provided at a myriad of levels: On the pier, on a rooftop garden, and on the mangrove island.

A new waterfront community pool allows access into the water as part of the waterfront experience.

New waterfront steps allow access into and observation of the daily high and low tides, the monthly effect of the moon on the tides, and the slowly rising seas.
A New Integrated Waterfront: Connecting the Amphitheater and Great Lawn to the Intracoastal
A New Adaptive Waterfront: Engaging the Water in New Ways

B. DESIGN CONCEPTS
03. SOLUTIONS
(C) IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

SEA LEVEL RISE MUST DETERMINE IMPLEMENTATION

The shape of the waterfront has changed only slightly over the past 100 years. Some new areas to the south were created to provide additional public waterfront, while new areas for development were created to the north. Some areas were removed entirely. The 1907 map shows the city’s land mass extending into the Intracoastal, where the South Cove Islands are today.
The waterfront should, through its design, construction, and operation, reflect West Palm Beach’s commitment to innovation, sustainability, and response to climate change. The waterfront should be seen and used as the city’s “front yard” and through a network of new “green” infrastructure and reenvisioned public spaces, physically connect the water to downtown destinations and the greater city beyond.

For West Palm Beach, interventions have been identified for the short term and long term.

Buildings
- Build New Banyan St Parking + Civic Building
- Update Building Codes For Structures

Streets + Alleys
- Convert Flagler Street to 2 Lanes
- Renovate Alley N. of 200 Clematis St.
- Build South Storm Water Corridor
- Build North Storm Water Corridor
- Create Food Truck Plaza
- Raise Designated A Streets
- Lower Designated B Streets
- Renovate Remaining Alleys
- Close Flagler St. to All Vehicular Traffic

Waterfront
- Remove Southern Bulkhead
- Remove Berm at Amphitheater
- Create New Islands
- Expand Island Boardwalk
- Expand Great Lawn
- Build Waterfront Pavilion
- Build New Kayak Launch
- Provide Waterfront Terraces
- Create Inland Storm Surge Protection

Sea Level Rise Must Determine Implementation.

Our bold vision for the waterfront is based on our belief that the city should be ready and able to adapt to social, economic and environmental changes over time. This vision, like all other grand scale projects, will be realized over many years, and include many multifaceted infrastructure projects that must be constructed in conjunction with the creation of each new public space.