

Please read this report which will be presented to the membership for approval at the meeting on November 4, 2010.

To read the Master Plan go to

www.fortlauderdale.gov/planning_zoning/central_beach_masterplan.htm Then click on the link in the P & Z home page Draft Central Beach Master Plan. The page number references here may not exactly match those of the latest on-line revision. The page numbers here refer to the widely circulated March 27, 2009 edition.

EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSED CENTAL BEACH MASTER PLAN
BY
THE CENTRAL BEACH ALLIANCE
October 2010

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by the Central Beach Alliance Master Plan Review Committee. Many Central Beach citizens feel that the Plan was prepared by the Sasaki Company without sufficient hands-on guidance from beach citizens. The Plan promotes large scale development, whereas the vast majority of residents want more influence on large scale development. This evaluation presents citizen suggestions for a Plan that is more responsive to citizen aspirations and concerns for the Central Beach.

We also request **WORKING MEETINGS WITH CITY PLANNERS TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS IN THE MASTER PLAN BEFORE IT IS PRESENTED TO THE CITY COMMISSION.**

SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISION OF THE MASTER PLAN

1. The Draft Central Beach Master Plan assumes that the Central Beach is an "urban area." This leads the authors, Sasaki Associates, toward a plan that encourages more population density. The citizens generally do not want large increases in density. These increases impact traffic and other infrastructure components, which are already strained. We prefer to keep what remains of the residential neighborhood character of the Central Beach. We also want to preserve the diversity of the small, "mom and pop" motels" and provide incentives for them to enhance their properties. The plan should be based on the principles of a SUBURBAN area, where increases in density are not a foregone conclusion.

2. The South Beach Marina and Hotel Area (SBMHA): The Draft Plan states that the "Purpose is to promote a high quality, world class destination resort." (P. 11) But there is no mention that a legitimate purpose would be to maintain the SBMHA as a pleasant place for the thousands of residents who live here now. The Central Beach doesn't need more tall, massive structures like Beach Place to be a charming and desirable beach destination. We don't want a "concrete canyon."

3. We like our open-space City-owned parking lots. We don't want huge parking decks in front of our condominiums. Parking decks are not necessarily "public improvements." They block our precious views, are usually ugly, are more expensive to maintain, require killing hundreds of mature trees and can be dangerous at night. The public does not like the dark and dangerous feeling of multi-storied parking decks. The welcome mat as you come over the Las Olas Bridge should retain the tree-lined openness of the existing parking lot.

The Draft Plan refers to parking decks as "enhanced parking" and "structured parking." No matter what they are called, we want to remove some of the recommendations for parking decks.

The Draft Plan also recommends that the City acquire additional parcels of land in order to preserve open space and provide additional parking---This is a better alternative. Alternative sources of funding should be discussed in the Plan.(See also common stakeholder comments P. 23)

4. Shadow Ordinance---Several tall buildings on A1A now cast a shadow on the beach during the peak tourist season---beginning at 3:00 PM. The ordinance should be rewritten so that future high-rise buildings on A1A do not cast a shadow on the beach before 5:00 P.M. ---with the formula for calculation designed by the City with input from the CBA.

5. Water scarcity must limit the future scope of development. Water has been rationed for years. News media frequently report "water fights" between communities in South Florida. Water scarcity is not even mentioned in this plan. The Plan should strongly recommend that citizens work with the South Florida Water Management District to develop a plan to control future water use to within sustainable amounts. Large scale developments should be required to submit a water supply impact study that is approved by the Water Management District. Large scale developments must not cause an increase in water usage.

6. We need to restrict A1A traffic. Permit commercial vehicles with local delivery. This idea is reinforced in the Draft Plan. (see P. 26-27.)

7. The height of new high-rise structures needs to be better controlled. This is a key factor in controlling population density. The Draft Plan needs to make clear and definite statements in this regard for each area of the Central Beach. Granting Planned Urban Development (PUD) status is a bad idea, except in the most unusual circumstances, because it releases the developer from most height, density, and set-back regulations.

8. The Draft Plan states that "an enhanced pedestrian environment could reduce parking demand" (P. 28). We like this idea and it should be better recognized when planning parking resources.

9. Bicycles---Residents also like the recommendation for an increase in bicycle lanes. (P. 29)

10. The Draft Plan proposes a new water taxi station and terminal on Las Olas Boulevard at Seabreeze Boulevard. That small canal is too narrow for this purpose. It would likely require confiscating dockage along the canal. Water taxis would deposit hundreds of additional people waiting for taxis at a busy intersection. This a densely used area and could become a hazard to traffic and pedestrians. Instead, the plan should restore the water taxi station between Coconuts restaurant and the Swimming Hall of Fame.

11. Everyone seems to agree that better signs are needed to help people find the City-owned parking lots.

12. The plan grants itself control beyond what the citizens expect. We had better be very careful about what the plan says about zoning. According to the Master Plan, the citizens would need to develop zoning requirements that meet the intent of the Master Plan. The Master Plan caters too much to developers. Consider the following quote from the Master Plan: "ZONING REGULATIONS SHOULD BE UPDATED TO REFLECT THE INTENT OF THE PROPOSED CENTRAL BEACH MASTER PLAN. THIS WILL REQUIRE THE POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF FORM BASED CODES TO CLARIFY THE INTENT OF THE CENTRAL BEACH MASTER PLAN." (P.88)

It is important for the City to get busy writing new zoning requirements for the Central Beach. Zoning is the best way to escape from the developer's favorite State law, the Harris Act.

It might be best for the City Commission to "table" the proposed Master Plan, rather than have it used as a hammer by developers. Zoning changes should be the exclusive purview of the the citizens. Zoning is the primary tool we have to control development.

FINAL NOTE: This evaluation is being submitted to the Board of the Central Beach Alliance for approval and presentation to the CBA membership. It was drafted by Jack Newton, Chair, CBA Master Plan Review Committee.

Page numbers refer to the widely circulated March 27, 2009 edition of the Master Plan.

