

Cocoa Beach

DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN

DRAFT

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ARCHITECTS

| BUILDINGS | INTERIORS | LANDSCAPES | CITIES |

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1: Introduction

“Do we want to be a parking lot for the beach or a Downtown?”
—Cocoa Beach resident

Why does Downtown Cocoa Beach need a Redevelopment Plan? Why now?

Why does Downtown Cocoa Beach need a Redevelopment Plan? Why now? Cocoa Beach has so much potential which hasn't been realized. Its Downtown is quiet and desolate with few people to frequent businesses and take advantage of the beaches. This economic downturn provides an unusual opportunity for new investment and new ideas. Historically, each recession has cultivated innovative products, processes, and systems which have propelled our way of living, thinking, and doing business from the industrial era of the 1870s to consumerism, convenience goods, suburbanization, and transportation infrastructure which grew out of the 1920s Depression era. (Richard Florida, *The Great Reset*). Cocoa Beach and the space program have been an integral part of this growth and continue to attract innovative and creative thinkers. But Cocoa Beach has not invested in its downtown's infrastructure, buildings, and amenities until now. The timing to establish the base year for TIF revenue with this year's property values will be extremely beneficial to the Downtown CRA and its objective to eliminate the slum and blight conditions identified in the Finding of Necessity Report for City of Cocoa Beach Downtown Area CRA. And because Cocoa Beach is very much untouched and uncluttered there is exciting potential to shape the public realm and reinforce Downtown's image with a new vision.

The community is interested in creating a stronger identity for Downtown which was expressed during several community meetings and workshops. The sentiment is that Downtown is not perceived as a destination and has become a magnet for public drinking and a parking lot for the beach. There is a shared concern that these visitors are not helping Downtown's image and both residents and businesses support a new vision. While some believe infrastructure improvements should be a priority, others envision a better mix of uses, and still others focus on policy and code enforcement to create the right environment for improvements.

VISION SUMMARY

Downtown Cocoa Beach is at a crossroads. Despite current economic conditions, the Downtown Cocoa Beach CRA is in a strong position to start planning for redevelopment. The key question is: how can Downtown create a stronger identity and image which capitalizes on its history as the birthplace of the space program, its current draw for surfing and ecotourism, and residential community without compromising the resident's quality of life? More specifically, how can Downtown maximize its future competitive advantage with other beachfront communities, which today is marginal based upon existing physical and regulatory conditions? This next chapter explores recommendations for a new Vision for Downtown as a result of existing conditions, community concerns and preferences, potential physical improvements, and a market assessment and suggests how the Downtown can structure the CRA to maximize its competitive advantage. This Vision suggests a combination of (1) physical improvements, (2) repositioning and broadening existing uses, and (3) management/operational guidelines and policy to address these issues. The fact is, Cocoa Beach is unique and can easily differentiate itself from surrounding comparable/competitive communities such as Port Canaveral, Melbourne, and Cocoa Village given its location, history and existing downtown (urban) fabric. Therefore, this is the time to start planning and making policy to be ready for implementation as the economy stabilizes; not to mention, the benefit the City/CRA should get from a low "tax base" year upon which the TIF will be established.

Study area boundaries.





Capitalize on the creative energy and activity in the downtown by repositioning the existing commercial and nighttime uses, introducing hotel and residential uses, encouraging outdoor displays, and creating a series of pedestrian paths with retail frontage.

Clematis Street, West Palm Beach, FL
Reston, VA
Miami Beach, FL



Plan Premise: This Redevelopment Plan was designed to outline the steps to revitalize Downtown Cocoa Beach and maximize its future competitive advantage. The general premise of this plan is:

1. To promote a more walkable Village Center
2. To support economic stability
3. To promote and enhance the “surfing village” resort uses
4. To protect residential neighborhoods from commercial intrusion
5. To enhance Downtown with a mix of uses
6. To reinforce, preserve, and expand the unique building types and neighborhood characteristics

Plan Objectives: The specific plan objectives outlined in the Finding of Necessity Report for the City of Cocoa Beach Downtown Area CRA- 2009, include:

1. The need to reverse the obsolescence of older marginal residential and commercial structures developed in piecemeal fashion some 30-50 years ago without adequate provision for parking or infrastructure.
2. The need for a broader array of housing types, particularly multifamily.
3. The need to diversify the economy particularly in the area of tourism.
4. The need for amenities and an enhanced community character which can increase the attractiveness of Cocoa Beach to tourist and new residents.
5. The need to upgrade the capacity of roads and infrastructure systems which are now 30-50 years old and in some cases over capacity or otherwise inadequate to meet future needs.

This plan analyzes current and projected conditions, articulates a vision of desired outcomes, and identifies strategies for filling these gaps, in collaboration with the community. These planning initiatives are fundamental to promoting a vibrant downtown area with retail, entertainment, and pedestrian activity.

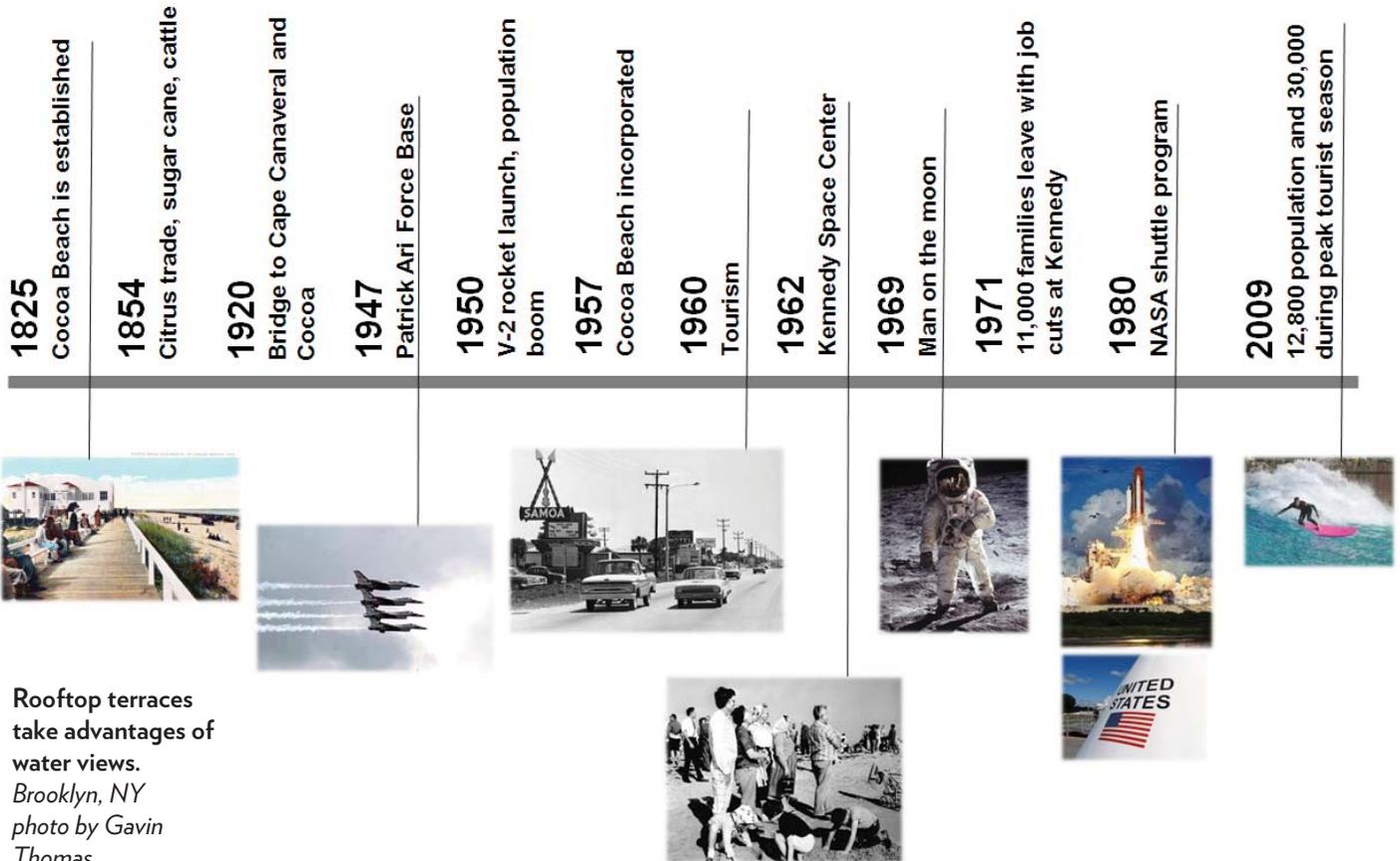
2: Existing Conditions

All the astronauts thought of Cocoa Beach as their home away from home.

—Cocoa Beach resident

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Cocoa Beach was established in 1925 as a beach community and grew up in the 1950s and 60s as the hub of space exploration. It has always maintained a small beach town character and supports a growing tourist community for surfing and eco-tourism.



Rooftop terraces take advantages of water views.
Brooklyn, NY
photo by Gavin Thomas

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Downtown Cocoa Beach is strategically located in the center of the Space Coast. With a rich history as the pioneers of space travel, Downtown Cocoa Beach is within 13 miles of several regional, recreational, and entertainment attractions, and point of interest including the Kennedy Space Center, Ron Jon's Surf Shop, the Cocoa Beach Fishing Pier, Cocoa Village, the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, the Atlantic Ocean, the Banana River Aquatic Preserve, the Thousand Islands, and the Canaveral National Seashore.



Street ends should be designed with setbacks and landscaping to frame entrances to the beach.

*Imperial Beach, CA
photo by Naima
Finnie
Naples, FL*

PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

The aesthetic condition of Downtown and its level of comfort for walking is poor. Sidewalks are often neglected and connections between parcels are limited. Many of the commercial properties in the Downtown Core are separated by large and unattractive parking lots which are unpleasant for people to walk through. There are few trees and minimal landscaping with limited views to the adjacent beach and ocean. Buildings have been inconsistently maintained so there is not a uniform quality of building stock. And many of the sidewalks are interrupted by parking lots and driveways which are visually uninteresting to walk by. These conditions make Downtown unappealing for walking and contribute to the slum and blighting conditions described in the Finding of Necessity for the Downtown Cocoa Beach CRA.



“The Downtown can be a DISTRICT, not just CORRIDORS.”
 —Cocoa Beach resident

CIRCULATION

The main thoroughfares for car traffic are Atlantic and Orlando Avenues which are State Highway A1A. They handle regional and local traffic at relatively high speeds. They are difficult for pedestrians and bicycles to cross, with the exception of Orlando Avenue north of Minutemen Causeway which has wider sidewalks and pedestrian oriented retail.

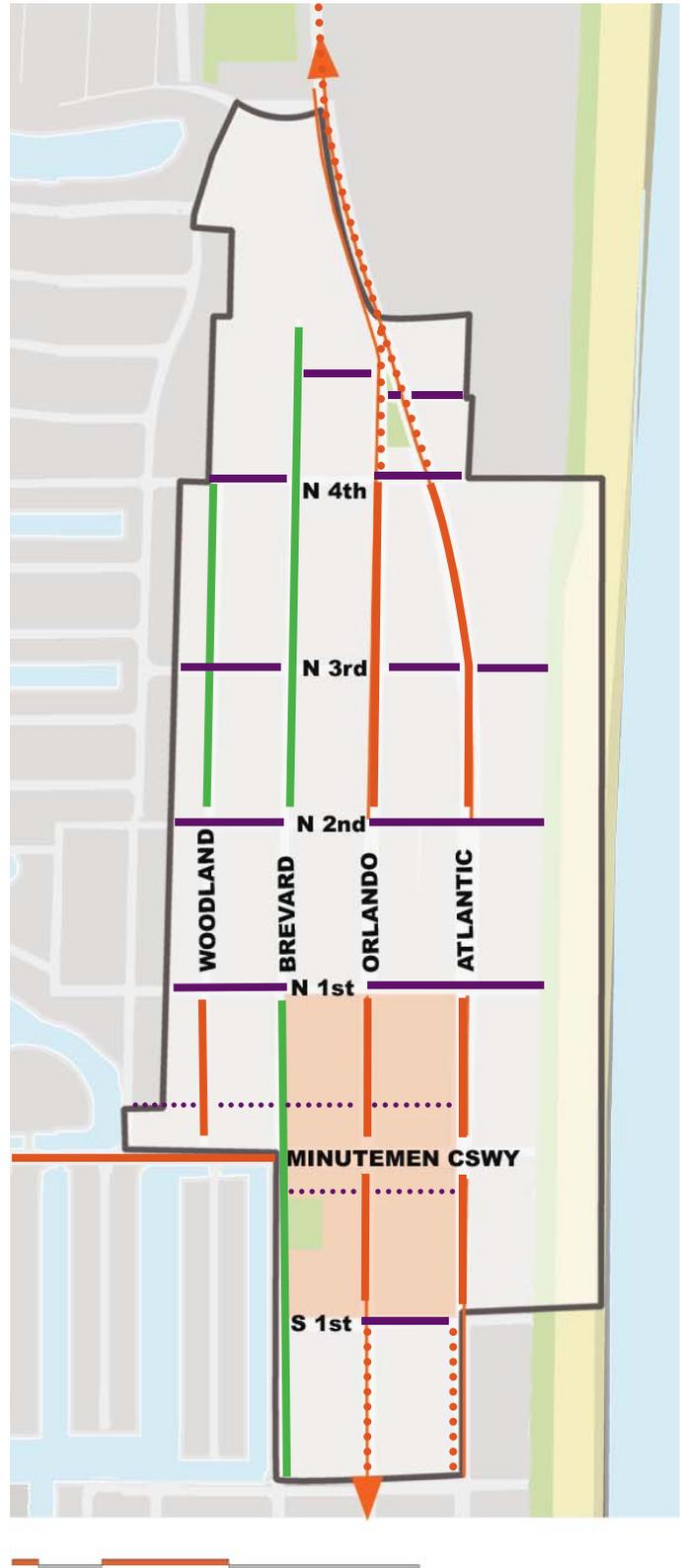
Brevard Avenue is more conducive to walking with less car traffic, however many of the sidewalks are poorly maintained or non-existent.

Minutemen Causeway has a dual personality as a thoroughfare for traffic to the west, and as a local pedestrian road especially around the City Hall area.

The remaining east/west streets, as well as the north/south Woodland Avenue, mostly serve local traffic.

Downtown is also served by public transportation and has on-street bicycle lanes.

- Major Arterials
- Primary Streets
- East West Streets Local
- Streets
- Active Alley/Easements



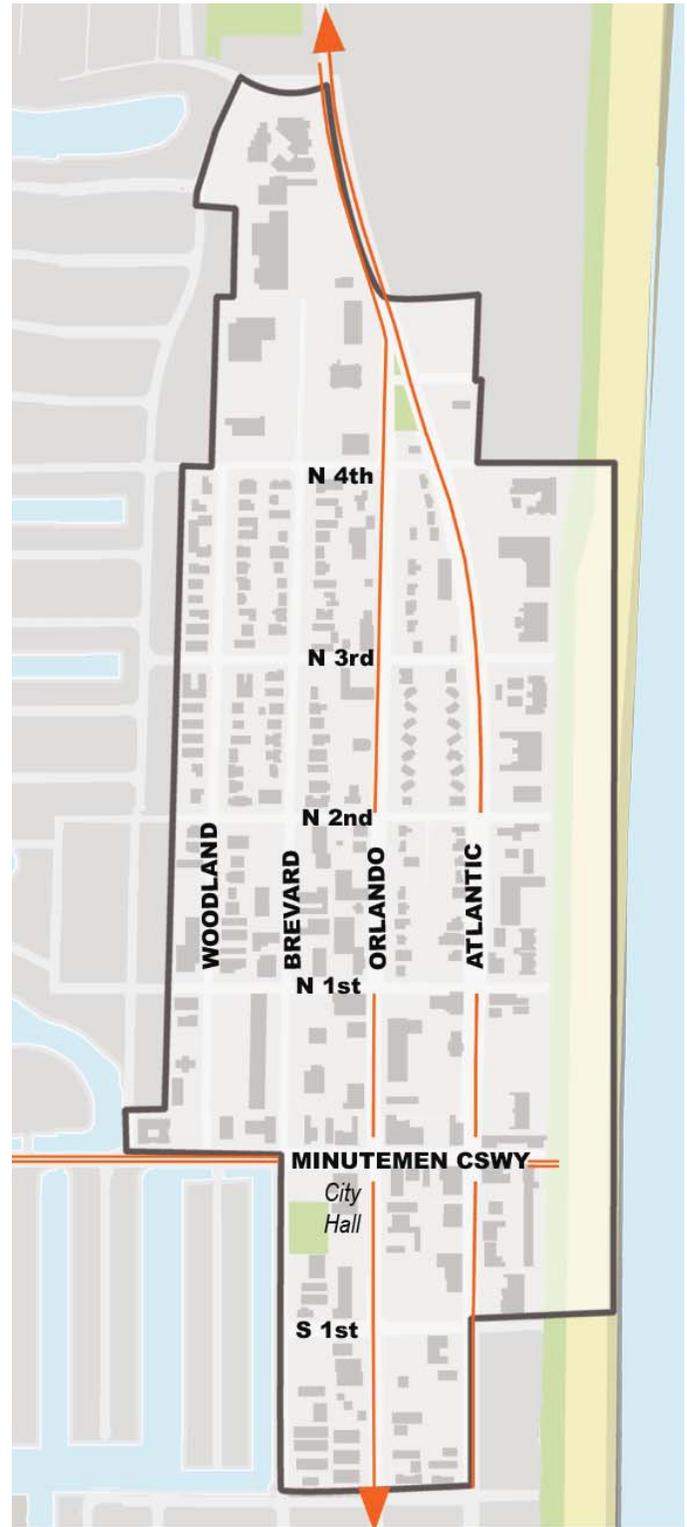
OPEN SPACE

In addition to the Beach, there are two small green spaces in the immediate study area. The triangular parcel to the north is a landscape feature where Atlantic and Orlando Avenues converge. It is protected as park land, but is not conducive to pedestrian use because of its design and location at a busy intersection. The park to the south is a passive space which has not been formally programmed since its recent acquisition by the City. It is currently being used for the weekly Farmer’s Market and is zoned for neighborhood commercial uses (CN).

At the southeastern most extent of the CRA district is Ramp Road Park, providing public space and access to the “Thousand Islands” and the Banana River Aquatic Preserve. At the western most extent of 4th Street South is public land owned by the Brevard County Endangered Lands Program which also provides public connection to the Islands and Preserve. Also, at this southern extent of the district is the City’s gym/recreation building and the Surfside Playhouse. These public spaces at the southern end of the district serve as a southern anchors for the CRA.

An opportunity also exists to utilize the western end of Minutemen Causeway (see Streetscape Plan) as a point of public access to the Banana River – thereby allowing Minutemen Causeway within the CRA to serve as a public connection between the Banana River Aquatic Preserve and the Atlantic Ocean.

There are very few public parks or plazas, but the primary public space is the beach.



CITY OWNED AND OTHER PUBLIC LAND

Although there is not a significant amount of publicly owned property in the downtown, the main parcels are strategically located in areas with the best opportunities for redevelopment. The City Hall site is in the center of downtown and the Post Office, which is leased to the Postal Service, and Library site are the northern anchors. Both are surrounded by vacant or underdeveloped properties and provide strong anchor sites for future redevelopment.

On the southern end of the district are the public anchors Ramp Road Park, the City gym/recreation building and Surfside Playhouse.

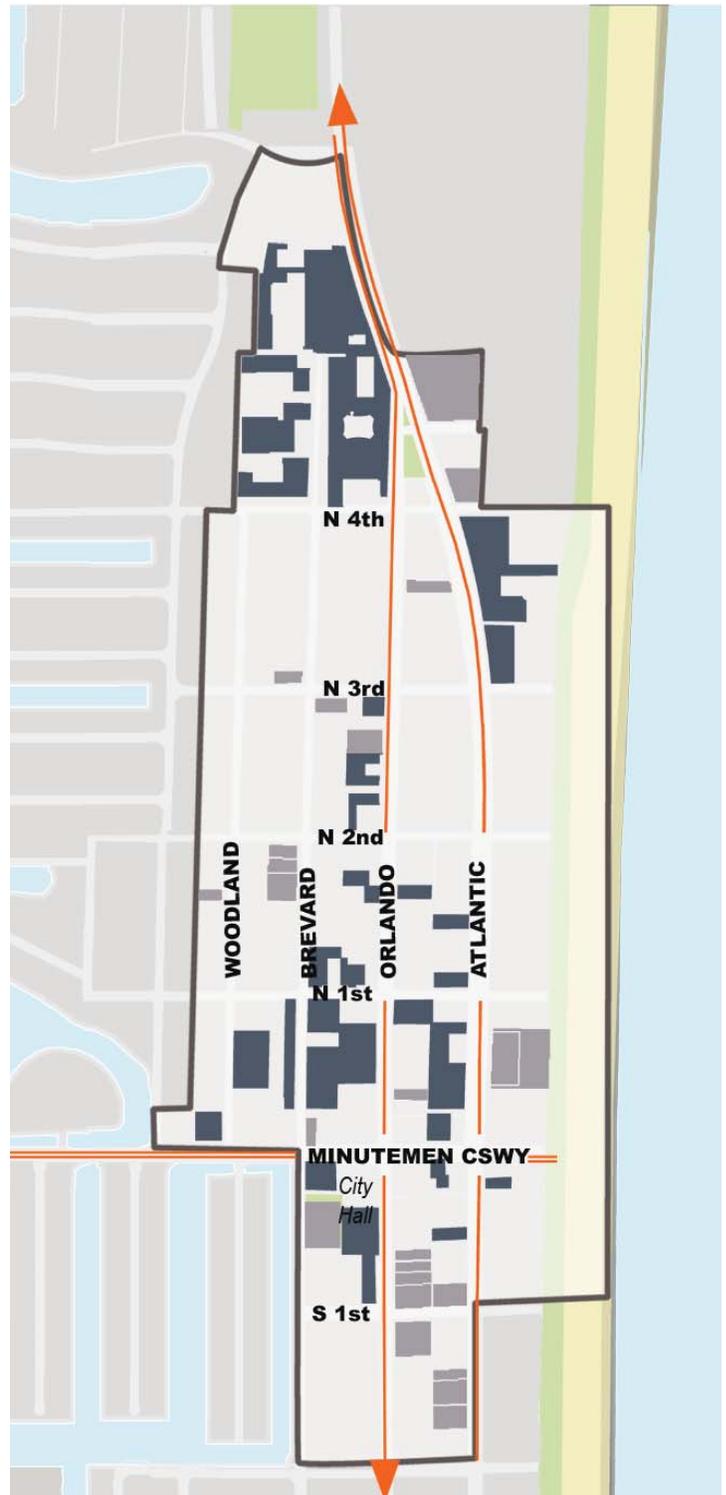
- City-owned land
- Library
- Post Office



UNDEVELOPED AND UNDERUTILIZED LAND

There is a surplus of undeveloped land in the downtown-- both surface parking and vacant property, but mostly surface parking lots. These undeveloped properties are easy to redevelop and should be prioritized for redevelopment in the downtown. The greatest concentration of these opportunities is in the northern section of the downtown by the Post Office and Library, and the central part of downtown within the blocks abutting Minutemen Causeway between Atlantic and Brevard Avenues.

- Surface Parking
- Vacant Land



ZONING

The current zoning for Downtown Cocoa Beach is modified by the Downtown Overlay District which organizes the downtown as 6 sub-districts. In general, the overlay loosens the parking requirements to permit shared parking, encourages preserving buildings with unique character and historic significance, discourages drive-through lanes, encourages improving and using alley, and encourages outdoor seating. In addition, the Primary Downtown Area District 1, allows for zero lot line development and greater lot coverage. Similarly, the Cottage Row District 3 has a greater lot coverage than the underlying zoning permits with relaxed front setbacks of 5 feet to allow for more flexible development. In addition, all developments must be architecturally consistent with the existing pattern of development in the downtown and approved by the City Commission.

In general, most buildings can be designed up to 45' in height unless they are abutting parcels designated as RS-1 or RM-1, in which case they must be reduced to 25' or 35'. Additional setback requirements also apply when abutting parcels with these zoning designations, as well as RM-2. Density requirements for the Cottage Row District 3 and lots less than 75' in width are somewhat lower at 8 dwelling units and 3 dwelling units respectively, compared to 10 dwelling units per acre for the remaining districts.

In terms of uses, transient lodging is permitted only in CG General Commercial and CT-1 Oceanfront Residential which is all east of Atlantic Avenue. RM-2, the multi-family professional district, permits offices, as well as multi-family dwellings as primary uses.

- RM1 Multi-family
- RM-2 High Density Multi-family
- CT-1 Oceanfront Residential
- CN Neighborhood Commercial
- CG General Commercial
- B-1 Public and Recreational
- PS-1 Public and Semi-public



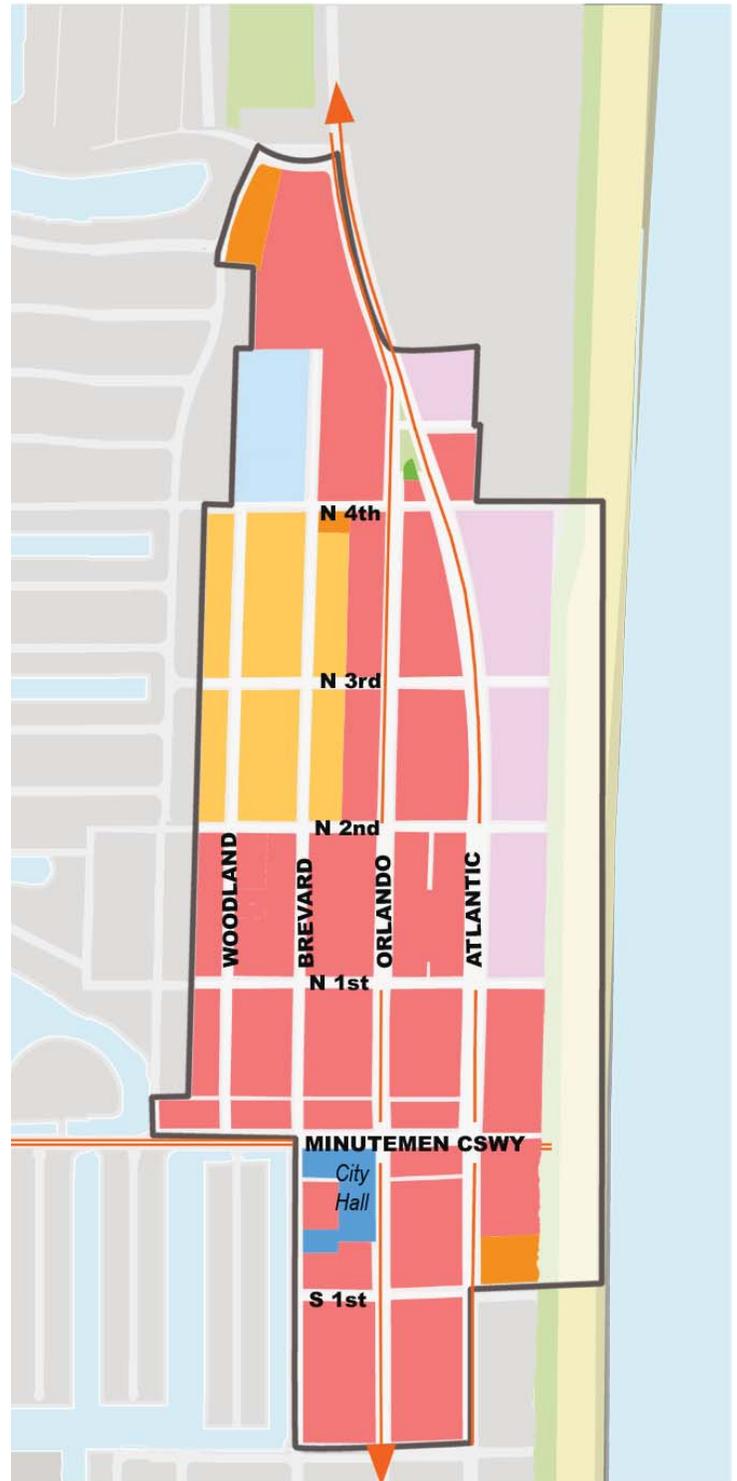
FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map and Table I-1 which describes uses and intensities establishes FAR maximums for the zoning categories and establishes intent for each use category. While a significant amount of land is designated as General Commercial, a mixed-use designation would provide greater flexibility for redevelopment.

PARKING

The current parking requirements are very high for a downtown and are more consistent with suburban parking standards where there is more land available for parking. This is especially true of office uses. However, the reduced parking requirements allows non-residential land uses to reduce their parking by 75% when all of the parking can be accommodated with public parking facilities which are located within close proximity (500 feet). Joint or shared use parking is also permitted for uses within the same block which do not have the same peak parking demands.

- Moderate Density
- High Density Residential & Professional
- High Density Residential & Tourist
- General Commercial
- Recreation
- Public
- Institutional



EXISTING BUILDING MASSING

The existing buildings do not maximize the current allowable development rights described in the zoning code. While the zoning allows most properties in the district to build up to four stories, the majority of buildings are one and two stories. The diagram below illustrates the building pattern and their “footprints” shown in black.



EXISTING USES

Existing uses are illustrated in the image to the right. Nearly a third of the land in the Downtown is vacant or underutilized as surface parking. Retail and then residential make up the majority of land uses in the Downtown. For the purposes of this study, existing land uses have been calculated based on the parcel size, not the building size. Vacant and underutilized land was calculated based on total land area to give a more accurate illustration of available land.

- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Vacant
- Surface Parking



3: Recommendations

LINKING ECONOMIC INITIATIVES WITH PLANNING

“If you’re not **GROWING** you’re **DECLINING**.” —Cocoa Beach resident

It is important for the City/CRA to create a vision that supports the optimal environment in which both residents and visitors can benefit. A fundamental factor to creating a viable and implementable redevelopment plan is having a clear understanding of underlying existing and potential economic demand drivers. There is no question that the Cocoa Beach resident is a primary stakeholder in, and beneficiary of, the redevelopment process. However, a viable and measurable redevelopment effort will be supported by three demand segments, including: local residents; day visitors; and, overnight visitors. While the local resident base represents a strong demographic, total population within the City is less than 12,000, with 19,000+ residents residing in a broader 10-minute drive radius from the CRA. However, there are nearly 2.1 million day visitors and 2.4 million overnight tourists that visit Brevard County annually and Cocoa Beach has historically served as a desirable destination for residents and visitors alike by providing an energetic and dynamic atmosphere. In a sense, Cocoa Beach is a unique community with multiple personalities ranging from the resident enclave of space coast executive employment to an east coast surf capital and lively beach environment. Therefore, it is important for the City/CRA to create a vision that supports the optimal environment in which both residents and visitors can benefit. This can be accomplished through elements of the visioning and redevelopment plan that specifically address physical improvements that promote walk-ability, safety and sense-of-place as well as management/operational guidelines that promote security and public well-being.

“We don’t want to ruin the TEXTURE of this historic place.”
—Cocoa Beach resident

I. PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS: A NEED TO ENHANCE DOWNTOWN COCOA BEACH’S IDENTITY

It is clear through field research and community feedback that Downtown Cocoa Beach has limited identity; for the most part, there is no sense of place. This is in large part a physical planning issue that can be mitigated in the short term with improved infrastructure and enhanced circulation for cars and pedestrians to create a more comfortable walking environment. A study funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation identified five design qualities which are critical to making places more walkable including what is called “imageability” the distinctive features which make places memorable, recognizable, and create a lasting impression. Downtown Cocoa Beach is associated with some very strong imagery related to the space program and the surfing industry, but the City has yet to transfer these images into the physical components of Downtown, mainly the streets and buildings. The following physical improvements will support Downtown’s redevelopment by strengthening its imageability:

1. Create a more appealing walking environment
2. Improve pedestrian circulation and accessibility
3. Upgrade key alleys to increase retail frontage

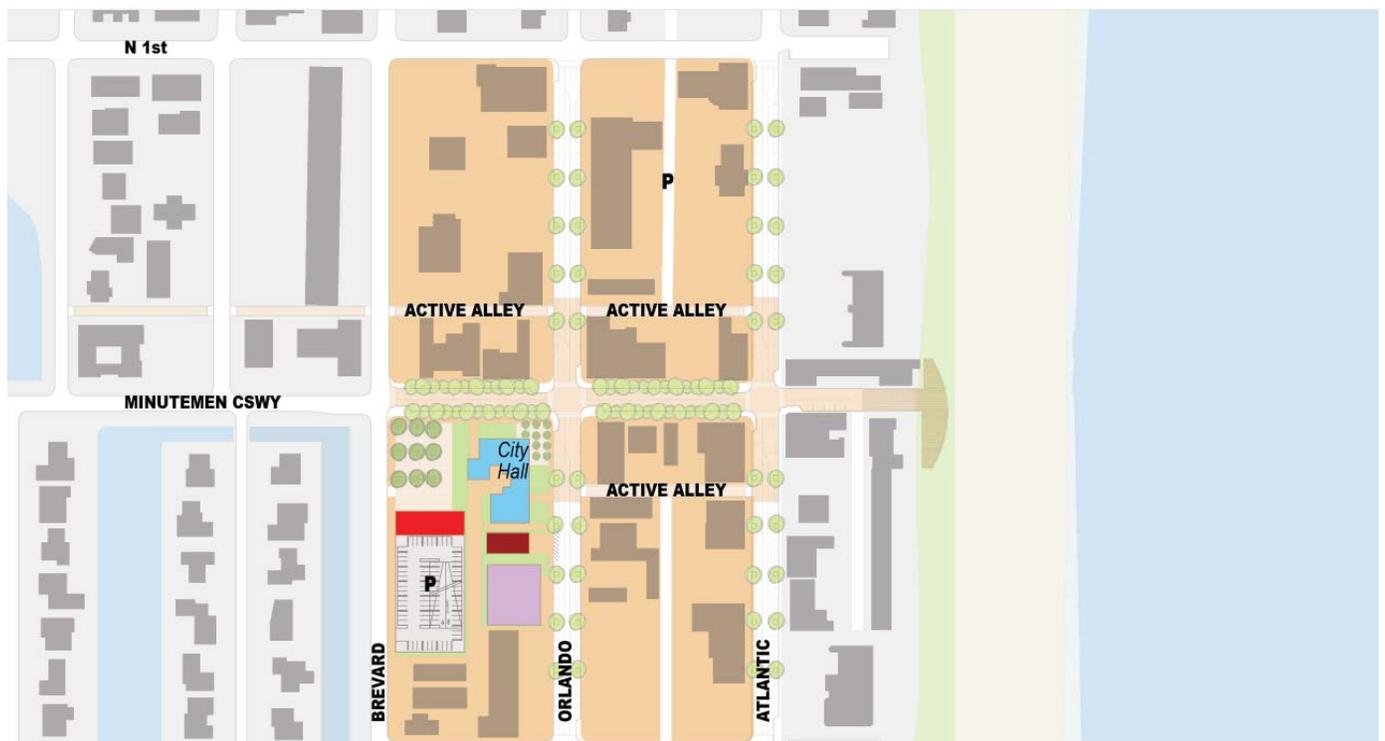
Retail frontage on alleys.
Georgetown, Washington D.C.



4. Revitalize and improve Minutemen Causeway

RENOVATE CITY HALL: Reposition City Hall block and activate Minutemen Causeway for pedestrian active uses by formalizing alleys for pedestrian uses and renovating City Hall and converting the existing parking lot into a more formal park and plaza with a new parking structure to the south with ground floor retail fronting the plaza, a new historical museum, and fire station.

-  Historic Museum
-  New Commercial
-  Fire Station



RELOCATE CITY HALL: An alternative would be to free up the southwestern block for new development by rebuilding City Hall at the northern end of the Downtown and formalizing the existing alleys as pedestrian streets which would open up onto a new public plaza fronting a historical museum and a new commercial structure with pedestrian friendly uses. This new facility would activate the street and encourage more pedestrian uses in the immediate surrounding area. Alleys on both the northern and southern blocks could be redesigned to support pedestrian foot traffic, dining, and gathering spaces. Structured parking would be designed fronting the alley with ground floor retail to both activate the pedestrian alley and create an interplay among the museum, park, and retail with a new fire station and museum.

-  Historic Museum
-  New Commercial
-  Fire Station

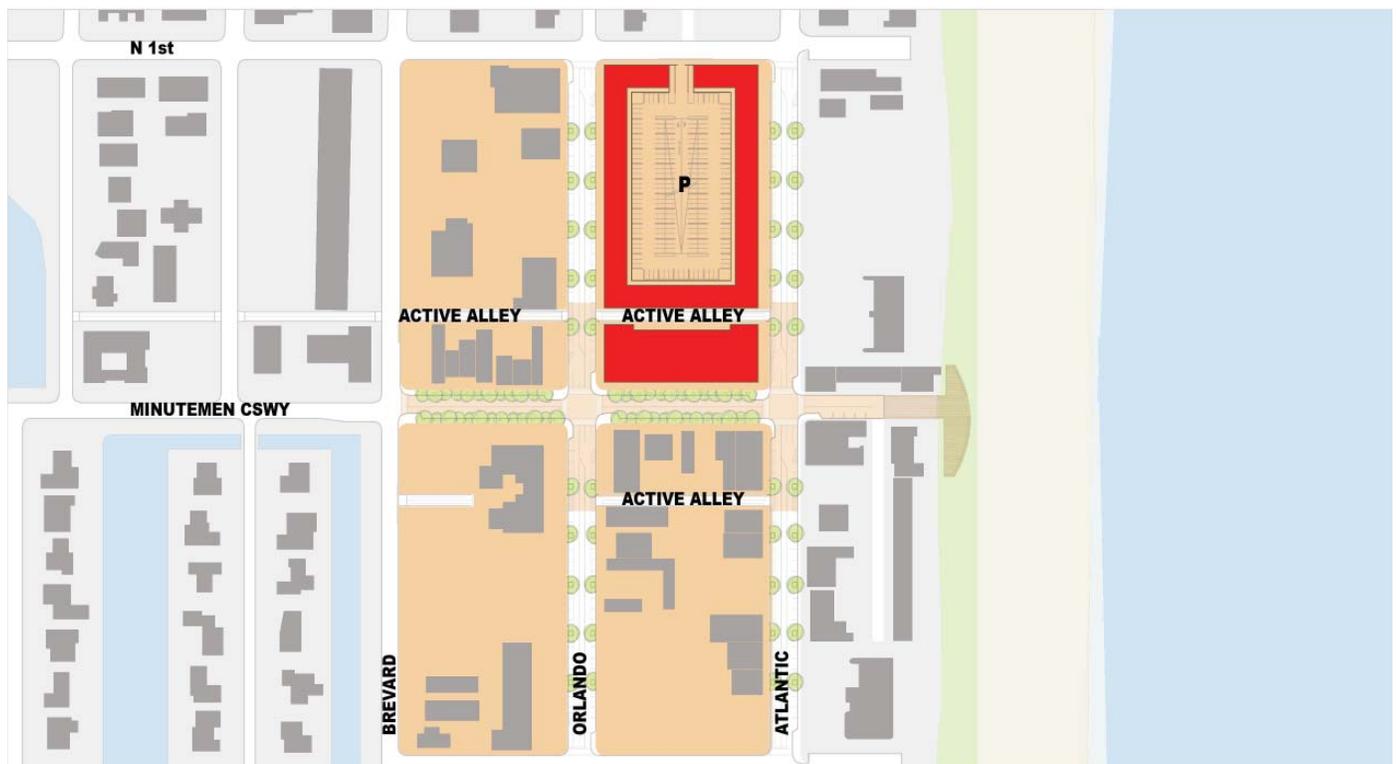


5. Redeveloping the Downtown Core

Key to Downtown’s redevelopment is the core area along Minutemen Causeway between the Ocean and Woodland Avenue. This vision suggests a combination of improvements to the central four blocks which straddle Minutemen Causeway between Atlantic and Brevard as follows:

SUPER BLOCK: Redevelop the northeast block of Orlando Avenue and Minutemen Causeway as a parking structure which is screened with commercial uses so that the building itself is not perceived as a parking garage and introduce smaller building on Minutemen Causeway and the back alley. The alleys in this core area may be enhanced for pedestrians with retail frontage and pedestrian amenities like outdoor dining, planters, lighting, and rear entrances.

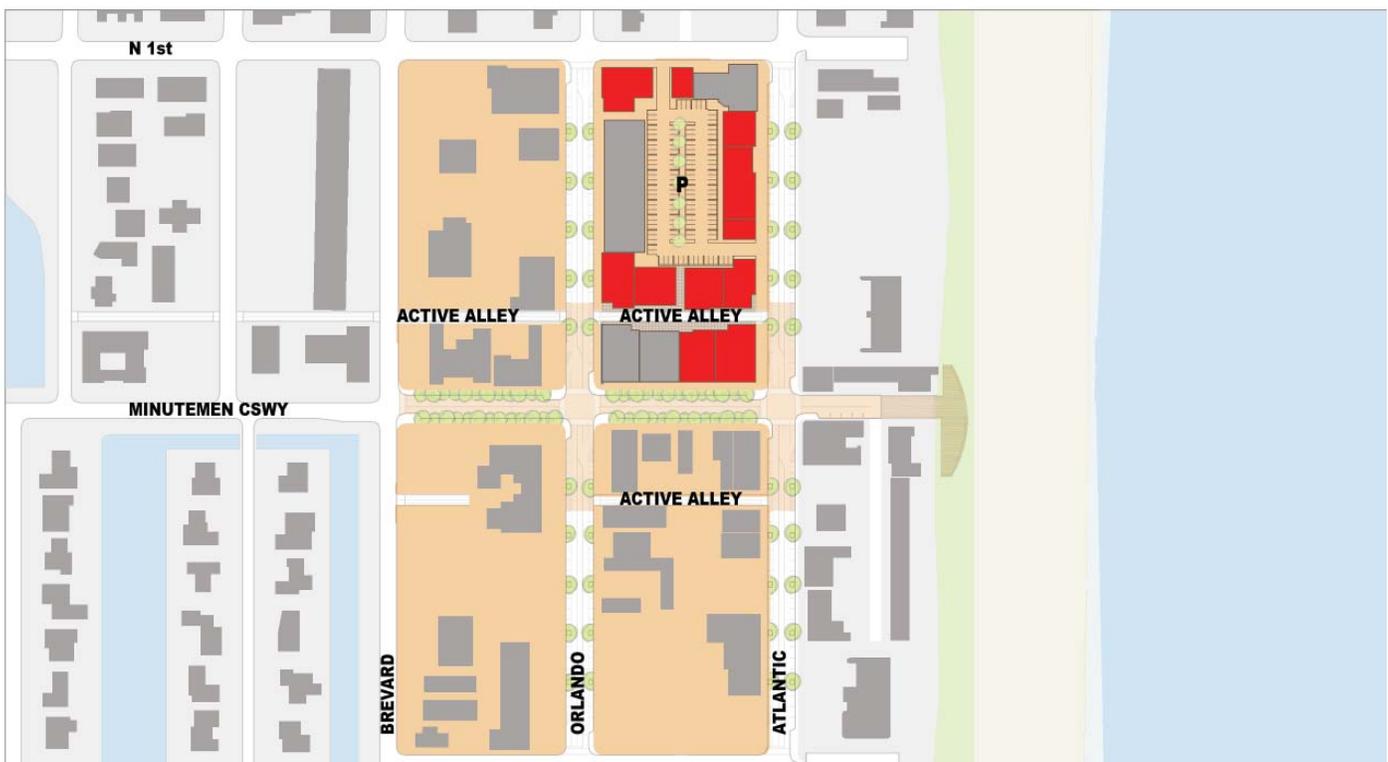
 New Commercial



INFILL: An alternative is to infill vacant spaces with new structures on the northeast block of Minutemen Causeway and Orlando Avenue. This provides a continuous edge to create a more complete pedestrian environment with more active uses. Surface parking is provided in lieu of a parking garage.

Insert perspective rendering of alley.

■ New Commercial

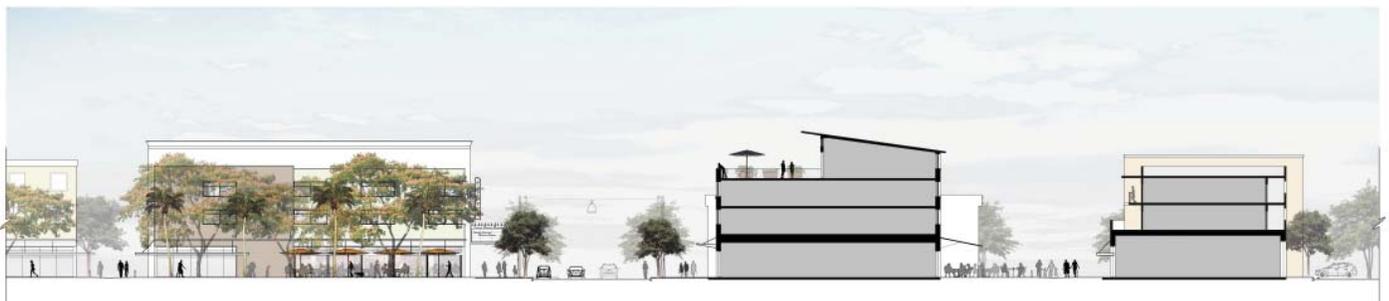


PROPOSED BUILD-OUT: Surface parking lots may be constructed in the center of all three blocks and small infill buildings create a continuous street wall. The northern alleys, which run parallel to Minutemen Causeway, may be formalized as pedestrian connections, with limited vehicular access to extend the pedestrian route.

Top: Proposed section of Minutemen Causeway looking west.

Bottom: Proposed build-out scenario.

- Historic Museum
- New Commercial
- Fire Station



- 6. Increase access to the beach and ocean on Minutemen Causeway with a gracious and grand deck at grade.
- 7. Reclaim street ends.

Insert perspective rendering of (!) street closure and (2) street end.



- 8. Design street ends to be closed off for festivals.
- 9. **Create a gateway at the northern end of Downtown and relocate City Hall.**

Possible new uses in this include, but are not limited to relocating City Hall to this northern parcel to create a more prominent entry to the downtown and to establish a synergy among the existing municipal uses including the post office and the library. The triangular park is activated with a small public building and the City Hall is expanded with a new plaza. The new municipal center will anchor the northern edge of downtown and establish a cohesive and appealing character. A new street on the parcel north of City Hall connects to the existing intersection to enhance circulation and introduce pedestrian crossings for better safety and access. In addition, in the long-term, the aging Atlantic Plaza has adequate land area to support a new mixed use residential/retail/professional campus.

- 10. **Convert A1A to two-way traffic to slow vehicular traffic, create safer pedestrian crossings and support commercial activity.**

Although comprehensive evaluation of impacts to traffic flow, ingress/egress, and related issues must be considered, from a retail and commercial activity perspective this proposed roadway design change would likely benefit redevelopment within the downtown core as vehicular traffic can be slowed allowing greater driver attention to the presence of a commercial activity zone while promoting pedestrian safety and improved pedestrian mobility.



11. Incorporate more open spaces and public gathering spaces into the Downtown landscape.
12. Address infrastructure improvements including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and landscaping.
13. Make downtown a more comfortable place for walking.

Comfortable places
for walking.
*Third Street
Promenade, Santa
Monica, CA*



- 14. Introduce more public art- and kinetic sculpture especially on vacant lots.

Public art can be incorporated into bus shelters, buildings, and on vacant lots to create funny and inspiring sculpture which is reflective of the community and its values.

Whistler, CO
Denver, CO
Fort Lauderdale, FL



- 15. Evaluate bicycle rack locations, amenities, and signage.
- 16. Need more bicycle paths and better markings.
- 17. Evaluate eco-friendly trash bins which compact trash- bigbellsolar.com (capacity of five trash cans).
- 18. Use local artist designed trash bins.

Casual cyclists ride with car traffic.
Cocoa Beach, FL

Iconic bicycle racks in New York.
New York, NY

BigBelly Solar trash compacting bins.
Bigbellsolar.com



- 19. Use sidewalk rain gardens as part of the stormwater management.
- 20. Expand narrow sidewalks for cafes.
- 21. Develop a parking plan and build capture parking for cars.
- 22. Identify buildings which can be a beacon for Downtown.
- 23. Provide public restrooms at beach.

**Wide sidewalks
accommodate cafe
seating.**
*West Palm Beach,
FL*

**Existing eco-
friendly sidewalk
plantings.**
Cocoa Beach, FL



II. REPOSITIONING RETAIL AND BROADENING USES

The analysis of retail supply and demand trends herein establishes the parameters for redevelopment within the Downtown Cocoa Beach CRA. Based upon the retail trade demand model, there is an estimated 60,000 to 70,000 square feet of net new demand projected within the broader retail trade area during the next 5+ years (detailed in Section 3). Though not all of this demand will be captured within the Downtown Cocoa Beach CRA itself, the CRA is expected to capture a considerable portion of this demand. This level of demand is effectively marginal in the context of the CRA's existing retail supply which is in excess of 300,000 square feet.

1. Reposition retail and commercial uses within the CRA, rather than adding substantial new supply. A repositioning generally means that a portion of the projected retail demand will be absorbed within existing retail inventory that is currently vacant or underutilized, and a portion of demand will be absorbed in new lower to mid density development.
2. Focus near term redevelopment/repositioning on strengthening and growing the existing base of restaurant and dining places generated from outside resident and visitor demand business which benefits from a “surplus” in demand. This can be accomplished through incentive funding programs that support physical improvements (such as interior build-out and/or exterior upgrades), or operating programs supporting promotion and marketing. In either case, initial steps of the redevelopment plan should define specific funding and management programs that target this existing group of businesses that are critical to the area's commercial success.
3. Re-capture at least some of the demand for specialty/niche grocery and convenience stores, as well as specialty shopper's goods such as outdoor/beach furniture, beach apparel, and other related household goods that are leaking to surrounding shopping destinations. The retail trade gap analysis indicates that with certain shopper's goods such as clothing, building materials, home furnishings and grocery, there is “leakage” of sales to areas outside of the Downtown Cocoa Beach CRA trade area, which is understood given the presence of large discount retailers on Merritt Island and the mainland that typically draw demand from larger areas.

Need and Opportunity to Broaden Use and Activity Base:

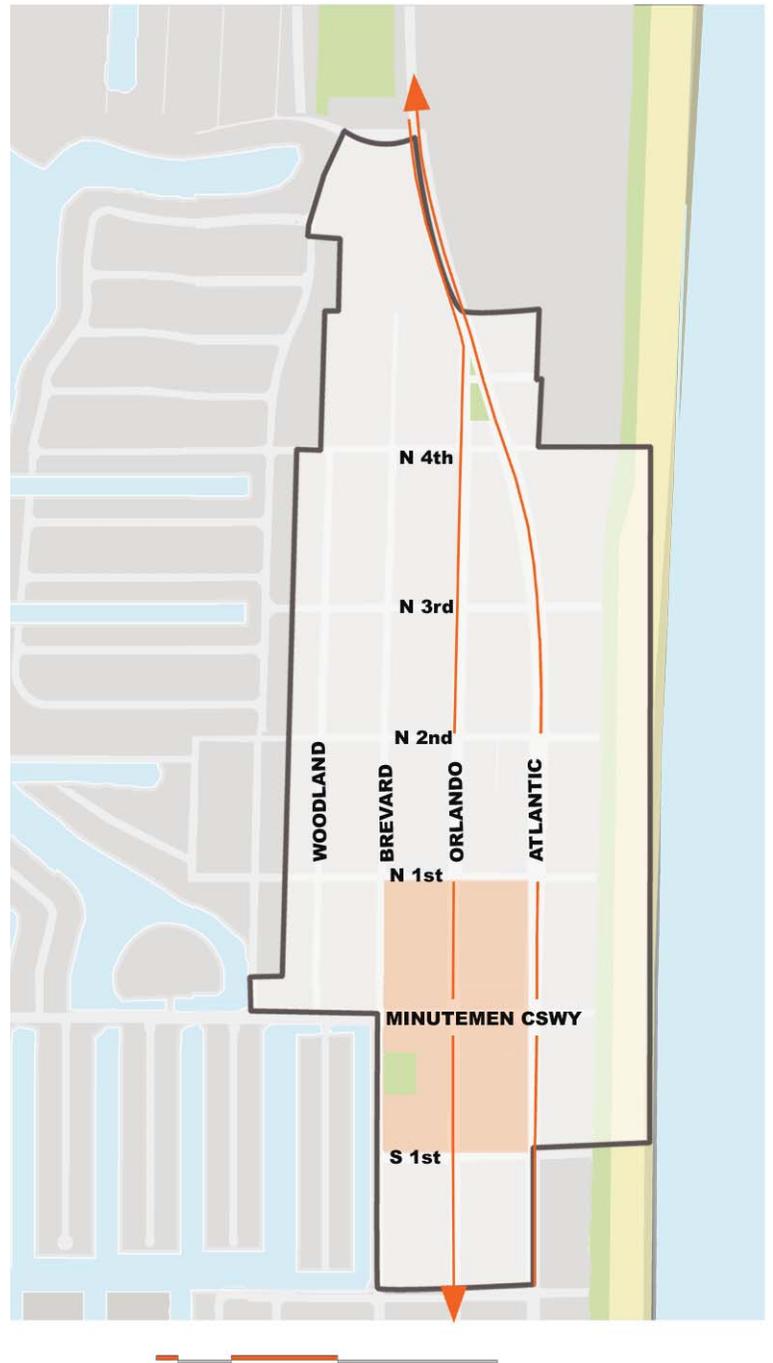
There is a need and opportunity to broaden the uses and activity base within the Downtown Cocoa Beach CRA as it relates to mid- to longer-term redevelopment initiatives (5 to 10 years), and in the effort to support measurable redevelopment and growth.

1. Integrate entertainment and activity that gives the visitor (and resident) a reason to be drawn downtown and extend their stay.
2. Anchor the core downtown district with a boutique hotel, comprising 50 to 100 total rooms within one or two facilities. This hotel product should not increase density or scale or compete directly with the surrounding beach properties.
3. Capitalize on an expansion of the arts which already exists in the community, including studios, galleries and theater (which could potentially be an upgraded venue for the Surfside Players), and a historical museum.
4. Introduce other complimentary uses and activities such as day spa and beach/water rentals, and night time entertainment.
5. Formally organize activity based recreation and promote them to ensure that these become value added components to the redevelopment plan that can actually provide additional revenue the CRA's operating budget. Between the beach to the east and parks/wetlands to the west, there is a considerable amount of that the CRA/City should be actively promoting. This includes but is not limited to water-based rental concessions (eg. kayaks, paddle boards, surfboards) and/or group eco-tours.
6. Consider expanding the concessions program to include beach front food and beverage service, which will allow for more control of this type of activity and manage the process so that it benefits the local merchants.

The Focus is Core, but Effect will Spread:

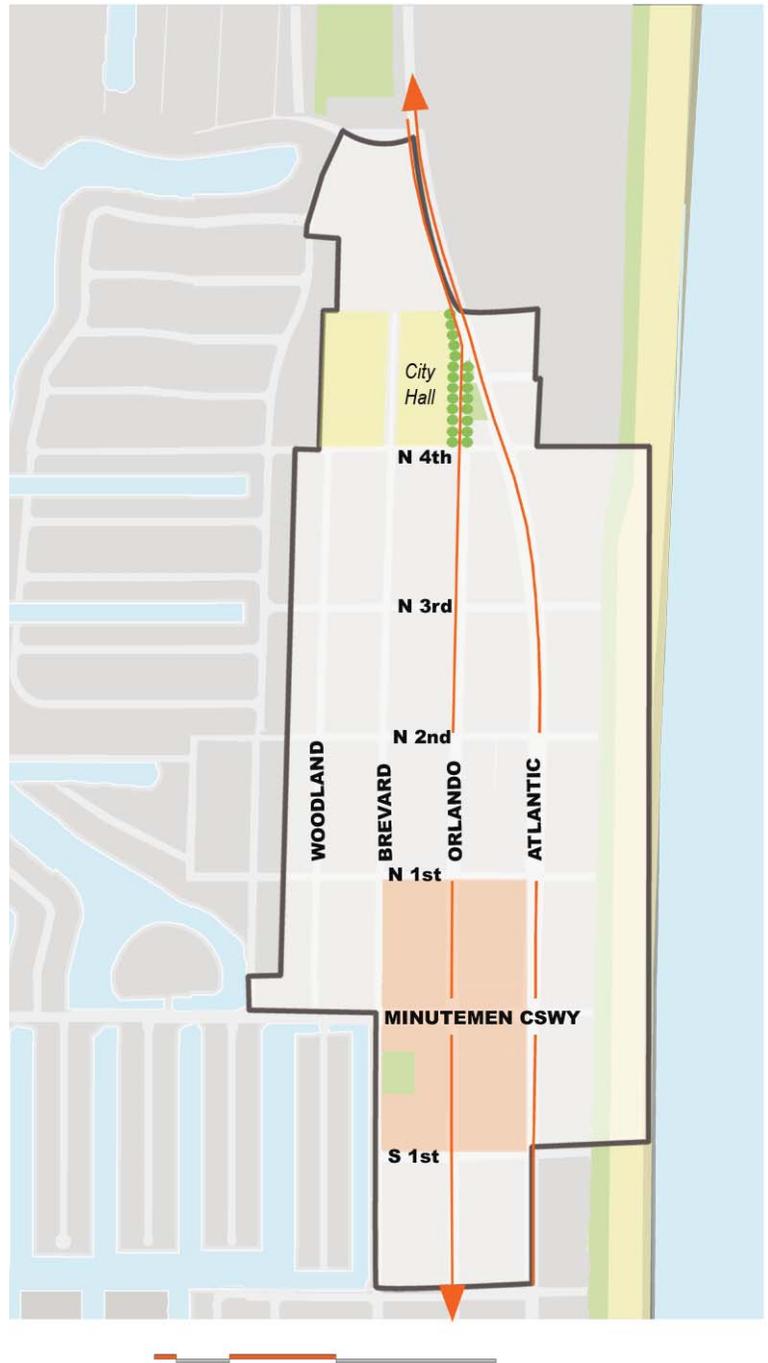
The economic and market analysis for the vision plan considers opportunities for the entire Downtown Cocoa Beach CRA. However, the vision and redevelopment plan should start at “Main and Main” (or Minuteman Causeway from Orlando Avenue to the beach), which has an existing concentration of businesses and can be easily identified and accessed from the broader area.

1. The initial focus should be on the CRA’s core/central area given current and near term market conditions, as well as the potential need for the City to address certain physical planning issues.
2. Minuteman Causeway should serve as the spine for redevelopment and blocks to both the north and south should be effectively linked to create a seamless downtown district.
3. Increase pedestrian alleys and easements in the rear of properties along Minuteman Causeway to allow for additional retail frontage in the core area while also enhancing pedestrian mobility throughout the area.



Additional Uses to Support Downtown Core and Surrounding Areas:

1. Relocate and redevelop City Hall. The existing City Hall site represents approximately 2.7 acres within the downtown core and a prime location for mixed use redevelopment. At the same time, relocating City Hall to a less retail/entertainment area within the CRA may serve as an anchor for revitalization elsewhere by attracting supporting office and limited supporting retail.
2. Reposition underutilized industrial and office space, given the area’s diverse economic base which varies from a strong arts community to the presence of the City’s government offices. The existing industrial properties provide great space for artist and professional live work space, while office space within office buildings and/or mixed use complexes support legal, architectural and or other professional business that benefit from proximity to City Hall. Moreover, it is important to recognize that despite the current economic conditions, employment projections for Brevard County indicate a positive trend over a 5 to 7 year period. And, in spite of the fact that the Kennedy Space Center (KSC) faces economic challenges during the next few years, there are indications that its eventual repositioning may create opportunities for tourism and high-tech industry jobs which should benefit Cocoa Beach and specifically the Downtown Cocoa Beach CRA.



III. OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The CRA Plan is the primary tool to initiate the Vision and eliminate slum and blight. The operational and management guidelines within this Plan encompass policies, procedures, and directives which serve as the mechanisms to regulate the Vision, allocate city resources, and prioritize its initiatives. Many of these policies support administrative, financial, planning, and marketing incentives to attract specific and targeted private investment which meet the CRA objectives in a clear and transparent way. These include:

1. Administrative incentives like streamlining the development review process, assisting with job recruiting (job fairs) for new or expanding businesses, assisting with site selection, waiving demolition fees, and restructuring permit fees.
2. Financial incentives like tax credits, abatements, rebates on tax increments, loans and subsidies, micro loans to small businesses, shared costs for infrastructure upgrades, reduced connection impact fees, signage upgrades, and façade improvements.
3. Planning and land use incentives like parking reductions, shared infrastructure agreements, density bonuses, and transfer of development rights.
4. Marketing incentives like a market analysis, business promotion, design competitions, land inventory analysis to promote available land, seminars, sponsorship of special events, partnering in marketing programs such as Florida Main Street.

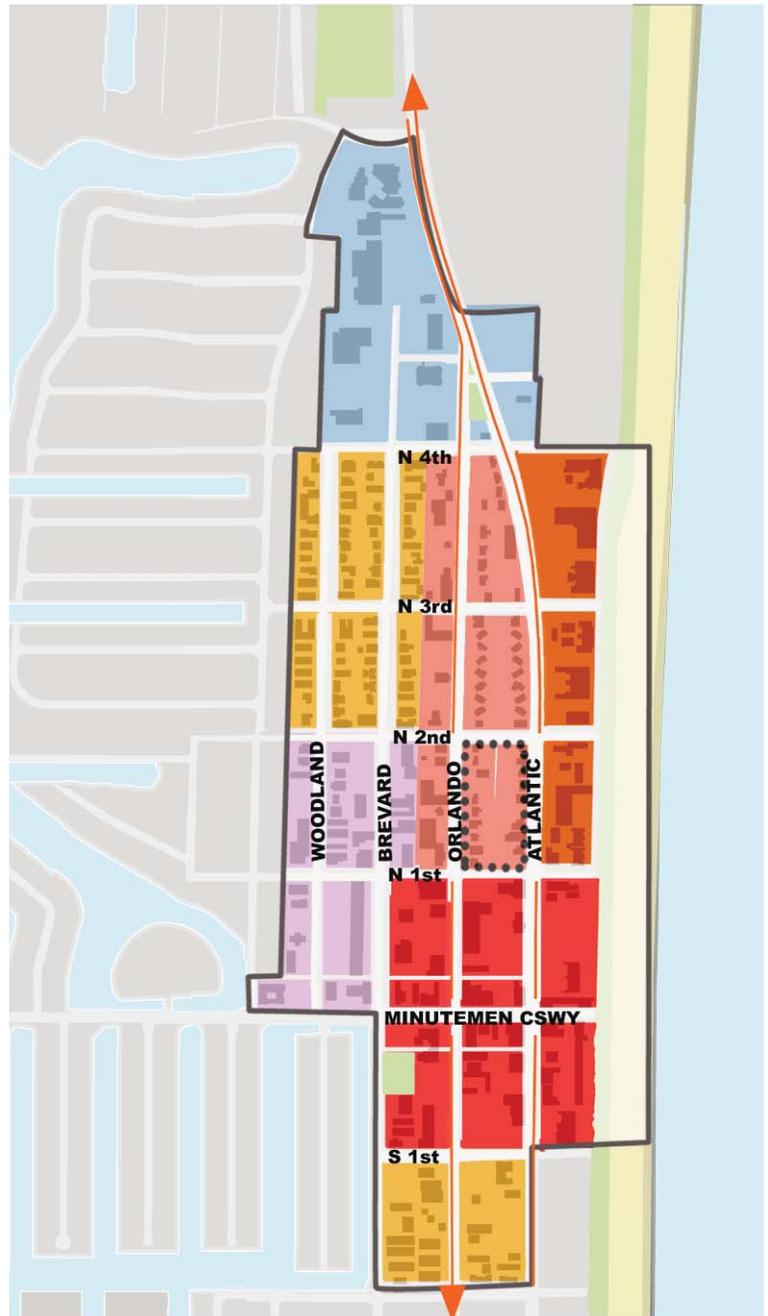
These incentives may be incorporated into the City's Land Development Regulations and the Comprehensive Plan as described below.

Regulatory Tools

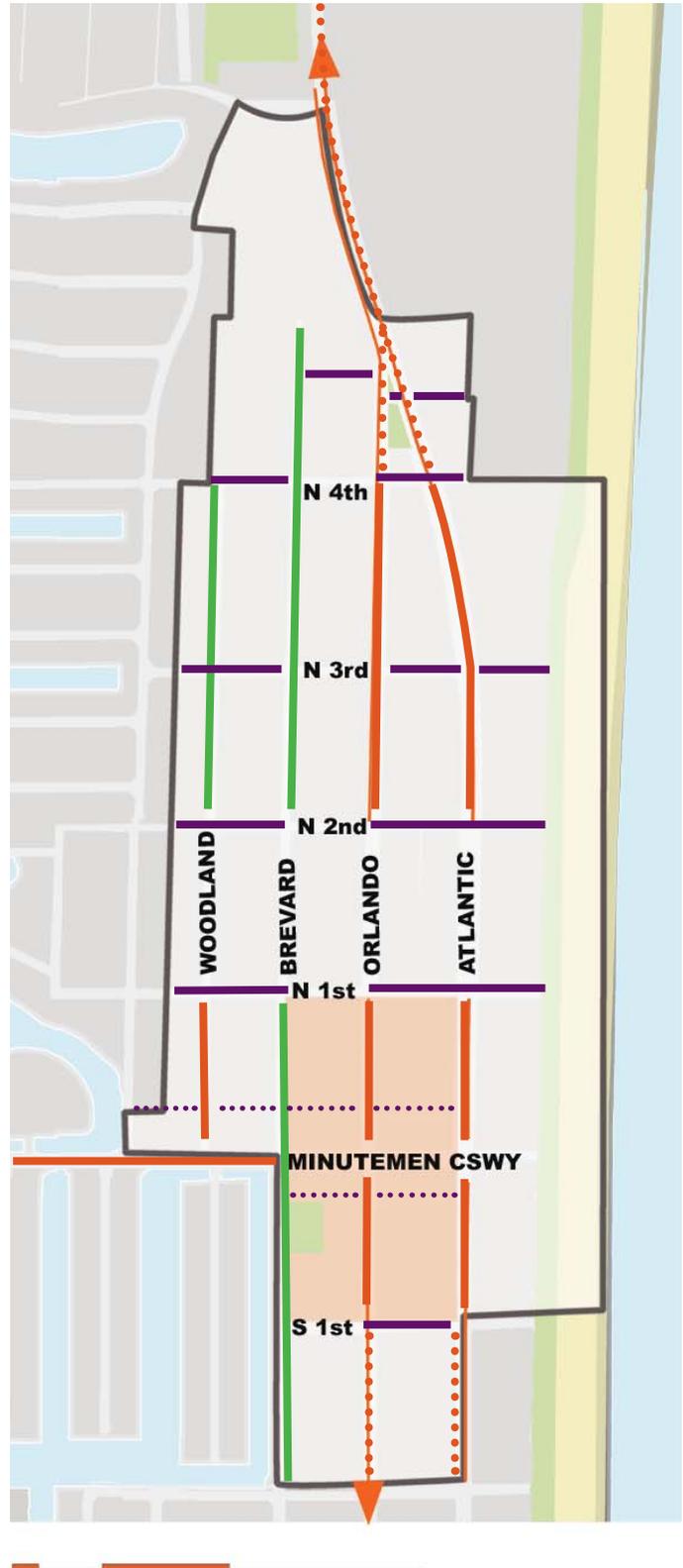
Physical improvements which extend beyond the public right of way, but are perceived from the street, will be the cornerstone of Downtown’s redevelopment. While the City/CRA will be responsible for infrastructure improvements which run the gamut from streetscape, to stormwater management, and parking, and even business and marketing support, the majority of physical changes with profound impacts to Downtown’s image and identity will be from private development, both new building and renovations and improvements. Therefore, it is within the CRA’s best interest to establish a clear expectation of how these structures will collectively reinforce the CRA’s vision. This expectation is primarily outlined in a new Design Standards Manual for the Downtown (down to S 2nd Street) and should be reinforced with additional language in the City Zoning Code and Future Land Use Element identified below:

1. Create overlay districts that reinforce differing neighborhood characteristics and establish an expectation that new development be consistent with the districts’ intentions
2. Allow transient lodging in CN district.
3. Create a Conservation District within Cottage Row.

- Downtown Core
- Artisan District
- Campus Gateway
- Oceanside District
- Cottage Row Residential
- Cottage Row
- Cottage Row Conservation



4. Establish street designations based on street types.
5. Limit chain retailers by requiring additional review for stores which exceed a maximum size.
6. Limit undesirable uses with distance requirements to one another.



7. Require vacant storefronts to provide creative window displays including art installations, historical photos, posters with local facts.
 8. Introduce FAR instead of density.
 9. Permit off-site parking.
 10. Protect existing residential with transition zones and districts.
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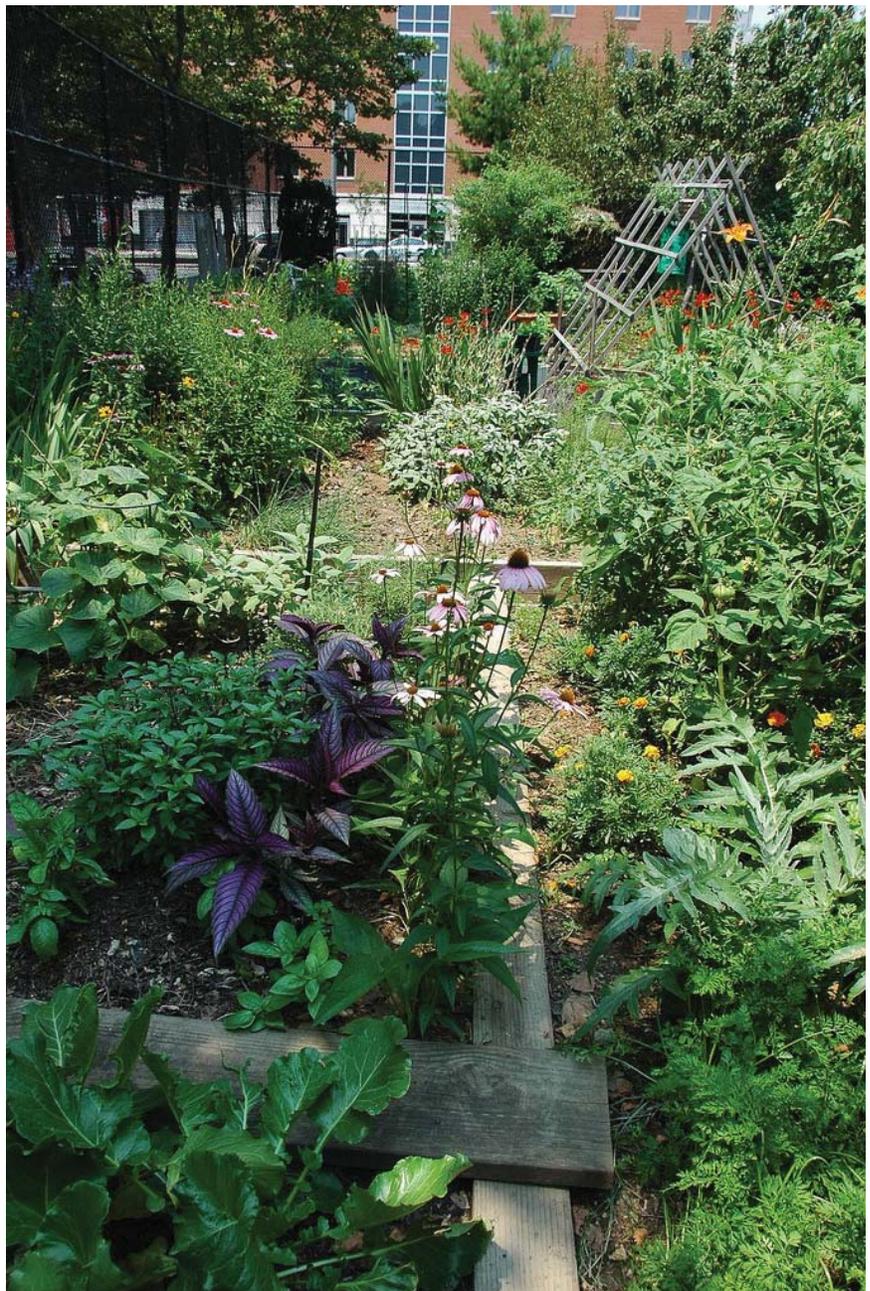
**Window displays in
vacant buildings.**

xxxx.xx

11. Reduce current parking ratios.

12. Permit community gardens.

Community garden.
Brooklyn, NY



City Support and Promotion

In addition to zoning and land use policies, the City should develop a policy initiative to support and promote local businesses and tourism. Moreover, the City will likely need to fund the planning process in accordance with its budget; therefore, the best redevelopment results will be realized from small, concentrated steps.

1. The City/CRA should encourage the local business community to form a Merchants Association to leverage opportunities in which Cocoa Beach (and its business base) can consolidate marketing efforts to reach a broader demand base. The existing business community within the CRA lacks a Merchants Association, which has been found to be an instrumental organization throughout many successful downtowns and/or business districts (refer to Section 4). The collective effort of multiple businesses to promote the area may prove to be far more effective than individual businesses spending dollars to market themselves. A Merchants Association can also be used in establishing and funding certain government projects, such as the Florida Main Street Program.
2. Enhance event programming options and streamline the event programming permitting process which is a relatively simple way to let the community (and broader region) know that the City/CRA is supportive of business growth and committed to redevelopment.
3. Streamline the building permitting process would also encourage building renovations and expansion for current and new businesses.
4. Promote downtown as a destination and market Cocoa Beach for eco-tourism and promote it as an attraction for observing sea turtle nesting.
5. Expand current initiatives like the Farmer's Market.
6. Host a social media site on Facebook and use other forms of media and internet to support local businesses, tourism, and market the Downtown.

Other Initiatives

1. Use code enforcement to manage little problems. Other initiatives can be developed to support increased code enforcement to address code violations, either through increased surveillance or electronic citizen reporting services like heygov.com or Cool Apps by cybertech.com and those policy initiatives described in the Community Policing Element. Increased police presence and enforcement should also be used to manage public alcohol consumption. Additional strategies may be addressed in other elements of this Redevelopment Plan.
2. Establish a historical society.
3. “Make Cocoa Beach an eco-friendly downtown.”
Support sustainable initiatives which promote energy efficiency Create an incentive based recycling- recyclebank.com

Conclusions

This Vision Plan suggests how to fulfill the CRA's mandate to eliminate slum and blight, while reinforcing Downtown's image as a small, beach front community with artists, rocket scientists and engineers, surfers, local business owners, and residents. It recommends focusing on the Downtown core first to create a starting point for public and private investment and proposes a combination of physical improvements, repositioning and broadening uses, and operational and management guidelines to support redevelopment initiatives. In addition, the appendix of this document provides the research and analysis underlying the conclusions and recommendations.