

PLANNING COMMISSION
April 20, 2022

The public may view the public meeting at:
www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms

Public Comment: Citizens may provide public comment here:
<https://www.iop.net/public-comment-form>

AGENDA

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission will hold its regular meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at **4:30 p.m.** in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard.

- A. Call to order and acknowledgment that the press and the public were duly notified in accordance with state law
- B. Approval of minutes March 9, 2022
 April 14, 2022
- C. New business Discuss task of reviewing potential uses of City parking lot at front beach
- D. Old business Discuss short-term rental analysis
 Discuss Comprehensive Plan update
- E. Miscellaneous business
- F. Adjourn



**Planning Commission Meeting
4:30pm, Wednesday, March 9, 2022
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC and
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Present: Scott Pierce, Sandy Stone, Ron Denton, David Cohen (via Zoom), Marty Brown, Sue Nagelski, and Douglas Kerr, Director of Planning

Absent: Steven Corney

2. Approval of minutes

Mr. Stone made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2022 regular meeting. Ms. Nagelski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Executive Session

MOTION: Mr. Stone made a motion to enter into Executive Session to receive legal advice. Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Planning Commission entered into Executive Session at 4:32pm.

The Planning Commission returned from Executive Session at approximately 5:30pm. Mr. Denton said no decisions were made and no votes were taken.

4. Old Business

A. Discuss Short-Term Rental Analysis

Director Kerr said the original map of the island in areas as presented at the February 23 Commission meeting is on the City's website. Mr. Pierce reported that some slight alterations will be made to the map and then the Commissioners can discuss what it means and what kind of recommendations can be formulated.

5. Miscellaneous Business

There will be a Special Meeting of the Planning Commission on Tuesday, March 29 at 4:30pm. The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission will be held on Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at 4:30pm.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Stone made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:36pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk



**Special Planning Commission Meeting
4:30pm, Thursday, April 14, 2022
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC and
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Present: Scott Pierce, Sandy Stone, Ron Denton, David Cohen (via Zoom), Marty Brown, Sue Nagelski, Steve Corney, and Douglas Kerr, Director of Planning

2. Comprehensive Plan: Transportation Element – Workshop with Stantec Engineers

Rick and Stuart Day, along with Josh Mitchell from Stantec gave a presentation to the Planning Commission reviewing some options and recommendations for traffic concerns across the island. Rick Day recapped the transportation concerns shared by the Commissioners in an earlier workshop.

Previously identified concerns included the capacity potential of the IOP Connector, egress capacity, traversing the island from north to south, the safety of Palm Boulevard, traffic in and out of the County Park, City parking at the front beach, islandwide parking, public transit, and multi-modal connectivity.

Rick noted that all the ideas have not been vetted in anyway with regards to cost or feasibility. Further study would be needed for all options.

Examples and benefits for the IOP Connector and Palm Boulevard intersection, County Park and City parking ingress/egress, ingress parking wayfinding, improvement to transit access to and from the beach, north/south grid solutions, the “S” curve at 21st Avenue, additional connection to the IOP Connector, consolidation of parking supply through a parking structure, circulation along Palm Boulevard and Waterway Boulevard, Palm Boulevard long-term vision, and an alternative to the IOP Connector were discussed.

Commissioners deliberated on how much of this presentation to include in the Transportation Element.

Commissioners identified the following options as those worthy of further evaluation in the immediate future, specifically the capacity of the IOP Connector, the intersection at the Connector and Palm Boulevard, County Park and City Parking ingress/egress, and ingress parking wayfinding. They agreed that longer-term improvements to Palm Boulevard should be considered.

3. **Adjournment**

Mr. Stone made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Pierce seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk

The Real Property Committee returned from Executive Session at 3:10pm. Council Member Streetman said no votes or action were taken.

7. New Business

A. Discussion of evaluating alternatives for redevelopment of Municipal Parking Lots [Strategic Plan Priority 1, Goal a]

Administrator Fragoso stated, “The suggestion was made that the City consider either taking or putting this topic, giving it to the Planning Commission for further discussion and consideration or also maybe issuing a request for information to private entities for a potential public-private partnership with the City where the City continues to meet its obligations with providing parking on Front Beach but basically letting a developer come back with some options to the City of how to better utilize that space.”

The issue had been discussed by the Real Property Committee in the past but there was some apprehension around it. Administrator Fragoso noted that when the City purchased the lot back in 1985, it did so with a \$50,000 grant from the State’s Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Commission. She said, “The City is encumbered to ensuring that that property is used for outdoor recreational purposes and parking.” That Commission would need to approve any changes or the City would have to pay the money back.

Director Kerr said, “The challenge with any development in that district is the City’s code no longer allows any hotels, condos, housing units of any type. So any property that becomes available just on the kind of free market, it is a struggle.” He said City Council would need to determine if they will allow any relaxation to the zoning restrictions in that area to allow for such development.

After some discussion, the Committee decided to bring the issue to the full City Council.

MOTION: Council Member Popson made a motion to present the idea of redeveloping the Front Beach municipal parking lot area while maintaining public parking to the full City Council. Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Discussion of proposed FY23 10-Year Capital Plan for IOP Marina and Front Beach [Strategic Plan Priority 3, Goal b]

Administrator Fragoso presented the capital items to be considered for inclusion in the FY23 budget. At the Front Beach area these items included: the replacement of some parking kiosks; monies for the replacement, repair or addition of dune walkovers; replacement of MobiMats as needed; monies to replace or rehabilitate public art; and repairs to sidewalks between 10th and 14th avenues in addition to the 1% of insured value for facilities maintenance.

Committee members discussed the need for some work at the Breach Inlet Boat Ramp and whether or not it is being used as intended. Council Member Popson said it is not a great place to launch a boat but is a better place to launch a kayak. He did note that the Fire Department launches jet skis in that area to affect water rescues.

Department is opening the gate at sunrise and closing it at sunset. They will conduct random site checks. A proposed sign posting “rules of engagement” was included in the packet, and staff is seeking Committee feedback. Council Member Popson expressed concern about allowing fishing in the area, but Director Kerr said it is not prohibited.

Director Kerr said there is no kayak launching area there yet, but Mr. Berrigan has the needed materials and has said he could have them installed by the end of the month. Staff will work with Mr. Berrigan and ATM to ensure the area is safe for use.

Director Kerr shared an idea for staffing the public dock without actually staffing the public dock would be to have Coastal Expeditions offer twice monthly coastal tours between May and September free to residents. The \$7200 cost is included in the FY23 budget. Council Member Popson suggested the need for first aid equipment to be left at the dock as well as better security for the gate. Director Kerr said there will be a monitored security camera at the public dock.

D. Update on ADA beach access improvements

Director Kerr said they are still waiting on a response from OCRM for a permit to extend the MobiMat further on four beach access paths. The public comment period is finished. He spoke with OCRM this morning, and “they indicated that they still needed a couple of more weeks.”

He also reported that staff has met with the Charleston County Greenbelt Funding people regarding the City’s request for funding at 34A beach access. He said they appeared favorable, so they hope to be successful with that request.

E. Discussion of evaluating alternatives for development of municipal parking lots [Strategic Plan Priority 1, Goal a]

Director Kerr explained that City code does not allow for a new hotel in this area. A retail operation, office space, or restaurant would be permitted, and no one has previously expressed interest in those options. He added that in the past City Council has not expressed a willingness to change the code to allow for other uses. Staff would need to understand City Council’s flexibility on allowable uses before reaching out to developers. He said a previous request for a boutique hotel in that area was not well received. Historically, increasing occupancy there has not been a popular idea.

Director Kerr said that if space remained for municipal use only, a different path could be taken with regards to development and funding.

After further discussion, the Planning Commission will be asked to look into the idea further and then report back to the Real Property Committee.

6. New Business

A. Presentation and discussion of condition assessment report of AIWW and Public Dock

Mr. Kirby Marshall of ATM presented an assessment of the condition of the intracoastal dock and the former watersports dock (now called the Public Dock) “to determine the viability of

City of IOP Large Front Beach Parking Lot

Goal

Optimization of the City owned property in the town's primary commercial district (IOP's Main Street a.k.a. Front Beach) to achieve the best use from an urban planning perspective. Add economic and beautification enhancements for added value for its citizens, existing businesses and visitor experience of a highly visible property.

History

(Early history, worth noting or significant?) This parcel previously purchased by the City has been used primarily for beach parking for visitors to the island. In its current state it offers approximately 460 paid parking places. *(The utilization rate of this parcel of land is less than 40%).* The City has also utilized this parcel for occasional storage of materials, equipment and miscellaneous items as needed. Of significant note the City used as a burn site as a result of 1999 Hurricane Hugo event. *(It is believed this was a one-time occurrence.)*

There is a recreational component restriction in place by South Carolina Parks Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT) due to a \$50,000 grant to the City. In addition, depending upon options considered for the future, Council might have to revise zoning at the site. Parking and traffic congestion may be an issue during peak hours in season.

Primary use is during the months of May-August. The City has generated parking revenues from the lot ranging from \$100,000 to \$450,00 on an annual basis. The revenue growth has occurred due to increase visitor demand, increase fees and improved management of the site. Investment in the site, since its purchase, has been limited to grading, parking kiosks, fencing, lighting and parking stops.

Property Description

This City owned parcel of land is a highly valued asset in the town's primary business district. It is on a corner lot at the intersection of Ocean Blvd. and Pavilion Dr. The adjacent buildings are a combination of commercial, residential and the City's Public Safety Building. This parcel of land is one row from the public beach with easy access to restaurants; shops, hotels, rental facilities, public restrooms, beach showers and a full service ocean front County Park.

(Provide lot #, address, description via tax records, aerial picture, goggle maps, etc.)

(Include infrastructure currently on site or accessible, e.g. water, sewer, electric, etc.)

(Provide current property appraisal.)

Assumptions

There is not a plan or a vision for this asset.

The City's Real Property Committee is reviewing the matter and will make its recommendations to Council.

Additional information is required.

It is prudent for the City to consider other options for this valuable asset. There will be items the City should require for any future use of the site; such as, but not limited to: parking equal to 460 spaces; beautification of the site; infrastructure improvements; ADA and other compliance requirements; public restrooms and greater revenue generating opportunities.

The City may have to address some encumbrances on the property.

The City will want to educate, solicit and keep the public and front beach property owners informed as to goals, objectives and process it might choose to undertake.

The City will have to make a go or no go decision to direct staff how to proceed.

There will be some costs involved primarily from staff time, material preparation, update appraisal, public notices, meetings, legal and likely business and citizen outreach.

Economic indicators are strong currently; interest rates are favorable and there is a robust real estate market on the island, but these conditions are subject to change.

Potential Process and Options

Apply for a Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) economic development grant ASAP to help offset initial costs of exploring options for this city asset. This type of project should be eligible and competitive.

Develop additional information for the Real Property Committee to consider a path forward.

Real Property could invite urban planners, Council of Governments (COG) staff, and other city officials (Greenville, Mt. P), South Carolina Department of Commerce (SCDOC) and trusted planning design firms to committee meeting or hearings to provide their insight and recommendations to potential, opportunity and process. Alternatively staff could be directed to reach out to these organizations to develop more information.

If the committee recommends further investigation does Council direct staff to proceed or is it advisable for The Real Property Commission to review and make recommendations?

Council may want to consider merits of a public private partnership thereby leasing the property or entertain selling the property.

Request For Information (RFI)

It is a regular accepted practice for local, state and the federal government to issue RFI's to solicit ideas from the private sector to assess various options as part of their procurement process. IOP's procurement guidelines allow for this procedure. This is typically a precursor to a defined Request For Proposal (RFP) and negotiated final agreements to achieve the organizations' stated goals.

In good faith if a government or agency submits an RFI to the private sector there should be some indication that if there are responsive proposals that it is the intent of the government to proceed with a future procurement. The respondents can spend significant time, effort and finances to respond to an RFI and they will be motivated to respond if good information is provided and they know the governing body is serious about the procurement.

To save time and resources the City can access a generic RFI through its own research and may also want to consult other local governments (two referenced above), SC procurement officials for samples that they use.

Typical items that are included in an RFI are, but not limited to: City information (data, bond rating, etc.), Description of intent/objective, Legal description of project (in this case the property in question), Drawings, plats, pictures, Requirements the government has for the procurement, Points of Contact, Economic factors, process the City plans for review, submission deadline.

In most cases the more specific and detailed a procurement the better. In this case, unless the City knows exactly what it wants, the RFI offer is broad by intent seeking alternative uses for the City to consider for the site.

The respondents information should include: Point of Contact information, company description, some general financials, experience in area of expertise,

sample of similar projects that they are recommending, insurance coverage, facilities, high level concepts and/or drawings, staff qualifications, etc.

Before release for solicitation have legal review of RFI.

Publish RFI through all procurement channels offered to the City, this may include the State procurement office, local media, Commerce Business Daily, Developer and Real Estate outlets, City vendor lists.

Post RFI Process

Prior to the City receiving responses establish a process to review, vet and assess the responses. Seek legal advice on appropriateness of maintaining confidentiality of the responses.

Staff reports findings to Real Property Committee

Real Property makes recommendation to Council

Council determines if there is a concept/approach they would like to embrace. Seek public input.

If a favorable direction is determined direct staff to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) and go through that process until and if an award is made to implement the original objective of improving this City asset.

2/22/22

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF CHARLESTON)

TITLE TO REAL ESTATE

WHEREAS, the City of Isle of Palms has acquired property from the Beach Company by deed dated September 15, 1987, for the purpose of providing and establishing a municipal parking lot to be used by visitors using to the City's beaches and commercial establishments; and

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism Commission has made the sum of Fifty Thousand (\$50,000.00) Dollars available to assist the City in such acquisition, and may make additional sums available to supplement this initial grant; and

WHEREAS, as a condition of said grant, the South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism Commission requires that the property hereinafter described shall be held, transferred or converted to other use subject to certain restrictions stated hereinafter; and

WHEREAS, at the request of the South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism Commission, the City has determined to convey the property described hereinafter to itself subject to said restrictions.

NOW, THEREFORE, KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT the City of Isle of Palms, a municipal corporation organized under the laws

of the State of South Carolina, for and in consideration of the recitals hereinabove, by these Presents does grant, bargain, sell and release unto the said City of Isle of Palms, its successors and assigns forever, the following described property, to wit:

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The real property which is and shall be held, transferred, sold, conveyed and occupied subject to the covenants, conditions, restrictions and limitations hereinafter set forth is located in Charleston County, South Carolina, and is more particularly described as follows:

ALL that lot, piece or parcel of land shown and described as PARCEL 1, BLOCK 33, SECTION "A" on that certain "Plat of Two Parcels of Land Situate as Shown, City of Isle of Palms. Presently owned by the Beach Company" dated April 6, 1987, revised August 26, 1987, and prepared by Herbert A. Niemyer, Jr., C.E. & L.S., and recorded in the Charleston County RMC Office in Plat Book B0, at Page 105. The said PARCEL "1", BLOCK 33, SECTION "A" measuring and containing 2.024 acres, more or less, and butting and bounding as shown more fully on the aforementioned Plat, which is incorporated herein by reference.

TMS # 568-11-00-200

RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The aforesaid property shall be subject to the following

restrictions and limitations:

This property has been acquired with state financial assistance provided by the Recreation Land Trust Fund. This property may not be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses (whether by transfer, sale, or in any other manner) without the express written approval of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Commission. The SCPRT Commission shall approve such conversion only if it finds such conversion to be in accord with the then existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan and only upon such conditions as it deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.

TOGETHER with all and singular, the Rights, Members, Hereditaments and Appurtenances to the said Premises belonging, or in anywise incident or appertaining.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, all and singular, the said Premises before mentioned unto the said City of Isle of Palms, its successors and assigns forever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City of Isle of Palms has caused these presents to be executed in its name by Carmen R. Bunch, its Mayor,

and its corporate seal to be hereto affixed this _____ day of _____, 1988.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED
IN THE PRESENCE OF:

BY: _____

Carmen R. Bunch, Mayor

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF CHARLESTON)

PERSONALLY appeared before me _____

who, on oath, says that he/she saw the within named City of Isle of Palms by Carmen R. Bunch, its Mayor, and the said Municipality, by said officer, seal said Deed, and, as its act and deed, deliver the same, and that he/she with the other witness witnessed the execution thereof.

SWORN to before me this

_____ day of _____, 1988.

(L.S.)

Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: _____

LAND ACQUISITION BY THE CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS

This is an OPEN LETTER to the citizens of the Isle of Palms asking each of you to consider the question of acquiring for public use two parcels of land in the City center. These properties are on Ocean Blvd. and have been used as parking lots. You should weigh very carefully both the advantages and disadvantages of buying them.

Most important, you may register your view by VOTING on MARCH 3. This is your opportunity to help City Council decide whether or not to buy these two sites, totalling 5.386 acres.

The FUTURE of this community will depend on how well we control our growth in the next several years and on how well we plan for the impact of easy Island access when current highway plans become a reality. To prepare for developing such plans, your City Government has acted by establishing a Planning Commission and by authorizing a number of studies, the most comprehensive conducted by the Clemson University School of Architecture and Urban Planning.

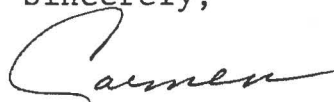
The CLEMSON study in briefings so far held has stressed the importance of containing compatible activities within areas of the Island that already exist. For example, activities of the day visitor should continue to be encouraged within the City center area.

The immediate question concerns growth and development in the central city area. The two parcels of land are now vacant. Each is zoned commercial. How these parcels are developed becomes crucial to any comprehensive city plan that will provide for future controlled growth of your community.

The COST of acquiring these parcels is a concern. The approximate cost will be \$1.66 million. With proposed development elsewhere on the island, it may not be necessary to increase the tax rate to buy the parking lots. As a part of a comprehensive City Master Plan, justification for funding from outside sources will become possible.

And, finally, all of the residents of The Island should benefit from an orderly growth that can be controlled using a comprehensive City Master Plan. The quality of life in our community should remain the same or improve. Our neighborhoods should continue to be desirable places to live even at the peak of the tourist season.

Sincerely,



Carmen R. Bunch
Mayor

The City of Isle of Palms will hold an advisory referendum on March 3, 1987 to give Island registered voters an opportunity to vote on whether the City should acquire two parcels of commercial property, totalling 5.386 acres, which are currently used as public parking lots. Voters will have an opportunity to cast their votes between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Precinct #1 votes at the Fire Station on Palm Boulevard and Precinct #2 votes at the Recreation Building on 28th Avenue.

ISLE OF PALMS

PUBLIC HEARING

February 24 (Tuesday) 7:30 p.m.

Exchange Club Building

PARKING LOTS on Ocean Boulevard - TO BUY OR NOT - for parking or other municipal uses, totalling 5.386 acres.

PROS

1. Eliminate commercial development such as condos or motels on these sites.
2. Minimize visitor parking on IOP streets. Without parking lots, 500 more cars will need to park on the streets.
3. Encourage day visitors to stay in City Center area.
4. Provide property for future municipal use.

CONS

1. COST- approximately 1.66 million. With proposed development may not need a tax increase: *If needed should be \$20 yearly on \$100,000 home.
2. Why should we provide parking for non-residents?
3. Will tie up funds that could be used for other purposes.
4. Allowing commercial property to be developed.

This is your opportunity to help City Council decide whether or not to buy these two commercial sites for parking or other municipal uses.

VOTE MARCH 3, 1987

VISMOR, MCGILL & BELL, INC.

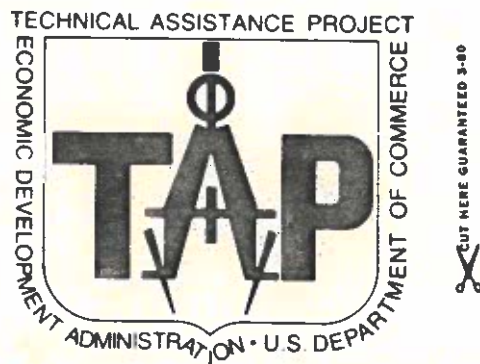
Isle of Palms
South Carolina

Front Beach
Revitalization Plan

VISMOR, MCGILL & BELL, INC.

Isle of Palms
South Carolina

Front Beach
Revitalization Plan



Prepared For:

The Town of Isle of Palms

May 1983

This study was made possible through a grant from the Office of the Governor, State of South Carolina

"This technical assistance project was accomplished by professional staff members under a grant from the Economic Development Administration. The statements, findings, conclusions, recommendations and other data in this report are solely those of the contractor and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Economic Development Administration."

FRONT BEACH REVITALIZATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The "front beach" area of the Isle of Palms is the subject of this study. It is the recognized recreational, activity and business center of the Island. As such, its future is critical to the long-range interests of the entire community.

Clearly, the Isle of Palms has grown and changed over the past 20 years, but there is little physical evidence that Front Beach has participated in this growth, with the exception of the Sea Cabin Condominium Complex, of course.

While remaining predominantly residential, the island has shifted its occupancy status. From a community occupied principally by seasonal or transit residents, it has become a community of predominantly year-round, permanent based residents. This change is reflected by the U. S. Bureau of the Census, which shows an increase in the number of year-round occupied housing from 47 percent of the total in 1960 to 73 percent by 1980. So in just 20 years, the composition of the population has changed substantially.

Population, Housing and
Occupancy Characteristics
1960 - 1980

	<u>Year- Round Population</u>	<u>Total Housing Units</u>	<u>Year-Round Occupied Housing</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
1980	3,421	1,782	1,293	73
1970	2,657	1,180	821	70
1960	1,186	703	332	47

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1960-1980.

Much of the change may be credited to the growth of the Charleston SMSA and the opening of the Silas Pearman Bridge in 1966. With improved access to the Island, and in fact the entire East Cooper Area, came the shift from predominantly "seasonal" to predominantly "permanent", along with a population increase of 188 percent, from 1960 to 1980.

The change in occupancy characteristics is best illustrated by the nearly 300 percent increase over the past 20 years in year-round occupied housing, compared with the total housing increase of 153 percent.

While undergoing the metamorphosis from predominantly seasonal to predominantly permanent and experiencing accelerated growth, two things have remained relatively constant: the family beach environment and the front beach complex. Unfortunately, they have very little in common. In fact, the two contrast sharply; change in the community has not been

accompanied by change in the front beach area. Therein lies a problem of contradiction.

Isle of Palms Growth
1960 - 1980

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Year-Round Population	+2,235	188%
Total Number Housing Units	+1,079	153%
Year-Round Occupied Housing Units	+ 961	289%

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of The Census, 1960 and 1980.

FRONT BEACH: DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

By official count of the U. S. Census, there were fewer commercial establishments on the Island in 1977 than there were in 1972. Contrast this change with the growth that has occurred in population and housing. From a total of 20 stores in 1972, the number actually decreased to 13 by 1977. And while there has been some upward movement in sales since 1977 (the most recent Census publication of retail sales data), it has not been significant. Certainly, it has not been in keeping with the growth of population and housing.

	<u>Retail Sales Isle of Palms</u>		<u>Increase</u>	
	<u>1972</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Retail Establishments				
Number	20	13	(-7)	-35%
Sales	\$2,723,100	\$2,945,000	\$221,900	8%

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1972-1977.

Note: 1972 data has been adjusted to 1977 levels for comparative purposes.

Of course, market conditions dictate in large measure the make-up and growth of retail operations. But assuming the market is growing, as indicated by the growth in population and accommodations, why then is the Front Beach area showing few, if any, physical signs of growth or change?

Part of the reason lies in the type of growth that has occurred; it has been principally in the permanent population. And this population is supportive of "convenience establishments" of the type found in the Island Shopping Center, not the resort enterprises that make-up Front Beach.

This is not to suggest that the shift in market conditions may be attributed in full to the current state of Front Beach. Although clearly from a physical standpoint, changing market conditions have yet to impact the area. It is as if Front Beach was designed to serve only short time, week-end visitors, and not the community as a whole. There are game rooms, drinking and eating establishments, and beach merchandising places, all of which are aimed more at "week-enders" than at the resident population or island vacationers.

There are no "browse about" specialty shops such as straw and ceramic; and even beach paraphernalia are in scarce supply. In fact, most business establishments associated with family beaches are missing from Front Beach. The lone exception is the Bingo House, and it is commercially unattractive.

Clearly, the area is missing out on the family market; and the Isle of Palms is a family beach. But before we prescribe

a change of diet, a closer inspection of the area's liabilities and assets is in order.

LIABILITIES

(1) Image

Image is perhaps the greatest obstacle to change and/or the infusion of investment monies into the area. Very simply, the area is not conceived as a focal point for family recreational, social or commercial activities. It is viewed and rightly so, as a "hang out" for young adults.

Changing this image will require changing the composition of the area---by no means a simple undertaking.

(2) Garbage Collection

There is a real problem with garbage collection. Large trash dumpsters are located along the sidewalk and street for ease of access both by the merchants and city collectors. The problem, however, is that these locations are unsightly and smelly. They reek of sour beer and kitchen garbage. Additionally, they pose somewhat of a health hazard, drawing flies to several of the outside eating establishments. To the visitor, strolling the area, these dumpsters are extremely offensive.

(3) Visual Blight

The area suffers from "visual blight." There is no design scheme nor concept; most buildings, while structurally sound, show signs of outward deterioration. Signs are cluttered and unattractive; trash dumpsters and barrels, however essential, are less than complementary, as are outside ice and beverage machines.

In combination, these factors produce a negative climate---one that repels rather than attracts.

(4) Mismatched Function

While not a liability as such, Front Beach is mismatched in its role or function as the "focal point" of the community. As stated earlier, the community is "family-oriented"; Front Beach is not. There is a need, therefore, to better match the marketplace with market opportunities. As it now stands, this situation represents missed opportunities.

(5) Beach Maintenance

The beach itself, including the dunes and undeveloped properties along Ocean Boulevard are poorly maintained. The area is littered by broken bottles, trash and empty beer cans. Clearly there is a need for continuous maintenance of these critical areas during the season. Cleanliness begets cleanliness.

ASSETS

Among the assets of the area are the following:

(1) Location

Front Beach is easily accessible and centrally located to serve the entire community. Yet, it is not congested by through traffic using Palm Boulevard, which serves somewhat as a by-pass.

(2) Established Center

Front Beach, by design, is the commercial, recreational and social center of the community. It is the established "focal Point," and as such, potentially, has the strongest drawing power on the island.

(3) Zoned Center

There are few commercial opportunities outside of existing market places, including Front Beach. Development of the island is tightly controlled through zoning, which effectively eliminates "outside" competition or the development of a competing commercial center.

(4) The Dunes

The dunes are one of those natural assets that perhaps is taken for granted. They not only protect the area, but add substantially to its "openness" and beauty. Unlike some of our coastal communities, the dunes have not been replaced by asphalt parking or concrete and steel buildings. Neither have they been designed into the development pattern. So what we have is an undeveloped and essentially untapped natural asset---one that should be integrated into the total development of the area with the use of vistas and boardwalks.

(5) Transportation Facilities

Ocean Boulevard at Front Beach is the widest street section on the Island. It can accommodate two-way vehicular traffic and diagonal parking on both sides. It is also designed to handle pedestrian movement, with sidewalks on both sides. The facilities are well conceived and are maintained in reasonably good repair.

(6) Parking

There are 220 diagonal, free, on-street parking spaces, approximately 50 off-street parking spaces in the municipal lot, and 30 semi-private spaces on the Palm Restaurant Lot.

Additional parallel street parking may be found on adjoining streets and vacant properties. The amount and ease of parking overall, must be considered an asset. However, there is a premium on street parking---it is the most convenient, easiest to maneuver, and free of charge. The off-street parking, which is further removed from Front Beach establishments, is available on a pay or patronage basis. The inherent problems with this arrangement are that, during the season:

1. "Beach-goers" often take out of use for an entire day the most convenient customer parking spaces. This could and possibly has resulted in the loss of business, particularly by quick-stop or carry-out customers.
2. Ocean Boulevard often is congested because of driver preference for free, convenient, on-street space, as opposed to the off-street alternative.
3. Turnover of on-street spaces for customer use is not promoted.

CONCLUSIONS

By better capitalizing on its assets and minimizing or improving on its liabilities, the Front Beach Area could assume a more prominent role in social, recreational and commercial activities. It has the essential ingredients, but the composition is out of date. Front Beach is still geared to a 50's market,

where the majority population was made up of "weekenders." The population and make-up of the 80's is quite different. Beach development has been greatly influenced by the Hilton Heads, the Beach and Racquet Clubs, the Kiawahs and the Seabrooks. Themes and design controls, amenities and specialty shops---these are the distinguishing features of beach development in the 80's. And these are the things that are needed in greater abundance in Front Beach if it is to be successful in the marketplace.

FRONT BEACH PLAN AND PROGRAM

There are essentially three components involved in a commercial revitalization program:

1. Renovating buildings and structures and improving the aesthetic qualities of the environment---making it a nice enjoyable place to visit.
2. Strengthening and improving upon the selection of goods and services, and better matching the marketplace (Front Beach) with the market---making it a worthwhile place to visit.
3. Improving access to the marketplace---making it easy to visit.

As these components relate to Front Beach, the following projects are recommended.

IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Adopt a "Revitalization Theme Concept." There are several forms it may take, but the most popular includes extensive use of treated cypress siding.

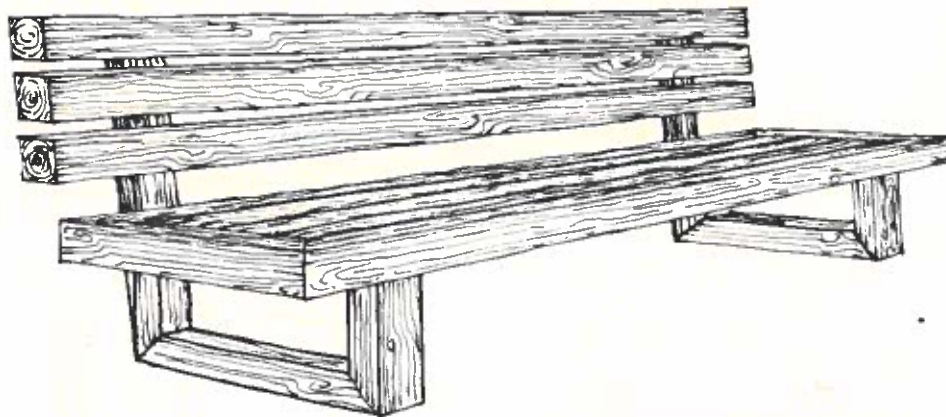
It requires minimum maintenance, yet is one of the more aesthetic beach exteriors. There are other themes, of course, that if carried through-out would produce comparable results, but extensive use of cypress facades would dramatically alter the perceived image of the area---elevating it, I believe, to a higher level.

2. Build a Wooden Boardwalk and Two Wooden Walkways Over The Dunes. This project should greatly improve the attractiveness of the area. It will tie Front Beach properties together; provide ocean and dune vistas; better orient beach front businesses toward the beach traffic; and most of all, it will emphasize the area as the hub or focal point of the community. When you arrive at Front Beach, a boardwalk stroll would, of course, be high on your agenda of things to do. It would also allow pedestrian traffic to better circulate and provide safer movement in so doing. From the Boardwalk, two additional beach access walkways are proposed, as illustrated by the accompanying plan map.
3. Add Street Furniture With Complementary Design Features. Street furniture generally includes an array of items such as signs, traffic signals, mail boxes, trash receptacles, lights, benches and utility poles, among

others. These items are functional by design, but can also be made to enhance and improve the environment through design coordination. This simply involves coordinating the design, materials, and placement of street furniture in such a fashion as to complement buildings, streets and open areas. Presently, there is little, if any, relation between the design and use of street furniture and existing buildings. Street lights, utility poles, telephone booths, trash receptacles (barrels and dumpsters), etc. in Front Beach are functionally adequate, but do not complement or enhance in any way existing development.

Also, there is a deficiency of such items as benches and drinking fountains. Yet, these items are particularly important to the tourist trade. These "extras" would help set the area apart as something special. They are accommodating to visitors, to say nothing of their affect on the growing resident population.

The suggested design of street furniture for Front Beach is illustrated on the following page. Suggested locations are shown by the accompanying plan map.



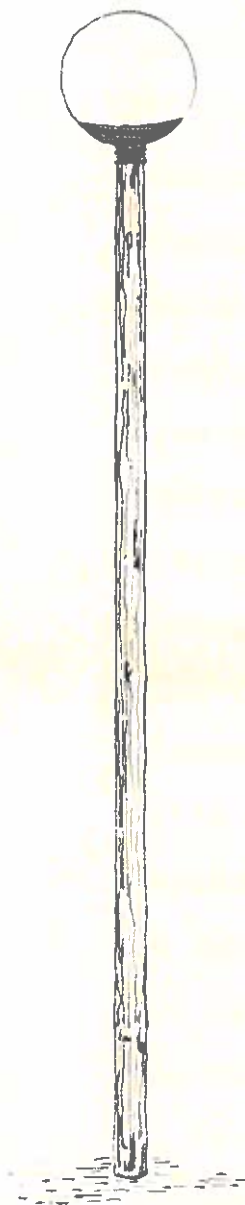
BENCH (WOOD)



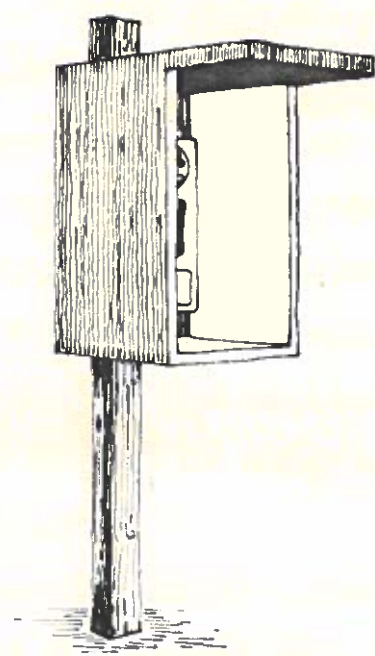
**TRASH RECEPTACLE
(WOOD WITH REMOVABLE
METAL LINER)**



**DRINKING FOUNTAIN
(PRECAST CONCRETE)**



**SIDEWALK LIGHTING
(WOODEN POST & GLOBE
LAMP)**



**PHONE BOOTH
(WOOD)**

4. Add Street Trees and Landscaping

With most of the natural vegetation including palm trees gone, and few signs of planting and landscaping, Front Beach contrasts sharply with much of the Island development. Admittedly, it is a commercial area, but it is also a resort commercial area and, as such, should be properly landscaped to create a "resort environment."

Certainly, the presence of palm trees in quantity would do much to improve the aesthetics of the area and project the Island's "palm image."

Additionally, landscaping should be integrated into each building site by either mandating it through the city's zoning ordinance, which would have to be amended of course, or securing it through a cooperative effort.

It is not enough to require property owners to landscape however; the city should take the lead in improving public rights-of-way to set an example and to provide incentive for the private sector. The recommended approach to landscaping the area is to commission a local landscape architect to develop a comprehensive plan for both public and private lands, and distribute the responsibility for implementation accordingly. In the interim, a suggested planting arrangement is illustrated by the accompanying plan map.

5. Remove and Replace Old, Cluttered Signs

Street signs, though critical to commerce, business and transportation, may actually hinder these operations if cluttered, poorly designed, unclear, outdated or deteriorating. Conversely, when properly designed, placed and maintained, they can, in addition to being functional, add to the aesthetic qualities and overall environment of an area.

A sign program of the type recommended for Front Beach consists of two parts: (1) removing deteriorated, cluttered, and improper signs and (2) replacing them with well designed, clear, and orderly ones.

The removal of signs can and has been accomplished through zoning. However, because of the potential ramifications of forcing remedial action, the powers of suggestion and persuasion are often more effective.

If, as a last resort, it becomes necessary to amend zoning regulations, and require removal of some of the more blighting signs, then, the city may do so.

New replacement signs should be constructed and placed in accord with the following standards:

- a. Shape and size. The shape and size of individual signs should be governed by the environment. Signs should be designed to complement, not detract from the structure or area in which they are to be located.

- b. Materials. To avoid premature fading and to minimize maintenance, signs should consist of durable, high quality weather resistant paint; laminated plastic; rustic wood; aluminum or comparable materials. Where appropriate, rustic or cypress wood is recommended to further enhance and promote the theme concept.
- c. Lettering. To add to the clarity of signs, one or two compatible letter styles should be adopted for use. The lettering should be easy to read and imposed on a strong background for legibility.
- d. Color. Color combinations should be adopted for specific uses. For example, green signs would denote traffic signs, blue would indicate pedestrian signs, and red for public information signs.
- e. Location. Signs should be located so as not to clutter the street or area and not create a hazard to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

A suggested signage program is illustrated by the accompanying plan map.

6. Assign Full-Time Maintenance Crew To The Beach Area During The Summer

The importance of maintaining a clean, groomed area cannot be minimized. Cleaning the beach, streets, sidewalks and grounds daily will not only physically improve the area, but improve its image as well.

And in the long run, this could produce very favorable results.

STRENGTHENING THE MARKETPLACE

It is not enough to improve the "looks" of a commercial area without improving the merchandise. While the development of a feasibility study or marketing program is beyond the scope of this Plan, it is not difficult to see that what the area has to merchandise is not adequately matched to its primary market, which in this case consists of permanent residents and vacationers, as opposed to "weekenders" or day visitors.

Diversifying the marketplace with specialty shops; expanding stock; modernizing facilities; and re-orienting, at least part of the market, would represent a major step toward bringing Front Beach into the '80's.

This is a matter for private enterprise however; there is little the city can do other than help improve the environment for commerce, as suggested by several of the previous recommendations. The ultimate success of this plan depends on a strong partnership between property owners and businessmen, and city officials.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE MARKETPLACE

Here we are referring not to the street system per se, but to the existing parking arrangement. Short-time customers are penalized by the present arrangement as the most convenient and free parking on Ocean Boulevard often is taken by day-long

beach goers. Admittedly, they too are potential customers, but by allowing this to occur, more frequent, short-time customer visits are restricted. Therefore there is a potential loss of short-term customer patronage because the present arrangement does not provide adequate turnover.

The resolve of this situation actually is quite simple, although it may have some negative overtones. Install time meters on Ocean Boulevard, to operate during the summer months only. The meters should limit on-street parking to two hours. This would force most day-long users to the "long-term" municipal off-street parking facilities, freeing up the more convenient on-street spaces for short-term customer use and facilitating parking space turnover.

An alternative would be to mark the time of parked vehicles at two hour intervals. This arrangement would allow the city to maintain free on-street parking, but would result in a rash of parking tickets, most of which would be uncollectable.

Metering is recommended for the area of Ocean Boulevard, between Tenth Avenue and Pavilion Drive, not the entire strip. This should adequately address the need to improve and in fact, maximize access to the commercial area.

Although more of an environmental improvement project than an access project, the construction of inlaid brick pedestrian street crossings is recommended at key locations, linking the off-street parking lots with the wooden beach walkways. While this is principally cosmetic, it also serves as somewhat of a safety feature, alerting drivers to the presence of pedestrian walkways.

PROMOTING THE MARKETPLACE

Everyone familiar with the Isle of Palms is aware of Front Beach. And in its present state it is not a strong drawing card. But with the implementation of the previous recommendations, the area will be dramatically changed, and these changes should be promoted, for the economic health of the area.

A promotional campaign may take several forms, but two elements in particular are recommended:

1. Brochures. A brochure extolling the qualities of and facilities and activities available at Front Beach should be printed and distributed to chambers and travel agencies.

The brochures should identify "things to see and do" at Front Beach. And if fully implemented as recommended---using the cypress theme concept---pictures of the area should, of course, be included in the brochure.

2. Signs and Markers. Directional signs and markers made of "rustic wood" should be placed at strategic locations, directing visitors to the area. This will help implant and project the new theme concept.

IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY

There must be a central driving responsible force to secure implementation of this Plan. Otherwise, it will die for lack of leadership. Assignment of responsible leadership is absolutely critical to implementation. This is the first step.

Appoint Revitalization Steering Committee

Inasmuch as a private-public partnership is essential to the success of the Plan, we suggest the creation of a five member steering committee to consist of the following:

The Mayor

One member of City Council

One member of the Planning Commission

Two Front Beach property owners or businessmen

We also suggest that the City Administrator sit with this committee as an exofficio member.

The full responsibility for project implementation should be assigned to this group.

Apply For State Bond Funds To Help Initiate The Plan

One of the key elements of the Plan is the construction of a wooden boardwalk and two wooden walkways extending over the dunes to the beach. This project, more than any other will help establish or reestablish the area as the "focal point" of the community.

Fortunately, there is financial assistance from the State available to assist with this project. State Bond Funds, through the S. C. Coastal Council, will be available in January, 1983 for beach access projects. The funds will be released on a 90 (state) - 10 (local) basis. So the major cost of this activity could be borne by the State.

One of the first assignments of the committee, therefore, will be to develop an application for project assistance.

Clay -
- Cameron
Bryce
Shae
Clay

The cost of this project will be approximately \$134,000, based on the following:

Boardwalk 900' x 12' @ \$120 per =	\$108,000
Walkways (2) 600' x 6' @ \$40 per =	<u>26,000</u>
Total	\$134,000

The actual amount will vary according to bid specifications and construction proposals; however, using the above figure, the city's share would be \$13,400.

Promote Building Renovation In Accord With The Theme Concept

For the most part, these changes are superficial, applying only to building exteriors. As such, the cost is tempered accordingly.

Implementation of the theme concept will depend completely on merchant and owner commitments to the plan.

It need not be introduced in full overnight. The plan could be put into effect on a piece meal basis. In this way, local business operators and property owners could renovate their individual properties as the need arises, but do so in accord with the suggested theme concept, patterning their improvements on the Plan.

Using this approach, it will take a little longer to achieve the desired effect, but it should work to the financial advantage and convenience of most property owners.

However, public commitment to the Plan, via the construction of the Boardwalk and beach access walks, could promote early private commitments to building restoration and Plan compliance to coincide with the opening of the Boardwalk, thereby maximizing results.

Install Parking Meters

Approximately 140 meters will be needed to cover the area recommended, from Tenth Avenue to Pavilion Boulevard. This will require an initial investment of approximately \$16,100 based on \$115 per meter. The expected revenue for a single season, however, could amortize this investment. Thus, the goal may be accomplished at no cost over the life of the meters. In fact, the city should be able to generate an annual income from them.

Add The Trimmings

With the basic projects in place, then the committee should move to add the trimmings---street furniture, landscaping, removal of any deteriorating signs that may still be around and inlaid brick crosswalks.

Establish A Revolving Account

Unfortunately, there are few, if any, outside resources for helping with many of these activities. Therefore, the committee should seek to establish a revolving account, using meter revenues---with city approval, of course---to systematically accomplish the Plan objectives. If the committee is provided working capital, it can realize the projected results.



Master Plan Report

Front Beach Revitalization/ Pedestrian Enhancement Study

CITY OF
ISLE
OF
PALMS



South Carolina

February 3, 2000

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Front Beach/Pedestrian Enhancement Master Plan City of Isle of Palms, South Carolina

February 3, 2000



This technical assistance study was accomplished by professional consultants under contract with the City of Isle of Palms, South Carolina and partially financed through an Economic Development Administration grant to the State of South Carolina Budget and Control Board, Office of Local Government. The statement, findings, conclusions, recommendations, and other data in this report are solely those of the contractor and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Economic Development Administration.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to outline the findings of the Isle of Palms Front Beach/Pedestrian Enhancement Master Plan, which was completed for the City of Isle of Palms, South Carolina.

The design team consisted of Seamon, Whiteside & Associates, Inc. (SWA) of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina and Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. (KHA) of Raleigh, NC. The scope of work for SWA included both master planning and landscape architectural design considerations and the scope of work for KHA consisted of evaluating pedestrian and vehicular traffic issues and parking considerations.

SWA conducted a Brainstorming Session with members of the business community, elected officials and concerned citizens on July 22, 1999. The work product of that session has been compiled into a separate document. Some of what was developed in that meeting, such as goal statements, has also been reproduced in this document.

One of the main impacts from that meeting was the decision by the design team, supported by the City, to shift the focus of the study from one of purely streetscaping issues to one of a more comprehensive master plan for the study area.



TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

Isle of Palms is located on a barrier island in South Carolina's Low Country just southeast of Mount Pleasant. Land use in the City is predominantly residential and resort uses, with a small commercial core along Ocean Boulevard in the Front Beach area. Access is via the Isle of Palms Connector (SC 517) from Mount Pleasant and from Palm Boulevard (SC 703) from Sullivan's Island. Limited transit service to and from Mount Pleasant and Charleston is provided via Sullivan's Island, with service at approximately one-hour intervals in the morning and two-hour intervals in the afternoon. As part of the effort to improve pedestrian access in the Front Beach area, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. has evaluated the existing traffic and parking conditions in the Front Beach study area.

The study area is bounded on the north by 14th Avenue, on the east by Ocean Boulevard, on the south by 10th Avenue and on the west by Balm Boulevard. The study area is shown in Figure 1.

Palm Boulevard is a four-lane street with curb and gutter on both sides. 14th Avenue is a two-lane street with drainage swales. Ocean Boulevard is a two-lane street with curb and gutter and diagonal parking on both sides, although the street narrows to two lanes without parking south of 10th Avenue. 10th Avenue, J.C. Long Boulevard, and Pavilion Drive are two-lane streets with drainage swales and no on-street parking.



The only signalized intersection in the study area is 14th Avenue at Palm Boulevard. The eastbound approach Isle of Palms Connector consists of a through lane, an exclusive right-turn lane, and two exclusive left-turn lanes. The westbound approach (14th Avenue) consists of a combined through/right-turn lane and an exclusive left-turn lane. The northbound approach consists of two through lanes, an exclusive right-turn lane, and an exclusive left-turn lane. The southbound approach consists of one through lane, one combined through/right-turn lane, and an exclusive left-turn lane.

Traffic control at other intersections is by stop sign, with Ocean Boulevard and Palm Boulevard as the major streets. Pavilion Drive has stop signs on both approaches to Harbor Oaks Drive. 14th Avenue makes a 90° turn into Ocean Boulevard with no traffic control.

The City of Isle of Palms performed AM Peak, Mid-day, and PM Peak traffic counts at this intersection during a summer weekday, and mid-day and PM peak traffic counts during a summer weekend day. Analysis shows that the intersection performs acceptably during peak period weekday and weekend conditions. No improvements are recommended other than possible signal timing modifications. A summary of levels of service for the intersection is shown in Table 1.

Level of Service Summary Intersection of 14 th Avenue and Palm Boulevard		
	Weekday	Weekend
AM peak hour	C	--
Mid-day peak hour	C	C
PM peak hour	C	C

Sidewalks exist along the north side of 14th Avenue, along both sides of Ocean Boulevard (but not on the east side north of Pavilion Drive), along both sides of Palm Boulevard, along the north side of Pavilion Drive, and along the northeast side of Harbor Oaks Drive. The only pedestrian crosswalk is across Ocean Boulevard, just north of the intersection with Pavilion Drive.

Parking in the study area consists of metered on-street spaces and attended off-street lots. All of the on-street spaces are diagonal spaces on Ocean Boulevard between 14th Avenue and 10th Avenue. There are 116 spaces on the East Side of the street and 91 spaces on the West Side of the street, for a total of 217 metered spaces. The 2-hour meters charge 25¢ for 20 minutes (75¢ per hour). There is no prohibition noted on the meters against feeding the meters.

The City operates two off-street attended lots. The larger lot, located between 14th Avenue and Pavilion Boulevard, has a capacity of approximately 500 vehicles. The smaller lot, on the south side of Pavilion, is used as an overflow lot and has a capacity of only about 35-40 vehicles. The fee for parking in the lots is \$5.00 per day. The lots

are only attended during the summer season.

In addition to the City lots, the County Park has 120 paved and 230 unpaved overflow parking spaces. The parking fee at that lot is \$4.00 per day.

Counts by the City indicated that the peak weekday occupancy for the metered spaces is about 51 vehicles Isle of Palms on a summer weekday (Thursday, August 26) and 101 vehicles on a summer weekend day (Saturday, August 28), indicating approximately 25% weekday and 50% weekend occupancies. On the same two days, the maximum number of vehicles parked in the large lot was 17 on a weekday and 39 on a weekend day, while the maximum in the small lot was 27 on a weekday and 43 on a weekend. Discussions with City staff indicate that these levels of parking occupancy are lower than typical summer conditions.

Based on the above, there do not appear to be either traffic or parking deficiencies in the study area.



PARKING ANALYSIS

The proposed redevelopment of the Front Beach area includes new retail development along Ocean Boulevard and along Pavilion Drive. The retail development will displace about 200-250 parking spaces and will generate a demand for about 100 spaces. Therefore, an additional 350 parking spaces will be needed to serve that development and to replace the portion of the existing parking supply that would be displaced.

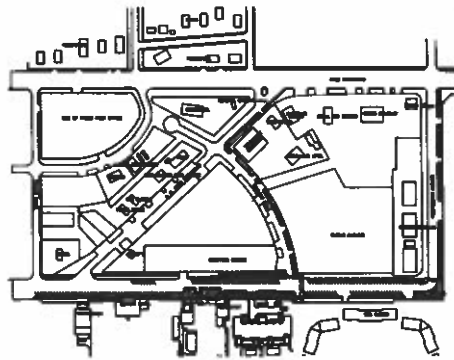
The existing on-street spaces on should remain on Ocean Boulevard to serve the shops and restaurants along the beach. A new, revised parking facility within the area of the large lot between 14th Avenue and Pavilion Drive is proposed to replace the spaces lost to retail development.

An analysis of the geometry of this site, allowing for a 40-foot depth retail development along both Pavilion and Ocean Boulevard for retail, shows that a 250-space controlled surface lot can be laid out on the remaining portion of the site, for a net loss of about 250 spaces. In the future, a three-level (two structural, one at-grade) parking deck could be constructed in that area, yielding about 400-450 spaces. These spaces would essentially replace the spaces lost to the retail development, but would not provide additional parking for that development. Based on current construction costs, the cost of the surface lot would be an average of about \$3,000 to \$4,000 per space, or about \$1 million for the lot.

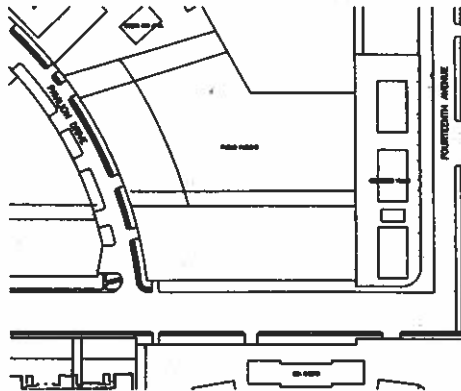


The deck spaces would cost an average of \$7,000 to \$9,000 per space, including the spaces on grade, for a total of about \$4 million. These costs reflect only construction cost, not land cost.

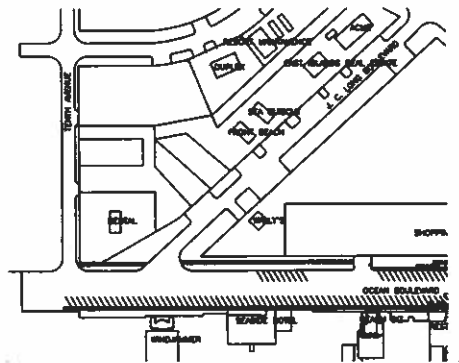
The current parking demand in downtown Isle of Palms, even in peak season, are met by the current supply. As the Front Beach area continues to develop, parking demand will increase, while the supply will decrease as new development displaces existing parking lots. Also, as development continues, land values will increase and, with appropriate pricing, parking can be viewed as a potential pay-as-you go revenue source (enterprise fund approach). More in-depth studies would be needed to evaluate the revenue potential of parking in Front Beach. The City should explore the potential for additional parking to serve the Front Beach area as this area continues to develop.



Existing Conditions - Overall



Existing Conditions – Pavilion Drive



Existing Conditions – J.C. Long Blvd.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The three plans on the left represent the existing conditions on the site. The top plan is the overall study area.

The next two are enlargements of the Pavilion Drive area and the J.C. Long intersection area.

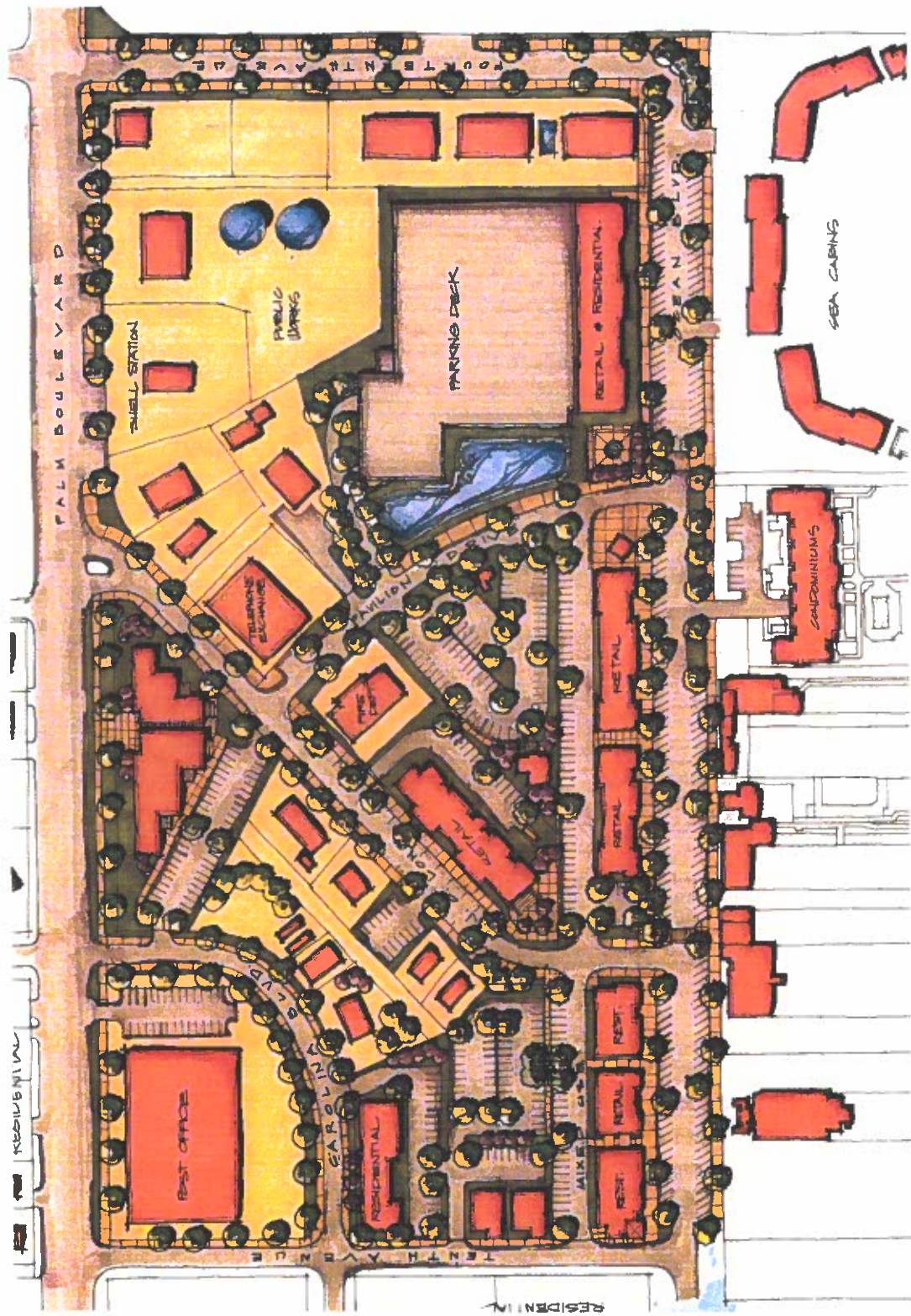
Both of these two areas will be described in more detail, in terms of their existing state and their proposed redevelopment in the sections following.

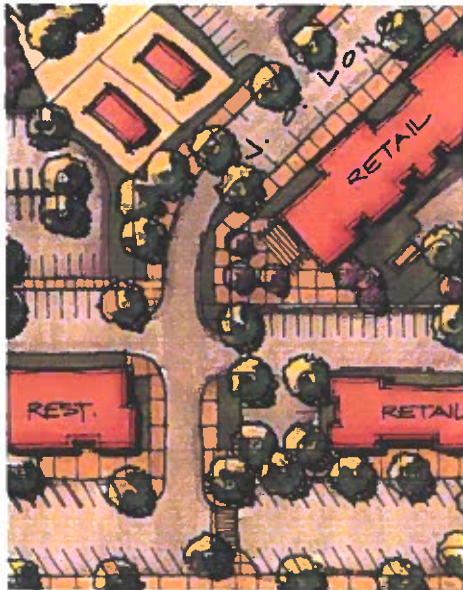
MASTER PLAN

The following page shows the overall master plan that was developed during this design process.

Sections following describe in more detail specific attributes of the plan as well as recommendations developed as a result of the master planning process.

The recommendations are grouped in terms of Immediate Action, Short-Term Recommendations and Long-Term Recommendations. This master plan is envisioned, as being a 20-year master plan and further study is needed for many aspects of the plan.





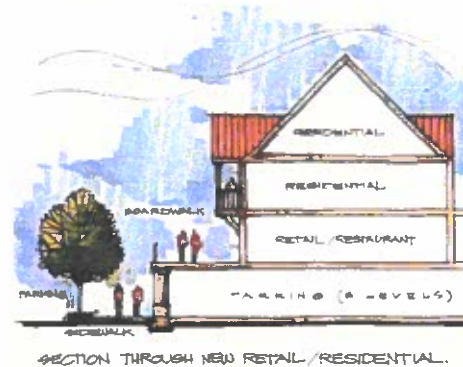
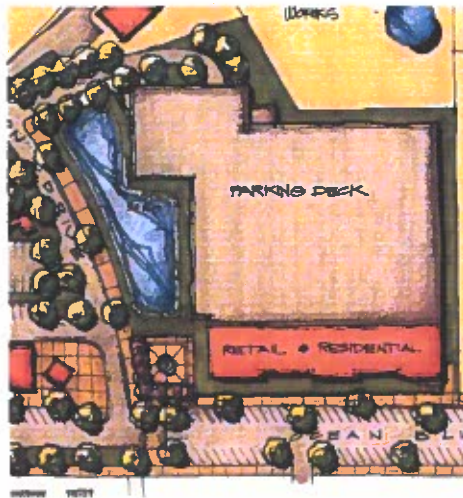
J. C. LONG REALIGNMENT

At present, J.C. Long Boulevard comes into Ocean Boulevard at a very acute angle. This causes some problems in terms of traffic due to insufficient sight lines when turning on to Ocean Boulevard and the excessively short length between the J.C. Long and 10th Avenue intersections on Ocean Boulevard. This is also important because 10th Avenue is the transition point between the commercial area and the single-family residential uses.

The Master Plan proposes realigning J.C. Long to intersect Ocean Boulevard at a 90-degree angle. This eliminates the sight distance problem and provides more distance between the intersections.

This change will require several small properties, most of which are undeveloped, to be reconfigured and/or relocated. It is the opinion of the design team that much of this could be handled in negotiations for property swapping since most property owners would end up with what is arguably more desirable lots than what they have now. This is based on the assumption that the new lots would front Ocean Boulevard instead of J.C. Long.

This would open up new opportunities for retail, restaurant and residential space along Ocean Boulevard with parking provided behind the buildings. It also provides more options for developing the land along the newly aligned portions of J. C. Long Boulevard.



PROPOSED RETAIL AND RESIDENTIAL SPACE AND PARKING DECK

The public parking lot on Ocean Boulevard at Pavilion drive is an under-utilization of that property. In the opinion of the design team, the land fronting Ocean Boulevard should be developed to take advantage of the proximity to the beach and to enhance that portion of the streetscape along Ocean Boulevard.

The proposed design would place a combination of retail, restaurant and residential on the street with a three level parking deck situated behind the buildings and accessed from Pavilion Drive.

A public plaza would take advantage of the corner of the two streets and the pedestrian circulation would function at two levels: the street level on the sidewalk and at a boardwalk level with the shops and restaurants (see sketch to the right). Residential uses would be located above the retail spaces.

It is the theory of the design team that, at some point in time, the value of the property fronting Ocean Boulevard will be such that its sale could fund a major part of the construction of the parking deck.

Investigating the value of the land and its possible sale was not within the scope of this project but it has been identified as a long-term recommendation.



BEACH ACCESS

Although not a significant part of this study, the design team feels that the public beach access points need to be strengthened in terms of their design, including signage, ADA compliance and materials and methods of construction.



There is a danger, as the property is redeveloped over time, of losing some of the beach access points. These areas should be protected and whenever possible, new access points should be identified and constructed.

These access points should consider convenience, safety and aesthetics in their design and execution.



CROSSWALKS

In a beachfront community such as Isle of Palms, the pedestrian deserves special consideration in the design process. Streetscaping elements in all cases should include provisions for crosswalks at all intersections.

On Ocean Boulevard, the master plan addresses crosswalks at the intersections of J.C. Long Boulevard and Pavilion Drive.

These crosswalks should be clearly delineated and have adequate signage, curb cuts and lighting. It is also desirable, although not required that an actual change in paving material (such as pavers or stamped paving) occur at the crosswalks.



14TH AVENUE

14TH Avenue is the “gateway” to the beachfront area from the Isle of Palms Connector. The connector itself offers an incredible panorama of the Atlantic Ocean that is unmatched in the Lowcountry. That long view is cut short by the existing Sea Cabins project and the abrupt and ill-defined curve where 14th Avenue meets Ocean Boulevard.

The terminus of this view and of 14th Avenue is an opportunity to set the tone as one begins to enter the beachfront area.

The uses along 14th do not address the streetscape

The present alignment presents some life safety issues as well as aesthetic concerns. These concerns may be easily addressed and remedied.

Recommendations:

- Define the curve in the roadway with new curb and alignment
- Add street trees and other decorative plantings at the curve in the roads
- Provide pedestrian connection to the County Park
- Provide street trees along 14th Avenue at a minimum of 60'-0" on center
- Future development should front the street and engage the streetscape in a meaningful manner



PALM BOULEVARD

Palm Boulevard from 10th to 14th Avenues is characterized by haphazard development with large expansive curb cuts, lack of overall organization and insufficient sidewalks. There is also a lack of buffering of parking areas to the street and buildings do not relate to the streetscape. Overhead power lines are also intrusive visually into the streetscape.

Recommendations:

- Place all overhead utilities underground
- Reconfigure the curb cuts where possible, making them as narrow as practical and still be able to accommodate the existing land use
- Widen all sidewalks to a width of (minimum) 10'-0"
- Place street trees at a maximum of 60'-0" on center
- Provide on-site buffering of parking areas that are adjacent to the street
- New construction should relate more directly to and engage the street as part of its overall design
- Signage should be addressed and should be more uniform and simplified



RECOMMENDED FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

Obtain an up-to-date ground and/or aerial photography survey of the entire study area

The base information available to conduct this study was minimal and very inaccurate. Several hours of field verification were required to reach a level where even very preliminary design studies could be done. No additional planning or design work should be done until proper base information has been obtained.

Explore alternative methods to relying on parking meters for on-street parking revenue

Parking meters are visually distracting and also are an obstacle for pedestrians to avoid. However, we acknowledge that the City receives significant revenue from the meters so an alternate means of paying for on-street parking needs to be devised.

Determine a plan of action to have all utilities (electrical, telephone, etc.) placed underground

This has obvious benefits from an aesthetic standpoint in that the skyline is not filled with power poles and wires. Also, the power poles are another element that pedestrians must avoid. The other benefit is in terms of damage from storms, which are frequent and sometimes severe along the coast.



SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Create an “Overlay Zoning District” to include the entire study area

An overlay district would allow special controls and regulations to be placed on all properties within the study area regardless of their individual zoning classifications now or at anytime in the future. These controls could help ensure the area would develop with a higher degree of quality in the future.

Implement architectural and site design guidelines for the overlay district

Architectural guidelines would set a standard for all development within the study area and could dictate building massing, materials, colors, stylistic concerns and detailing. Site design guidelines could control landscape elements such as signage and paving materials as well as requirements for parking areas, curb cuts and screening and other plantings.

Create a “Design Review Board” and hire staff members to administrate

The Design Review Board would enforce the guidelines for the district and make rulings on whether proposed new projects or renovations complied with the guidelines. The Board would have the authority to approve or deny projects and require revisions to plans in order to comply with requirements. The staff members would accept applications, review plans, make recommendations to the board and inspect projects for compliance to requirements.



LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Explore funding/financing options for construction of parking deck

It is the untested opinion of the design team that, at some point in the future, land along Ocean Boulevard will become valuable enough that the City of Isle of Palms can sell a portion of land fronting Ocean Boulevard near Pavilion Drive and use that money to help fund the construction of the parking deck.

This possibility needs to be explored as well as other options to help finance or fund the construction of the deck.

Negotiate necessary property exchanges for J.C. Long realignment

In order to complete the realignment of J. C. Long Boulevard it will be necessary to negotiate several property exchanges with current landowners. These negotiations should begin as soon as possible so that when the City is ready to carry out the change the agreements will have been made.

Determine a plan of action to implement plaza and landscaping plans

As other changes occur the opportunity will present itself to implement the landscaping of both streets and other public area. The City should anticipate those opportunities and conduct the necessary planning and design to complete these projects.

The plan of action should include budgeting for construction of these specific projects in the fiscal year they are anticipated to occur.