



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

Himmarshee Revitalization Plan

Public Outreach Summary and Next Steps

January 2024



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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01



Overview

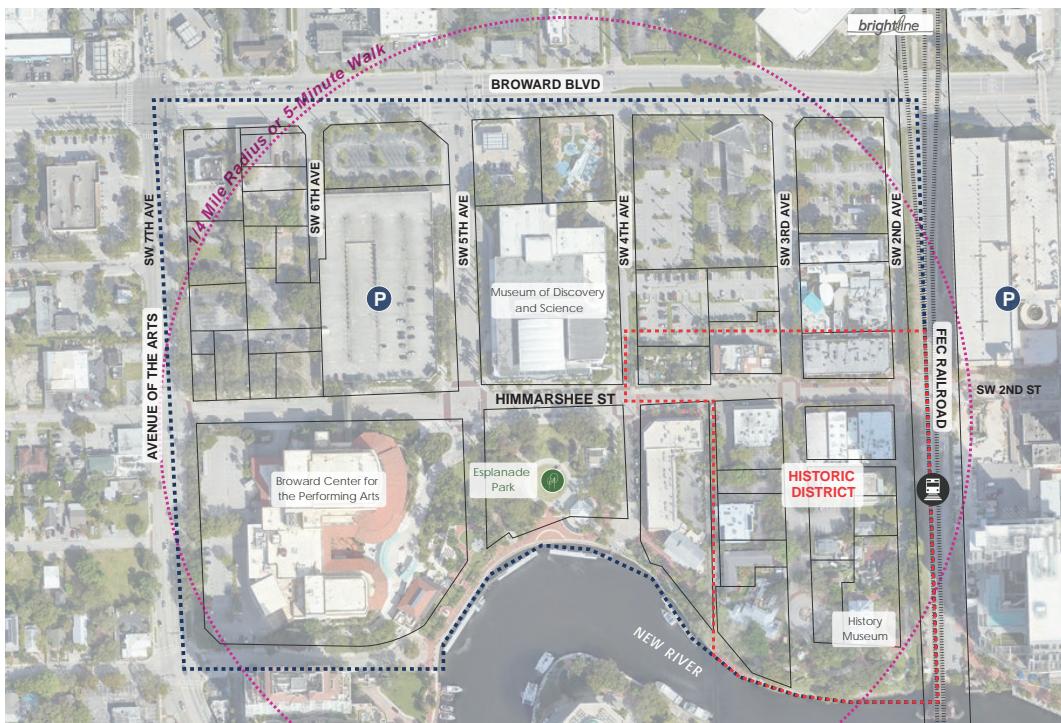


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OVERVIEW

The City of Fort Lauderdale Development Services Department engaged Urbe Studio in September 2023 to assist with preliminary public outreach to identify opportunities to enhance and revitalize the area bound by SW 2nd Street between the FEC Railroad and SW 7th Avenue and the Himmarshee (H-1) Historic District, and create a Revitalization Plan for Himmarshee Street (SW 2nd Street) and the Himmarshee Historic District.

The overall intent of this effort is to help revitalize the area and attract development that complements the district's amenities and attractions. The City is looking to identify opportunities to enhance and revitalize this area, referred to for the purposes of this report as Himmarshee, through **updates to the existing code, implementation of a more integrated streetscape and creation of design criteria** to ensure new development is compatible with this district while maintaining and respecting the historic character of the area.





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The scope of work for this task included:



Project management and coordination with City staff



Conducting one-on-one virtual discussions with key stakeholders



Assisting City staff in developing a communication strategy to drive attendance to the open house event



Preparation of presentation materials and informational boards for the open house event



Planning, attending, and facilitating discussions at the interactive open house event



Preparing a summary report and presentation with findings



02

Engagement Process



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ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Various outreach methods maximized engagement opportunities and included the following activities:



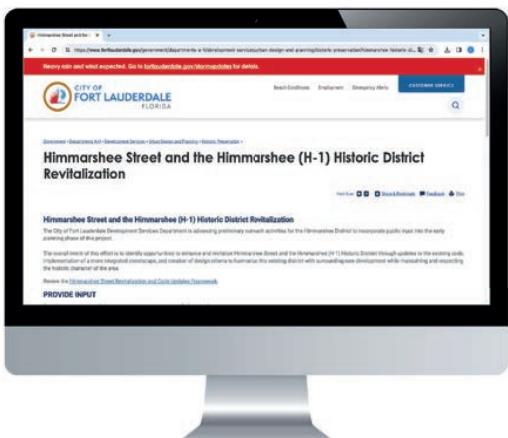
Creation of a splash page on the City's website and a digital comment map ftlcity.info/himmarsheehd



Conducting one-on-one discussions with key Stakeholders



Hosting an interactive open house event





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Stakeholder Engagement

The City of Fort Lauderdale is committed to engaging with key stakeholders to understand the needs, perspectives and ideas for the study area. The following key stakeholders were previously identified by City staff with the intent of conducting one-on-one discussions:

- ✓ Steven Glassman, City Commissioner District 2
- ✓ Fort Lauderdale Historic Preservation Board
- ✓ Fort Lauderdale Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- ✓ Business Owners on 2nd Street
- ✓ History Fort Lauderdale
- ✓ Riverwalk, Inc.
- ✓ Museum of Discovery and Science (MODS)

Objectives

-  Conduct preliminary outreach to incorporate public input into the early planning phase of the Himmarshee Revitalization Plan.
-  Learn about stakeholders' concerns and priorities for the area.
-  Identify opportunities to enhance and revitalize Himmarshee Street and the Himmarshee (H-1) Historic District.
-  Obtain input about desired next steps.





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To best understand stakeholders' perspectives, individual virtual meetings were held between **October 5th and October 30th** with key stakeholders to provide the City with insight about the various challenges, needs, and opportunities in the study area.



To understand key community concerns, the 45-minute to one hour discussions were informal and focused on existing infrastructure, provision of services, safety, and placemaking.





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Meetings were attended by City staff in addition to the consultant. The consultant facilitated these meetings by providing a brief overview and status of the task followed by a discussion framed by the following questions:

Thinking about what we experience today:

- What do you value the most about this district?
- What do you believe is negatively impacting the district and should be changed to meet community needs/desires or goals?
- Can you identify any challenges/barriers hindering the success of this area?

Thinking about the future:

- What would you like to see protected/celebrated/retained over time?
- How do you envision the district to evolve?
- What services / other services would you like this area to provide?
- What, in your opinion, are the most important actions/investments or capital improvements the City and others should undertake in the district?
- Are there any opportunities you would like the City to consider/ review or better understand in relation to existing conditions in the district?

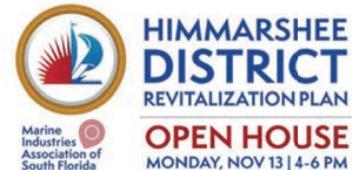
This comprehensive approach ensures a well-rounded understanding of the priorities and concerns, informing the ongoing development of the Himmarshee Revitalization Plan.



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Communications

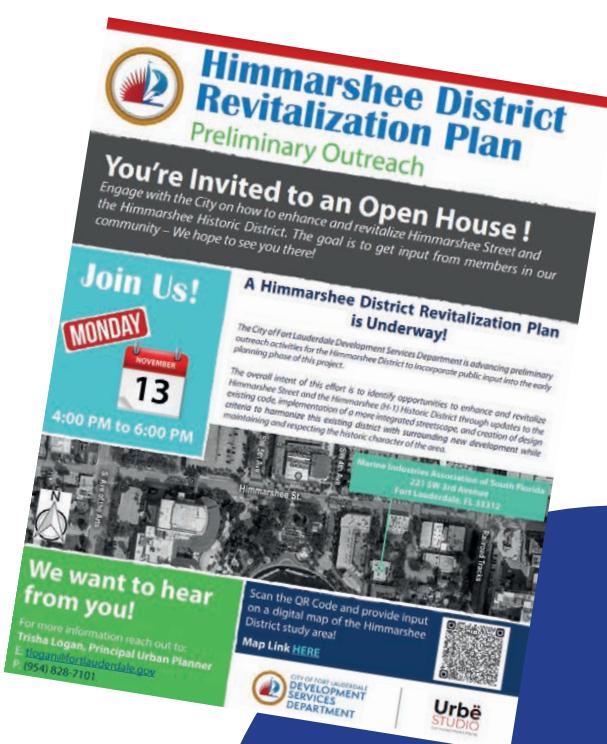
In coordination with the City's strategic communications department, the open house event details were shared through the following channels:



- City of Fort Lauderdale Website
- Facebook
- Nextdoor
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- X (formerly Twitter)
- November Water Bill
- E-blast (to targeted contacts within the study area and area of influence)



Through the engagement on these platforms, a total of **51** people RSVP'd to **confirm their attendance** at the open house, **35** people expressed interest in attending, and a total of **47** individuals attended the open house.





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OPEN HOUSE EVENT

The public open house event was **held on November 13th 2023**. The event attracted a diverse group of stakeholders and residents.

The attendees **actively participated** in the event and **provided input through interaction with informational boards** prepared to gauge reactions about key aspects of the district.

Staff sought feedback about what participants valued most in the Himmarshee district, as well as their hopes for future development in the area.

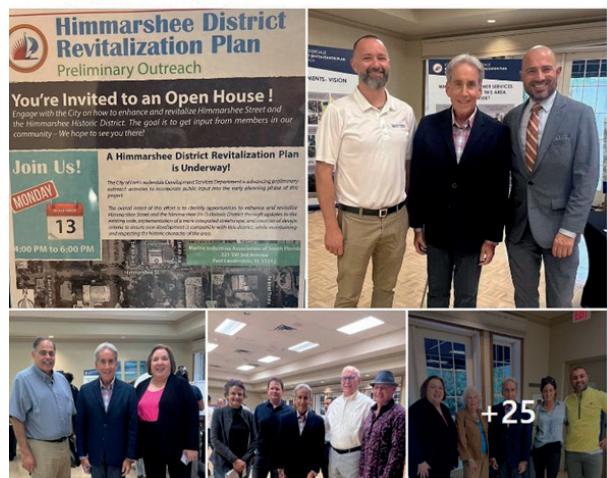
A total of **47 individuals participated in the open house**, representing various stakeholders, including residents from adjacent neighborhoods, representatives from the Tarpon River and Sailboat Bend Civic Associations, Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, Broward Center for Performing Arts, among others. Overall, participants were very engaged during the event and demonstrated strong support for the project, with the hopes that improvements are soon set in motion.



Steve Glassman is with Jeremy Collette and 5 others.
23h ·



Do you remember when the Himmarshee District was clean, active, safe, and busy day and night? Well, that needs to be our goal now and the reason why I added this to the Commission to do list. Several months ago, I met with the area businesses and today we held the Himmarshee District Revitalization Plan Preliminary Outreach Open House to reach an even wider audience. Thank you to staff and all those who attended. Let the process continue!

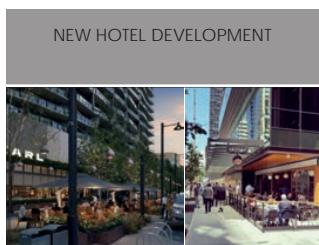




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These were some of the aspects illustrated in the exhibits:

- ✓ Enhancing the nighttime experience with a variety of entertainment options, diverse dining, and outdoor seating alternatives.
- ✓ Encouraging the development of other commercial uses that integrate with the district's existing environment.
- ✓ Leveraging the development activity in the vicinity to foster new residential and hospitality development projects within the district.
- ✓ Enhancing the landscape and aesthetics by introducing public art and establishing cultural facilities, thereby shaping an identifiable art district.





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Other aspects illustrated in the exhibits:

- ✓ Implementing parklets or other “quick-build” project ideas on the streets to enhance the public realm.
- ✓ Expanding sidewalks to provide more room for outdoor dining, along with better lighting to address safety concerns during nighttime hours.
- ✓ Enhancing the street scene with increased landscaping, including strategic placement of street trees for increased shade.
- ✓ Improving circulation within the district through the incorporation of wayfinding systems.
- ✓ Emphasizing pedestrian and bicycle-friendly infrastructure to increase multimodal access.
- ✓ Allowing new development activity that incorporates transitional heights that integrates into the existing character and context.

STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS



DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY/ HEIGHT



03



What We Heard



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WHAT WE HEARD

The insights received from stakeholder discussions revealed several themes, reflecting for the most part a shared understanding of the Himmarshee challenges and opportunities. Given the diverse interests of the various stakeholders, there are some conflicting perspectives that were apparent as well. Below is a **summary of common themes** that percolated through conversations with key stakeholders:



Nostalgia for a Safe and Active Place:
Stakeholders yearn for a return to a time when Himmarshee was a clean, safe, and a vibrant place that offered a mix of daytime and nighttime uses.



Safety First:
There is a common concern around safety and lack of law enforcement, making sure the district is a safe and comfortable environment, particularly during nighttime hours to all users.



Restoring Identity:
There is a shared desire to restore and reclaim the distinctive identity of Himmarshee.



Management and Oversight:
Businesses on Himmarshee/ SW 2nd Street recognized that there is a need for a governing body or management structure that takes ownership and manages of events, regular cleaning, and safety within the district.



Balancing Economic Goals and Community Needs:
Stakeholders highlighted the need for finding a delicate balance between economic development goals and the well-being of the local community and residents. This area is anchored by strong civic institutions, and they should carry a strong weight to how this area evolves.



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Addressing Infrastructure Challenges:

Concerns were raised regarding existing infrastructure challenges, particularly drainage issues, signaling a need for comprehensive solutions.



Leveraging Proximity to New Developments and Brightline:

Stakeholders recognized the close proximity to proposed new high-rise developments on Broward Boulevard and the Brightline station are a substantial asset for the district, emphasizing the potential positive impact.



Compatible Development to Protect Community Character:

The Himmarshee (H-1) Historic District height restrictions may be holding back the economic development of the area and hindering its success. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of remaining flexible and finding the right mechanisms to ensure new development, if allowed in the district, is compatible in scale, height and density, and aesthetics with the historic character of the district, with the objective of maintaining a cohesive urban fabric.



Capital Investments in Esplanade Park:

Stakeholders highlighted the need for capital investment in Esplanade Park, even for minor improvements, to accommodate small-scale programming and enhance the park's overall experience. It was noted that developing a public realm master plan would be a good step to establish goals, priorities and identify resources.



Walkability and Placemaking:

Observations were made about the wear and tear of sidewalks and crosswalks, suggesting a need for upgrades to the multimodal network. Placemaking and wayfinding initiatives were brought up as elements to infuse more character and vitality into the area.



Advocate for a Greater Mix of Uses Beyond the Bar Scene:

There is a strong desire for a greater mix of uses on Himmarshee Street/ SW 2nd Street, especially for daytime uses and dining options.



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Long-term Sustainable Strategy:

The importance of developing a strategic plan was emphasized as part of this effort to ensure mechanisms are in place to capture funds to implement improvements and secure financial sustainability and resilience of the district over time.



Business-Friendly Mindset:

Stakeholders advocated for increased flexibility and reduced procedural barriers for property/business owners in the district to address property maintenance and beautification. This would foster better relationships with businesses and help them succeed.



Developing an Action Plan:

Stakeholders advocated for the development of an action plan designed with a robust public engagement component to provide recommendations that guide the district's evolution over the next 5-10 years.



Addressing the Regulatory Framework for Entertainment District:

Stakeholders commented that late-night activity and open containers on Himmarshee/SW 2nd Street are causing waste management and safety issues. Formation of a management structure to provide oversight would assist in providing additional structure within the Entertainment District.



Better Circulation:

Stakeholders stressed the importance of better management of street closures and enforcing the designated pick-up/drop-off area within the district for rideshare users, enhancing accessibility and overall circulation especially in the evening hours.



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Key public input was received during the November 13th public open house event. Below, is a summary of the feedback received through the interactive boards at the open house.

Values

In order to gain deeper insights into what residents take pride in and want to celebrate and protect, participants were asked about what they value the most in the district. The input received highlights **five common themes**:

1. The historical significance of the historic district.
2. The appeal for open spaces and proximity to Esplanade Park and the Riverwalk.
3. The presence of strong civic institutions.
4. Walkability and convenience of access, proximity to the Brightline station.
5. The dynamic atmosphere of a local entertainment district.





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Challenges/Barriers

A total of **72 impressions** were received in response to the exhibit inquiring about the challenges and barriers hindering the success of the district. Some of the issues noted were:

Challenges/Barriers	Impressions/Votes
It does not feel safe anymore	13
Lack of security and safety	13
Entertainment district (nighttime uses) is not working as currently operating	10
Lack of enforcement	9
Insufficient parking	7
No space for outdoor dining	7
Himmarshee (H1) Historic District height restrictions	4
Excessive lane widths	2
More daytime business open	2
Lack of fine dining options	2
Lack of cafes/shops	2
Homeless	1

*entries are organized by number of votes from top to bottom.



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Services & Uses

A total of **67 impressions** were received in response to the exhibit inquiring about the services desired for the district to provide. Daytime/nighttime uses and supporting the district's cultural facilities were some of the popular entries. The input received reflected the following preferences:

Services/Other Services You Would Like the Area to Provide	Impressions/Votes
More restaurants with outdoor seating	24
More cultural facilities/venues art district	18
Nighttime activities/ entertainment	9
New hotel development	9
New residential development	7
Office environment/ development	0

*entries are organized by number of votes from top to bottom.





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Vision / Desired Elements

Placemaking is about finding the right mix of components that need to be integrated into a space to transform it into a lively and welcoming environment that provides a higher quality experience. These elements not only contribute to the envisioned physical transformation, but also play a crucial role in shaping the district's identity. It goes beyond the physical aspects of design, taking into consideration the cultural, social, and historical context of a place. Well-designed urban spaces consider the needs and desires of the community, promoting walkability, accessibility, and a balance between various land uses. Incorporating these elements is fundamental to creating a vibrant, inclusive, and thriving district that aligns with the vision and aspirations of its residents and stakeholders.

A total of **97 impressions** were received through the exhibit that gauged visual preference towards key elements (streetscape elements and development intensity/scale) directly related to the desired vision for the district and included the following:





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Desired Elements	Impressions/Votes
Wider sidewalk with outdoor seating and new lighting	25
Increased landscaping with street trees	15
Public realm activation/ public art	13
Parklets and quick build interventions	9
Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle connectivity - bike facilities	9
Low scale development compatible with existing Himmarshee Historic District	9
Midrise development with mixed uses	7
Improved connectivity through wayfinding	6
Development with transitional height	4

*entries are organized by number of votes from top to bottom.





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Events

A prominent issue raised in multiple stakeholder meetings was the perceived decline of the 'Entertainment Himmarshee District,' which was seen as losing its vibrancy and becoming less active.

To gauge the community's engagement with the district's events, one of the interactive boards in the public open house showcased a list with regular activities/events programmed in the district and inquired about the level of participation at these events.

The feedback received revealed that a significant number of individuals continue to attend these events, reflecting a continuous interest in the district's event offerings.

Events	Impressions/Votes
Jazz Brunch	12
Halloween on 2nd street	11
New Year's Eve	10
Cinco de Mayo	9
St Patrick's Day celebration	8
Walk/ run on Esplanade Park	6
Pub Crawl	5
ITB Night	5
Light up Lauderdale	3

*entries are organized by number of votes from top to bottom.



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To be Prioritized Next

When asked about actions or investments to be prioritized as a next step, participants demonstrated substantial consensus. The majority expressed a strong preference for prioritizing investing in an enhanced streetscape that allows for sidewalk activation (outdoor dining experience).

Prioritized Actions/Investments	Impressions/Votes
Enhanced Streetscape	13
Sidewalk Activation	12
Establishment of a governance structure for the management and oversight of the entertainment district	3
Development of a Public Realm Master Plan	2

*entries are organized by number of votes from top to bottom.

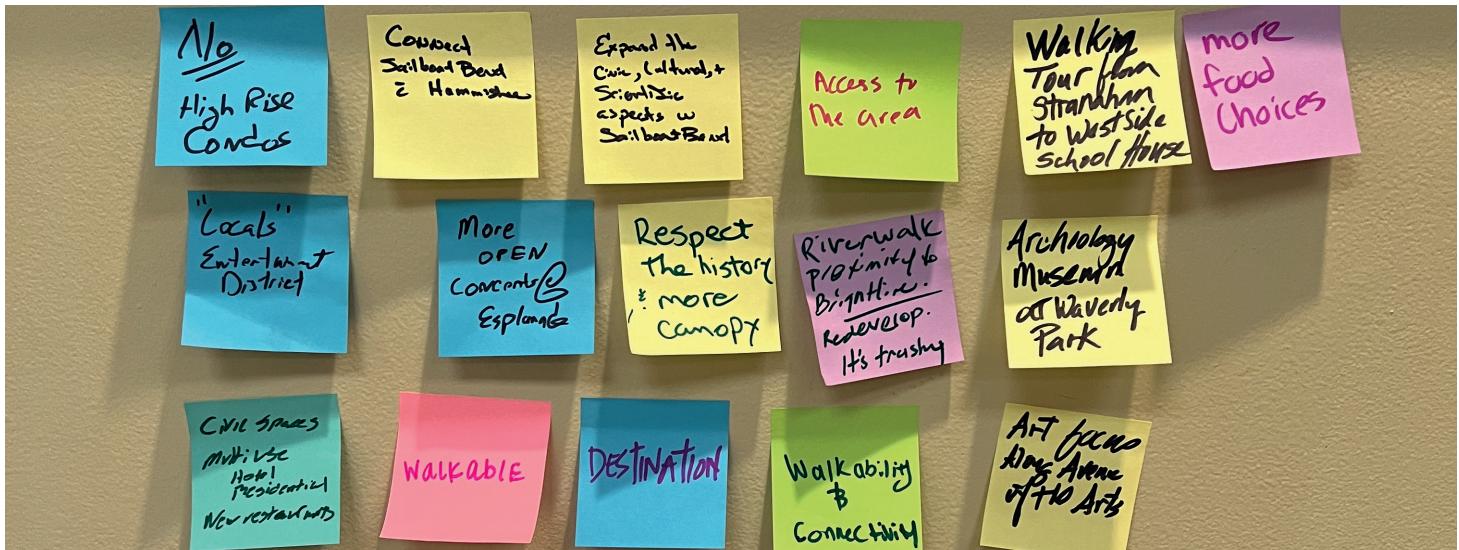




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Additional input was received during the public open house event expressing community desires or concerns; **the main ideas and inferences gleaned include:**

- ✓ Enhancing walkability and connectivity throughout the district, including enhanced small boat access.
- ✓ Establishing the Himmarshee district as a sought-after destination for diverse activities.
- ✓ Introducing an art walk and walking tours to showcase and promote the historical aspects of the district.
- ✓ Avoiding the development of high-rise buildings in the district.
- ✓ Increasing the variety of food choices and dining establishments.
- ✓ Establishing a connection to the Sailboat Bend neighborhood.
- ✓ Expanding the district's civic and cultural offerings.
- ✓ Fostering more connections to Esplanade Park.
- ✓ Promoting more cultural tourism.
- ✓ Building an elevated pedestrian connection to/ from the Brightline station.





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Additionally, during the public open house, six public comment cards were received indicating specific community desires, all which reemphasizes the input received through the interactive boards. These comment cards included the following:



The importance of fostering quality businesses in the area and a desire for more sit-down restaurants, cafes, and shops with adequate lighting in lieu of bars. It was also pointed out the potential for the waterfront area to capitalize more on waterfront dining experiences.



The desire for an improved walkable environment with wider sidewalks, enhanced landscaping, signage improvements, and the establishment of proper pedestrian zones.



A desire for art galleries or public art installations in the district, positioning the Himmarshee district as an extension of Las Olas. Furthermore, the feedback underscored the district's role as a connection to downtown.



04

Next Steps



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NEXT STEPS

The City of Fort Lauderdale's overall intent is to identify **opportunities to enhance and revitalize Himmarshee Street and the Himmarshee Historic District** through a comprehensive approach.

The objective of this outreach task is to document and consider input received through this process to **set goals and prioritize next steps** to set in motion a Himmarshee Revitalization Plan.

Based on the outreach activities completed as part of this task, the **longer-term goals outlined below for the revitalization of Himmarshee are suggested for prioritization**. Each goal is listed in an order based on which topics received the most amount of input from stakeholders and the general public who participated in the open house event. It is also suggested that a **strategic plan** is assembled to further explore **methods to address each scope of work, assign responsible parties, and identify potential mechanisms to secure funding** for each element.



Develop a **comprehensive and data driven existing conditions analysis** that assesses the regulatory framework, infrastructure, and land use context to establish clear opportunities and needs. This process should also draft a set of guiding principles that provides direction to the planning process for further goals of developing streetscape design concepts and opportunities to improve the Himmarshee



Identify best practices or models for a **special district governance/management structure** that provides oversight and coordination with businesses to address waste management, clean-up, safety, enforcement, street closures, and events.



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Develop **streetscape design concept alternatives** that incorporate enhanced design elements and provide expanded sidewalks to facilitate outdoor dining. This body of work should include a prioritization and implementation strategy and should yield a preferred alternative.



Conduct a **market analysis** to identify opportunities and understand the demand, feasibility, and potential to provide for **desired as well as expanded uses** within the area.

Each element involves further stakeholder engagement as well as identification of funding to support each effort. Mechanisms and methods outlined above are yet to be explored in detail; however, each of the options for next steps will require feedback and directive from the City of Fort Lauderdale City Commission.



Identify opportunities to enhance and revitalize Himmarshee Street and the Himmarshee (H-1) Historic District through **updates to the existing code** to allow compatible development and limit any adverse effects on the historic district.



Develop a **public realm strategy** that establishes common goals, priorities and provides guidance, and identifies resources to fund and manage public art installations, capital investments in Esplanade Park and the Riverwalk, and small-scale programming for public space activation.



05



Appendix



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INTERACTIVE BOARDS



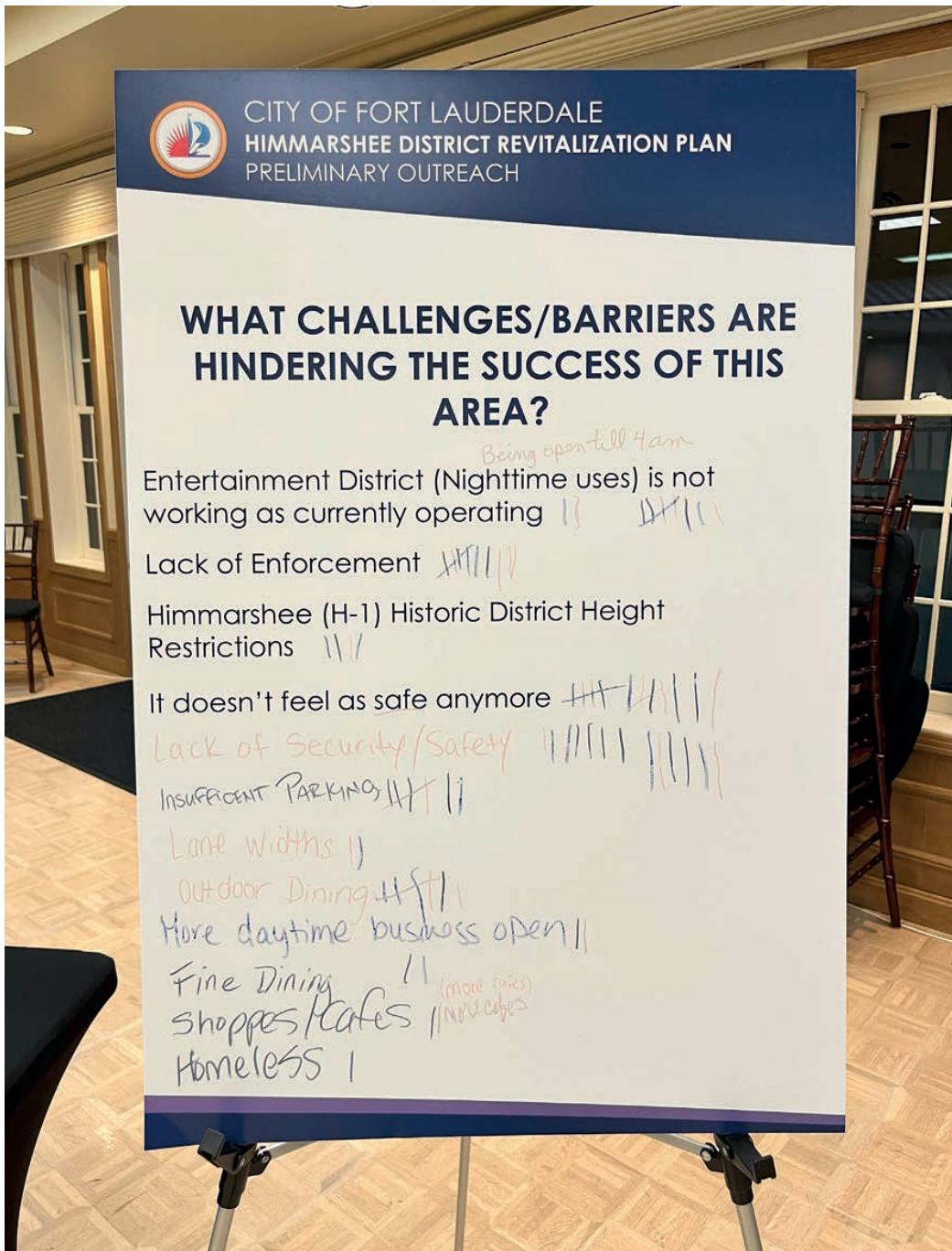


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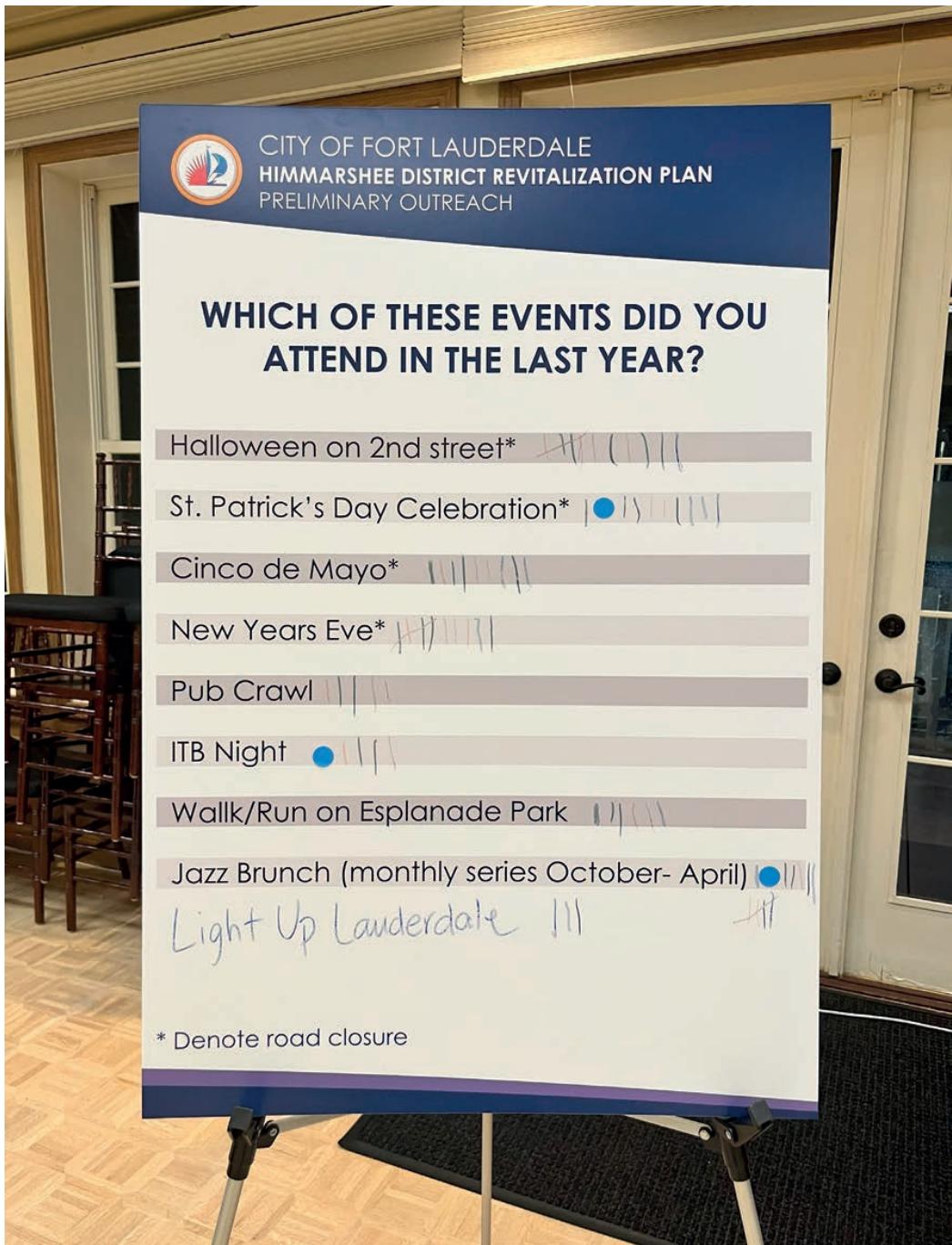


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