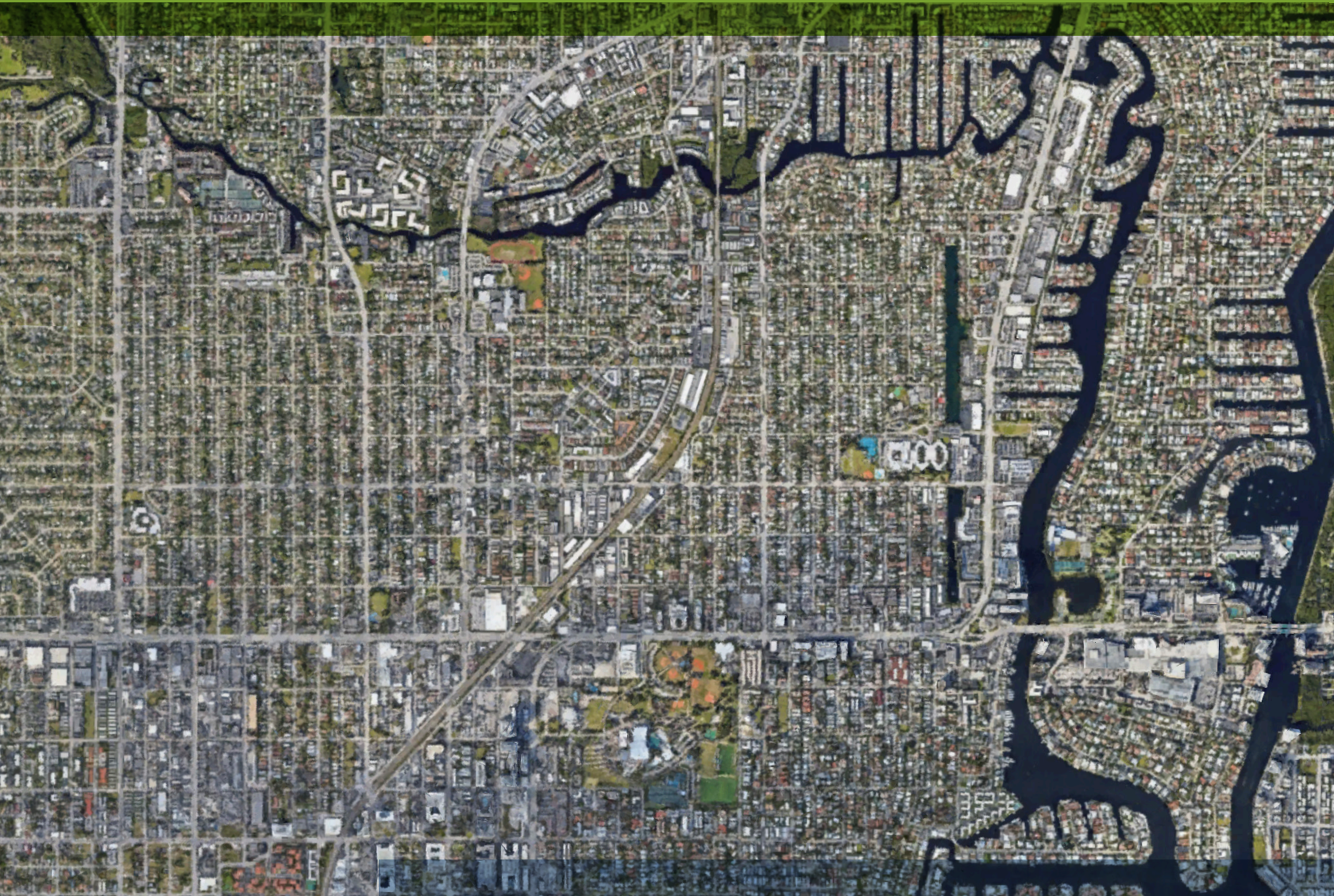




Southeast Florida/
Caribbean

CITY OF FT. LAUDERDALE

Future Development along Mixed-use Corridors



Technical Assistance Panel Report | DECEMBER 6-7, 2023

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ON THE COVER: Aerial view of the Sunrise
Boulevard and U.S. Highway 1 intersection.



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About ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean

For more than 25 years, ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council has served as a powerful voice for best practices and the latest trends in real estate in the region. With 1,300+ members living and working in Florida's seven southernmost coastal counties (from Indian River through Monroe) and throughout the Caribbean Islands, ULI brings together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs. ULI shares knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, electronic media, events, and programs.

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Since 1947, the ULI Advisory Services program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for complex land use challenges. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services. National and international panelists are specifically recruited to form a panel of independent and objective volunteer ULI member experts with the skills needed to address the identified land use challenge. The program is designed to help break through obstacles, jump-start conversations, and solve tough challenges that need an outside, independent perspective. Three- and five-day engagements are offered to ensure thorough consideration of relevant topics.

An additional national offering is the project analysis session (PAS) offered at ULI's Fall and Spring Meetings, through which specific land use challenges are evaluated by a panel of volunteer experts selected from ULI's membership. This is a conversational format that lends itself to an open exchange of ideas among diverse industry practitioners with distinct points of view. From the streamlined two-hour session to the "deeper dive" eight-hour session, this intimate conversational format encourages creative thinking and problem solving.

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Urban Land Institute harnesses its members' technical expertise to help communities solve complex land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. In 2004, the ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council began providing these services locally through Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) to address specific development/real estate issues in areas such as housing, parking, redevelopment, future land use, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), and similar topics.

Drawing from its local membership base, ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean conducts TAPs offering objective and responsible advice to local decision-makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. In fulfillment of ULI's mission, this TAP report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

Learn more at seflorida.uli.org.

Distinct from Advisory Services panels, TAPs leverage local expertise through a half-day to two-day process.

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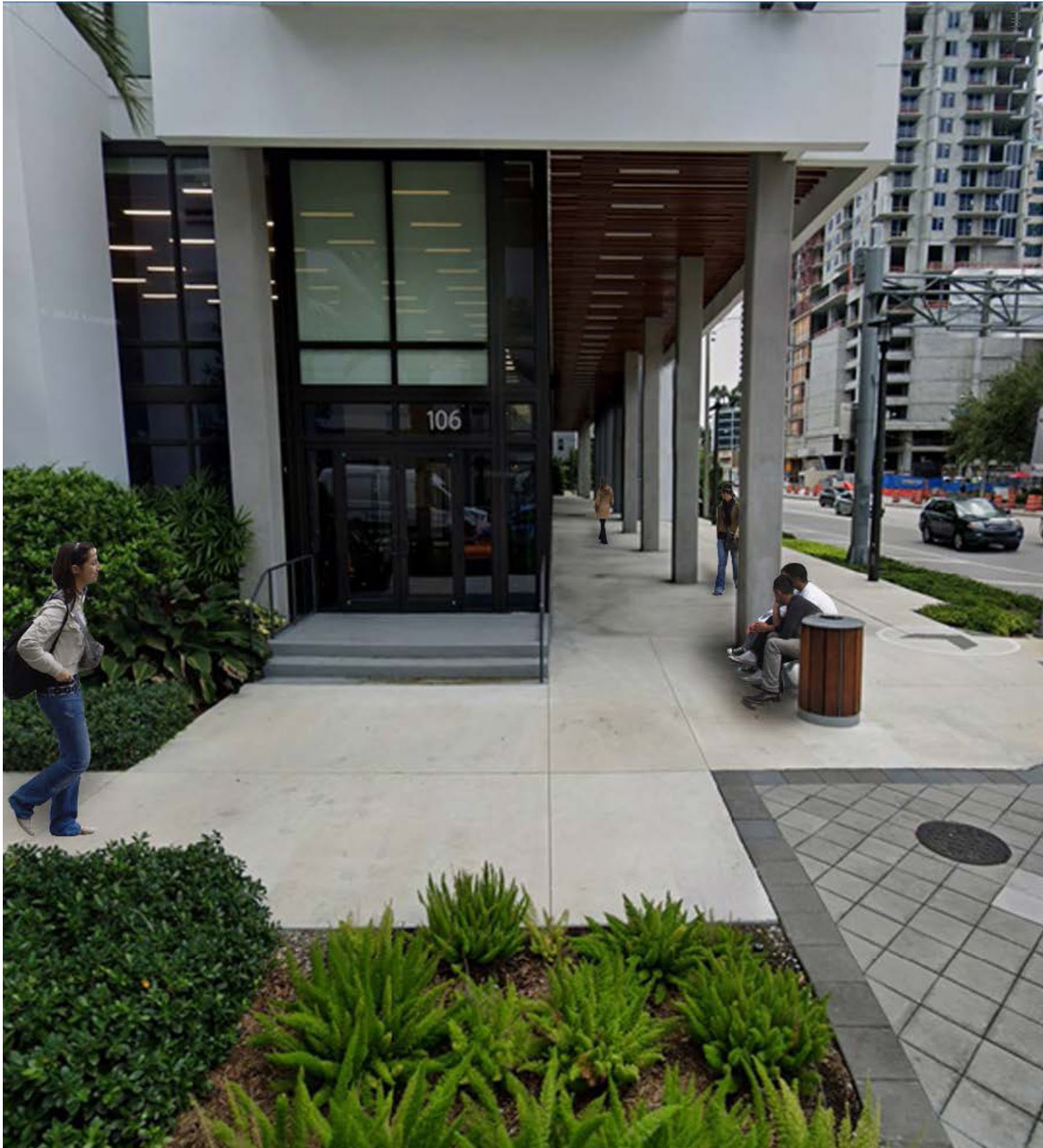
Acknowledgments

ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean is grateful to the City of Ft. Lauderdale for inviting ULI to conduct this study. In particular, ULI would like to thank Jim Hetzel, principal urban planner for the City of Ft. Lauderdale, for his leadership, assistance, and support of the information gathering critical to the success of this study. The panel would also like to thank the City's elected leadership, the City planning staff, and the community stakeholders who collectively shared their perspectives, experiences, and insights with the panel.



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An activated first floor of this building invites the public in to enjoy the generous sidewalk and shaded space.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Fort Lauderdale is growing in population, in commercial business, and as a popular city for raising a family, vacationing, or owning second-home. As the community grows, its commercial corridors, once home to modest houses and single-level commercial businesses, are growing as well with mid- and high-rise development under construction across the City and particularly along several key transportation corridors.

Recognizing this growth pattern and with a goal of promoting a successful mix of uses, supporting multi-modal transportation, providing for a variety of housing options, and enhancing the overall livability of the City, the City has embarked on an effort to better guide development along several key roadways. U.S. Highway 1, Sunrise Boulevard, Davie Boulevard, Broward Boulevard, and a few intersecting streets have been identified as important corridors for further study. The City's recent work in this area has included an analysis of the current built environment and a classification of the corridors into three primary character areas, largely based on the existing densities found along the roadways.

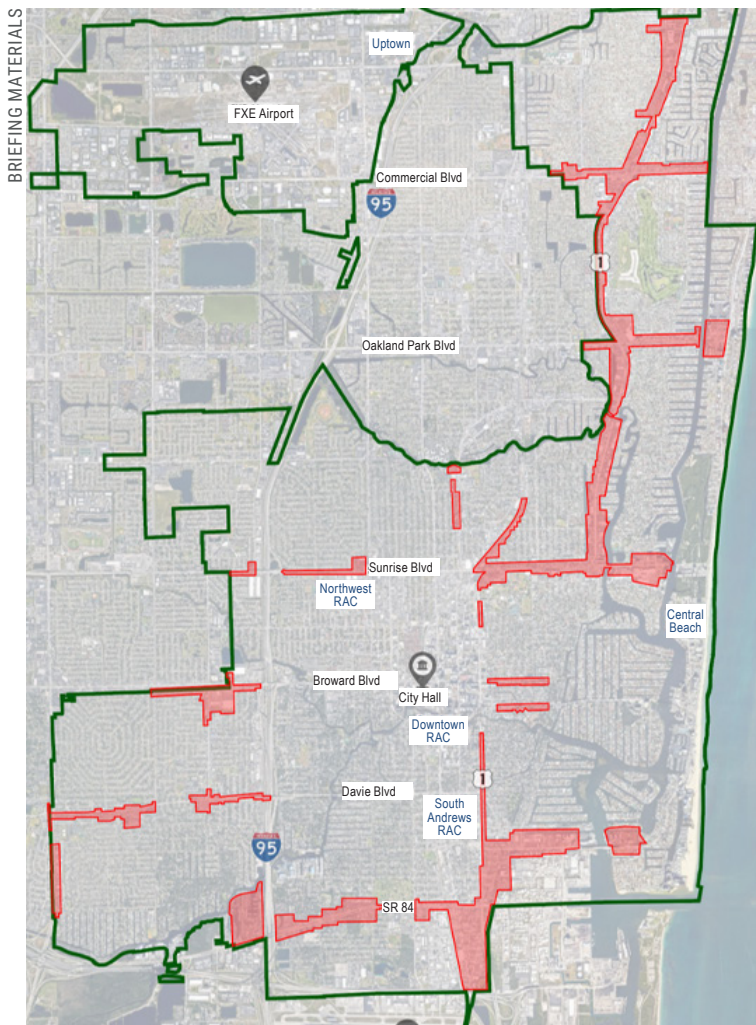
To better understand the opportunities and potential challenges posed by the development of a comprehensive guidance strategy for the City's mixed-use corridors, the City turned to the Urban Land Institute Southeast Florida District Council (ULI) and its technical assistance panel (TAP) program for assistance. ULI convened a group of real estate professionals with the expertise to provide the City with the guidance needed to shape a program of focus for future mixed-use corridor development. The TAP panel outlined the following recommendations for the City's consideration as it moves from this analysis phase into a second phase marked by community engagement and, with the City Commission's approval, engagement with a consulting team to create a comprehensive guidance document and associated land use codes.

Form-based Codes Recommendations

The City's early investment of time and resources to shape robust and effective form-based codes for mixed-use development will pay off in the long run and better support the City's continued growth. There should be one form-based code across all of the City's commercial corridors, calibrated to suit the unique context of each corridor segment. This one-code foundation will provide all parties (developers, City staff, and the community) with a user-friendly foundation and more predictability, through a clear communication of expectations, when new projects are proposed and begin construction.

Education and community engagement and familiarization with development dynamics and related positive and negative impacts will help ensure that the resulting code standards are working in concert with the surrounding neighborhoods and that the resulting projects improving public infrastructure and contributing to a more vibrant and walkable community..

Using as-of-right development processes, for projects fully meeting the code requirements can also increase predictability and certainty for both the public and private sectors. And, as no one code can meet the widely variant needs of every development, flexibility will need to be built into the process with allowances for administrative-level changes for smaller pivots and public hearing approval for variances that require greater adaptations.



The City identified a number of key commercial corridors, marked in the red highlights, for the TAP study.



A new bike lane, marked in green, assists with multi-modal transportation along one of the corridors.

Public Realm Recommendations

As corridors evolve into more consistently mixed-use environments, the appeal and functioning of the public realm become increasingly important. To encourage developers and property owners to dedicate more land for public use, the City can recalibrate its open space requirements to create a robust public realm and bolster walkability along the corridors. Placemaking, whether by the City in public areas or by private developers on site, will further support the enjoyment community members experience when moving along the corridor. Using build-to lines in place of building setbacks can also positively

impact the experience of walking, biking, or driving along the City’s corridors. Finally, improved curbside management can positively influence the corridor experience, making walking a safe and enjoyable choice through the reduction in the number of curb cuts along these thoroughfares.

Recommendations for Neighborhood Transitions

Finally, as the corridors gradually actualize their projected capacity, which will inevitably go vertical, the transition between these larger-scale buildings and their adjacent residential neighbors and the movement of people—whether in cars or on foot—becomes increasingly important.

Improved and expanded mobility is key to community cohesion and acceptance as density along the corridors increases. Enhancing street connectivity, to create additional connection points between projects and facilitate movement between projects, can help ease the volume of traffic on the main corridors. Planning today for the addition of public transit in the future can help build community support and ensure that the public realm is ready for the addition of bus routes, light rail, or other future transit options.

To create space and separation between larger corridor buildings and the abutting, oftentimes single-family neighborhoods, developers and neighbors often default to erecting barriers or walls. The City is encouraged to create a menu of options that would promote and incentivize smoother, gentler transitions involving landscaping, pocket parks, or other dual-purpose buffers in place of concrete walls. These intermediate areas could also provide a welcome space for gentle density in the form of duplexes, four-plexes, and townhomes, which can support the production of missing-middle housing in the market and provide a broader range of housing and homeownership opportunities. The City should also consider how and where developers could be incentivized to work with the surrounding community to jointly determine potential community benefits that could be folded into a project.

The progress made across the City of Fort Lauderdale, led by its staff of planning professionals and elected officials, is exciting and is setting the stage for thoughtful continued growth. With particular focus added through the recommendations of this study and the anticipated work to come, the City's corridors can continue to grow into welcoming and walkable mixed-use environments that will support the commercial needs of the City as well as the residential needs of its growing population.



Building cranes around the City are clear signs of the growth that is underway in Fort Lauderdale.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The City of Fort Lauderdale is in the midst of a multi-phased process to review and revise its land use and development policies related to the City's key commercial corridors. These important stretches of roadway connect residents to employment, businesses to customers, and visitors to the City's wonderful amenities. The corridors have evolved as the City has grown and today feature an interesting mix of uses, scales, setbacks, and roadway access. These inconsistencies create an environment where vehicular and pedestrian traffic is often at odds, where tensions may simmer between commercial and neighboring residential areas, and where the focus on the roadway negatively impacts the walkability and enjoyment of these commercial mixed-use environments.

To address these challenges, the City of Fort Lauderdale and its professional planning staff turned to ULI and its trusted and objective technical assistance panel process for guidance. Through the TAP process, ULI convened a

panel of real estate professionals to assist the City, bringing to the City expertise in the areas of urban planning and design, real estate development, economic development, resilience, and legal and regulatory matters.

The City's Objectives

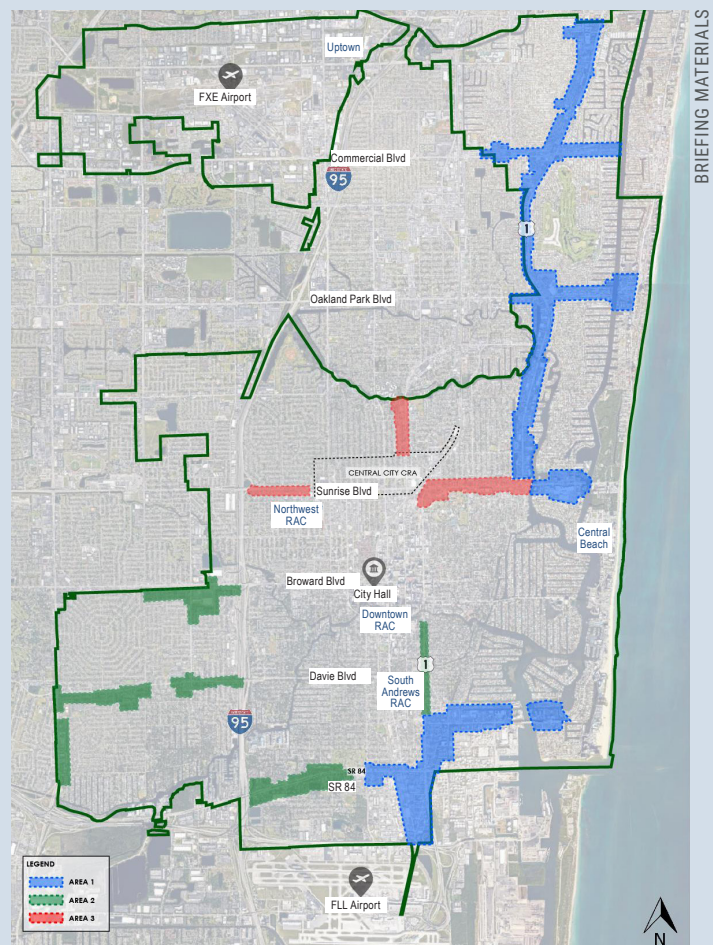
Improve regulations so future development along corridors will

- Promote a more successful mix of uses
- Support multi-modal transportation, walkability, and connectivity
- Provide for a variety of housing options
- Enhance the overall livability of the City

Specific concerns

- Site and building design
- Streetscape design
- Neighborhood connectivity, compatibility, and transition

The corridors in question are highlighted in the map to the right, with three character types noted by the following colors: BLUE – mixed-use high-density; RED – mixed-use medium-density; and GREEN – mixed-use low-density.



BRIEFING MATERIALS

The corridors of concern are spread across Fort Lauderdale and vary greatly in building typology and land use. There are themes, however, that the City identified within each of the corridors, leading to the establishment of three character areas, each featuring a mixed-use environment but with varying densities.

Character Area 1: mixed-use, high-density. This character type centers primarily around Federal Highway 1 and a few intersecting roadways (*Commercial Boulevard, Oakland Park Boulevard, and Sunrise Boulevard east of U.S. 1*). Character Area 1 corridors are marked by large lots, large rights of way, many of the City's mid- and high-rise buildings, and high traffic volume.

Character Area 2: mixed-use, medium-density. Character Area 2 centers around *Sunrise Boulevard east and west of downtown Fort Lauderdale and NE 4th Street*. These corridors also experience relatively high traffic counts, yet not as high as Character Area 1. The buildings, generally a mix of single-story commercial spaces, sit on lots that are typically shallow and have smaller rights-of-way than their higher-density counterparts.

Character Area 3: mixed-use, low-density. This final character area includes *Davie Boulevard, Broward Boulevard, and portions of State roads 441 and 84*. The smaller and more shallow lot sizes along these corridors are suited for the single-story commercial spaces and single-family homes that line these roadways.

In addition to briefing the panel on the mix of uses along the corridors, the City also stressed the importance of planning for a future where sea level rise may place many of these roadways underwater. Property owners are taking steps to elevate buildings in impacted areas yet the raising of the roadbed and related utility infrastructure remains a challenge for the City, with projected costs far outpacing municipal funding sources. Efforts to address land use along the corridor should take into account additional measures to manage stormwater runoff and other water infiltration from rain and other weather events.

Following a briefing from the City, a review of previous planning documents, and a tour of corridors representing each character area, the TAP panelists met with area stakeholders to gain additional insights into the development challenges along the City's commercial thoroughfares from the perspectives of business owners, real estate developers, and architects. Thus equipped, the TAP panelists discussed their findings, deliberated possible solutions, and arrived at a set of recommendations that center smart growth, investment, mobility, and livability. The recommendations are loosely categorized into guidance around form-based codes, ways to improve the pedestrian experience and public realm, and improving the neighborhood transitions—roadway to right of way, right of way to the property line and building frontage, and the building and property edge to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Study Questions

1. What key elements contribute to successful mixed-use corridors?
2. How should the City utilize land development regulations to address recent State law such as Live Local?
3. How could new zoning regulations for future development along these areas better:
 - Ensure appropriate form, scale, and design consistency?
 - Address compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods?
 - Support a safe, connected, multimodal, and walkable built environment?
 - Improve the relationship between the public and private realm?
4. How should the City effectively leverage and coordinate efforts across city, county, and state jurisdictions to support these recommendations?

FORM-BASED CODE RECOMMENDATIONS

The application of a form-based code for Fort Lauderdale’s commercial corridors can have significant positive impacts on the built environment and the human experience of walking, working, shopping, and playing in Fort Lauderdale. A form-based code provides the City with a degree of certainty around what will be built and it provides developers with a clearer understanding of the City’s expectations at the outset, increasing predictability and certainty for developers and potentially helping to reduce pre-development costs.

General Principles

There are several key principles that the panel set forth as guides for the City as it shapes form-based codes for the City’s mixed-use corridors.

- **Create one code.** The panel believes there should be one form-based code across all of the City’s commercial corridors. Recognizing that there are differences between the environments surrounding each corridor, the standards within the code should be calibrated based on context of each corridor segment to better suit the nuances of the surrounding environment.
- **Engage the community.** When embarking on the process to create a code that will equally support each character area, the City should engage with the community to help ensure that the resulting standards are tailored to meet the community’s needs. Thoughtful engagement and implementation can also help bring the community along as a partner in the process, reducing potential tensions around future development.
- **Promote predictability.** Form based codes work best when applicable to all properties within the established boundaries. This as-of-right development, pursuant to established standards, promotes predictability across the community and supports a cohesive development pattern along the corridor.
- **Allow for flexibility.** As no one code can meet the widely variant needs of every development site across the City, the code should provide an avenue for



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

New developments along the corridors feature some of the best practices the City is striving to promote, including protected walkways, transparency into the ground floor spaces, and plantings to soften the hardscape and help mitigate the urban heat island effect.

approving administrative-level variances to account for site constraints and unexpected or unique challenges. Should more significant changes be required, far beyond what the form-based code allows, such changes should be subject to the City’s public hearing process.

Key Components

A form-based code for Fort Lauderdale, a code that will support future development of mixed-use buildings and respond to the market, should include the following key components.

- **Define neighborhood transitions.** While the building uses along the corridors typically feature commercial operations on the ground floor, and rightfully so, there are often residential uses abutting the commercial property. The transition between the commercial spaces and the residential homes, particularly single-family residential homes, directly abutting or separated by a local roadway will require additional attention. These “rear-yard” transitions are expected to provide sound and visual buffers, yet options beyond concrete wall construction should be explored to make better use of green infrastructure, landscaping, dual park uses, and more.
- **Develop design guidelines.** The City is encouraged to develop a set of design guidelines to correspond with the character areas surrounding each corridor. These guidelines should address form and function, but not go so far as to dictate style. The architectural design and features of each building, beyond those necessary to enhance safety and comfort of the public realm, should be left to the architects, builders, and property owners and will allow for a more authentic and visually interesting built environment.
- **Define frontage types.** In pursuit of a public realm that is more oriented toward and safer for the pedestrian, the code should specify a menu of defined building frontage types. Within these parameters, the City can more actively promote walkability, ensure a more



Rear-yard spaces and transitions between mixed-use buildings and residential neighborhoods often default to sterile fencing or walls, yet with some thoughtful planning—and planting—these same spaces can become amenities and visually pleasing for all.

pleasant and safer pedestrian experience, and smooth the transition from the private building and property to the public realm.

- **Address vehicular access.** Traffic moves along these corridors at speeds that can make pedestrian crossings—across the street or across a building’s driveway—difficult and even dangerous. Further study of vehicular access along the corridors, analysis of where and how curb cuts are allowed, and where and how secondary access could be provided will be warranted to support the safety and security of pedestrians moving along the corridors.
- **Align building envelopes with neighborhood context.** The intensity of the building design and the associated building envelope standards should take into account the surrounding neighborhood context. This proposed alignment will help create a built environment that feels complementary and intentional, again supporting the positive experiences of moving along the corridor.
- **Provide standards for a mix of uses.** As the City works to promote mixed-use buildings along the commercial corridors, the form-based code should specify unified standards to help promote an appropriate mix of uses. While the market will largely dictate what use will go where (and next to what), the City should lead with its goals and associated standards for the preferred commercial mix, which can also facilitate adaptive use of buildings in the future.
- **Consider minimum standards for ground floor spaces.** The City has already addressed ground floor uses to a degree in its guidance documents, but taking that work a step further, the panel recommends establishing a minimum standard for the ground floors of the buildings along the corridors. Requiring active uses and building transparency—windows that allow people to see in and, conversely, those inside to see out and add more eyes on the street—will create a more walkable and enjoyable pedestrian experience along the corridor.
- **Incorporate resilience and sustainability measures.** The City’s recent investment in sustainability and



The variety of land uses along the City’s commercial corridors interact with the roadway in differing ways. With standards in place across the three character areas, things like vehicular access, curb cuts, and on-street parking can be better managed and become more consistent.

resilience guidelines for design and construction is an excellent step in the right direction. The City should continue to vet and implement the Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale Design and Construction Manual guidelines where appropriate.

- Consolidate parking requirements.** The way cities manage parking and the parking needs of tenants and visitors are changing significantly with some cities are eliminating parking minimums altogether and some residents are moving into buildings with zero dedicated parking spaces. While Fort Lauderdale may not yet be experiencing shifts of that degree, there are opportunities to gain efficiencies by consolidating the City’s parking requirements. By using fewer categories for parking provision—perhaps just one set of minimums for commercial uses and one set for residential uses—and providing options for building owner/developer flexibility, through market-based supportive information (e.g., proximity to transit, shared use agreements between buildings with different peak hours), the City can better allow for innovative solutions in parking management.
- Align public benefits with development bonuses.** As developers seek additional opportunities to expand projects, gain additional market share, and increase profits, the City can align the granting of development bonuses (e.g., increases in density, floor area ratios, and height) with community benefits (e.g., enhanced resiliency, additional affordable housing units). Where possible, the community benefits should be informed by, if not directed by, the community surrounding the development in question.
- Push for affordable housing.** As developers seek to build more residential units across Fort Lauderdale, the City should include provisions to support the incorporation of affordable housing in mixed-use buildings along the corridors. These locations make particularly good sense for additional affordable units as they would be proximate to public transit, located within walkable distances to services, and can be



The shade trees, planted away from the building to allow for canopy growth, will help absorb rainfall and stormwater and help cool the area for pedestrians.

built more affordably than single-family units through economies of scale.

- Calibrate rooftop standards by character area.** Building rooftops are often an afterthought, with mechanical equipment hastily screened as a project nears completion. In other instances, rooftops are additional points of activation, bringing building occupants up to the roof for lounging, parties, and other gatherings. By taking a closer look at a new development, to identify the resiliency opportunities and neighborhood compatibility issues, the City can support the creation of a built environment that is resilient, responsive, and additive to the surrounding neighborhood. The incorporation of cool roofing material can help reduce the urban heat island effect rather than adding to neighborhood heat intensity. Using a constructed parapet wall to screen mechanical equipment or party spaces creates an environment that is more visually appealing to neighbors and reduces potential noise conflicts.

In a strong market like Fort Lauderdale, the addition of a form-based code can help the City support walkable environments, a mix of uses along key commercial corridors, and create predictability and certainty for developers bringing projects to the City.

PUBLIC REALM RECOMMENDATIONS

The planning work that the City is undertaking, and the focus on its mixed-use corridors specifically, is a pursuit of an environment that is more enjoyable for Fort Lauderdale’s residents, employees, and visitors. The City can guide private development, yet much of what happens on private property is outside of the City’s control. The public realm, however, provides the City with a wonderful opportunity to influence the experience of being in Fort Lauderdale, enjoying the City’s amenities, working or visiting area businesses, living in its neighborhoods, and moving between destinations.

Walkability and placemaking are key to an enjoyable pedestrian experience. The City’s open spaces and the balance of open space with the built environment is influenced by building design and curbside management. The panel addressed each of those five factors in its recommendations around public realm actions.

Walkability

Creating an appealing and walkable environment can prove challenging for municipalities. Barriers, such as control of right of way, legacy infrastructure, and climate impacts can limit the appeal of walking in certain areas. For the City of Fort Lauderdale, improving the walkable environment around the City begins with identifying and focusing on the areas, environments, and assets the City can control.

- **Emphasize the right-of-way treatment.** The transition between private property and the aligned right of way should not be a development afterthought. By placing added emphasis on the right-of-way treatment, requiring wide pedestrian walkways separated from the roadway, preferably native and ample landscaping treatments, and ongoing maintenance, the City can positively impact the pedestrian experience and create a streetscape that is walkable along the entire length, not just in particular segments.
- **Create a menu of frontage types.** Not all buildings are or should be the same along any particular corridor—

and that is a good thing. Planning for a variety of building types, sizes, scales, and uses also requires planning for a variety of building frontages—defining how those buildings sit on and interact with the right-of-way and roadway beyond. This advance planning and a menu of recommended frontage types will assist developers in understanding their building parameters and increase process predictability.

- **Harmonize the ground floor with the street.** The panel’s understanding of sea level rise and its potential impact on Fort Lauderdale led to a recommendation that the public realm assist in harmonizing the raised ground floors of buildings (raised in order to meet building codes that account for sea level rise) and the street beyond. This continuity and cohesion is important in order to enhance the public realm and its habitability and will support the ongoing sustainability of the public/walkable portions of a property and prevent abrupt or even drastic elevation changes when moving from sidewalks to building front doors.
- **Focus on the pedestrian experience.** The experience of walking in front of a building is greatly influenced by the building envelope on the ground floor (featuring walls or windows) and the activities within that may be visible from the sidewalk. Prioritizing or incentivizing the creation of habitable ground floor spaces will result in walkable districts that come alive with views into the shopping, dining, or other active uses within.

- **Emphasize canopy structures and shade trees.** South Florida is hot most of the year and walking on concrete sidewalks in urban settings can quickly become uncomfortably hot. Creating shade structures along the sidewalks and encouraging the use of shade trees in plantings—replacement plantings in existing developments or new plantings in projects nearing completion—can provide pedestrians with much needed relief from the heat and intensity of the sun’s rays.
- **Create streetscape guidelines.** Streetscape guidelines for the City place the public realm and walkability front and center in planning and development work. With strong and clear guidelines supporting the City’s Public Works Department and requiring alignment by developers working on corridor-based projects, the City can improve the overall walkable experience along the corridors.

Placemaking

The Congress for New Urbanism defines [placemaking](#) as “the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play, and learn in... Placemaking is a process. It is a means to an end: the creation of quality places.” For the City of Fort Lauderdale, placemaking along its mixed-use corridors may take many forms, but the work is in pursuit of shaping the corridors into places that visitors, employees, and residents seek and choose to spend time enjoying. To support placemaking along the corridors, the panel recommends the following measures.

- **Require habitable space.** The City should consider establishing a requirement that a certain percentage of the ground floor (to be determined by the City) along the corridor frontage be habitable space. This requirement supports the pedestrian experience as noted on the previous page.



Shade trees and canopy structures along the public right-of-way can provide welcome respite from the sun’s intensity.

- **Define activation.** The City currently has in place a requirement that ground floor spaces along the corridor be activated, yet the required activation can be unclear in definition and difficult to bring to reality. The City is encouraged to adopt a definition for ground floor activation that provides all parties with desired clarity.
- **Encourage outdoor seating.** For buildings along the corridors that have active frontages, such as restaurants, every effort should be made to encourage outdoor seating as a function of the business's regular operations.
- **Encourage transparency.** Active frontages can add energy and dynamism to the sidewalk beyond if pedestrians are given glimpses into the world inside the active ground floor space. People like to see people—those inside can enjoy watching the people pass by and those passing by would enjoy seeing the diners or shoppers enjoying the spaces inside.
- **Allow for privacy screening.** While transparency should be strongly encouraged, the City can also provide opportunities for flexibility in visibility. Privacy screening on outdoor frontages should be approached in a thoughtful and defined way that allows for private restaurant seating to be successful, while balancing the pedestrian experience. Suggestions on materials, allowable heights, and permeability as well as best practice examples might prove helpful in working through negotiations with buildings owners, operators, and City staff responsible for the screen approvals.

Open Space

The open space requirement currently in place in the City should be revised to create more impactful public spaces.

- **Incentivize moving open spaces to building frontages.** Presently, each new development is required to create open space, regardless of parcel



This small restaurant makes efficient use of its patio space, providing outdoor dining options. The windows provide welcome transparency and the bushes provide a sense of privacy in an otherwise very public setting.

size, somewhere on the development parcel. If the City were to instead incorporate open space requirements into the frontage design, developers/owners could push their existing 1,500 square feet of required open space to the front, thereby contributing meaningfully to the pedestrian realm along the corridor.

- Limit the open space requirement.** Additionally, the City is encouraged to consider applying the additional open space requirement only for properties of a particular minimum scale (e.g., greater than two acres) and setting the additional open space requirement as a percentage of the lot size. This reconfiguration would push more open space to building frontages, which would create more space for public realm further supporting a more enjoyable and walkable environment for all.
- Count accessible elevated spaces toward the open space requirement.** The panel further recommends that elevated public spaces that are accessible to the public count toward the open space requirement for the development.

Building Design

The alignments of buildings along the corridor and the public realm can significantly impact the walkability of the area.

- Replace setbacks with build-to lines.** The City should consider establishing a build-to line along the mixed-use corridors in lieu of setbacks. This shift will encourage a more defined presence for the frontages instead of allowing the variability that comes with setback lines and related varying frontages when buildings are set deeper into the lot than the initial setback line.



Even at very different scales, the building frontages in the examples above are pulled to consistent edges of the public realm, creating a comfortable walking experience where every business is given the same degree of exposure to the sidewalk.



The design of this mixed-use building pulls access off the primary Sunrise Boulevard frontage to a secondary street to the west. This curb management program allows traffic to flow freely by while still providing ample access to the building’s shops off a street with less traffic volume, creating a safer experience for all.

- **Provide review criteria to ensure predictability.** There may be instance where developing a building to the build-to line is not functionally practical. The City will need to provide variances for deviations based on project-specific conditions.

Curbside Management

The corridors today feature a significant number of curb cuts. These access points create tension for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other modalities as cars frequently move in and out of traffic. The following measures can assist the City in reducing the number of curb cuts along the study area corridors.

- **Require access management.** With careful study of the corridors, identifying traffic counts and patterns, and understanding business access needs and potential alignments, the City can begin to reduce the

number of curb cuts through an access management program that will consolidate access points and/or identify alternative access points.

- **Consider requiring access from secondary frontages.** For those buildings along the corridor that have secondary frontages, the City should indicate desirable primary and secondary frontages to ensure predictability and connectivity (with exceptions always possible) and then consider a shift to requiring primary access on those secondary frontages. This move will help reduce the number of vehicles entering/exiting the roadway and reduce the instances of accidents along the corridors.

TRANSITION RECOMMENDATIONS

The mixed-use nature of the City's commercial corridors and the associated density that typically follows creates unique conditions that will require thoughtful planning and design. Density along the corridors makes good urban planning sense for the City. That density brings more people, more pedestrians, and typically more vehicles to the environment. Planning for enhanced street connections, transit opportunities, and transitions to the neighboring, lower-density often residential neighborhoods should begin today to lay the foundation for successful development tomorrow.

Street Connectivity

The movement of people across the City is growing more challenging as the City's population, both primary residents and part-time residents, continues to grow. By improving and enhancing access to inter-city connections from corridors, people can continue to move about the City safely and with relative ease.

- **Create cross access points.** Pulling vehicles off the corridor and allowing movement between properties through cross access points can allow for more direct access for drivers and reduce the interruption of these short trips on the corridor.
- **Require secondary street access.** Where possible, access to businesses and buildings along the corridors should be moved to secondary streets to reduce the number of curb cuts along the roadway. These secondary access points will be safer than access directly off the corridor, due to speed of through traffic, and will improve the pedestrian experience by reducing interruptions by turning vehicles.
- **Develop corridor cross sections.** Working with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and Broward County (the county), the City should develop corridor cross sections to incorporate Complete Street components. Additionally, the City should coordinate with the county to develop context sensitive plans that harmonize with the surrounding

Complete Streets

Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to prioritize safety, comfort, and access to destinations for all people who use the street, especially people who have experienced systemic underinvestment or whose needs have not been met through a traditional transportation approach, including older adults, people living with disabilities, people who cannot afford or do not have access to a car, and Black, Native, and Hispanic or Latino/a/x communities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, jobs, and schools, bicycle to work, and move actively with assistive devices. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk or move actively to and from train stations.

Creating Complete Streets means transportation agencies must change their approach to community roads. By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to prioritize safer slower speeds for all people who use the road, over high speeds for motor vehicles. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for people walking, biking, driving, riding transit, and moving actively with assistive devices—making your town a better place to live.

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environment and set minimum standards that all new developments must meet.

- **Ensure public realm setback.** The public realm that will be created and expanded through the panel's open space recommendations should be protected through public realm setbacks that tie back to the character areas as defined in the City's Mixed Use Development planning analysis document.
- **Expand the Sunrise Boulevard regulations.** The inter-district guidelines that address a portion of Sunrise Boulevard today should be expanded to encompass the full length of the corridor. Without such an expansion, the divide between the character areas of the corridor will grow wider and the experience will become more disjointed.

Multimodal and Transit

As the City's population grows and density increases, the need for transit also grows. Movement along Fort Lauderdale's commercial corridors should be supported by mass transit and provide safe passage for alternative transportation modes.

- **Promote mass transit along corridors.** Planning should already be underway with FDOT, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, and other transit agencies to ensure that the corridors will support premium mass transit with appropriate land use policy.

Plan today for the type of transit you want to have tomorrow.

– TAP Panelist

- **Incentivize to mobility improvements.** Large-scale projects coming to the key corridors should be incentivized by the City to incorporate mobility-related improvements into the projects. Factored into the early design and development, mobility plans—

including areas for rideshare access, e-bike storage, and other alternative transportation—can more readily support a resident population that may not wish to drive or who might prefer to leave their car at home on occasion.

- **Establish benefits for transit oriented development (TOD).** As the City plans for future transit improvements, it should consider establishing a section of the code for TOD projects. This section of the code could align certain benefits, such as parking reductions and additional density, for developers and property owners who choose to build with a transit mentality. This approach will also encourage community support for mass transit solutions.



Premium mass transit for Fort Lauderdale's corridors will take careful planning but will be an important asset to the community as population growth and development pressures push higher-density projects to the City's mixed-use corridors. This streetcar line in Tacoma, Washington, assists residents and visitors with moving around the denser portions of Tacoma.

Neighborhood Transition

As mentioned, the transition between higher-density corridor developments and the surrounding, often single-family residential neighborhoods requires particular care and attention.

- **Use a transition zone.** To create a step-down in building use and intensity between high-rise mixed-use buildings and single-family homes, the City should explore the use of a transition zone between residential neighborhoods and mixed-use corridors. A transition zone of moderate density buildings—four-plexes, duplexes, and townhomes—would provide a welcome step down in density and could provide opportunities for a mix of housing that is more attainable for the City’s workforce and support the addition of missing middle housing in the market.
- **Encourage context-sensitive buffering.** In areas where mixed-use development abuts residential neighborhoods, the City should encourage buffering mechanisms that are sensitive to the scale of the adjacent properties.
- **Establish a suite of rear yard treatments.** In an environment where a concrete wall is the default solution for screening, the City is encouraged to establish a suite of potential treatments to inspire more functional, attractive, and sustainable designs, such as landscaping treatments, pocket parks, screening of parking, art installations, and more.
- **Encourage additional blending measures.** Residential liners and façade articulation or treatments should also be encouraged to provide for context sensitive transitions to lower density residential areas, smoothing the lines between high- and low-densities and creating more harmony between the City’s commercial and residential neighborhoods.

Community Benefits

As projects are posed to the City, City leaders are encouraged to explore how the development community could be encouraged to work with and better support the residential communities adjacent to the new project. Taking this collaborative path will require more time, but the payoff—a neighboring community in support of the proposed development—should be worth the additional investment of time.

- **Consider neighborhood context and needs.** The City is encouraged to work with potential developers to better understand how the new development could relate to and better serve the adjacent residential area. The result is a neighborhood with a new commercial neighbor rather than two worlds (residential and commercial) operating completely separate from one another.
- **Consider tax increment financing (TIF) for community benefits.** Using TIF funding on a project could provide the developer with opportunities to fund community-desired projects in areas within a defined benefit zone. This would allow adjacent residents to benefit from corridor development and see the projects as welcome additions. Community outreach will be needed to determine the specific community-desired benefits around each project.
- **Encourage incorporation of community benefits into project design.** As development proposals come before the City, developers should be encouraged to incorporate community benefits into the project design. These benefits could come in the form of community-accessible EV charging stations, co-working spaces, and more, and should be determined in collaboration with the surrounding community. Carefully crafted design review criteria and processes will be essential to achieving this goal.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the primary areas of focus for the panel, the form-based code, public realm, and neighborhood transitions, there were several additional items the panel believes the City should consider as it works to encourage further responsible mixed-use development along its commercial corridors.

- Form a corridor working group.** As the roadways under scrutiny in this study are managed by entities other than the City, it is encouraged to form an intergovernmental working group, including key public and private stakeholders, to foster and maintain collaboration throughout the implementation of the recommendations. The City may need to lead these efforts, but forming this collaborative working group at the start will help ensure that all parties are working in concert and alignment, helping the City meet its corridor goals.
- Continue the good work.** The City has invested its resources in the articulation of guidance documents like the DCM. Continuing to vet those documents and guidelines and working with developers to fine tune the path forward will serve the City well. Working together to best meet the community's needs and the challenges of a warming climate, the City and the development community can make great progress.
- Encourage/require LEED certification.** For higher density tiers of development, the City is encouraged to require LEED certification and equivalent industry-recognized green building standards. The City of Miami has enacted similar requirements and its rollout of the requirement could serve as a model.
- Explore innovative housing solutions.** While the City's current housing allocation, as managed by the county, has been stretched, demand for housing in Fort Lauderdale continues. The City should explore innovative solutions to meet this housing demand, and more thorough study is required.
- Update the City's in-lieu contribution.** The present fee developers must pay in lieu of meeting the City's affordable housing requirement is very low, particularly in comparison to the requirements in peer cities as well as to the actual cost of supplying an affordable unit. The panel recommends updating and increasing that in-lieu fee contribution to shift movement back to meeting the City's goal of additional affordable units in the market.
- Incentivize additional affordable housing.** The City's population is growing and housing prices are quickly outpacing wages. City leadership is strongly encouraged to create incentives to catalyze additional affordable housing development in Fort Lauderdale.



Some of the City's naturally-occurring affordable housing sits on the commercial corridors and may give way to more dense, mixed-use development in the future. The City should continue to incentivize more affordable housing development.

CONCLUSION

As the City dives deeper into the tools and resources it will need to further encourage and guide mixed-use development on Fort Lauderdale's mixed-use corridors, improving consistency and predictability as well as promoting transportation oriented development and an inviting public realm will be key to success. The panel's recommendations, outlined in this report, are designed to serve as a guide as the City embarks on phase two of the process which will include public engagement (outreach and consensus building), preparation of the code amendments, and public hearings.

The City is taking a thoughtful approach to the future of these corridors. The investment of time to shape robust and effective form-based codes will pay off in the long run. There should be one form-based code across all of the City's commercial corridors, calibrated to suit the unique context of the corridor segment. Community outreach should not wait until phase two but instead should be conducted now to help ensure that the resulting standards are tailored to the needs of the surrounding community. Predictability, so important in the development process, can be supported by creating as-of-right development. And, as no one code can meet the widely variant needs of every development, flexibility should be built into the process.

The appeal of the public realm is an important factor in the success of these corridors. Factors such as using open space requirements to create a robust public realm, supporting placemaking activities along the corridor, and using build-to lines and curbside management can influence the experience of the public realm along the

corridor, encouraging walking instead of driving and creating opportunities for social contact and interaction which, in turn, build community and help ensure that these mixed-use environments provide safe and pleasant experiences for all.

Finally, as the City promotes denser development along the corridors, the transition between these larger-scale buildings and their adjacent residential neighbors will become increasingly important. The City's work should include careful planning and design to enhance street connectivity, provide for future transit opportunities, and create menus of options that promote smoother, gentler neighborhood transitions and community benefits.

The City is at an exciting point in its history and growth. As it continues to grow and reach 200,000 full-time residents, the City has a unique opportunity to leverage these corridors to encourage further smart growth, investment, mobility, and livability for its residents, employees, and visitors.



ABOUT THE PANEL



Steve Wernick
Panel Chair
Managing Partner
Wernick & Co, PLLC

Steven J. Wernick, Esq. AICP is an experienced land use attorney and serves as the firm's Principal and

Managing Partner. Steve maintains a multi-disciplinary practice infused with a passion for placemaking that makes him a go-to counselor on land use, zoning, and government affairs. Steve assists clients in every phase of real estate development, including zoning and development approvals for mixed-use projects in urban centers and revitalization areas in South Florida. His work often takes him into post-industrial districts. Since 2013, Steve represents national and local developers on adaptive use and new construction projects in the Wynwood Arts District—including Goldman Properties' Wynwood Garage, Related/East End's Wynwood 25, and Sterling Bay's 545 Wyn Office Building. Steve represented Dacra Development and Miami Design District Associates in securing approvals for the Miami Design District Special Area Plan (SAP), including 1 million+ square feet of phased development of luxury retail, art, and civic space. Steve

is credentialed by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). With significant experience in navigating zoning and regulatory approvals and a keen understanding of the dynamics of emerging neighborhoods, Steve regularly consults and advises both public and private sector clients on creative zoning solutions that facilitate contextual redevelopment and inclusive growth. Steve served as special counsel to the City of Miami's Wynwood Business Improvement District (BID) on the creation of the City of Miami's first Neighborhood Revitalization District to support transformation of Wynwood from garment district to warehouse arts district and now a mixed-use neighborhood with 5,000+ people working there every day. In 2017, the American Planning Association awarded the NRD-1 the National Planning Award in Economic Development. His work shepherding the Wynwood Norte Community Vision Plan and NRD-2 overlay district earned him recognition by the Daily Business Review as the 2022 Unsung Hero. Steve is a former past chairperson of the City of Miami Waterfront Advisory Board. He currently serves on the Board of Friends of The Underline, Inc., Builders Association of South Florida, and is an active member of Urban Land Institute and the American Planning Association.



Shamim Ahmadzadegan
Design Director, Principal Gensler

Shamim's portfolio of award-winning projects demonstrates a deep experience with designs of enormous

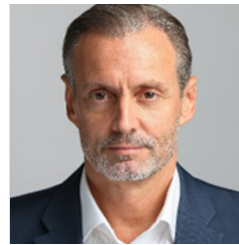
scale and complexity. Those projects span a wide range of focus areas, including urban planning, mixed-use, tall buildings, commercial office buildings, hospitality, education, and retail. Thanks to this broad base of expertise, Shamim brings a holistic view to his work and pairs it with a sensitivity for local context and culture. As a result, his projects exhibit a harmony with their surroundings and function as studies in the concept of place. Shamim believes that design and architecture should be both pragmatic and poetic, functional and aspirational, and, ultimately, should better a city. This viewpoint is reflected in his leadership on a two-year research project entitled *The Spaces In Between*, which demonstrates the importance of placemaking and shows how it differentiates projects and creates more soulful spaces. The research also resulted in a toolkit of parts that condenses the art of placemaking into six actionable principles that cities can use to produce highly successful destinations.



Kimberly Brown
Director of Resilience Planning and Implementation Miami-Dade County Office of Resilience

Kimberly Brown serves as Director of Resilience Planning and

Implementation in the Miami-Dade County Office of Resilience. Her experience has spanned both private and public sector work including over fourteen years with Miami-Dade County. During that time, she has worked on a variety of land use and environmental efforts including facilitation of the seven-year review and update of the County's Comprehensive Plan. Currently, her work focuses on advancement of resilience initiatives that allow the County to adapt and thrive in the face of climate-related threats. Ms. Brown also serves as Miami-Dade County's representative on the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact Leadership Committee. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Florida and professional certification by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).



Francisco Garcia
Principal, Planning Consultant The Euclid Group

A planner, urban designer, and architect by training, Mr. García is responsible for leading designs for new communities as well as urban

redevelopment and revitalization projects in America, Europe, Asia, and the MENA region. In 25 years of professional experience he has held executive positions in both the public and private sectors. Mr. García's experience is broad in range encompassing, among others, management of a large municipal community planning department, urban design, and zoning division inclusive of code compliance. In addition, and pertaining to master planning and regulatory coding efforts. Mr. García has been involved in the design of diverse master plans in green-field, infill and gray-field conditions as well as for new towns, and a number of code calibrations for municipalities large and small. Mr. García brings this experience and knowledge to effective leadership of design workshops and charrettes and is repeatedly called to lecture before government officials, developers, and citizen groups. He also effectively advocates and mediates in complex entitlement processes.



Ben Hutchens
Design Principal – Landscape Architect Arquitectonica GEO

Mr. Hutchens is a Registered Landscape Architect with over 20 years of experience that specializes

in urban site design for mixed-use, commercial, multi-family residential, municipal, and institutional projects both local and international. Driven by a passion for the outdoors and striving to achieve a timeless design and a sense of place with every project, Ben's thoughtful and expressive design demonstrate his commitment to aesthetics, functionality, and resiliency while providing clients with designs of great impact and value. Ben has recently served as the Lead Landscape Architect Designer for the Wynwood Streetscape Master Plan and the University of Miami Lakeside Village student housing project as well as several other Florida-based and international projects.



Renee Miller
President
R. Miller Consulting Group

Renee Miller is the Founder and President of R. Miller Consulting Group, LLC. Renee has over 24 years of experience in local government

management and has worked as a professional administrator at all levels of municipal and county government, spending most of her career in the areas of Planning, Government Relations, Community and Economic Development, Community Redevelopment, and Senior Government Administration. Renee’s experience as a senior municipal executive includes holding the position of City Manager of an urban area coastal city with a population of over 39,000 residents and an annual combined operating budget of \$150 Million dollars. In line with her commitment to excellence as a professional administrator, she obtained her certification from the International City County Management Association as a Credentialed Manager in 2010 and has a wide array of competencies up to and including establishing new municipalities. Renee founded R. Miller Consulting Group in 2016 and has been working with cities since that time to find innovative ways to plan for and implement their redevelopment visions. Renee holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from Florida State University, and a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from Florida Atlantic University.



Aaron Stolear
President of Development
13th Floor Investments

Aaron Stolear leads 13th Floor Investments Public Private Partnership (P3) vertical. As part of his responsibilities, he oversees Link

at Douglas, a 1.5 million square-foot transit-oriented development with residential, office, retail, and public infrastructure components. Prior to joining 13th Floor, Mr. Stolear worked in Project Management and Execution at ExxonMobil Development Company. There, he worked on multi-billion dollar infrastructure projects ranging from oil production facilities in Angola to a residential building campus in Iraq. During his time at ExxonMobil, he held a variety of project management functions and positions. Mr. Stolear graduated as *Magna Cum Laude* in Civil Engineering from the University of Florida and holds an MBA from Harvard Business School.



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