

City of Marco Island

# Midtown Plan

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Jane Hittler Park and the Esplanade in the foreground



Midtown from the south, looking over Veterans' Community Park

# Acknowledgements

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*~Marco Island Citizens~*  
*~Midtown property and business owners~*

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# A. Executive Summary

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- ❖ The Midtown Master Plan provides eight sub-districts within the Midtown boundary. The sub-districts are unique with respect to existing land uses and the built environment. Recognizing these sub-districts as independent but integrated components of Midtown is essential to the future development and redevelopment of Midtown. It is the intent of these sub-districts to maintain all current permitted land uses and density (as provided in the Comprehensive Plan, 9/17/07 - recommendations), while providing further development incentives within these areas. Furthermore, the plan will provide guidance to Marco Island policy makers and citizens with respect to Midtown development and redevelopment proposals, including future Land Development Code amendments.
- ❖ Also, clear policies which address Land-use, Transportation, Housing, Infrastructure, Parks and Open Space, Economic Development, Community Character and Public Safety are provided in the plan. After plan adoption, these policies shall guide all future land-use decisions within Midtown.

The vision for midtown is to promote and incentivize new development and redevelopment into a safe, compact and interconnected core. The plan recognizes and reflects desired uses, activities, access points/corridors, linkages, comfort levels and the desired community image in order to increase Midtown Marco Island's social and economic fabric. The plan emphasizes the importance of public and private investments in streets and sidewalks, public spaces (parks and parking) and civic facilities which reinforces the importance of Midtown Marco Island. On June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 the Marco Island City Council adopted Ordinance No. 11-05 which extended the use of waterfront commercial density to upland commercial property within midtown through the development agreement process. Allowing the transfer of development rights onto commercial property within midtown will overtime support a wider array of goods and services, restaurants, galleries, commercial endeavors, while encouraging a pedestrian-friendly environment through redevelopment opportunities, such as hotel and mixed-use development.

The Midtown Overlay Sub-district Map, Exhibit "A" illustrates each of the sub-district boundaries. These districts inform visitors and residents alike that they are arriving to a unique place providing an authentic quality of life experience supported by businesses and service districts and established residential/transient communities. A mixture of land-uses in Midtown serves both the needs of visitors and residents during their travels throughout the tropical small town. The northeastern sub-district (East Elkcam Circle) primarily operates as a heavy commercial/service district while the southeastern sub-district (Town Center) operates as a retail, financial and business district. Additionally, the northern sub-district (Rose Marina/Angler's Cove) provides a public marina and multi-family/transient district, while the western sub-district (Collier Blvd.) operates as a retail/restaurant and business district. It is the intent of the sub-districts to recognize variations in Midtown in order to provide appropriate standards for development and redevelopment purposes. The Midtown Improvements Map Exhibit "B" visually depicts the physical improvements identified within the action matrix, which is found at the end of the plan policies. Both maps provide guidance for public and private improvements and land use decisions. To implement the proposed policies outlined in the plan, we have provided recommended short-term, mid-term and long-term strategies. These strategies will require public/private sector partnerships. There must be multiple partners and stakeholders involved in the implementation of this plan over the next 20 years.

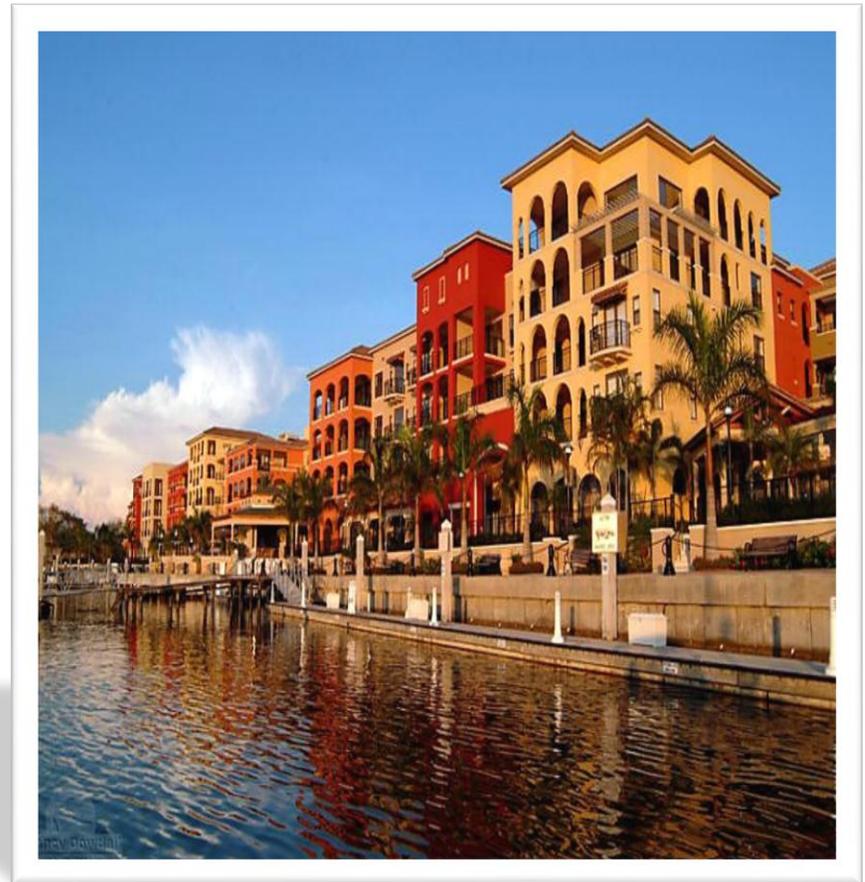


## B. Recommendations Report

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### I. Objectives

1. Ensure that midtown continues to serve as the center of culture, commerce and civic life for the residents and visitors of Marco Island.
2. Encourage new investment in buildings and businesses within midtown to provide employment and an enhanced tax base.
3. Build upon the natural assets of midtown as well as the tropical small town character qualities that have attracted people to live on and visit Marco Island.
4. Strengthen the variety and quality of available goods and services within midtown.
5. Develop a clear and consistent message about the unique attributes of midtown.
6. Recognize that the residents and merchants of midtown are both important as stewards of the livability and quality of life in the community.



The Esplanade as viewed from Smokehouse Bay

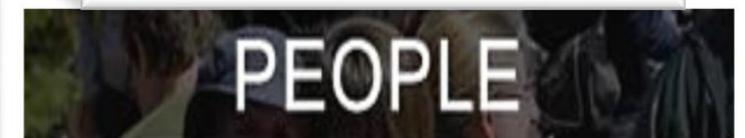
## II. Policies

### A. Land-use

1. The highest intensity of commercial and residential development should be concentrated in a pedestrian friendly and walkable midtown core.
2. The city should encourage residential and transient accommodations including hotel and mixed-use developments that plan to utilize the Transfer of Development Rights program. The city should recognize that development and redevelopment to the heart of midtown will help to sustain the commercial and cultural vitality.
3. In return for providing tangible public amenities, such as but not limited to (open space, parking, sidewalks and pedestrian nodes) increased development opportunity through zoning incentives should be allowed so both variety and predictability are possible for developers and investors.
4. The city should find creative ways through zoning initiatives to integrate an artist culture into the midtown sub-districts. This integration will help to energize neighborhood revitalization and stimulate economic development, while addressing the cultural needs of midtown.
5. The city should support business groups interested in pursuing potential redevelopment funding and/or technical assistance from state and federal agencies that encourage the revitalization of traditional, historic neighborhood and commercial districts through a community-based comprehensive approach. Potential agency or authority programs may include but shouldn't be limited to "Florida" Main Street Program, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Downtown Development/Improvement Authorities (DDA & DIA).



**It's all about**



**In Motion**

## **B. Transportation**

1. The city should continue to review and prioritize capital investments, operations, frontage improvements, lighting, right of way parking and other issues related to streets and sidewalks.
2. The city should emphasize the importance of the following key intersections:
  - N. Collier Blvd. and Bald Eagle Drive,
  - N. Barfield Drive and Bald Eagle Drive,
  - Elkcarn Circle and Bald Eagle Drive,
  - East/West Elkcarn Circles and N. Collier Blvd.

The streetscape at these intersections should be enhanced to improve traffic flow and pedestrian crossings.

3. Parking incentives should be furthered to allow additional shared parking opportunities. The city should continue to encourage shared parking agreements while ensuring shared vehicular access and pedestrian movements between businesses and properties.
4. Bicycle lanes should be added to streets which can accommodate them and the city should continue to incorporate practical bicycle routes which are identified in Proposed Bike Paths Master Plan (12/31/10). Vehicular parking reduction incentives (i.e. parking credits) for developers who incorporate bicycle racks and alternative mobility options into their site plan should be promoted.

5. The city should consider alleys within midtown as commercial delivery routes while managing the alley right of way in a manner which accommodates solid waste services. Furthermore, the city should identify and work with Midtown property/business owners to consolidate trash receptacles.
6. Pedestrian routes and corridors should be planned, managed and expanded over time into a comprehensive network. This network should include wider sidewalks with trees, pedestrian-scaled-lighting and furnishings which can function as safe and attractive walking routes.
7. The city should continue to upgrade roadways and the associated stormwater management systems.



Conceptual traffic calming designs for key intersections

## C. Housing

1. The city should encourage density transfers to establish transient lodging and mixed-use development opportunities.
2. The city should find ways to integrate the option of an administrative review process into the Land Development Code for modest mixed-use development proposals within the boundaries of midtown.



Holiday Inn

## D. Infrastructure

1. The city should identify and prioritize projects to replace all under sized and out dated water lines, sanitary sewer lines, storm drainage lines/facilities and fire hydrants within the boundaries of midtown.
2. The city should continue the development and distribution of the “purple pipe” reclaimed water system throughout midtown.
3. The city should look to find ways to better integrate way-finding signs into streetscapes as a means of informing visitors of public parking options.
4. The city should encourage a unified signage plan for both public and private lands.
5. The city should bury overhead utility lines in appropriate public setting locations.
6. Sidewalk lighting should be completed throughout midtown and the lighting shall be consistently designed to improve pedestrian movement.
7. As parking inventory is evaluated and the demand for parking increases, the city should identify opportunities to provide more public parking, parking garages, bicycle parking and shared parking throughout midtown.



## E. Parks and Open Space

1. Veterans' Community Park should continue to be improved as indicated by its master plan. The first and next project should include the construction of the bandshell. This venue will reinforce midtown's role as the civic and social heart of the community.
2. The city should continue to manage the farmer's market while evaluating additional event programming for all age groups.
3. The Bay Walk trail connecting Veterans' Community Park to the Esplanade should be a priority for the city as its construction will provide a safe park setting pedestrian bypass for midtown residents and visitors to explore all of midtown's offerings.
4. The city should identify appropriate public restroom facility sites to help accommodate bathroom needs for midtown travelers.



Veterans' Community Park – The Master Plan



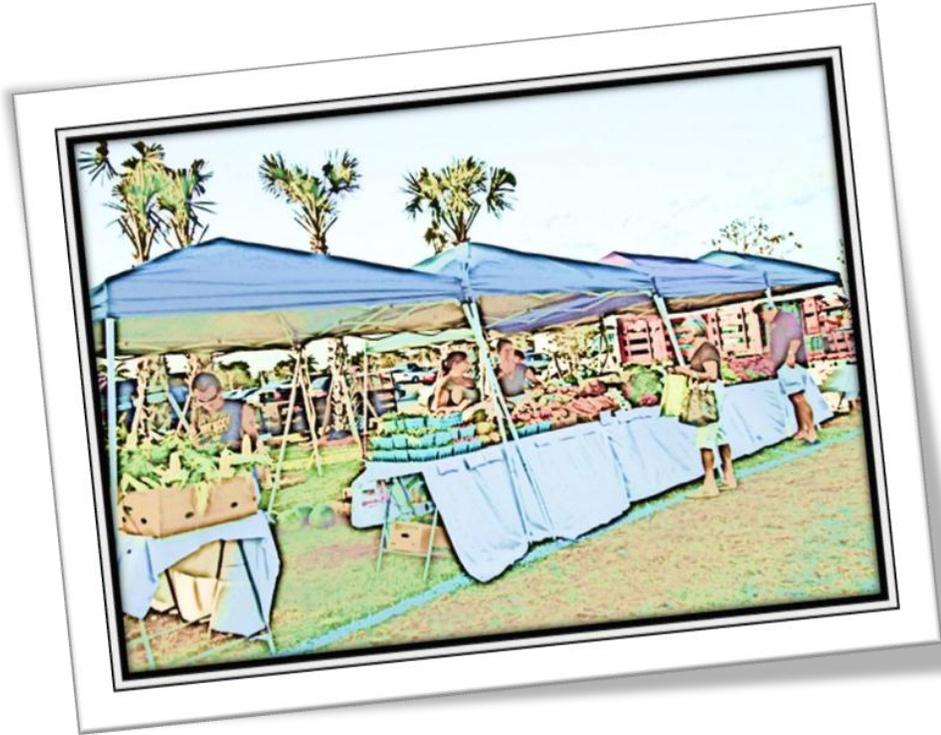
## **F. Economic Development**

1. The city should partner with the Chamber of Commerce to develop a business recruitment and retention program. When recruiting, the objective should be to capture retail leakage and those businesses that could serve local unmet needs.

2. The city should maintain events and festivals within Veterans' Community Park, while partnering with midtown businesses to extend and coordinate business hours of operation for residents and visitors. This coordination will help solidify midtown's identity and image as a destination for entertainment and commerce.

3. The city should continue to support and promote broad-based organizational efforts to provide events, promote businesses, market midtown and bring together the many diverse interest groups in the community that have an interest in the health and vitality of midtown.

4. The city should recognize the secondary benefits that existing midtown business owners would absorb after the addition of a public entertainment venue at Veterans' Community Park. This attraction has to be one that captures the attention of both residents and visitors of all ages as this venue would be a great amenity for the larger Marco Island community.



## **G. Community Character**

1. Midtown gateways should be clear, landscaped and dramatic, offering a sense of crossing a threshold into a special place – the heart of Marco Island as a community.

2. Streetscapes should encourage safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian movement throughout midtown, connecting businesses to each other and to surrounding districts.

3. Building design should emphasize a tropical feel with pedestrian-oriented features on the ground floor, while contributing to the quality and character of sidewalks and public spaces.

4. The city should encourage businesses to add elements, such as artful signs, displays and lighting to reinforce the pedestrian-orientation of midtown. These added elements will help to create a humanistic scale at the ground floors throughout midtown.

5. Public buildings and parks should be prominent and dramatic pieces of architecture that can serve as landmarks and symbols of community life.
6. The city should encourage the use of Florida Friendly Landscape principals into public and private projects.
7. The city should provide valuable public spaces to assist in the generation of activity within Midtown. A fishing pier at the north end of Jane Hittler Park would serve as such public space and add to the tropical island community character that Marco Island has.
8. Community gathering spaces in all shapes and sizes with outdoor sitting and lighting accommodations should be viewed as an amenity for the pedestrian as they stroll through midtown.
9. The city should work with event planners and community event promoters to identify locations for event signage while establishing a design for a uniform monument event signage plan/program. The city should consider leasing signage space to organizations as part of this program to offset the maintenance and operational costs of this program.

## H. Public Safety

1. The city should continue to enforce and educate citizens and visitors on helpful driving techniques when in parking lots and on city streets.
  
2. The city should utilize Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques to detour criminal behavior with site design and planning efforts. Some natural design surveillance techniques that should be incorporated into Midtown Marco Island Site Development Plans are:
  - a. The designing of streets to increase pedestrian safety;
  - b. The placement of lighting along pathways and other pedestrian areas at proper heights and with proper luminaire shields;
  - c. The utilization of the shortest possible and the least sight limiting fence materials.
  
3. The city should recognize that natural surveillance increases the threat of apprehension by taking steps to increase the perception that people can be seen on and within midtown properties. Furthermore, natural surveillance occurs when a community prescribes the placement of physical features, activities and people in such a way as to maximize visibility. These design techniques help to promote a positive social interaction among private and public spaces.



Key attributes to a safe city

### III. Action Matrixes: Short, Mid and Long Term

SHORT TERM STRATEGIES: 1-3 YEARS	STAKEHOLDERS
Foster coordination with midtown businesses, which includes the development of a business retention and recruitment program	City of Marco Island, Chamber of Commerce and Midtown business owners
Program community events and festivals	City of Marco Island, Local private organizations and Midtown business owners
Implement themed banner and street sign program with the Midtown insignia	City of Marco Island
Enhance sidewalk and storefront amenities to provide more bicycle parking and pedestrian access with sitting areas	City of Marco Island and Midtown business owners
Construct and install angled parking and landscaping within city right of ways, while removing illegally parked vehicles	City of Marco Island and Midtown property owners
Enhance pedestrian crossings and establish desired locations for mid-block crossings	City of Marco Island and Federal/State granting agencies
Enhance zoning and land development code language to incorporate the Plan Concepts and Land Use maps as proposed to improve landscaping, parking, setbacks, land uses and architectural and site design standards	City of Marco Island and Midtown stakeholders
Integrate way-finding signs for public parking and facilities	City of Marco Island
Identify sidewalk and lighting districts	City of Marco Island
Develop venues for entertainment, including the development of a bandshell at Veterans' Community Park	City of Marco Island
Establish appropriate sustainable design standards as Marco Island development guidelines for commercial and multifamily development, which are consistent with (LEED) – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design	City of Marco Island and Midtown stakeholders

MID TERM STRATEGIES: 3-7 YEARS	STAKEHOLDERS
Evaluate Redevelopment financing/programming options to determine which best suites Marco Island’s needs. Some options include: “Florida” Main Street Program, Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA), Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Downtown Development/Improvement Authorities (DDA & DIA)	City of Marco Island and Midtown business/property owners
Establish Midtown Gateway Entrances with uniform landscaping and signage at the below locations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Jane Hittler Park and N. Collier Blvd. on the West-end</i></li> <li>2. <i>Rose Marina and Bald Eagle Dr. on the North-end</i></li> <li>1. <i>Rose Ct. and N. Collier Blvd. on East-end</i></li> <li>2. <i>Hartley Ave. and Bald Eagle Dr. on the South-end</i></li> </ol>	City of Marco Island
Promote and enhance the existing bike paths Master Plan	Ad-Hoc Bike Pathways Advisory Committee
Expand hotel and lodging opportunities through the implementation of the Transfer of Development Rights exchange program	City of Marco Island, property owners and developers
Develop the Bay Walk trail connecting Veterans’ Community Park to the Esplanade along the southwestern edge of Midtown	City of Marco Island and Federal/State granting agencies
Develop a fishing pier at the north end of Jane Hittler Park	City of Marco Island
Enhance wireless access and communications within Midtown	City of Marco Island and Midtown business/property owners
Improve the function and aesthetics of alleys to enhance loading and unloading zones, parking and service (dumpster) accommodations	City of Marco Island and Midtown business/property owners
Provide opportunities to allow building construction closer to streets	City of Marco Island
Construct a traffic calming device at the Bald Eagle Drive and N. Barfield Drive intersection	City of Marco Island

<b>LONG TERM STRATEGIES: 7+ YEARS</b>	<b>STAKEHOLDERS</b>
Evaluate the midtown parking demand and identify opportunities to provide additional public parking	City of Marco Island and Federal/State granting agencies
Enhance the existing Collier Area Transit (CAT) system by finding incentives and opportunities to increase ridership, number of stops and hours of operation	City of Marco Island, Hotels/Resorts and Condominiums, Midtown business owners and the Collier Area Transit (CAT) administration
Further develop all of Veterans' Community Park amenities	City of Marco Island
Preserve existing marinas for public use and access while promoting economic development of additional marinas, restaurants and other waterfront uses	City of Marco Island and Midtown property owners
Improve and complete the installation of all sidewalk and lighting districts	City of Marco Island, property owners and developers
Continue managing and further support community and special events at Veterans' Community Park	City of Marco Island
Develop land development code incentives to entice Midtown businesses and property owners to improve their building aesthetics and update building facades	City of Marco Island, property owners and developers
Maintain and further develop stormwater management facilities	City of Marco Island

# Exhibit "B" Midtown Improvements Map

Preserve existing Marinas for public use and access

Design and construct Midtown Gateways with signage and landscaping = 

Develop a traffic calming device at Bald Eagle and Barfield

Construct angled parking and landscaping within city ROW's

Develop the fishing pier at the north end of Jane Hittler Park

Enhance pedestrian crossing and provide mid-block crossings

Develop entertainment venues and bandshell at Veterans' Community Park

Develop the "Bay Walk" trail, connecting Veterans' Community Park to the Esplanade

