Public Outreach and Municipal Participation

The creation of the Community Design Guidebook included a broad program of public outreach and the participation of local municipalities.

These workshops generated discussion about the situation of the built environment in Broward County. A general consensus about a set of issues deemed to be important, and some general common themes emerged from these workshops.
Design Professional Workshops on Context Study Areas

As part of the effort to utilize the best technical expertise from Broward County, the Community Design Guidebook team implemented two design professional workshops, during the Spring and Summer of 2003, to study five representative places in the County. The study areas were chosen for their similar attributes to much of the rest of Broward, within five distinct categories: Roadways and the transport network in general, public spaces, building design, landscape, and signage.

These workshops afforded an opportunity to garner local expert opinion concerning the issues relevant to Broward’s infrastructure and identify likely policy recommendations and design solutions, applicable throughout the County.

Location: Hollywood Boulevard and US 441
Before and After: A grayfield shopping center provides opportunity for redevelopment to revitalize a community, include a range of housing options and new commercial activity supported by a transit infrastructure.

Location: Sunrise Boulevard and Federal Highway at the Gateway Center
Before and After: A major intersection designed exclusively for motor vehicles can accommodate increased density by dedicating routes for people and transit, allowing mixed-use zoning, and a well designed urban space.
**Executive Summary**

**Location: Tri-Rail and Amtrak Station at I-95 and West Broward Boulevard**
Before and After: A regional transit center can become a major gateway to the county with improved wayfinding, mixed land uses to include hotel, commercial, and a public plaza with pedestrian promenade connection to nearby business and residential communities.

**Location: Federal Highway and Dania Beach Boulevard**
Before and After: A smaller strip shopping center can be revitalized with new transit and pedestrian amenities, consolidated and shared parking strategies, new building to the sidewalk, and a loft residential component.

**Location: New River Canal, US 441, and Interstate 595**
Before and After: An underutilized public space at the intersection of regional highways with a waterway can become an amenity accessed via multiple modes, restoring the natural environment while providing recreational trails and access to the waterway with water transit.
Public Workshop Image Preference Survey

The Image Preference Survey was conducted in September of 2003 to obtain objective information on the local community’s view of what are the physical attributes of good and bad environments. This information is helpful in building community consensus.

The Image Preference Survey used here was based on the work of Anton Nelessen and Nick Wates. Nelessen’s Visual Preference Survey has a well-documented efficacy from approximately 50,000 trials over many years, which has provided an 85% agreement among respondents on the preferred attributes of the designed physical environment.

The following general concerns were identified through the Public Workshop:

- The preferences for landscaping, shading, and other environmental features vary according to context: urban, suburban, pedestrian, highway.
- The presence of natural elements in the scene is always a positive.
- Surfaces and elements that have been designed and detailed with an apparent ordering are preferred regardless of architectural style.
- A variety of architectural styles is preferred.
- The quality of fit and finish of built structures is important, where higher quality materials that are fitted with craftsmanship or high manufacturing standards are preferred.
- Climate tempering in the form of shade is especially important in the South Florida environment, where a dense cover of shade trees is apparently the preferred method.
- The presence of people, especially people involved in diverse activities congruent with public spaces, is an especially positive attribute.
Spaces or infrastructure that produce apparent dirt, trash, clutter, or pollution are rated negatively, and conversely, spaces or infrastructure that appear clean, well kept, orderly, and exhaust-free (such as light rail transit), are preferred. In keeping with this, street furniture should be in place to take care of the trash and other needs.

The size of spaces devoted to automobile related infrastructure relative to pedestrian and transit infrastructure is important, as space for pedestrians and other low-speed modes such as bicycles and transit is apparently seen as fundamental to a good environment, whether in the ‘suburban’ or ‘urban’ context. Further, pedestrians and pedestrian amenities should take precedence over auto related infrastructure.

An orderly arrangement of the features of the public space is preferred to a disorderly arrangement. Thus, lighting, street furniture, shade, and the other furnishings of the public space are preferred when placed in an orderly pattern, as in for example a straight line, to those arrangements that occur in an ad hoc, or apparently disorderly fashion.
Demonstration Areas

As a way of putting the Guidebook principles into action, and to better illustrate how the process helps achieve the County’s overall goals, as well as the individual goals of each city, three demonstration areas were selected to be included in the scope of this project. The cities selected for participation in the pilot program were the municipalities of Coconut Creek, Dania Beach and Wilton Manors.

The three cities chosen each had very specific, and very real issues to resolve. Workshops were held in each of the participating municipalities with the public, city commissions, planning and zoning boards, and municipal and county planning, zoning, and engineering staff. All were handled within the context of the Guidebook principles and recommendations. In each case a presentation of the guidebook principles was followed with a workshop to determine local needs and assess the local context. Subsequent meetings and workshops focused on an evaluation of the local conditions, a recommended strategy, and a decision to adopt a course of action.