

PRINCETON CHARRETTE

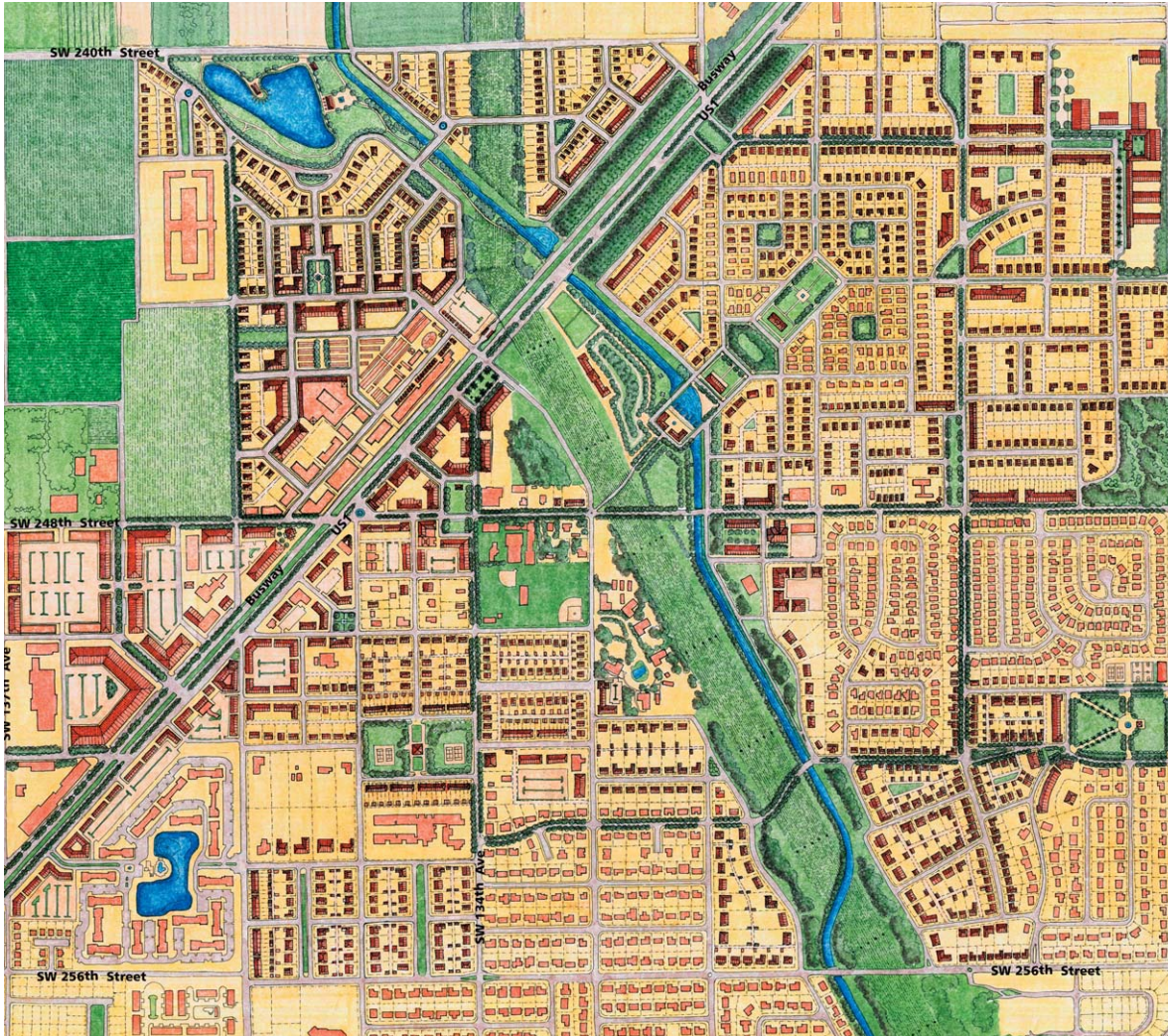


CHARRETTE REPORT JAN. 2004



TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
INDIAN RIVER • ST. LUCIE • MARTIN • PALM BEACH

PRINCETON CHARENTE



A CITIZENS' CHARRETTE AREA PLAN

prepared by

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL
PLANNING COUNCIL

*With and for the citizens of Princeton
and
Miami-Dade County, Florida*



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Statement of Legislative Intent

This statement is applicable to these recommendations in its entirety and is declared to be incorporated by reference into each part thereof.

1. Nothing in the recommendations of the Princeton Charrette shall be construed or applied to constitute a temporary or permanent taking of private property or the abrogation of vested rights as determined to exist by the Code of Miami-Dade County.
2. The recommendations of the Princeton Charrette shall not be construed to preempt considerations of fundamental fairness that may arise from their strict application. Accordingly, these recommendations shall not be deemed to require any particular action where they are incomplete or internally inconsistent, or that would constitute a taking of property without due process or fair compensation, or would deny equal protection of the laws.
3. The recommendations of the Princeton Charrette are intended to set general guidelines concerning its purposes and contents. They are not a substitute for land development regulations.
4. The recommendations of the Princeton Charrette contain long-range policies for the redevelopment of the Princeton area. Nothing in these recommendations shall require the immediate changing of existing uses or structures. It is the intent of these recommendations that they be applied as redevelopment occurs naturally or is precipitated by the destruction of the property to the extent that redevelopment in its original form is not economically feasible.

The recommendations of the Princeton Charrette are not intended to preempt the processes whereby applications may be filed for relief from land development regulations.

PRINCETON CHARRETTE

The Princeton Citizens' Charrette Area Plan grew out of a public, seven-day charrette, held June 6 through June 13, 2003. The Charrette was held at the Naranja Neighborhood Center and was well attended by over 60 residents and property and business owners, representing a diverse cross-section of the community.

The intersection of SW 248th Street and U.S. 1 is designated as the focus of a Community Urban Center (CUC). CUCs are identified within Miami-Dade County's Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP), which states that Community Urban Centers are moderate-intensity "design-unified areas that contain a concentration of different urban functions integrated both horizontally and vertically." The CDMP further states that these "centers shall be characterized by physical cohesiveness, direct accessibility by mass transit service, and high quality urban design." The results of the charrette represent the citizens' vision for the future of the Princeton CUC.

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council's Design Studio, Miami-Dade County's Urban Design Center, and a team of professionals, including: A + S Architects and Planners; Glatting Jackson, Kercher, Anglin, Lopez, Rinehart; designers Sita Singh, Elena Romero, Peter Quintanilla, George Johnston, Dan Cary, Maria DeLeon Fleites, Natasha Fahim, Freddy Vivas and Steven Fett comprised the charrette design team. These urban designers assisted citizens in studying the many challenges faced by the community and proposed specific solutions included within this report.

During the week of the charrette, the design team set up its studio in the Naranja Neighborhood Center, where the doors remained open to the public all day. A presentation of work in progress was held on the evening of June 13th. Residents, property and business owners, as well as County staff and elected officials were present. Work continued in the weeks that followed the initial public workshop.

A series of presentations by county staff will be conducted during the fourth quarter of 2003. This will be a time for citizens to provide further input and direction, and will represent the first step from planning towards implementation of the Princeton Charrette Area Plan.

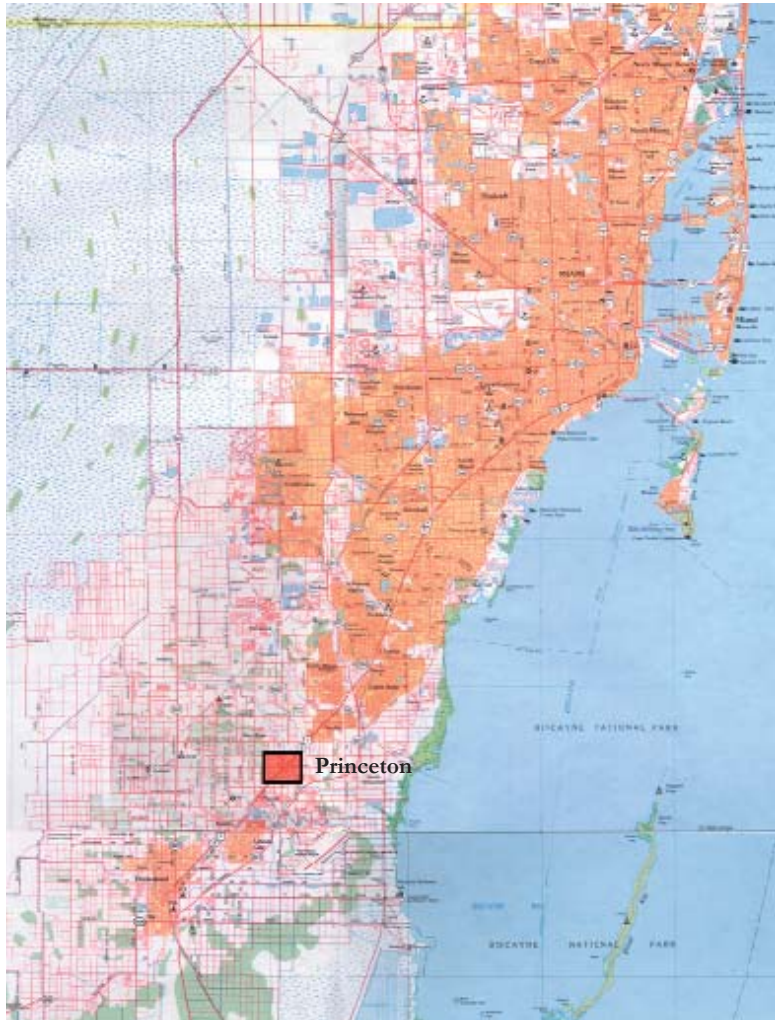


THE STUDY AREA

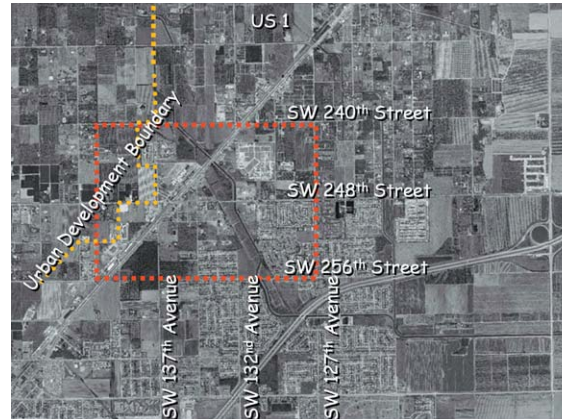
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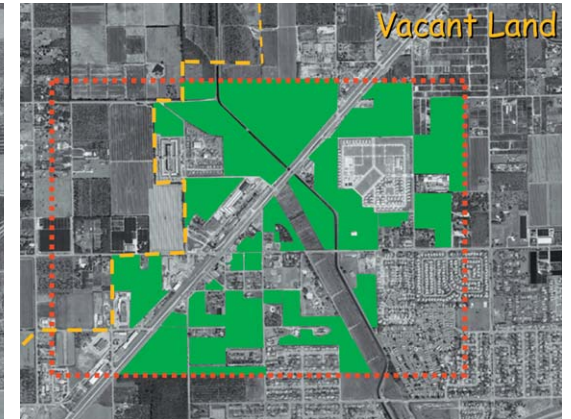
Founded by Gaston "Duck" Drake, who established a lumber company in the area, and home of the first tomato cannery in Florida, Princeton retains today an agricultural character. Located in the southern urbanized portion of Miami-Dade County, and easily accessible by U.S. 1, Florida's Turnpike, and future service on the Busway, the community is experiencing rapid transformation, with formerly agricultural lands being converted to residential subdivisions and other uses.



Historically an important agricultural area, Princeton today finds itself situated in the path of urban expansion southward along the U.S. 1 Corridor.



Princeton is easily accessible from U.S. 1, Florida's Turnpike, and future Busway service



Significant amounts of land lay vacant and ready for development within the Urban Development Boundary



It is critical that a plan for Princeton be developed to guide future growth and development in a manner that contributes to the community and preserves its existing positive qualities.



Characteristics of the best villages and towns

Traditionally, villages and towns are made up of between one and several neighborhoods, each neighborhood ranging in size between 40 and 125 acres. In larger towns, where there are multiple neighborhoods, these may be clustered around a central business district or main street shopping area. Within neighborhoods there are a diversity of uses and housing types. Residential densities may average between 6 and 10 units per acre across the entire neighborhood, with some houses occurring on large lots and some units clustered in the form of multifamily apartments or townhouses. Towns and Villages recognized by residents as great places to live share the following characteristics:

A well defined center and edge - The best towns have a strong sense of place. One knows when one has arrived and left. They do not sprawl and merge into one another and have a recognizable center. The center is the place people go to shop, do business, get news, and see their neighbors. The center is typically anchored by some important community civic building, such as a town hall, library or religious building. Civic buildings are situated on a public green or plaza that serves as a gathering place for residents.

A hierarchy of interconnected streets - Great towns have a diversity of street types, serving the different transportation needs of the community, and providing strong interconnection between a diversity of land uses.

Beautiful streets designed for both cars and pedestrians - Streets are designed and viewed as part of the public realm, to be used equally by both cars and people.

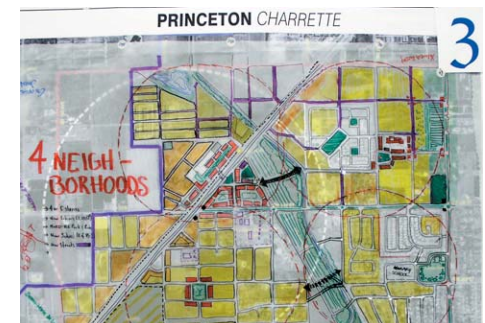
A diversity of housing types - All members of the community must be able to find a suitable place to live within the community. Communities need a great variety of people to function well, physicians and bankers, carpenters and shop keepers, teachers and baby sitters. If the community is not attractive to a few wealthy individuals, there may be no one to donate money to build a library. Without labor, there would be no one to work the fields or maintain landscaping.

Places for work and shopping in proximity to housing - Quality of life is improved when people are able to live in close proximity to workplaces and frequently used shopping destinations. Ideally, many residents should be able to reach centrally located work place and shopping destinations by walking, or by very short vehicle trips.

Appropriately located sites for civic buildings - Well designed communities have specially created and prominent locations for placement of their important civic buildings, such as churches, libraries, schools, and community meeting halls.

Parks and open spaces - Communities have a variety of open space needs, including recreation fields, quiet places for meditation, and small open spaces where young children can safely play within shouting distance of their homes.

Citizens participating in the Princeton Charrette recognized these principles and developed a series of requests consistent with these characteristics of good places to live.



Citizens' Requests:

GENERAL REQUESTS



Development should occur in the manner of a traditional neighborhood

A WELL DEFINED CENTER AND EDGE:



Maintain an identity based on the agricultural heritage of the area
Build entrance features
Build a town center
Create a regional destination at Bargain Town

A HIERARCHY OF INTERCONNECTED STREETS



Interconnect neighborhoods
Study traffic conditions

BEAUTIFUL STREETS DESIGNED FOR BOTH CARS AND PEDESTRIANS



Build mixed-use buildings along U.S. 1 with parking in the rear
Make Busway easier to use by adding traffic lights
Improve sidewalks and lighting

A DIVERSITY OF HOUSING TYPES AND AFFORDABILITY



Build mixed-use buildings
Build new housing to accommodate all incomes
Provide housing and activities for retirees

PLACES OF WORK AND SHOPPING IN PROXIMITY TO HOUSING



Improve the industrial area
Improve the carnival storage site
Provide for grocery store, restaurants, shopping and jobs

APPROPRIATELY LOCATED SITES FOR CIVIC BUILDINGS



Build library and community center
Build new schools
Build historic museum
Improve the post office

PROVISION OF A VARIETY OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES



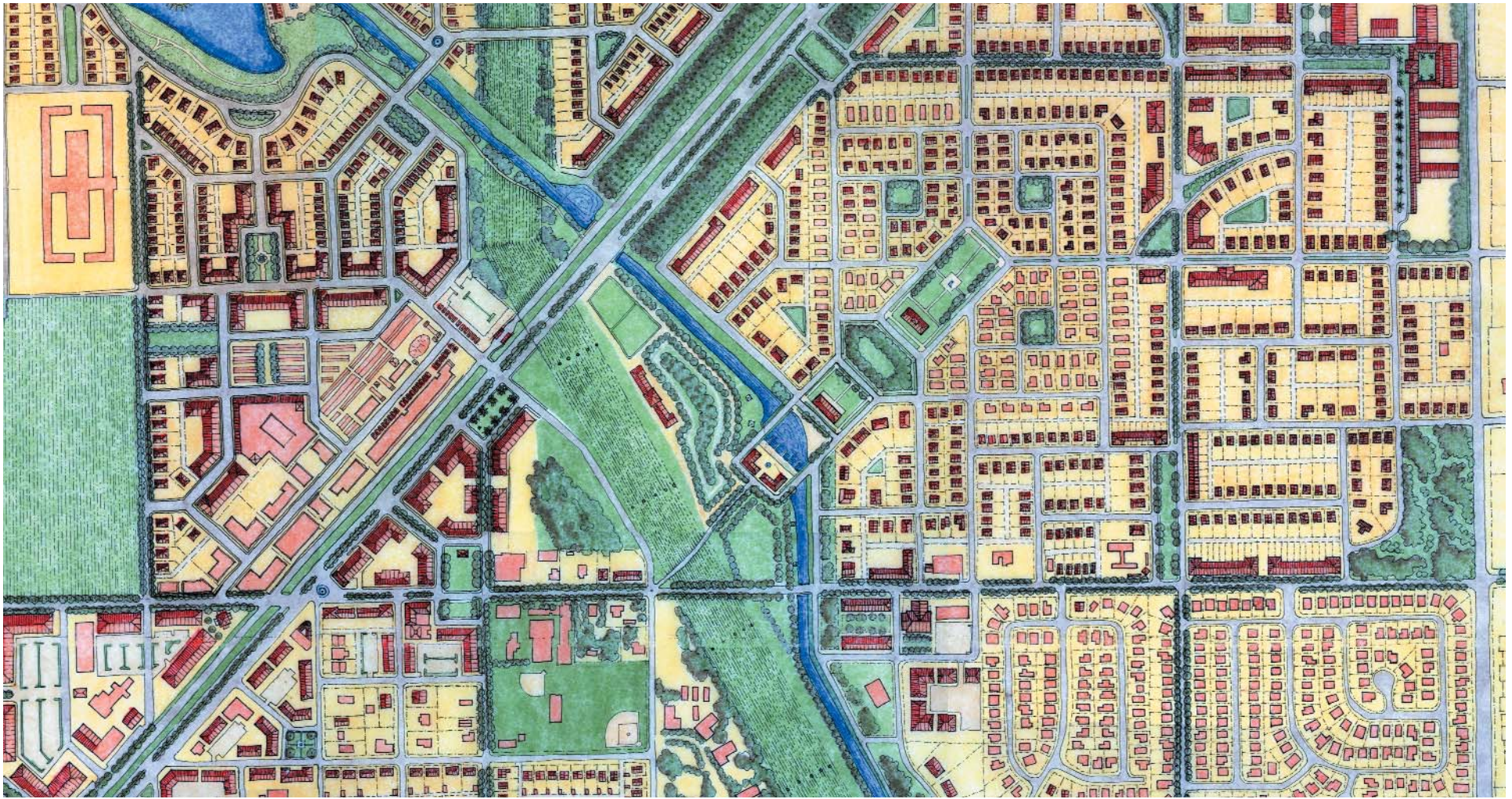
Build linear park along the C-102 canal
Make use of waterfront opportunities (lake and canal)
Build more parks
Build tennis courts and public pool

OTHER REQUESTS



Create entertainment center
Create arts district at the old flea market building
Encourage bed & breakfasts

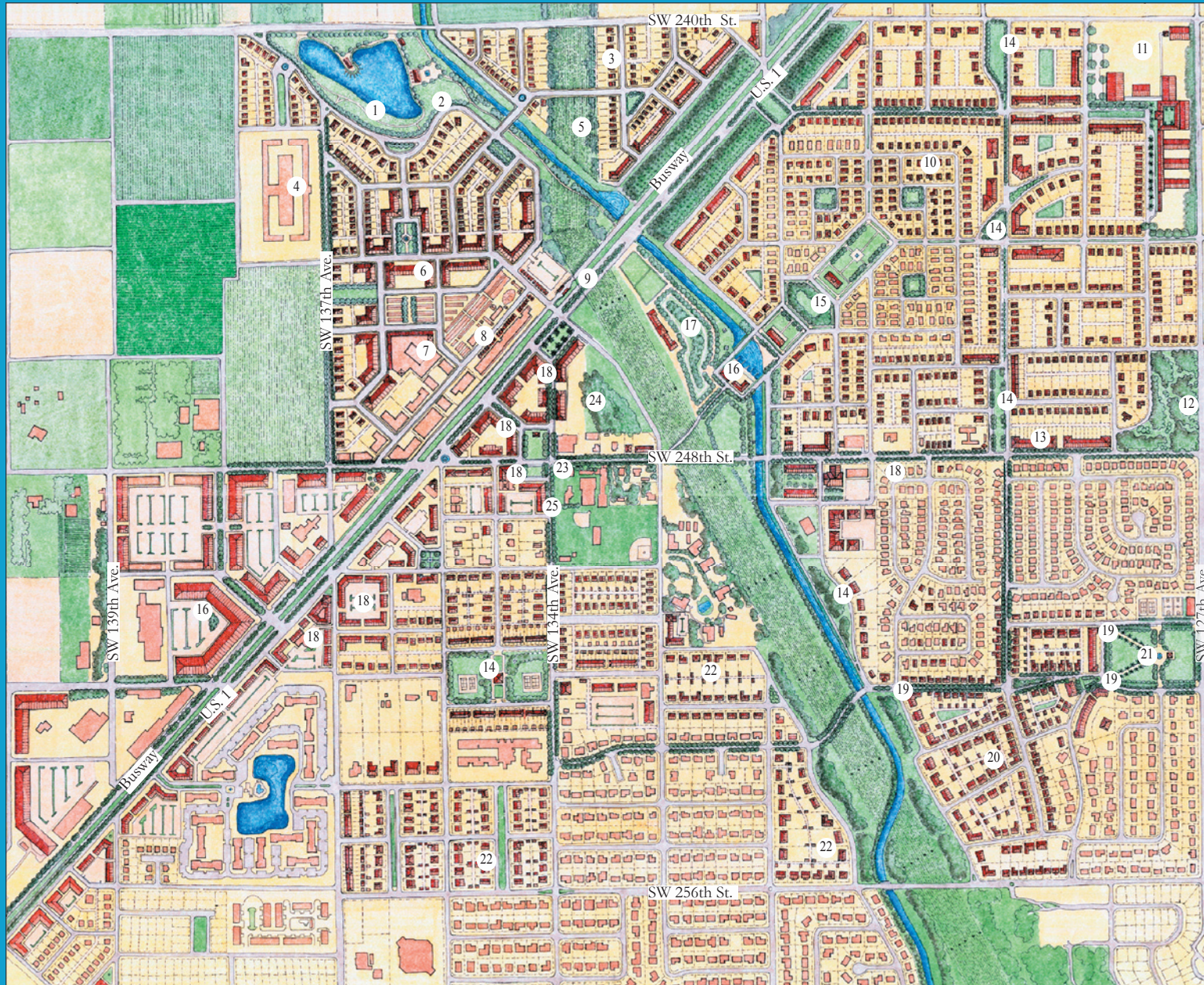
CITIZENS' CHARRETTE AREA PLAN



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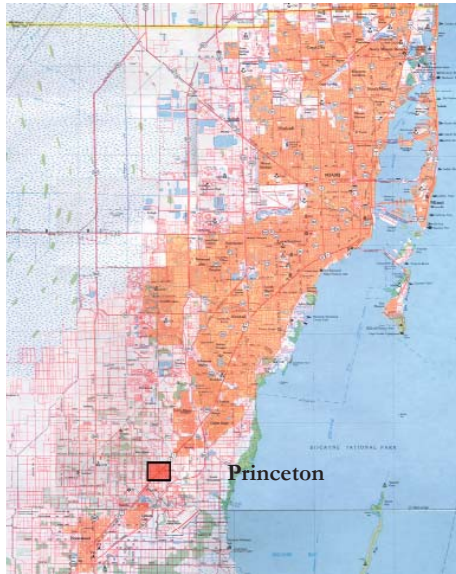


PRINCETON: THE CITIZENS' AREA PLAN



Points of Interest

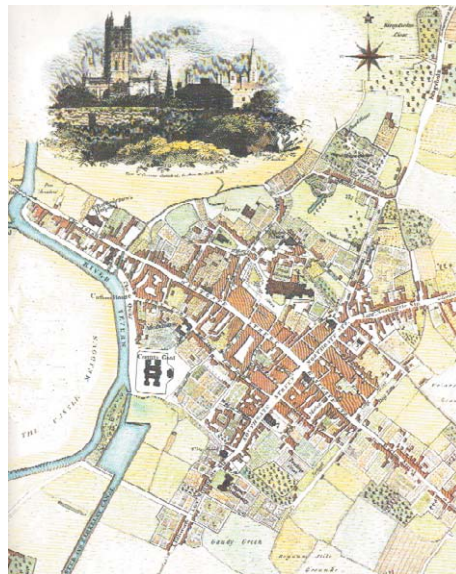
1. Lakeside park
2. Trail head and canoe land-
ing ramp
3. New proposed neighbor-
hood
4. Arts District
5. FPL right-of-way/ plant
nursery
6. Multi family residential
building
7. Parking garage
8. Bargain Town main street
9. Busway station
10. Jordan Commons
11. Proposed elementary school
12. Protected natural area
13. Townhouses
14. Public Park
15. New east-west connection
16. Trail head, boat ramps
17. Stables/trail head
18. Mixed use buildings
19. Proposed neighborhood
connections
20. Princetonian Trailer Park:
change over time
21. Princetonian Park
22. Infill Housing
23. Village center
24. Proposed school expansion
25. Proposed church expansion
26. Industrial District



Identity

Historically an important agricultural area, Princeton today finds itself situated in the path of urban expansion southward along the U.S. 1 corridor. Like so many settlements in Florida, Princeton will lose its identity as a distinct community if it allows itself to be swallowed up by undifferentiated suburban sprawl.

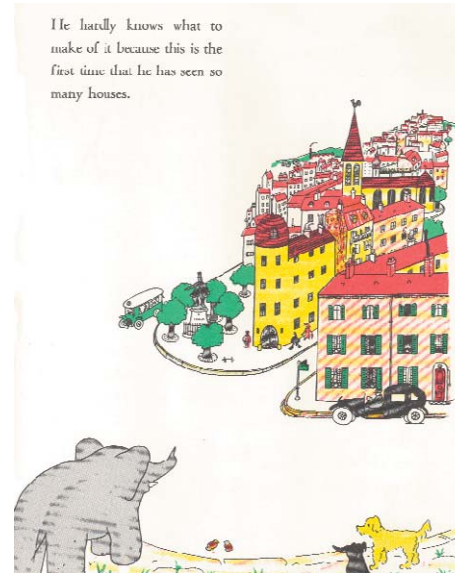
Countering this trend will not be easy, but success will result in a strong sense of community, a higher quality of life for residents, and higher property values. Key ingredients to forming a distinct identity include: distance from surrounding development, clear boundaries between town and country, a compact form with most people living within walking distance of a well defined community center, and architectural character.



Spatial separation

In their ideal form, towns are spatially separated from one another by several miles of open space and farm land. The best towns have distinctly defined edges. There is a clear and strong contrast between what is town and what is country. The distance of separation, and strong contrast between countryside and town creates interest, and a sense of anticipation as one approaches and enters the town.

Opportunities for spatial separation are all but lost for most communities in south Florida, and although it is already impossible to provide miles of separation between Princeton and developed areas to the north and south, some separation can be provided, and the sense of place further underlined by a compact form, density and architecture.

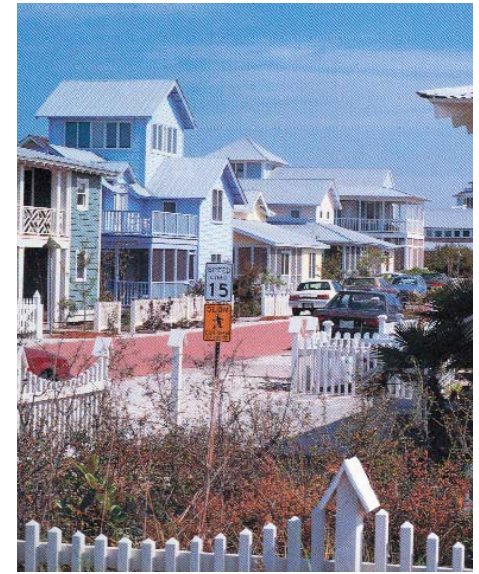


Density and compactness

Low density suburbs were conceived as a way of giving everyone the benefits of living in the country at an affordable price. However, most suburban homeowners enjoy neither the benefits of country life nor the convenience of life in town.

A better living situation is the traditional small town. Compact, at average densities of 6 to 10 units per acre, residents live within a short walk of playgrounds, schools, and places of work and shopping, and also a short walk from the countryside.

The compact density creates a different sort of contrast between town and country, but one that is effective in establishing community identity.

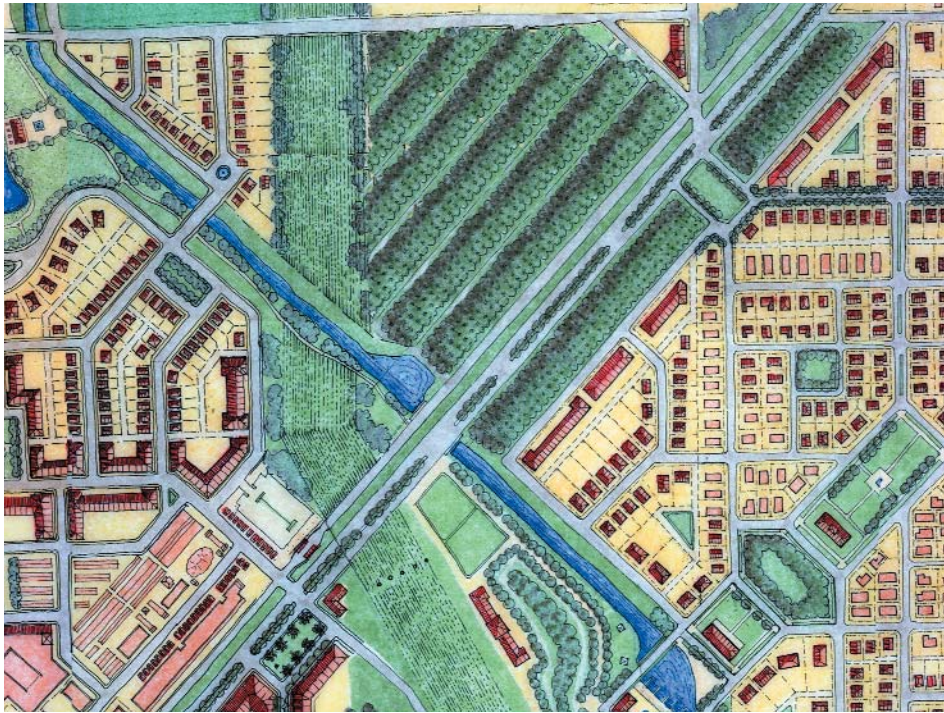


Architecture and urban design

Beyond separation and compactness, architectural character and community design also contribute significantly to identity and sense of place.

One Florida example is Seaside, a small community west of Panama City. As one drives along coastal highway 30A, Seaside's white picket fences, pastel colors, streetscapes and architecture are in sharp contrast to surrounding areas. One realizes the arrival at a special place.

Given the undifferentiated sprawl that characterizes most areas of south Florida, urban design can be used as a powerful way to define place. In combination with appropriate architecture, good urban form will help distinguish Princeton from surrounding areas.

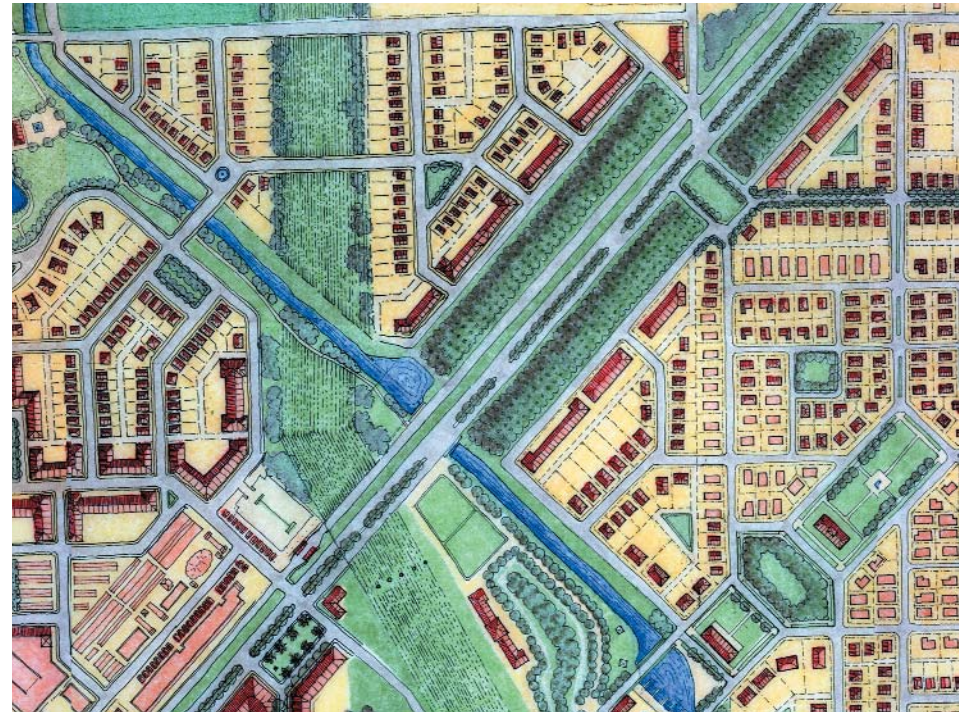


The Urban Development Boundary

The Urban Development Boundary (UDB) limits the extent of development into the Everglades and agricultural areas. The UDB's location to the west of Princeton will ensure a well-defined distinction between the urban and rural character of the area. However, there is no such similar distinction possible to the north of Princeton, as all the land is within the UDB.

This is unfortunate from a number of perspectives. In the absence of agriculture along U.S. 1, visitors passing through the area will have no idea that they are in a place with an important agricultural heritage. Urban areas merge, one into another, making it more difficult to maintain a distinct identity. In addition, provision of an excessive amount of commercial opportunity along U.S. 1 will interfere with the formation of centrally located business and shopping districts at the town centers.

Consideration should be given to the formation of land use policies and incentives to encourage the retention of agricultural lands between towns and villages.



Celebrating Princeton's heritage

As illustrated at the above left, in a modified version of the Citizen's Charrette Area Plan, retention of even a modest amount of active agricultural land between communities would help to define boundaries and provide view corridors to the more extensive agricultural areas to the west.

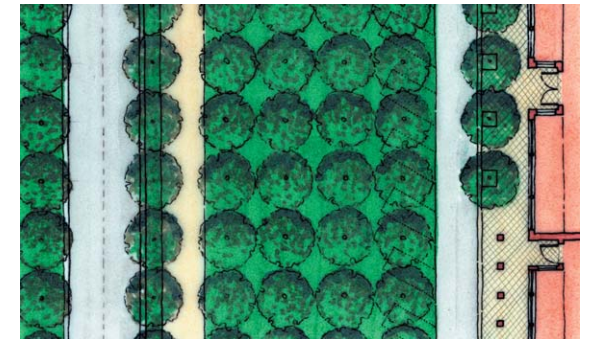
If this is not possible, the Citizen's Charrette Area Plan calls for groves of trees to be planted several rows deep on both sides of U.S. 1 north of the C-102 canal as shown above. Formally planted trees such as Phoenix Date Palms, Royal Palms, or flowering trees such as Royal Poinciana or Tabebuia could be spectacular, and would provide a symbolic reference to Princeton's agricultural heritage. Maintained as a well kept linear park the groves would represent a beautiful and unique entry way into the area. Approaching Princeton from the north, a traveler's focus would be on the grove until reaching the C-102 canal. Approaching the canal, the view of the Princeton's edge would take precedent signalling arrival at a special place.



Arrival to Princeton

The groves to be planted on both sides of U.S. 1, north of the C-102 canal should be densely planted in a very regular grid pattern at least several rows deep. This arrangement of trees is known as a *bosque*. The trees used should be fairly uniform in height and form, and should be selected to be impressive at maturity. Plantings may be of one species or of several, provided that a large enough uniform block of each species is used to powerfully represent a planted grove. The power of the design comes from the plantation-like effect that only a large grove of a single species can provide. Species should be the same on each side of the street, so that it feels as if one is actually driving through the grove. As in the image above, the objective is to create a powerful image at the approach to Princeton. When the canal is reached the bosque of trees gives way to an open view of Princeton's edge.

The groves should be very carefully maintained, and recognized as a formal entrance feature and memorial park, celebrating the rural agricultural heritage of the community. Cut coral stone monuments might be placed just north of the groves, with inset plaster frescoes, such as that at the top right, announcing the arrival to Princeton.





The approach to Princeton from the north
Passing through an impressive grove of trees symbolic of Princeton's heritage



Sudden arrival
The grove gives way to a first glimpse of the town



The Approach

The Edge

Arrival at Princeton



U.S. 1

U.S. 1 requires aesthetic improvement. The redesign of U.S. 1, including street trees, lighting, wide sidewalks and curbs will only begin to address the current environment of this important corridor. In addition to these physical improvements, the street needs to be viewed and designed as a public space to be used comfortably by both vehicles and pedestrians. Currently, U.S. 1 is a place where only drivers in their cars feel comfortable.

FDOT transportation plans need to recognize that Princeton is rapidly evolving from a rural to urban area, and that the design of U.S. 1 needs to be adjusted to reflect this reality. The segment of U.S. 1 passing through Princeton is not differentiated from any other segment, north or south. A 'hybrid' urban/rural section sends a mixed message as to character of this area. Additionally, the proposed access management project will severely restrict cross-access. Such restriction may be appropriate within rural areas, but not the heart of what will become Princeton's town center.

The section of U.S. 1 from the bridge over the C-102 canal south to SW 137th Avenue should be urbanized through installation of outside curb and gutter, wide sidewalks at least 12 feet wide, and pedestrian-scale lighting and streetscape. Design elements such as pavement textures and/or brick crosswalks should be used at the intersections of SW 248 Street and SW 244 Street to heighten awareness that these intersections are important pedestrian crossing zones and access points to the Busway Buildings of appropriate scale must be brought up to the street in order to provide a sense of enclosure and to send a message that Princeton is an urban center.

Traffic signals should be added at: SW 256 Street (new connection and signal); SW 252 Street (new connection and signal); SW 244 Street (new connection and signal at Bargain Town and Busway Station);

and SW 240 Street (new connection and signal).

Directional connections should be added at: the intersections of U.S. 1 and: SW 139 Avenue (right-in, right-out), the Tuscany development now under construction (right-in, right-out), town center access (directional median opening); SW 137 Avenue and SW 250 Street (reworking the connection as shown on plan to prevent illegal 'u-turns' taking place at the post office, directional median opening).



The network of streets should be improved within the community to allow local traffic alternatives to using U.S. 1 for north-south trips. As Princeton and the surrounding communities grow, traffic will increase on U.S. 1, requiring this road to be expanded unless the overall network can be improved to provide alternative routes for local trips.

New development taking place will require additional traffic capacity. Currently, traffic backs up at the four-way stop at the SW 248 Street/SW 134 Avenue intersection. Some roads that should be through roads terminate and then continue blocks away, continuing a pattern of disjointed network that forces most traffic onto U.S. 1 at some point. Currently the network is discontinuous, forcing local north-south trips onto U.S. 1. Although the street grid is weak and discontinuous, there are opportunities to

continued on next page

improve it and take existing and future local trips off of U.S. 1.

Expansion of U.S. 1 beyond four lanes would adversely impact the formation of an attractive and healthy town center. Increasing the width of U.S. 1 would tend to disconnect east and west portions of the town center, and would adversely impact businesses on both sides of the highway. Every effort should be made to avoid having to expand U.S. 1.

Connection of disjointed network segments to create viable alternative travel routes could alleviate the need to further widen U.S. 1 by providing additional traffic capacity within the corridor. By increasing connections, 'hot spots' such as the intersection of SW 248 Street and SW 134 Avenue can be alleviated



by offering motorists viable alternate routes.

The Busway Station should be designed to reflect the history of Princeton. At one time Princeton had its own stop and station on the Florida East Coast Railroad. A replica of the original station to serve as the Busway station could be built in partnership with Bargain Town and designed in

consultation with Miami-Dade County's Urban Design Center.

Issues regarding the Busway, and existing delay and safety issues. Existing signage does not clearly announce the Busway to motorists or why drivers should yield right-of-way. Iconic signage should be provided that more clearly communicates to motorists why they are yielding the right-of-way. Additionally, crossing gates should be considered at the intersections to prevent conflicts between buses and cars. If we think of the Busway as a light-rail facility (the only difference is the technology as it operates in an exclusive right-of-way), gates could prevent many of the conflicts that have given the Busway a perceived hazardous safety record. They have been used effectively in many communities such as Portland and Dallas that have light-rail systems for conditions such as these.

Installation of gates/vehicle barriers would also allow for safe operation of the signal preemption for the buses that appears to have been discontinued. The preemption is what minimizes the delay for buses on the Busway and makes it a truly attractive travel alternative to U.S. 1.



Transportation has always been an issue
Markham's Cannery located along the rail line



U.S. 1 - Existing condition

As an important north-south highway that carries a large number of vehicles, U.S. 1 benefits Princeton businesses with the energy it provides. In combination with the Busway currently under construction and a nearby access to the Florida Turnpike, Princeton has already been identified as a good location for business and residential development.

In its current form, a trip along U.S. 1 through Princeton does not give a good impression of the community. There is nothing to tell the traveler and visitor that they are passing through a significant place. The haphazard arrangement of buildings with large setbacks from the highway gives the road frontage a bleak and depressed look, undifferentiated from surrounding areas. Improving the look and feel of U.S. 1 as it makes its way through the community was viewed as a high priority by residents.



**U.S. 1 - Phase I condition
Completion of U.S. 1 roadway improvements**

The improvements to U.S. 1 that are underway will help to a limited degree, but the landscape and roadway design changes alone will not be sufficient to differentiate Princeton from the surrounding areas and mark it as a unique and separate community. The FDOT design improvements will improve the aesthetics of the actual highway but will do little to give Princeton a much needed sense of place.

The Citizens' Charrette Area Plan proposes several design changes intended to transform U.S. 1 through Princeton into an urban street. Completing the grid system, signalization of several intersections, curbs, sidewalks and pedestrian level lighting and textured crosswalks at key pedestrian crossings are some of these important changes. It is essential that these proposed elements be incorporated into the FDOT construction work program as soon as possible.



U.S. 1 - Phase II conditions
The first portion of the entry grove is established

The Charrette Area Plan calls for buildings to be pulled up to the street, and for tree plantings on both sides of the highway, either in grove form or as a single row of trees. Street tree planting and the establishment of entrance groves can be phased, but should still occur as soon as possible. Redevelopment and investment will take place most rapidly if a beautiful address is created along U.S. 1.



U.S. 1 - Ultimate buildout condition
The entire grove is established and maintained as a park

Buildings of appropriate height pulled up to the sidewalk, and an appropriate selection of street trees will help to enclose and define the U.S. 1 corridor as it passes through Princeton. U.S. 1 becomes an outdoor room, an important part of the public realm, attractive to travelers in vehicles as well as local residents and pedestrians.





The street as a well formed public space

Essential to creating a beautiful community is an understanding that streets should be seen as part of the public realm that should be as attractive and important as public parks, greens and plazas. Regardless of its scale, any street with the application of urban design principles can become an attractive public space.

To make a street feel like a defined space, it must be provided with a sense of enclosure. Within urban areas this enclosure is provided by appropriately scaled buildings; in small towns and villages where there is less likely to be sufficiently tall buildings, this sense of enclosure is provided by street trees. The objective is to create a space where the enclosing walls of the outdoor room have a height to width

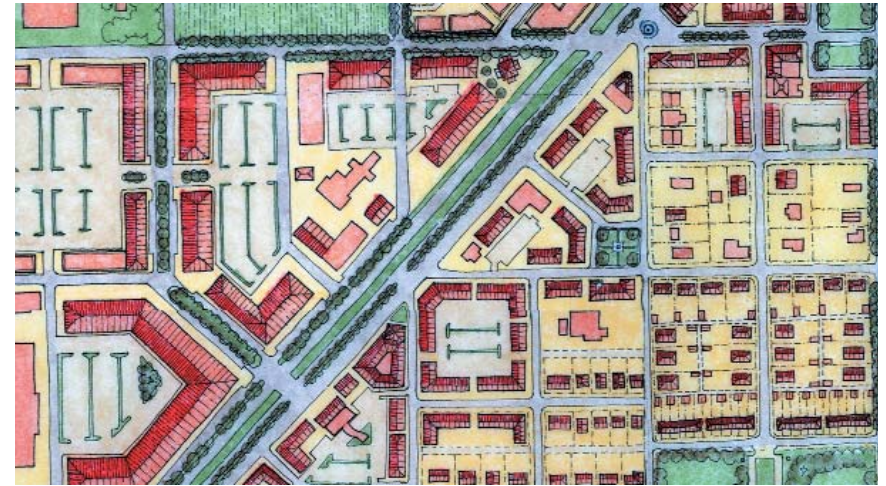


ratio of between 1:1 and 1:6. In simple terms, the wider the road and distance between planting areas, the taller the trees need to be. Plantings also need to be sufficiently close together to provide a clearly defined enclosure.

Tree species selection

The two images above illustrate the differences in impact different tree forms can have on the feel of the street. Given the width of U.S. 1 as a four lane divided highway, taller species such as Royal Palms or large Phoenix Date Palms will provide the best sense of enclosure.

It is essential that all plantings must be maintained in good and healthy condition in order to create an impressive address along U.S. 1.



A hierarchy of streets



Princeton has a range of street types in scale from busy highways such as U.S. 1 to rural unpaved shell roads. The Citizens' Charrette Area Plan furthers this tradition, assuring that street types are consistent with the land uses and densities proposed to occur along them. A diversity of street types has been proposed throughout the plan to provide a wide selection of addresses to choose from, some on busy streets, close to the center of activity, and others on quieter, smaller streets.



It should be noted that the Charrette Area Plan recommends the provision of alleys. Where alleys are provided, zoning should require that garages face the alley, and that unsightly services such as power transmission and trash collection occur at the alley side of the property. This assures that the street, which is part of the community's public space, is attractive. Besides providing a way to move the least attractive functions to the rear, alleys provide an address for outbuildings and garage apartments. These uses further diversify the type of housing that the community can provide.

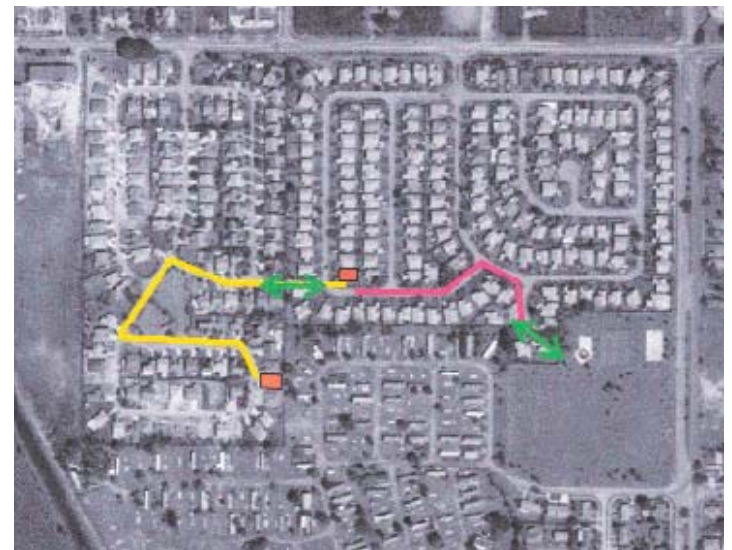
The discontinuous street grid serving Princeton makes it difficult to travel in the area and negatively impacts the few through streets and connections to major collectors or highways. U.S. 1, SW 248th Street, and SW 127 Avenue, in particular, are negatively impacted by the incomplete status of the street network.

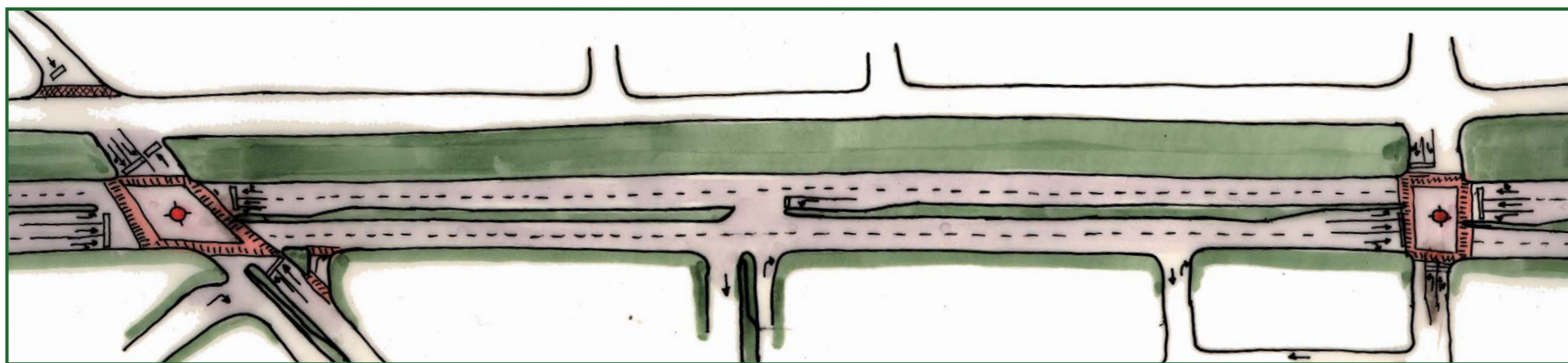
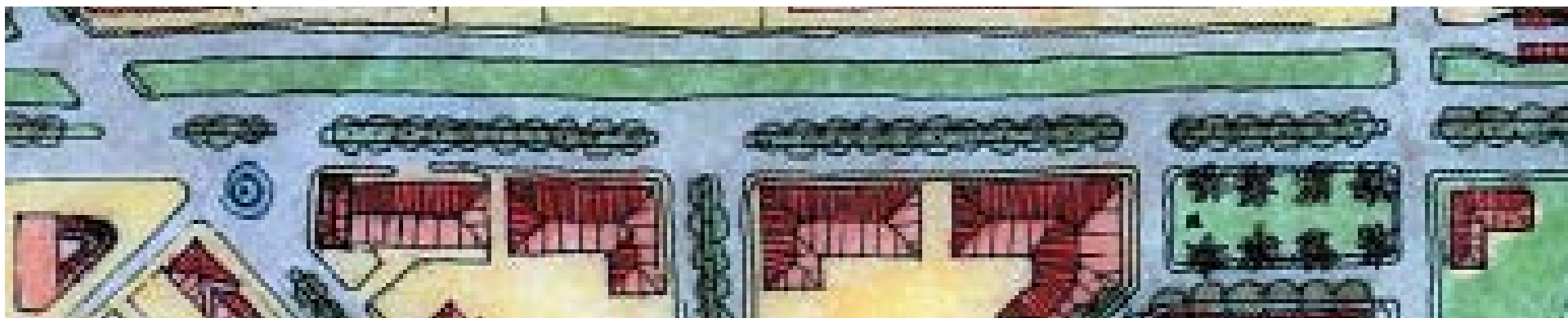


The impact of a more complete grid

It is important that new development be designed in the manner of a traditional neighborhood, where any new streets connect with the surrounding street network at all possible opportunities. Walled, limited access communities should not be permitted to occur. Such approaches adversely impact surrounding streets by loading traffic on the street network at a very few, if not one point, while eliminating the opportunity for through streets. Communities that are made up predominately of gated communities can be shown to at least double trip length.

Even minor improvements to the street system, to provide more connections, can dramatically shorten trip length and reduce or eliminate the need to impact the primary collector system for local trips. The example in the two images at the right shows how failure to interconnect neighborhoods can increase trip length by 400 percent.

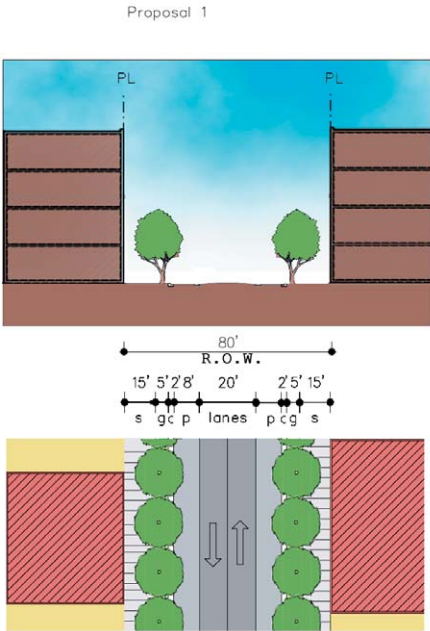
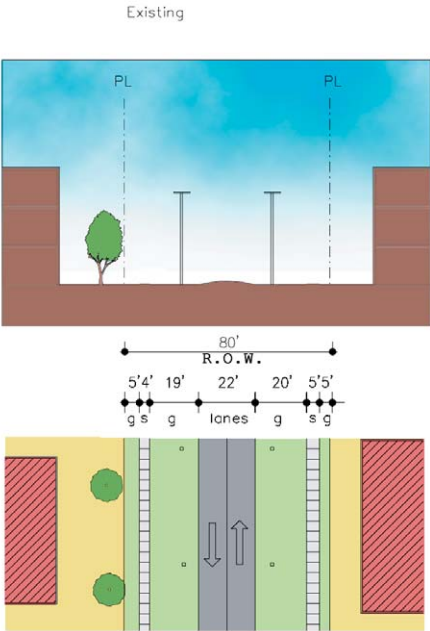




U.S. 1 design and traffic calming within the town center

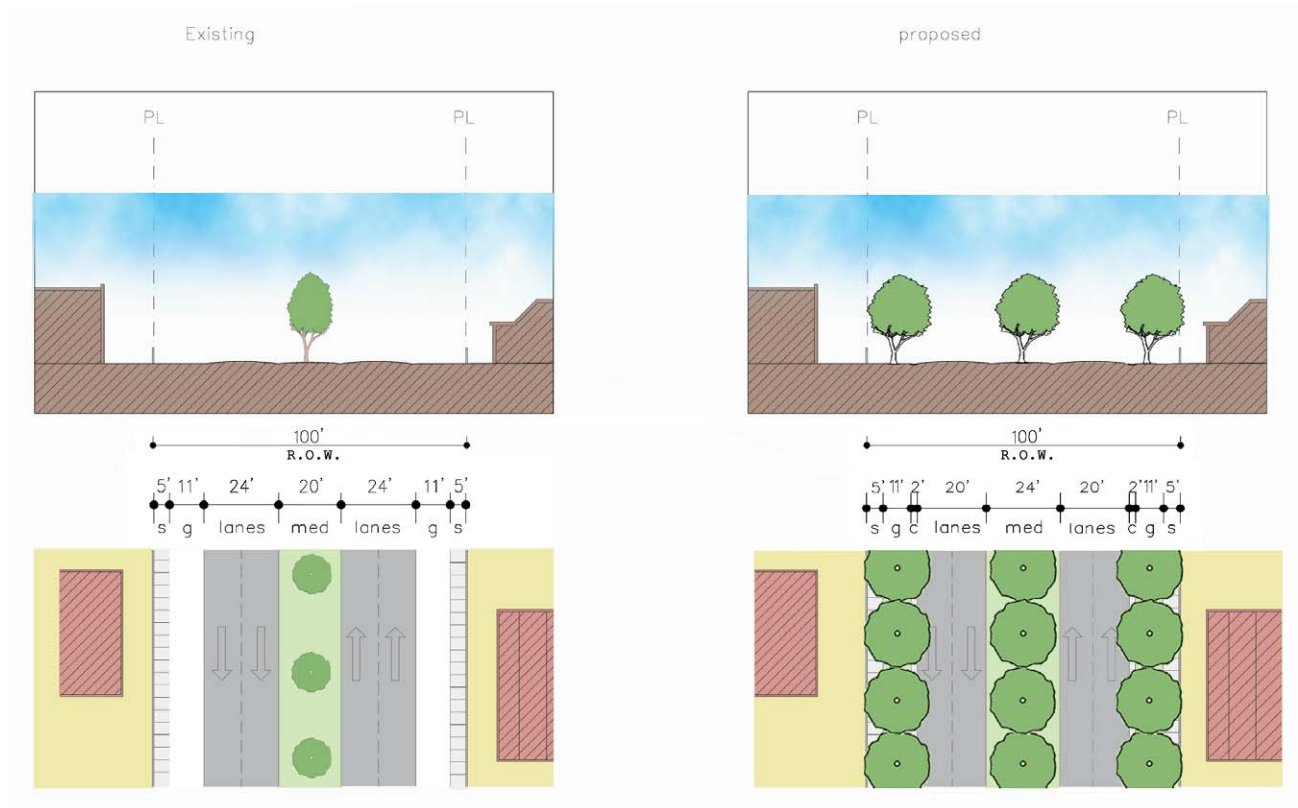
The Citizens' Charrette Area Plan calls for U.S. 1 to be built as an urbanized section through the Town Center District of Princeton. The urban section of the highway would include: outside curb and gutters, wide sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian level street lights, signalized intersections and bricked crosswalks at key pedestrian crossings such as at the Busway station and SW 248th Street. It would be beneficial to the area if on-street parking could be provided along the east side of U.S. 1. This would support retail, provide pedestrians with a buffer from traffic, and would slow traffic in the downtown area. If this is not possible, sidewalks at least 12 feet in width should be provided along the east side of the highway.

Proposed turning movements and intersection configurations are illustrated in the diagram above.



SW 248th Street at The Town Center

An urban cross section with curb and gutters and on-street parking is proposed for the segment of SW 248 St. between US1 and SW 133 Ave. within the proposed Town Center. A transition zone is recommended to signal to the motorist that conditions are changing between the rural section and the urban section near the Town Center.



SW 127th Avenue

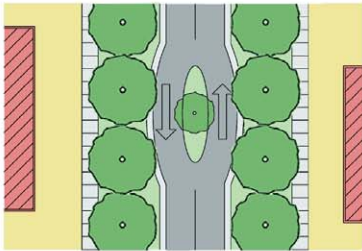
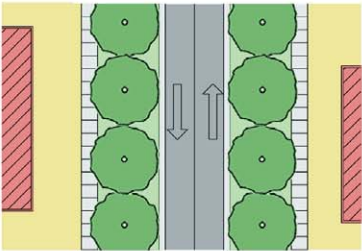
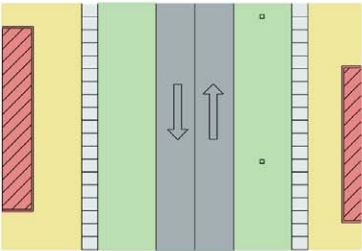
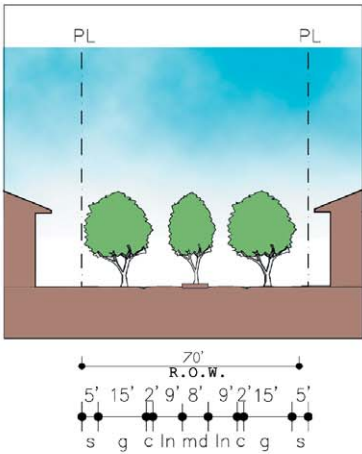
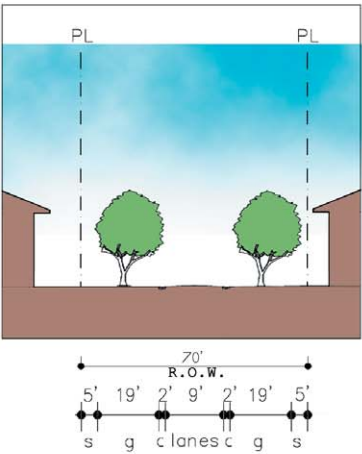
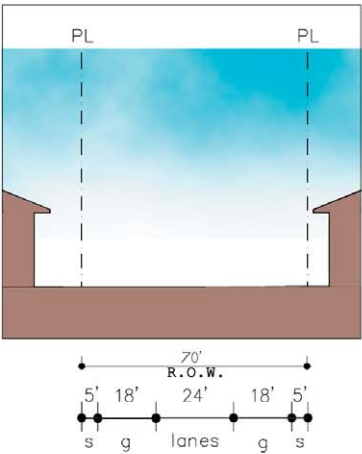
Improvements to this avenue includes the addition of street trees to buffer pedestrians from traffic.



Existing

Proposed Section 1

Proposed Section 2



SW 256th Street

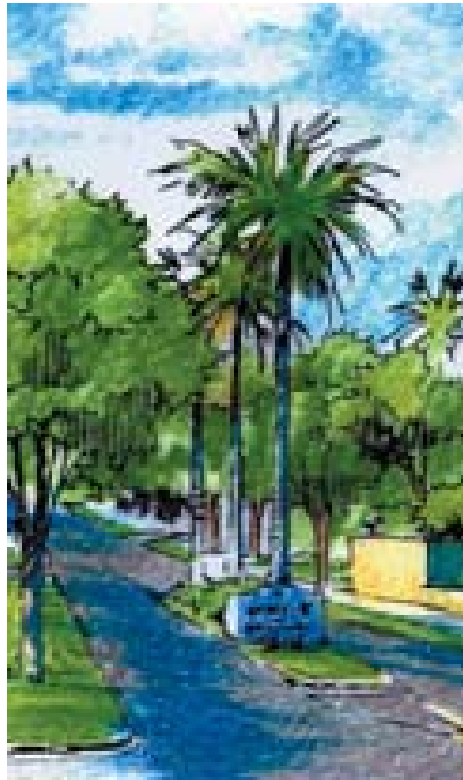
Improvements to the street include adding street trees curb and gutters, and traffic calming features that allow the street to function as a local residential street.

Traffic calming strategies

To a significant degree, behavior of motorists can be controlled through traffic-calming measures. Some of these measures include narrowing of streets and planting of street trees close to the pavement edge; provisions for on-street parking; placement of monuments and plantings at mid-intersection; use of pavers at crosswalks; provision of bulb-outs to narrow pavement at intersections and pedestrian crossings; and many other methods. The objective of traffic calming is to slow traffic down while still allowing travel through a neighborhood.

The best traffic calming methods create psychological barriers to speed rather than physical barriers. By planting large shade trees close to the edge of the pavement and creating a canopy over the street, drivers feel they are in a tight space and slow down.

Some traffic calming methods can also be used to beautify neighborhoods. At intersections small islands can be created like the one illustrated, that can include attractive tree plantings and markers or monuments.



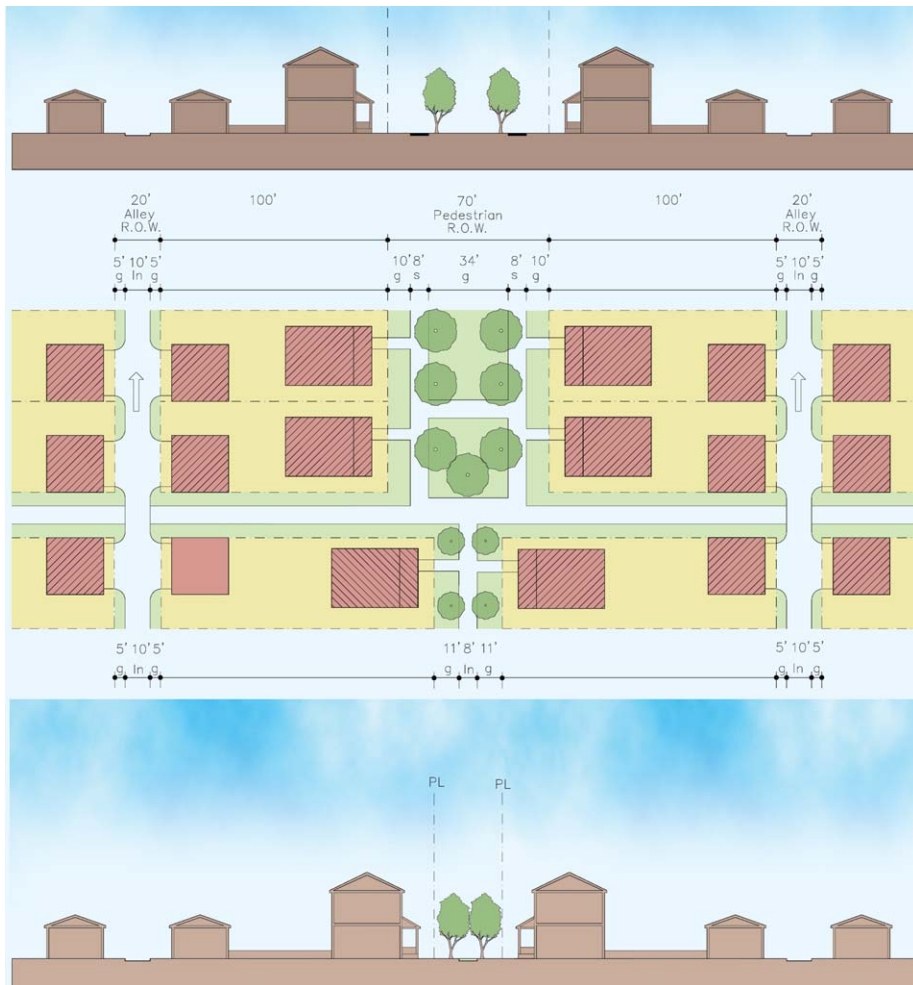
The implementation of any traffic calming strategy should be done in close consultation with the adjacent neighborhoods and home owners. Small charrettes can be held within the neighborhoods to discuss various options and designs.

In budgeting for landscaped traffic calming islands or bulb-outs at intersections, it is important to include provisions for maintenance and watering of vegetation. In some cases, this responsibility may be assumed by a homeowners' association or special taxing district.



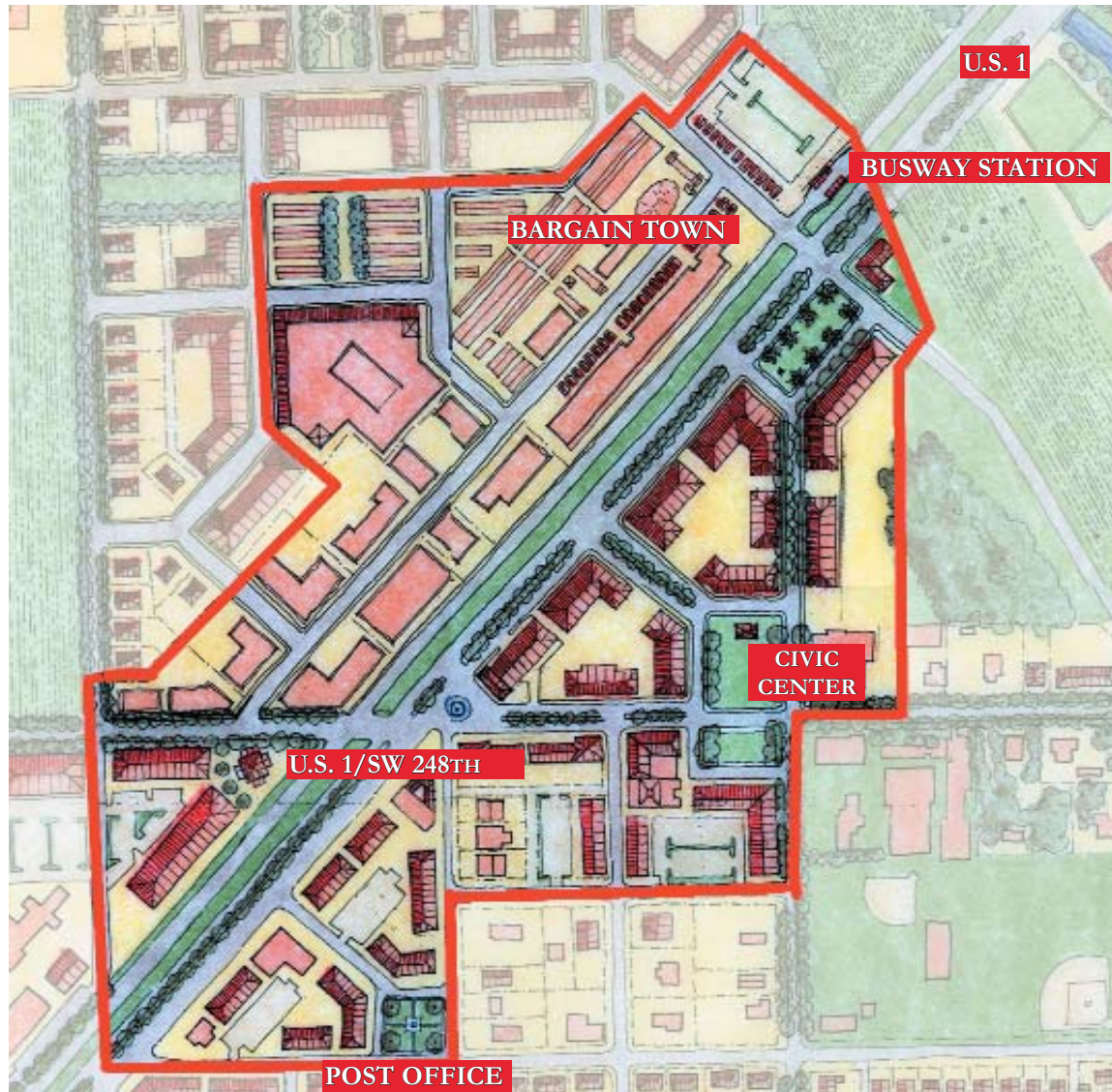
As the network of streets in Princeton is made more continuous, consideration should be given to including traffic calming features on streets intended for local use, in order to discourage cut-through traffic. Traffic calming features can be added over time, as evidence accumulates that such features are warranted in a particular situation.

Traffic calming features have been recommended along SW 256th Street.



Protecting pedestrians and children from traffic in neighborhoods

Pedestrians and children can be protected from the impact of traffic in neighborhoods through design. Without street closures and disrupting the grid system of streets, automobiles access this neighborhood from an alley faced by garages and outbuildings, as illustrated in the drawings above. Pedestrians access homes from a park and sidewalk system that is at the front of the lot.



The Princeton town center

Princeton's proposed town center is located on U.S. 1, between the future Busway station and SW 250th Street. The heart of the town center, and proposed location of Princeton's town square is SW 248th Street and SW 134th Avenue.

The Town Center has been designed as a mixed use district that would include a variety of uses, including: office, retail, residential and civic uses. Residential uses would occur primarily above first floor commercial uses. Existing civic uses within the district include the Nazarene Church and Princeton Christian School. Princeton Christian School can be anticipated to grow as an important anchor of the community. Parents dropping off and picking up children at the school, may also shop within the district as it develops. The district also includes a post office. The Citizens' Charrette Area Plan proposes to replace this building with one of a more civic character, that might also house a library and community meeting hall.

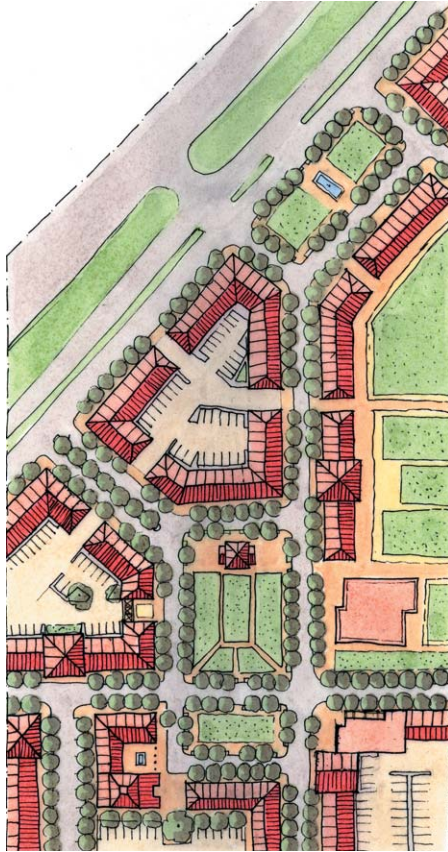
Bargain Town currently exists as a farmers market and flea market, but it is envisioned to transform over time into a seven-days-a-week regional attraction, with a festival market place atmosphere. Bargain town has the potential to evolve into an attractive asset to the community and is proposed to become the heart of a proposed arts district.





A Busway station with reference to Princeton's history

The Busway station is located just north of entrance to Bargain Town. The Charrette Area Plan was designed so that this Busway station can serve the entire town center of Princeton, including Bargain Town and the Princeton Christian School.



Princeton town square
on SW 248th Street

and

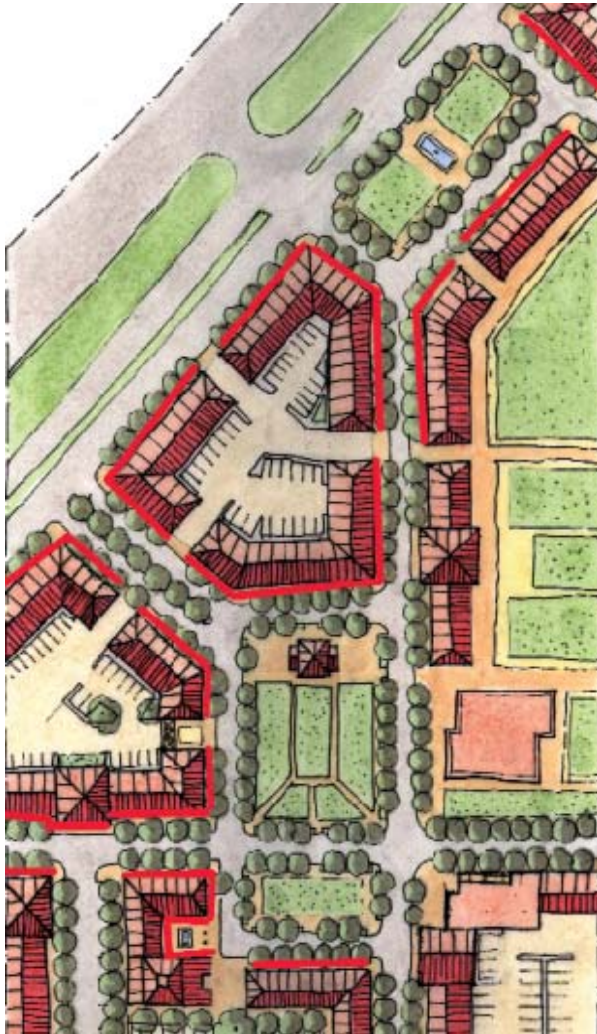
Transit square
located east of U.S. 1
across from
the Busway station



Princeton town square and transit square

The civic center of Princeton is focused on two squares connected by a main street shopping area. The squares are surrounded by civic uses such as the Princeton Christian School and Nazarene Church, and retail uses including small shops and restaurants. The squares are sized and designed to be attractive gathering places for people, and with the surrounding uses occupied by a sufficient number of people, these spaces will feel vibrant and appealing.

The main town square on SW 248th Street, creates a beautiful and central address within the community for the Princeton Christian School and the Nazarene Church. Transit Square is located to draw visitors from the transit station into the civic and shopping area.



Mixed-use town center
Required ground floor retail areas shown in red

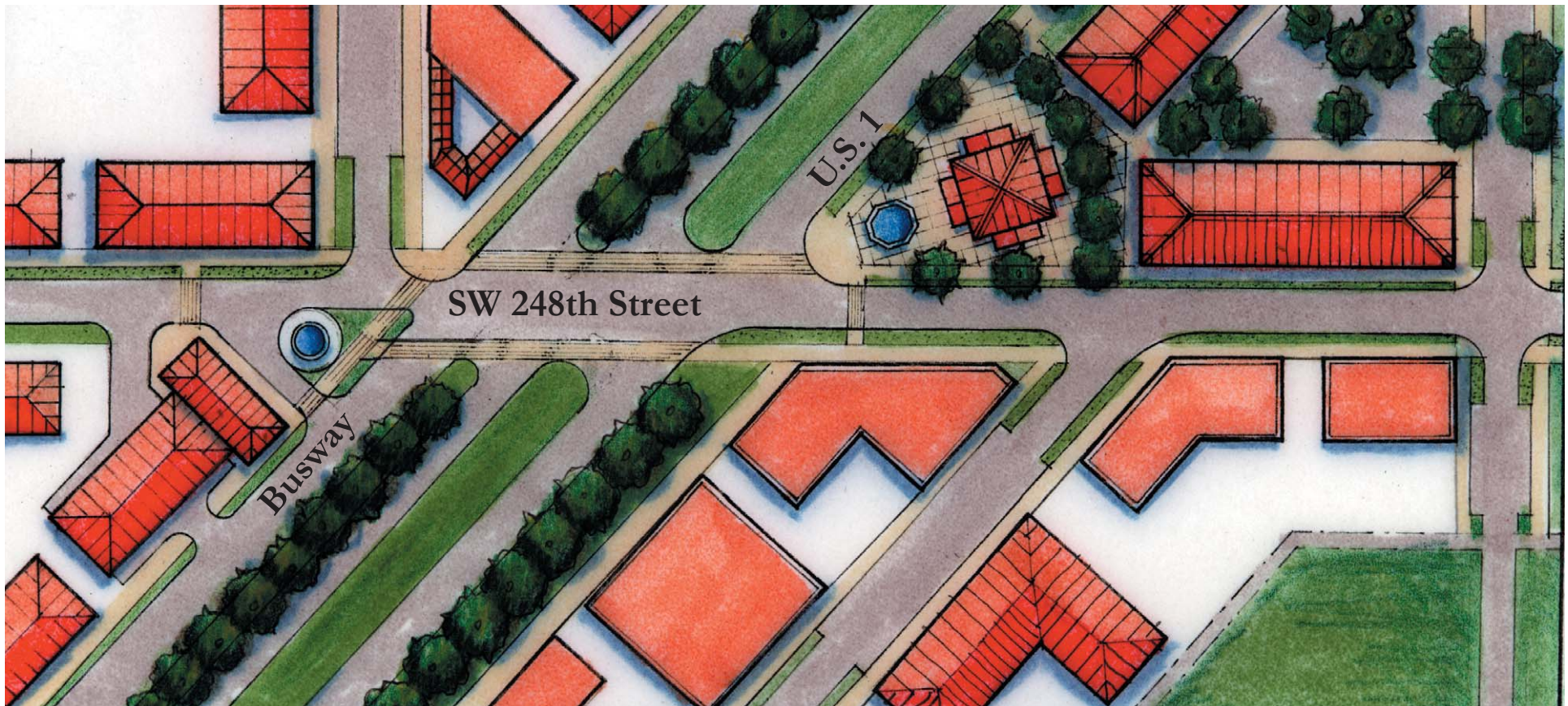


The Princeton town center

The plan at the left shows how retail and civic uses wrap around the town and secondary squares and line U.S. 1. The scale of buildings that should occur within the district is illustrated in the images above. Ideally, buildings would be three stories within the downtown area, and would include residential above the first floor. Buildings facing U.S. 1 should be a minimum of four stories and continuous buildings are recommended to be required along U.S. 1 to help make the space feel comfortable to pedestrians. Wide sidewalks of at least 12 to 15 feet should be provided along the highway. Wide sidewalks provide a buffer from traffic, and also allow small tables to be set out where people can sit and enjoy a cup of coffee.

Given the location of the Busway station across the street from the green facing U.S. 1, and improvements proposed to facilitate pedestrian crossing of the highway, the shopping district has an opportunity to be successful, particularly if it is developed in an attractive manner. The district also benefits from being within walking or bicycle distance from most homes in the community. It also benefits from proximity to Bargain Town, which is envisioned to become an active festival market place. Shopping opportunities provided by Bargain Town will likely be different than those provided by the town center, so in a sense Bargain Town should be viewed as an anchor that will attract regional customers to the town center, making area businesses more successful.

Parking is hidden at mid block to assure that the retail area is an attractive and comfortable place to visit and shop. It is important that the retail frontage along U.S. 1 and internally around the civic greens is continuous and not broken up by parking area or vacant lots.



The 'Main and Main' intersection - U.S. 1 and SW 248th Street

This may be the most important intersection in Princeton, and it will become increasingly so as the community develops. Brick-paved crosswalks and signalization are recommended to facilitate pedestrian crossing, and the Charrette Area Plan recommends that this intersection be improved to include special landscape and architectural features, such as fountains to create a beautiful and powerful impression on travelers moving along U.S. 1. In combination with the formal grove of trees at the northern edge of Princeton, the proposed design will give Princeton a strong sense of place.

It is equally important that U.S. 1 be lined with a continuous frontage of attractive buildings pulled up to the street. It is also recommended that the buildings enclose the street space properly and make the highway feel like a public space as it moves through Princeton.



Detail of the new post office/library/civic building



Location and site plan



A civic building for Princeton

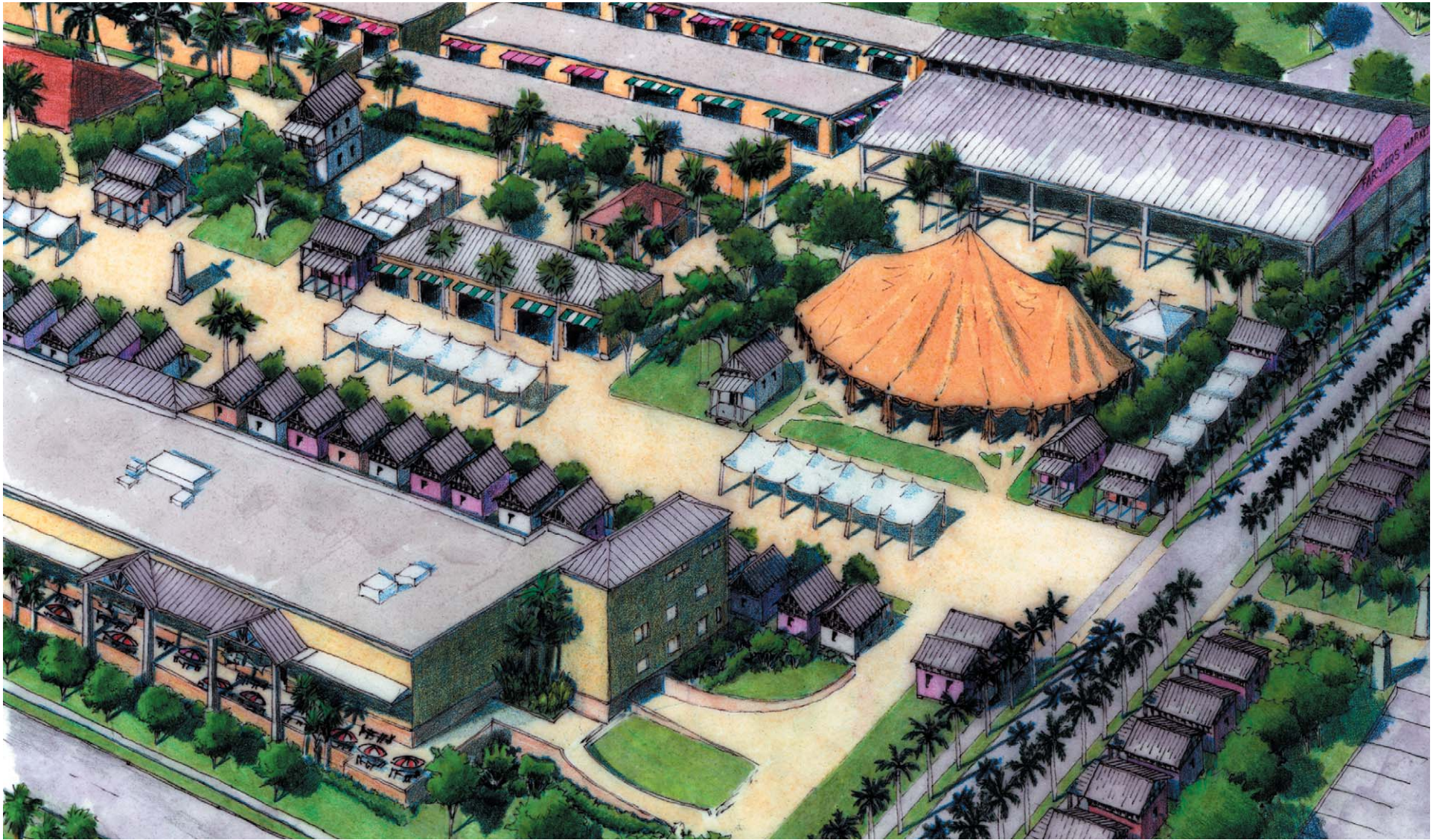


A public building that does not contribute to the community

Traditionally, greens and squares are anchored by a church or important civic building. Such buildings had architectural features that made them centerpieces of the neighborhood and points of great community pride. Their construction represented an opportunity to beautify the community, and to acknowledge the importance of the institution that the building represented.

Besides churches and schools, town halls, libraries and post offices were the principal civic buildings that small communities were likely to include in prominent locations. The library and post office were usually located at the center of the community, where they could easily be reached by all residents. Both institutions were frequently visited and both made good anchors for town center shopping areas.

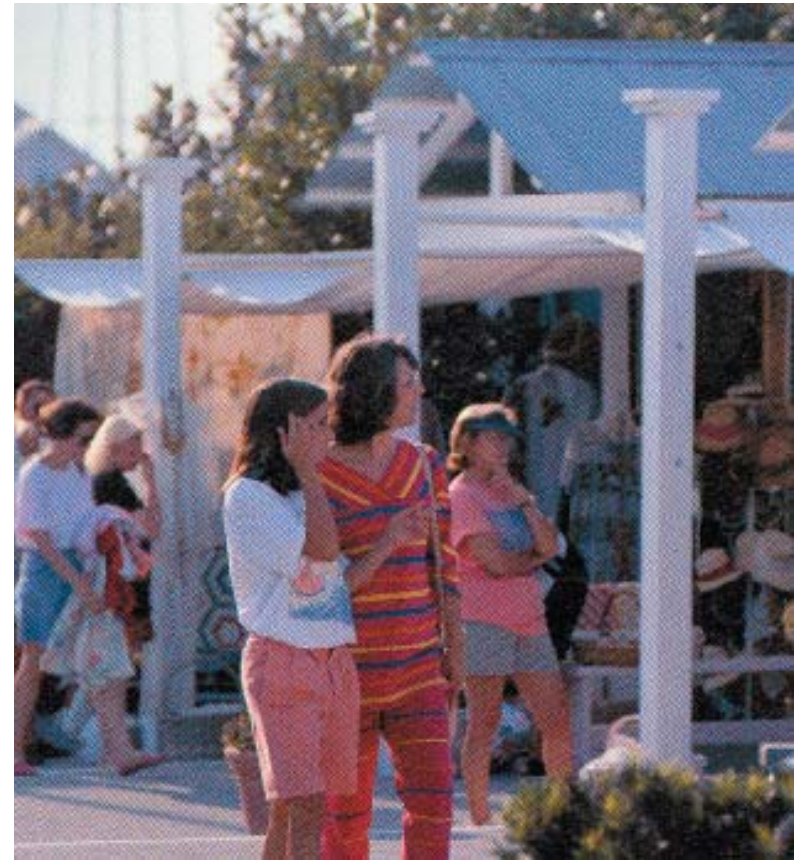
The existing Princeton post office should be replaced with a building that has civic character. Consideration should be given to building a beautiful civic building that could house a community library, meeting hall, and post office. As Princeton grows, the post office and meeting facilities could be moved into separate civic buildings.

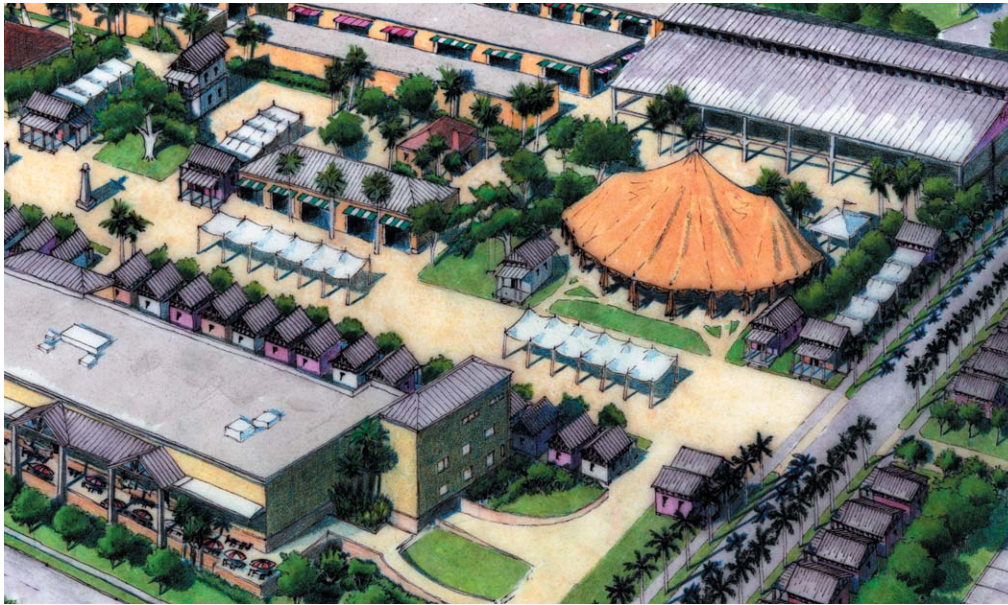




Bargain Town as a festival market place

Bargain Town can evolve into a seven-days-a-week festival market place, farmers market, art and antique showplace, and arts district where tourists and south Florida residents can enjoy a country fair atmosphere, shop, eat, and be entertained by street performers, small concerts and guest lecturers. The trademark circus tent could alternatively serve as the main stage for entertainment, or a protected area for antique and art auction. Small brightly painted buildings, and attractive canvas pavilions would serve as shops and display booths. Over time, Bargain Town can become a destination for tour buses, and a fun gathering place for south Florida.





Proposed design concept for Bargain Town



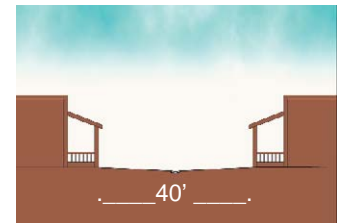
Bargain Town design concept

The design concept for Bargain Town is based on town planning and space making principles. It is proposed to infill open areas of the property between the main building and ancillary buildings with small pavilions, painted pastel colors. These would serve as small shops, with goods displayed on the porches and spilling onto the street where appropriate. Mixed with the small pavilions, would be bright and colorful canvas canopies supported by white columns. The hall-mark of the market place would be a large circus tent, that could serve alternatively as an auction area, concert pavilion, or theater and lecture hall.



The small buildings would be aligned to form a tight pedestrian street, approximately 40 - 50 feet from porch face to porch face. The street itself is designed as a 'festival street' with flex space without curbs, as illustrated at the right.

The intent of the concept is to create a neat, colorful festive feel. Streets would be terminated with fountains or architectural features. The interior of the main building should be renovated and brightened with better lighting, and consideration should be given to using it as a food court with outdoor seating.



As envisioned, Bargain Town would evolve from merely being a farmer's and flea market, into a regional festival market place that includes entertainment, and has attractive power to all members of the family.



Bargain Town - existing condition



Advertisement



Proximity to workplace

The old flea market, a very large courtyard style building, exists in a form that could be easily transformed into an attractive workplace for the arts and crafts trades, such as stone carving, painting, metal working, ceramics and mosaics, casting and foundry uses, and classroom space for teaching such skills. Space within the complex could be leased or sold as condominiums. Provision of such space would be key to marketing the neighborhood as a working arts and crafts community.

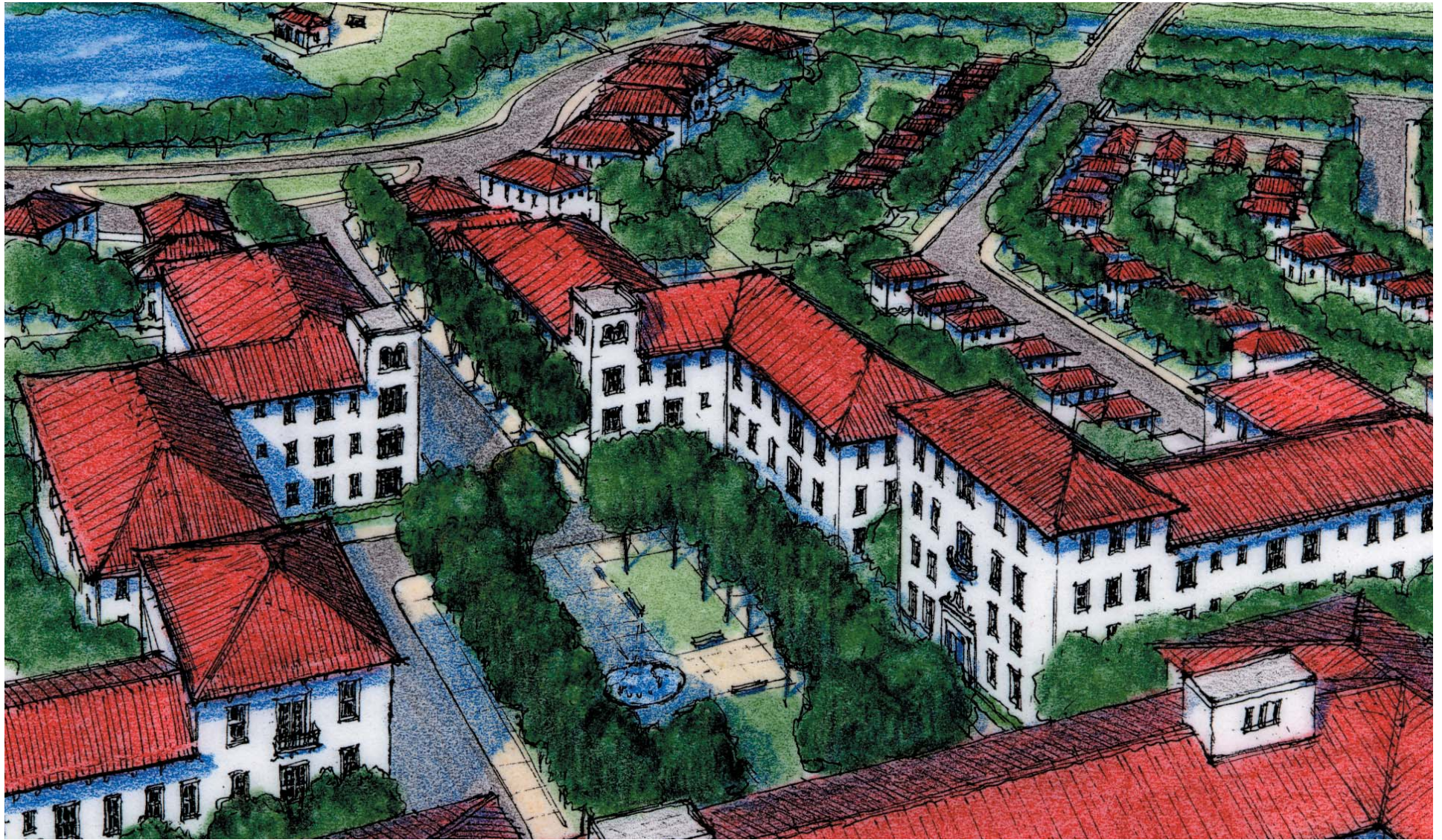
The existing building is located within convenient walking distance form all addresses within the neighborhood.

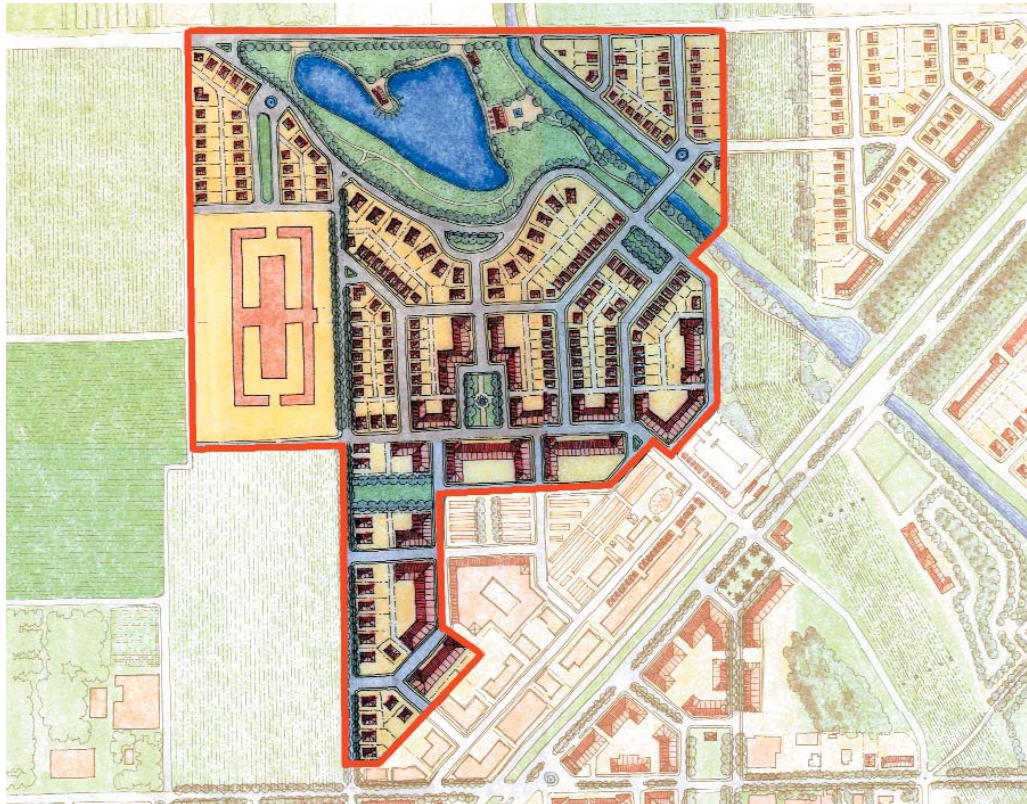


Proximity to shopping

All portions of the Arts District are within a short walk of Bargain Town and Princeton's town center. Bargain Town provides an opportunity for residents to buy fresh vegetables at the farmers market and a retail outlet for art work produced by the community. In its renovated form, Bargain Town is expected to grow as a regional attraction. The grand tent, small buildings and colorful pavilions will give Bargain town a festive look and feel.

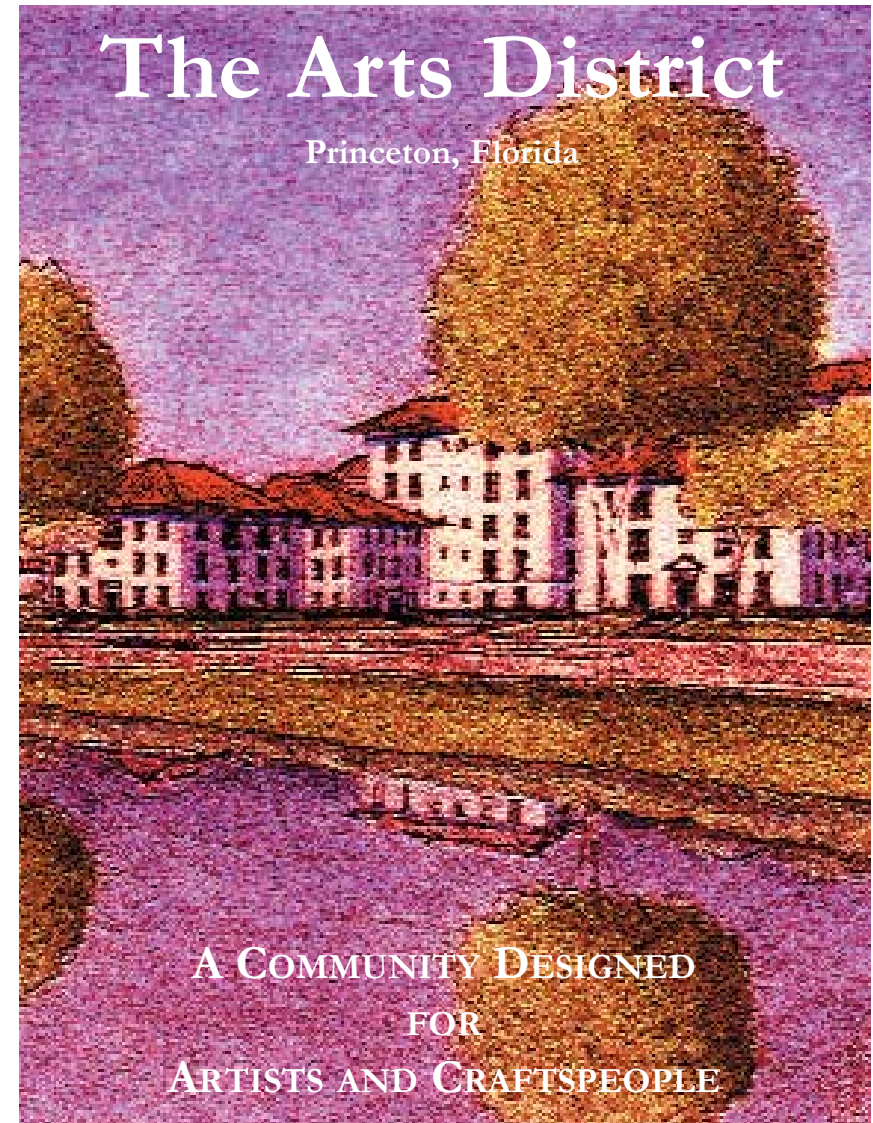


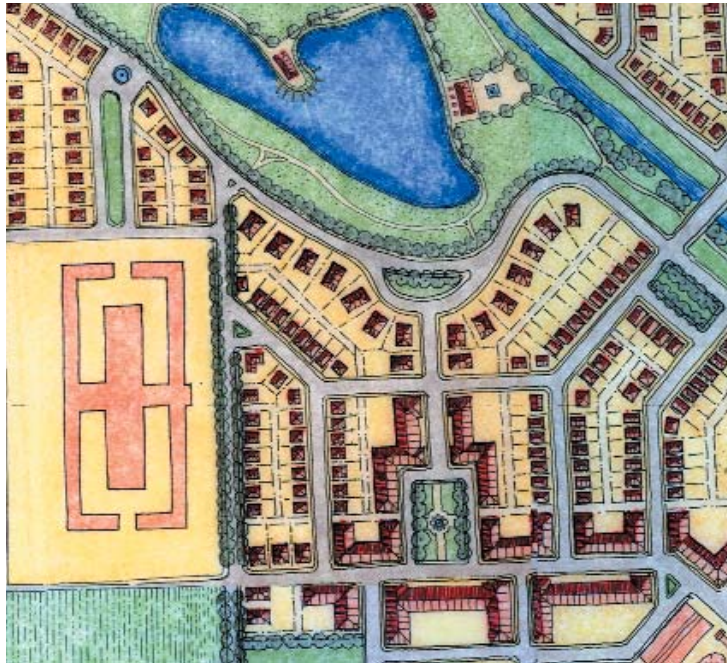




The Arts District is planned as a traditional mixed-use neighborhood. On its western boundary it includes an existing large courtyard building that is proposed to serve light industrial uses such as an artist's workplace and studio complex. Artists and artisans could rent or buy condominium space within the building for stone carving, small foundry works, welding, ceramics, woodworking, or any craft or art related purpose. The neighborhood is adjacent to Bargain Town and the town center, which together could provide retail outlets for products produced within the district.

As proposed, the development could be marketed to artists and retirees interested in participating in an arts community.





Housing

As proposed, the Arts District neighborhood can and should accommodate a variety of housing types, including multi-family apartments and condominiums, town houses, live-work units and single family homes. Opportunities are further diversified by lot size and location, with some units facing parks or greens and others facing only other homes.

On single family lots of sufficient depth, provision should be made for out-buildings or granny flats within this neighborhood. In cases where the main house is occupied by the owner of the property, such units should be allowed to be rented. Outbuildings help to make housing affordable in three ways: 1) they provide income to the owner of the main house, 2) they provide affordable accommodations to singles, whether young or old, and 3) the structure may provide workspace for a home-based business.



The Arts District neighborhood

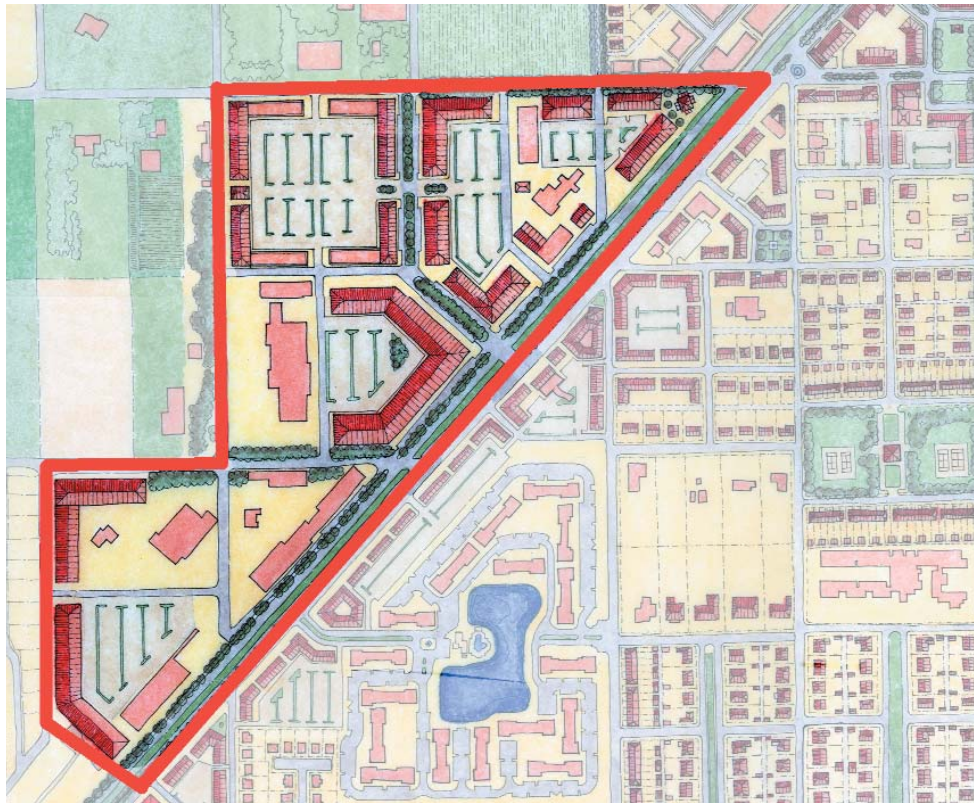
A variety of residential living accommodations are provided to meet the needs of a diverse range of people.

The Arts District could be attractive to a wide variety of ages, incomes and family sizes. Development that provides a broad spectrum of housing opportunities should be encouraged.



Arts District

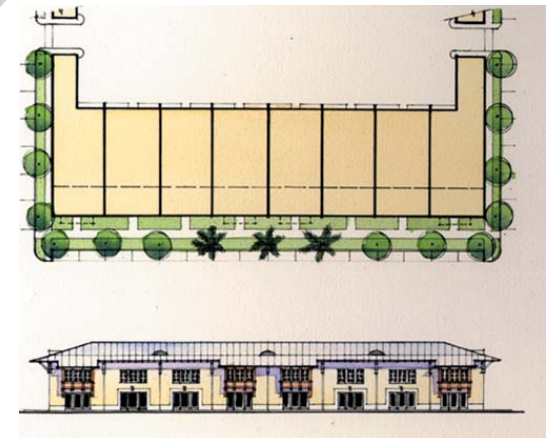
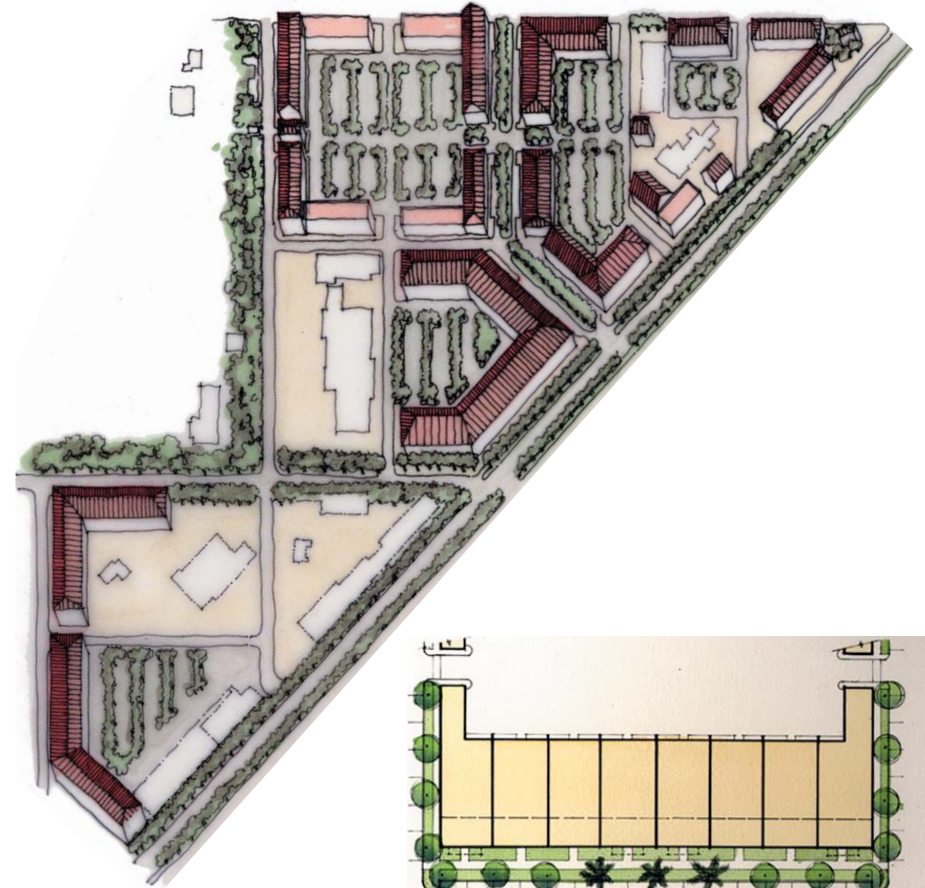
Residential area, viewed from across the lake and park at the north end of the district.



Industry as a good neighbor

Some industrial uses can occur in close proximity to places of residence without negatively impacting other nearby uses. The industrial area in Princeton is well located to have minimal impact on residential neighborhoods. Its primary impact, however, is visual and in its current form it negatively impacts the aesthetics of U.S. 1 and the impression visitors have of Princeton.

The Citizens' Charrette Area Plan resolves the existing problems by encouraging the construction of attractive industrial buildings that shield work yards, storage areas and parking from external view. Passing along U.S. 1 or along any primary street, it would be impossible to see anything but the building facade.



A well designed and attractive industrial building





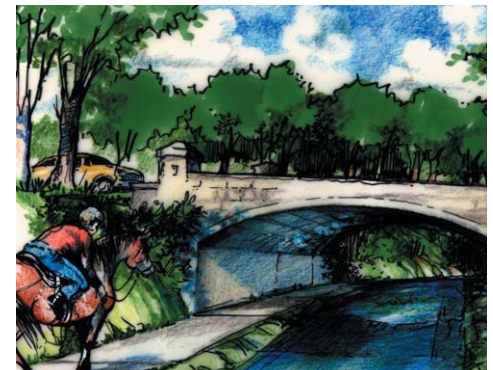
View of the equestrian waterfront park and the greenway system from above Jordan Commons



C-102 Canal - existing conditions



Plan for Princeton equestrian park



Trail passage under U.S. 1

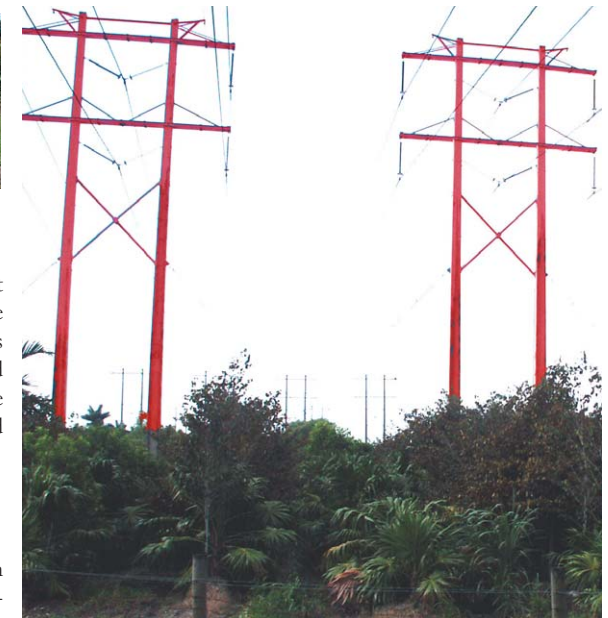


An opportunity to establish a beautiful regional greenway system

There is a unique opportunity to develop a greenway system along the C-102 canal. This greenway could connect from the lake at the current end of SW 240th Street west of U.S. 1, and follow along the canal, eventually reaching Black Point Park where the C-102 empties into Biscayne Bay. The greenway could allow for pedestrians, bikers, and equestrians to use the proposed trail, and there may be also opportunities for canoers and kayakers to use the canal. The trail could cross U.S. 1 beneath the bridge, while at-grade crossings are proposed for SW 248th Street and SW 256th Street. Opportunities for trailheads and parks occur at various points along the FPL easement and canal right-of-way. One of the most notable is that proposed within the Citizens' Charrette Area Plan as the Princeton Equestrian Waterfront Park. The proposed park could include stables for boarding horses, and fields for training as well as storage and launching facilities for canoes and kayaks.

Land for parks and trail access points should be acquired before the area becomes further urbanized and these opportunities are lost.

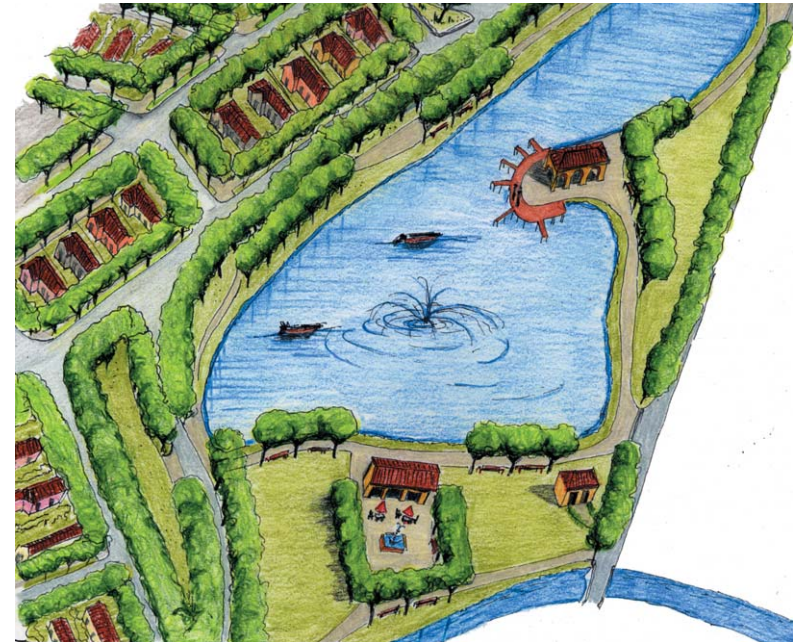
As can be seen in the photographs, much of the C-102 has an excellent character as it passes through farm lands and groves. Consideration should however be given to finding ways to mitigate the negative visual impact that transmission lines have on the landscape. Perhaps the supporting structures could be painted in bright colors, so that they seem more like sculptures, rather than impositions on the landscape. An proposal should be made to FPL to determine what the visual impact of painting the poles would have.



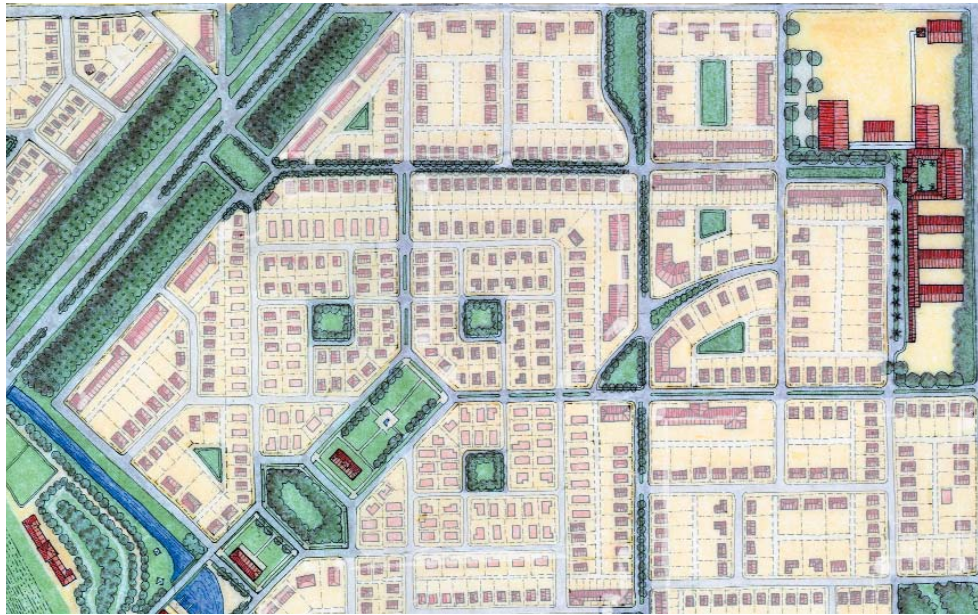
**Power transmission line supports:
a concept in aesthetics**



Lakeside park
A stop along the C-102 greenway trail



The lakeside park serves as both an neighborhood park and part of the regional greenway and trail system.
This is one of a series of parks and access points along the greenway.



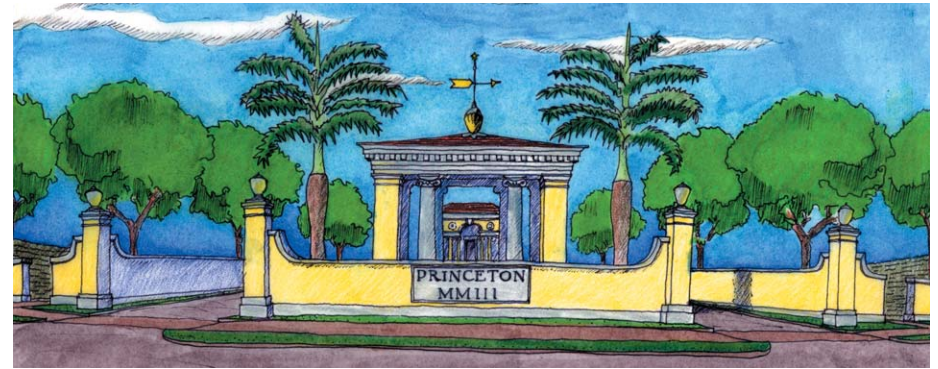
Neighborhood parks

Neighborhood parks should be provided in a variety of sizes. Large neighborhood parks such as the proposed South Princeton park, Princetonian Park and the green at Jordan Commons provide opportunities for tennis, informal soccer and baseball, and perhaps a neighborhood meeting hall, as noted in the plan for South Princeton Park. Neighborhood parks are not specialized recreational facilities and should be designed in a form that allows their use for multiple activities such as informal ball games and neighborhood picnics.



'Shouting distance park'

Equally important to the larger neighborhood parks, and too frequently overlooked, are small 'shouting distance' parks where young children can play on their own or with friends close to home. Such parks can be implemented through special taxing districts or neighborhood associations.

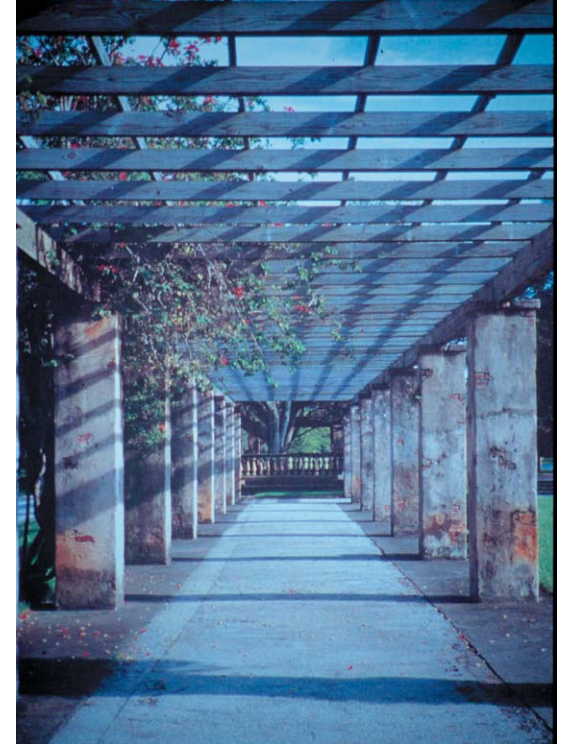


South Princeton park

A beautiful center to the neighborhood, convenient for children to play



South Princeton park
Designed as a centerpiece to the neighborhood, including a community meeting room, pavilion, and stone walls

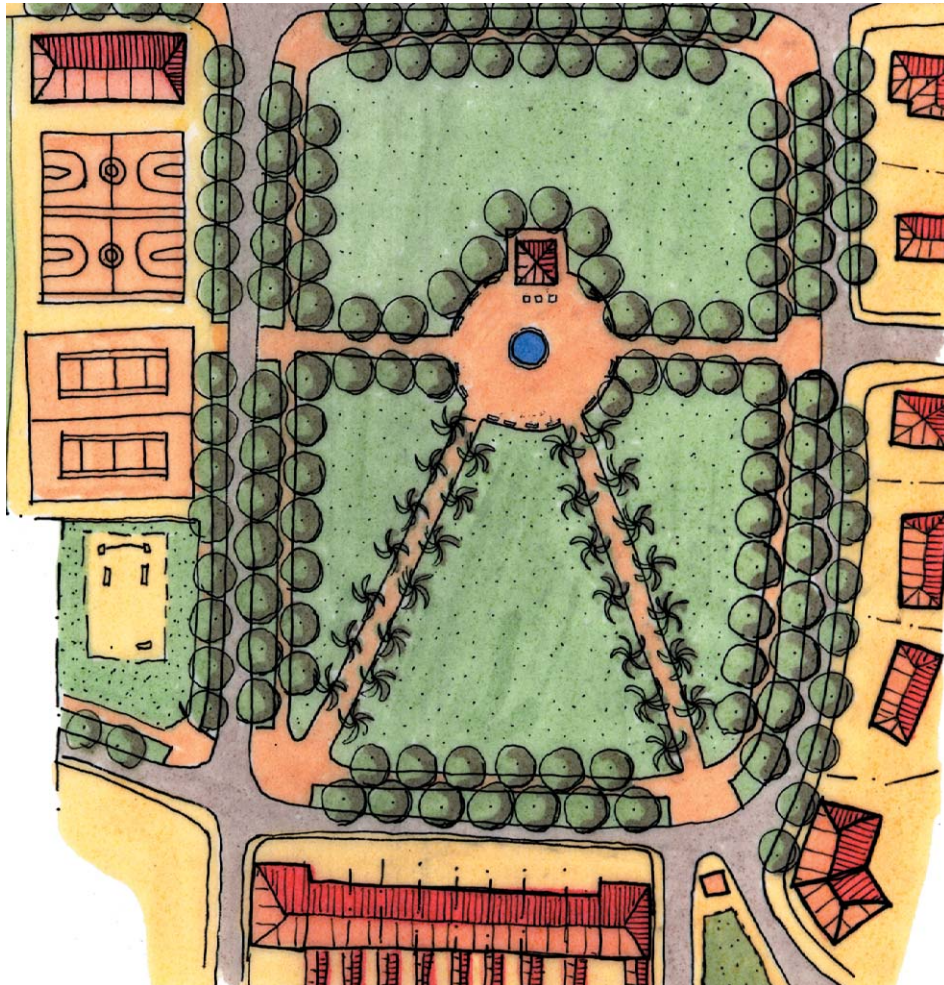


Coral Gables
Prado Entrance

Small parks as the focal point of the neighborhood

Parks can be improved with architectural features that make them beautiful center pieces of the neighborhood and points of great community pride. It is most important that land be acquired in the right locations for such facilities. Over time the parcels can be developed as landscaped greens and play areas, or as more formal gardens.

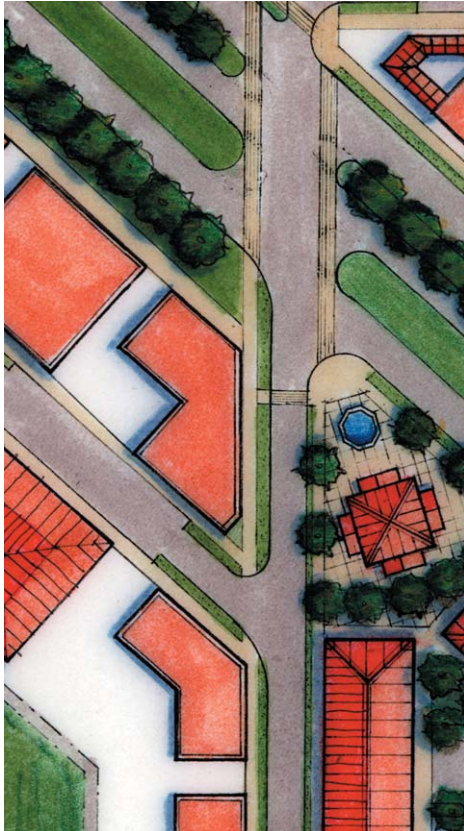
It does not cost a great deal to build a beautiful trellis system such as at the Prado Entrance in Coral Gables. Such projects can be taken on by community groups at the cost of materials and labor. As worthwhile endeavors that improve the whole community, such projects can be a lot of fun and help bring the community and neighborhood together, particularly if accompanied by an impressive picnic or barbecue.



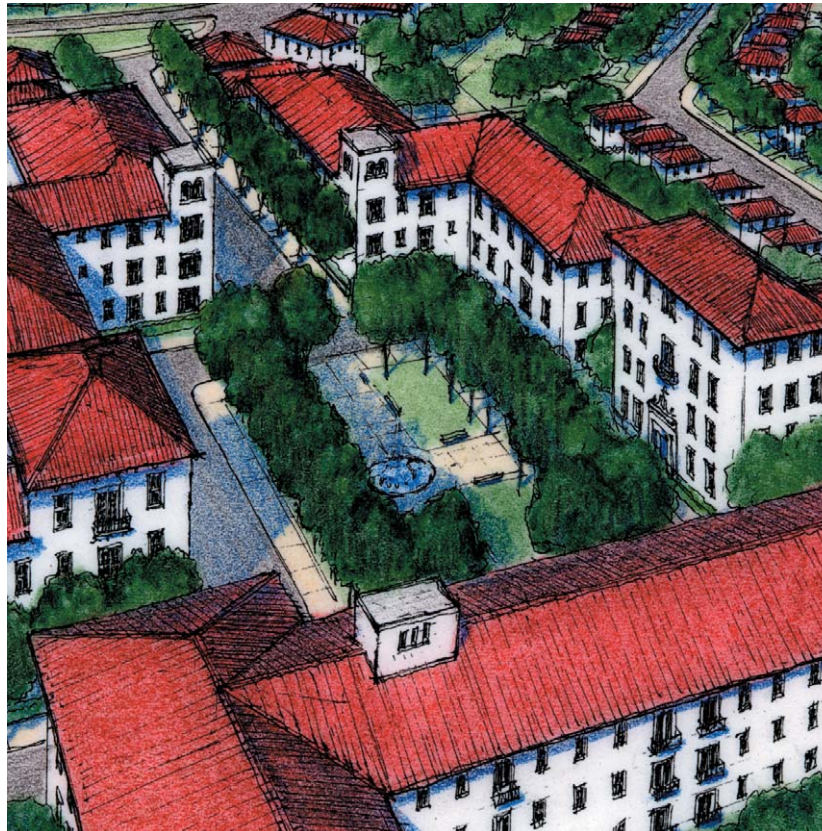
Princetonian Park

It is important that houses front on neighborhood parks. The homes provide eyes on the park and also assure that the park has enough use to feel alive and active.





Plaza at U.S. 1 and SW 248th Street



Arts District commons



Princeton town square



Post office square

Greens, squares and plazas

Greens, squares and plazas are typically more formal and more urban than most parks. They are generally designed more as gathering places for people than as recreational areas. Typically they are surrounded by buildings on all sides, and exist in a very clearly defined space that feels very much like an outdoor room. It is important that squares and plazas not be too large. Squares should have a sufficient density of population and mixture of uses around them in order to feel vibrant. With fewer than one person per 300 square feet of space, a space begins to feel empty and devoid of life. The Arts District Commons, Princeton town square and post office square are typical in design, and appropriately sized for the potential future development. The Plaza at the intersection of U.S. 1 and SW 248th Street is less typical, but will function well as a gathering place if the buildings that surround it are sufficiently tall to give the space a sense of enclosure. Active uses such as a coffee shops or restaurants that face the space and provide tables and chairs to attract patrons will also contribute to lend a vibrant character to the plaza.

Schools as Important Civic Institutions

Traditionally, the architecture of civic buildings was a reflection of the reverence the community held for the institutions housed in them. Schools were often the most important civic buildings within a community. It may have been beautifully built, with exceptionally good materials and often was located at the very center of the town at a prominent location. Such buildings had power, and were the source of community pride. Walking through their doors, students knew they were on an important, if sometimes difficult mission. It is not clear what message is conveyed when our children attend schools surrounded by high fences and made up of portable classrooms.

Schools should be sized to serve their communities. Elementary and Middle Schools should be small and close to the homes that they serve. When possible, children should not have to endure long bus trips to and from school. Neighborhood schools make it easier for parents to participate in school activities and governance, and thereby the education of their children. Schools that serve primarily the nearby surrounding neighborhoods are ‘owned’ by the community and are protected and overseen by the neighborhood. Typically, they do not need fences.

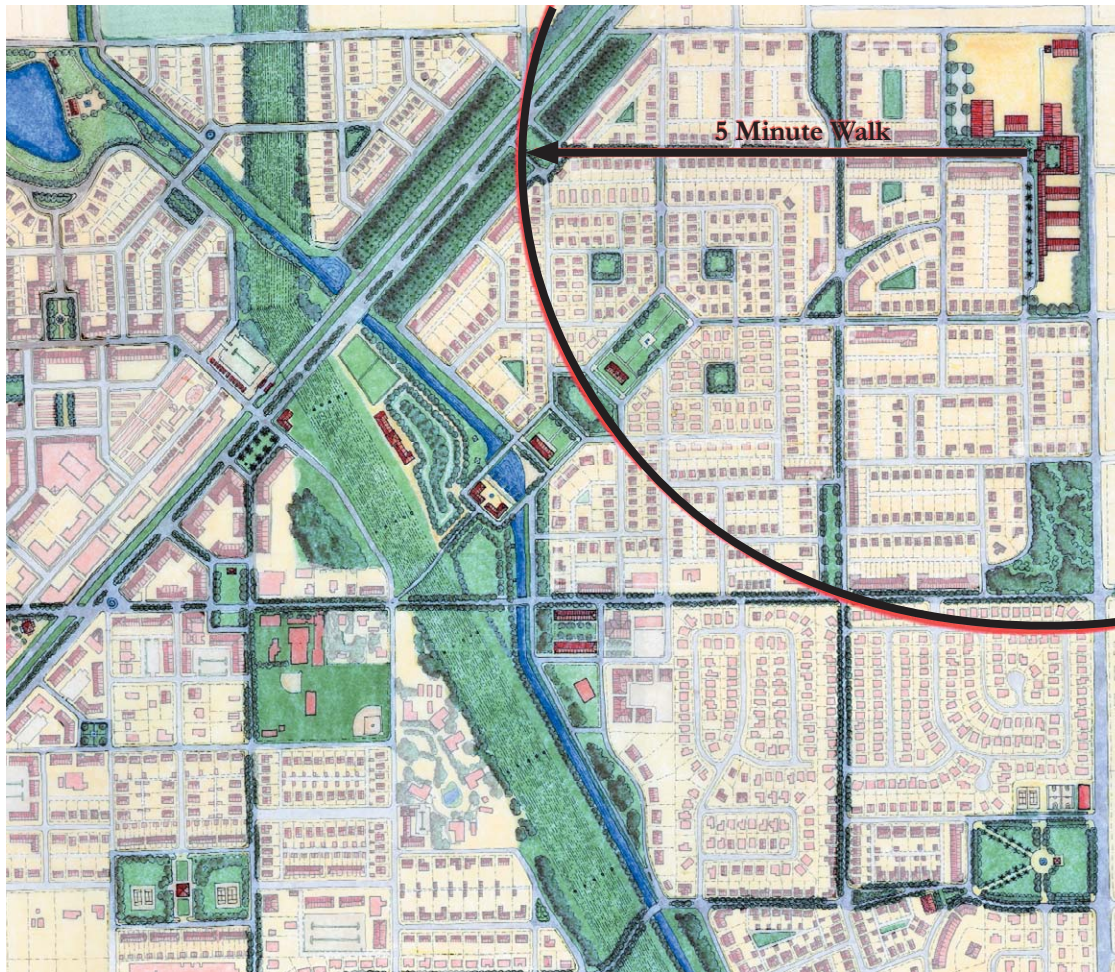
When schools are small, they can be located within the community, in close proximity to where people live (as illustrated in the drawing at the right). If schools become too large, they become regional facilities that adversely impact rather than benefit the neighborhood. There is little if any sense of community ownership, and the facility is seen as an intrusion that adversely impacts surrounding property values.

Princeton should work with the school board to site a neighborhood elementary school within the community, that is sized to serve children from Princeton and adjacent neighborhoods. It is important that the school be built in an attractive and high civic form that allows it to be integrated into the fabric of the community and in close proximity to the homes that it will serve.



Proposed design concept for an elementary or middle school in Princeton

Schools should be carefully integrated into the fabric of the communities that they serve. Attractive design and architecture make schools good neighbors to nearby residential areas, and a source of pride. In close proximity to the homes, many children can walk or ride bikes to school, and parents can more easily participate in school governance and activities.



A new neighborhood school

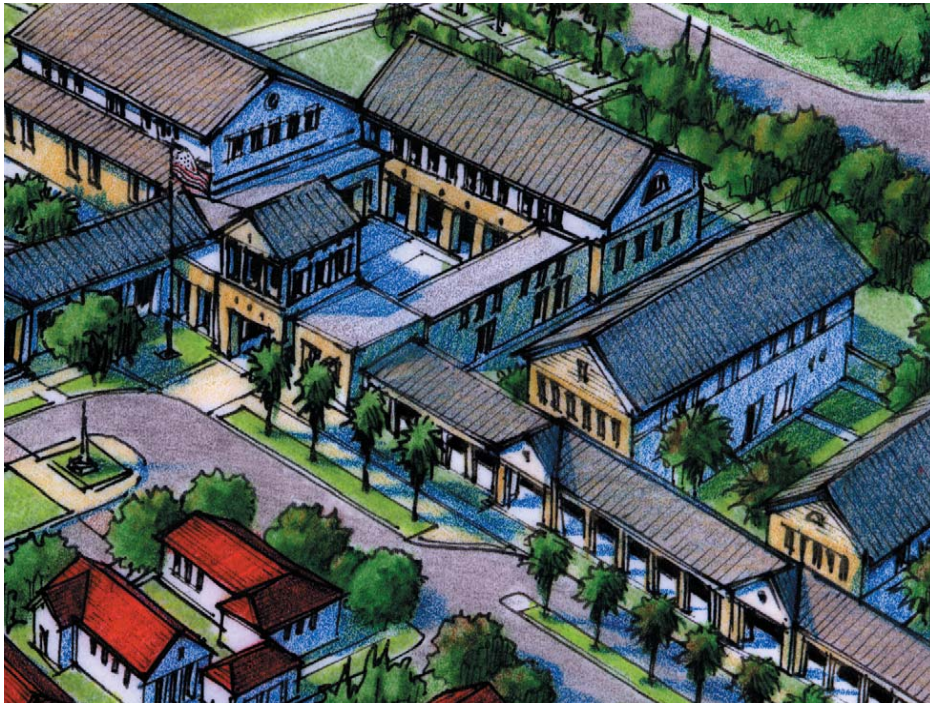
Proposed to be located just west of SW 127th Avenue, between SW 240th Street and SW 244th Street, the new school would provide a beautiful termination of the SW 242nd Street access from US. Highway 1. The proposed location is easily accessible from the surrounding neighborhoods and would be within walking or bicycle distance of many homes.



Site plan of proposed new elementary or middle school, civic character reflecting the importance of the institution



Simple and elegant organization



Alternatives

Princeton residents should work with Community Councils 14 and 15 and the Miami-Dade County School Board to try to encourage a beautiful neighborhood elementary or middle school to be built on the recommended site. It is important that the school be relatively small (approximately 500 students), that it be an attractive civic building or campus, and finally that it be designed as part of the overall community and not as an isolated fortress. During the charrette, representatives of the school board seemed open to this approach, and if these key issues can be properly addressed, location of an elementary or middle school on the proposed site should be considered as the preferred alternative.

Not only can a school be designed in a manner that integrates the facility appropriately into the community, as in the design proposed, but could also be used for other purposes. As an alternative, the proposed plan could make a wonderful group residence for senior citizens. Another option would be to develop the property as a traditional residential neighborhood, as illustrated at the far right.



West elevation of proposed school



School alternative



Residential alternative

IMPLEMENTATION



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Priorities and Project Management

The Citizens' Charrette Area Plan represents a vision intended to guide actions and investment toward a well defined objective. The plan is comprehensive, and describes a large number of development and redevelopment opportunities. Not all of these opportunities should be pursued immediately, attention and resources should instead be focused on those opportunities that are strategically most important to achieving the long term objectives of the plan. It will take many years to fully implement the plan, but steady progress can be made toward the objective, and Princeton will improve with each step.

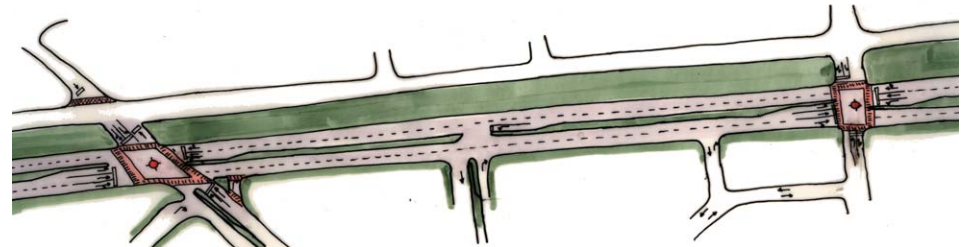
Princeton is situated in the path of growth. Given the diverse transportation access provided to the area by U.S. 1, The Florida Turnpike, and Busway service, the issue will not be about attracting development, but managing it.

First Priorities

In partnership with the community, the Department of Planning and Zoning, through the Community Planning Section should assign an individual or team with responsibility to shepherd the Citizens' Charrette Area Plan through the review, approval and adoption process. It is important that someone be designated as the person responsible for assuring that the Princeton plan is adopted and that all necessary Comprehensive Plan, Zoning and Land Use changes necessary to assure implementation of the plan are expeditiously processed. Princeton is already experiencing rapid growth and development pressure, and achieving the objectives of the plan requires that land use and zoning policies be put in place to assure that new development proceeds as envisioned. It is recommended that a team representing the planning, design, and legal professions be assigned the responsibility.

Adoption of the Citizens' Charrette Area Plan by Residents and the Charrette Steering Committee. The final draft plan will be available for review in November of 2003. If found acceptable, the Steering Committee should accept the plan and recommend its approval by the Community Councils.

Review and Approval of the Citizens' Charrette Area Plan by Community Councils 14 and 15.



The Citizens' Charrette Area Plan should be reviewed and approved by the Community Councils and forwarded to the Planning Advisory Board with a recommendation for approval.

Review and Approval of the Citizens' Charrette Area Plan by the Planning Advisory Board.

The Citizens' Charrette Area Plan should be reviewed and approved by the Planning Advisory Board and recommended for adoption by the County Commission, as the Citizens' Charrette Area Plan for the Princeton Community Urban Cneter.

The County should immediately begin working with FDOT regarding design issues related to U.S. 1. There are a number of issues regarding the design of U.S. 1 that should be negotiated with FDOT immediately. These include: creating urbanized sections, using gateways, installing outside curb and gutters, sidewalk design, utilization of pavement textures at designated intersection, and the addition of traffic lights at SW 134th Street, SW 256th Street, SW 252nd Street, SW 244th Street and SW 240th Street.

County staff should work closely with the Urban Design Center to develop the necessary implementing ordinances including any necessary changes to the County's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. As noted already, Princeton is already experiencing significant growth pressure, and it is important that implementing ordinances be developed as quickly as possible.

High Priority Items

The County should begin the process of identifying and reserving right-of-way as necessary to implement the Citizens' Charrette Area Plan, and better connect the existing street grid. Princeton is just beginning to experience congestion problems at some intersections that are the direct result of an incomplete grid system. Improvements to the system focused on completing the street grid should be prioritized and implemented.

The land identified in the Plan as the Princeton equestrian waterfront park should be acquired for its future use as a public land. This land is in an excellent location to provide for future park

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needs as well as affording an opportunity to link the eastern neighborhoods to the town center. As a trail head for a greenway system that can be used by equestrian, canoes, and hikers, the land contributes to a project that is regional in scope. It should be acquired as soon as possible.

The County, including representatives from the Urban Design Center, and Community Councils should begin negotiating with the Miami-Dade County School Board regarding the possibility of establishing a new elementary or middle school at the location proposed within the plan, and in a manner consistent with the design proposed. It is important that the school be built in an attractive and high civic form that allows it to be integrated into the fabric the community, in close proximity to the homes that it will serve. It is recommended that the Department of Planning and Zoning Department stay actively involved in this issue.



Moderate Priority Items

The County should work with landowners and tree farms within Princeton to establish the formal entry groves at the north end of the community. The sooner these can be established, the sooner they will mature and have a powerful impact on the approach to Princeton. Implementation may require easements or required setbacks. These should be addressed during the review of the Zoning Code.

The lands designated in the Plan as neighborhood parks should be acquired for future use. It

would be wise to acquire lands for neighborhood parks, before development interests increase the price of land further. These lands will ultimately be needed, even if they are adjusted in size and location to accommodate a well planned development proposal, they can be traded or sold off at a future date. It is likely that such investment will be rewarded.

‘Shouting Distance’ parks should be required to be included in all proposed developments of more than 25 units. Although it is not necessary to acquire land for shouting distance parks, in areas yet to be developed, opportunities should be sought to purchase small well located parcels that could serve existing neighborhoods. Development regulations should require the provision of such spaces in all new development.

Ongoing Assistance

Miami-Dade County has developed a system of Community Councils to assist in overseeing the planning of communities in South Miami-Dade. The County’s greatest difficulty with implementation of the recommendations of this report will undoubtedly be time.

The Regional Planning Council has developed a team of experts that can provide cities with supplemental manpower and experience, should time constraints make assistance necessary. The Council can direct County staff to model ordinances, RFP’s, and model development regulations and codes that can simplify the task of developing these documents. Assistance in preparing such documents is available on a contractual basis.

THE CHARRETTE PROCESS



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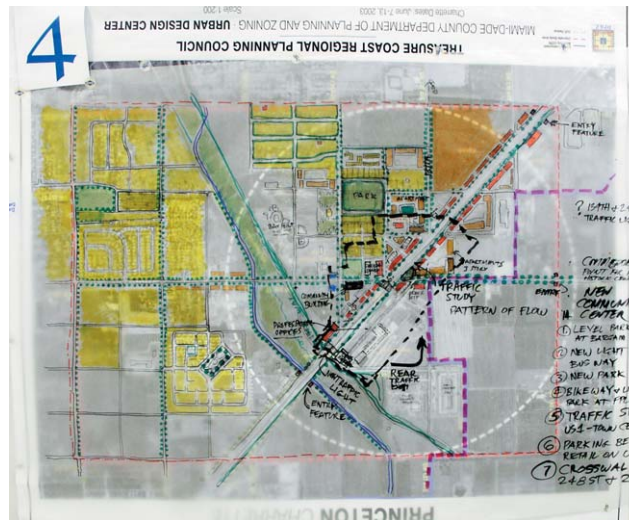
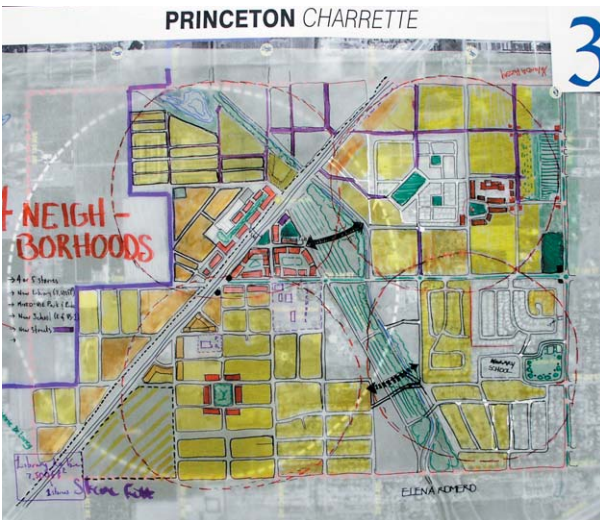


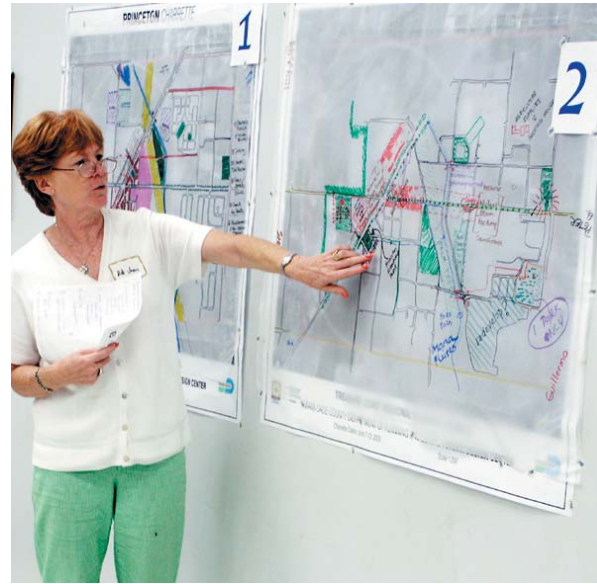
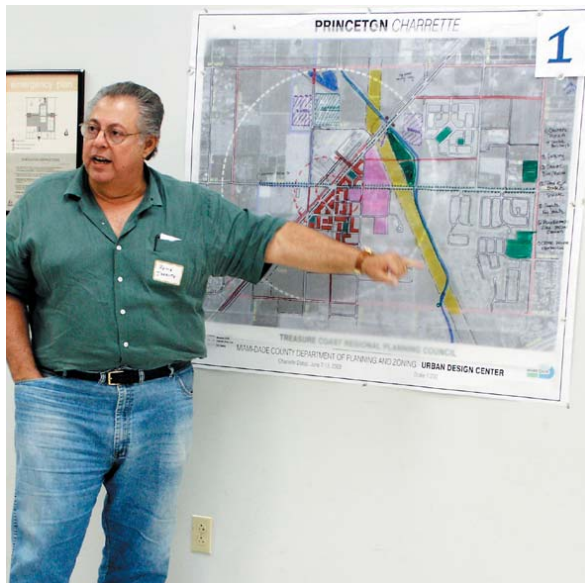
Views of the citizens drawing their ideas





The citizens' plans





Citizens presenting each group's plans for Princeton





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Glatting Jackson, Kercher, Anglin, Lopez, Rinehart: Wade Walker
Urban Designers: Dan Cary, Steven Fett, Sita Singh, Pedro Quintanilla, George Johnston, Maria DeLeon Fleites, Natasha Fahim, Freddy Vivas, Elena Romero



Images from the
June, 2003 Princeton Charrette
Princeton, Florida