

# Technical Assistance Panel City of Riviera Beach

## Siting and Redevelopment Recommendations for City Hall and Other Municipal Services Buildings



September 8 and 9, 2016  
Riviera Beach, Florida



**Urban Land  
Institute**

Southeast Florida/Caribbean



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# Urban Land Institute Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council Technical Assistance Panels

## What are Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)?

Since 1947, ULI's Advisory Services Program has been assisting communities by bringing together week-long Panels of seasoned real estate, planning, financing, marketing, and development experts to provide unbiased pragmatic advice on complex land use and development issues. In 2004, the ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council began providing Panel services of one or two days to address specific development/real estate issues in the areas such as housing, parking, redevelopment, future land use, TOD, and similar topics. Since then, dozens of TAPs have been completed throughout the region.

## How Do TAPs Work?

Sponsors request TAPs services on a specific issue that can be addressed by a Panel of experts in one or two days. The District Council assists the sponsor in refining the scope of the assignment, and convenes a Panel to address those specific issues. The sponsor works within ULI templates to provide background information to ULI Panelists prior to the Panel convening. When convened, the TAP Panel views the subject site, hears from public and private stakeholders, and then deliberates on the assigned issues. At the conclusion of the Panel's work, an oral report is presented to stakeholders followed within about four weeks by a written report and final power point presentation. A fee is charged for the advisory service, but the Panel members are not compensated for their time. They are only reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses, such as overnight lodging and transportation to attend the TAP. To ensure objectivity, Panel members cannot be involved in matters pending before or be working for the sponsor, and cannot solicit work from the sponsor during the Panel's assignment period.

## Who is ULI?

ULI was founded in 1936 as a non-profit institute to facilitate the open exchange of ideas and information among local, national and international real estate industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places. Today it has more than 38,000 members worldwide. ULI neither lobbies nor acts as an advocate for any single industry – it is committed to providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities.

Locally, the District Council includes more than 950 members spread along the east coast of Florida from Indian River County through the Florida Keys and from the Caribbean.

# Sponsors and Panel Members

## Sponsor

City of Riviera Beach

## Riviera Beach Mayor and City Council

Mayor Thomas Masters

Council Chair Terence Davis, District 5

Council Chair Pro-Tem KaShamba Miller-Anderson,  
District 2

Councilwoman Lynne Hubbard, District 1

Councilwoman Tonya Davis Johnson, District 3

Councilwoman Dawn Pardo, District 4

## City Staff

Danny Jones, Deputy City Manager

Terence Bailey, City Engineer

DeAndre Spradley, Principal Planner

## Panel Members

### **Chair**

Chuck DeSanti  
DeSanti and Associates

### **Panelists**

Charita Allen  
Allen Economic Development Partners

Barron Channer  
BACH Real Estate

Jessica A. Josselyn  
Kittelson and Associates, Inc.

Paul Lambert  
Lambert Advisory LLC

Christopher J. Russo  
City of Sunny Isles Beach

Eric Singer  
Bilzin Sumberg Baena Price and Axelrod LLP

Ken Stapleton  
Ken Stapleton and Associates

Jeff Suiter  
EDSA

## District Council Staff and Consultants

Julie Medley  
Executive Director, ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean

Carla Coleman  
Coleman and Associates Consulting, P.A.

Jean Scott  
SLC, LLC, Inc.

ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean  
3170 N Federal Highway, Suite 106  
Lighthouse Point, FL 33064  
Phone: 954.783.9504

# Introduction, Panel Process, and Panel Agenda

## Introduction

In the summer of 2016, the City of Riviera Beach asked the ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council to convene a TAP to develop a set of observations and recommendations related to relocating or rebuilding city hall, the city's public safety operations, the public works department, and a branch library.

Five publicly-owned sites were to be considered in the evaluation, including the potential for private redevelopment on one or more of the sites. The following describes the process used by the TAP to make its recommendations, including public input sessions and the specific issues that the City asked the TAP to respond to. A separate section summarizing the TAP's recommendations concludes this report.

## Panel Process

The City of Riviera Beach Siting Recommendations for City Hall and Other Municipal Services Buildings TAP process centered on the following six steps:

1. Representatives from the ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council met with City staff to discuss issues related to assessing the present facilities, optional sites, past proposed plans, market conditions, and other information provided for the Panel's review.
2. ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council staff researched the City's desired outcomes for the TAP, and based on that research, selected TAP members who had the expertise most appropriate for addressing the issues raised by the City.
3. The TAP members received a comprehensive set of pre-onsite meeting materials about space needs, the five sites, previously prepared site drawings and maps, market values, and general information about the City of Riviera Beach. TAP members also participated in a tour of each of the sites and were briefed on challenges and opportunities relating to each site by City staff.
4. The TAP onsite work session extended over one and one-half days on September 8 and 9, 2016. Its work sessions were held at the Riviera Beach Community Redevelopment Agency's Clean and Safe Program offices on Blue Heron Boulevard, and the public comment meetings were held at Riviera Beach City Hall. An additional public input session was held at City Hall on September 22, 2016.
5. The TAP presented a number of preliminary recommendations and received community feedback at the public meetings on September 9 and September 22, 2016.
6. The TAP, under the leadership of the ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council, prepared this report on its recommendations and conclusions.





Figure 1



Figure 2

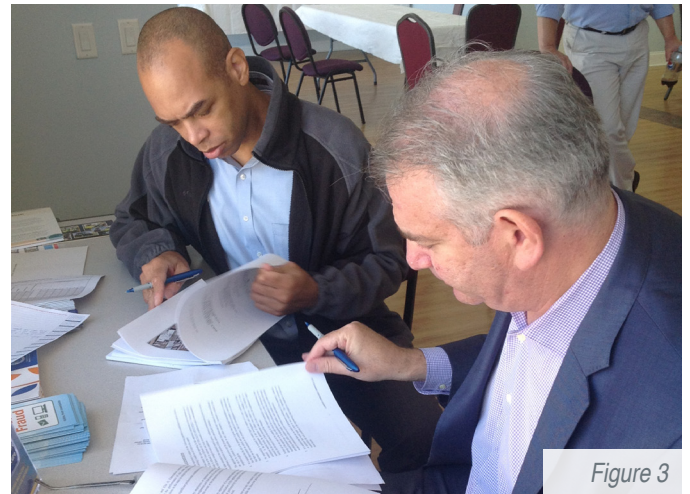


Figure 3

Figure 1: Panel members and city staff meet over lunch to answer questions and plan the first day of onsite work.

Figures 2 & 3: Panel members deliberate TAP questions and begin outlining recommendations during onsite work sessions.

## Panel Agenda

The agenda (included as Appendix A) for the one and one-half day TAP was organized as follows:

On September 8, the Panel began its orientation with a lunch meeting briefing about and bus tour of the five publicly-owned sites under consideration for the new facilities. City staff acquainted the Panel with past efforts to address the siting issues for the various components – a new city hall, a new police headquarters and training facility, a new public works headquarters, and a new branch library. History and different perspectives on the various

sites were also discussed. Over the past several years, the TAP learned, multiple plans had been prepared for several of the facilities but had not yet been implemented. Creating a comprehensive plan for the new facilities and implementing it was stated to be a high priority. Following the tour, the TAP held an organizational work session before it met with community stakeholders to hear their views. That evening, Panel members participated in a working dinner meeting.



On September 9, the Panel spent the morning and afternoon working on the specific questions that the City had asked it to address. Panelists also met with the police chief and assistant police chief to discuss their facility needs. During the day, the TAP narrowed and organized its ideas into a meaningful set of preliminary recommendations. In the late afternoon, the Panel members presented their ideas and initial observations to and heard additional comments from an audience of interested citizens, business owners/representatives, and community leaders. In an effort to reach as many citizens and other interested parties as possible, an additional public meeting was held in the evening of September 22. This meeting was attended by four of the Panelists and ULI staff, with information about the comments communicated to the remaining Panelists prior to finalization of the TAP recommendations.



Figure 4

Figure 4: Riviera Beach City Engineer Terence Bailey, TAP Chair Chuck DeSanti and Panel member Eric Singer

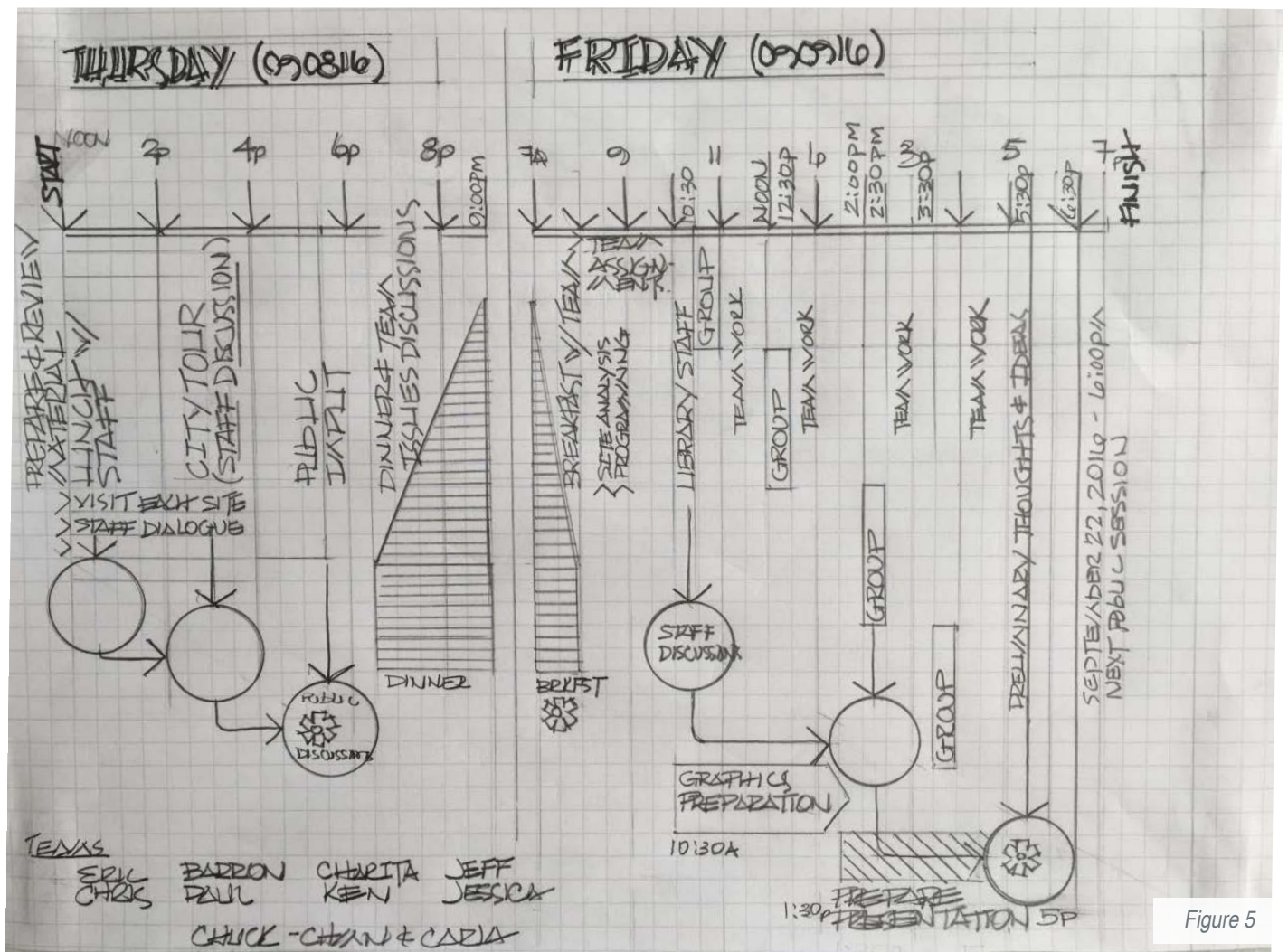


Figure 5

Figure 5: TAP Workflow Chart



# Background: The TAP Focus Area

Through this TAP, the City of Riviera Beach asked for advice on siting a new city hall complex, municipal services buildings (police, fire, public works), and branch library on one or more of several properties currently publicly owned in the City. A copy of the questions posed is attached in Appendix B.

## The City



Figure 6

Figure 6: Signage near Riviera Beach's coastal area helps brand the City.

The City of Riviera Beach was incorporated in 1922, and operates under a Mayor-Council-Manager form of government. With a population of nearly 34,000, Riviera Beach is a coastal community located in Palm Beach County between the cities of Palm Beach Shores and North Palm Beach. It is home to the Port of Palm Beach and other thriving marine-related industries, mostly catering to large yacht services. Its city motto of “The Best Waterfront City to Live, Work, and Play” described a community that is fiercely proud of its diverse history and potential. Important 2014 US Census Bureau estimated City characteristics include:

- A city median household income level less than that for the Palm Beach County (\$38,300 for Riviera Beach, as compared to the \$52,878 median income estimate for all Palm Beach County households)
- A younger population than Palm Beach County (median age of 38, as opposed to 43.9 countywide)

Riviera Beach also has a wide variety of neighborhood and income types, with generally higher-priced residential property values residing on the barrier island known as Singer Island. The unemployment rates in 2014 for residents 16 years of age and above was 17.2 percent, compared to a county-wide rate of 10 percent for the same age cohort. Riviera Beach property values and associated tax base continue to trend higher as the recession fades.

In recent years, the City has invested heavily in upgrading infrastructure at its marine-oriented coastal redevelopment site and along US 1 (Broadway), mainly through its Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). In 2014, the Riviera Beach CRA broke ground on a \$375 million public/private redevelopment of the Riviera Beach Marina based on a master plan approved in 2014. The CRA and City are in the process of creating an active and vibrant mixed-use waterfront at that site.



*Figure 7: Significant investment has been made by the City of Riviera Beach and its CRA to upgrade infrastructure in this district, as well as in the \$375 million public/private Riviera Beach Marina redevelopment partnership.*



## Existing City Hall and Other Municipal Services Buildings

Many of the existing public facilities in Riviera Beach are outdated and in need of replacement. Since 2010, the City has been working on reconstruction issues, most notably for police and public works, but to-date no plans have been implemented. Outlined below are brief summaries for each of those current facilities and proposed plans.

### **City Hall**

Prior to 1978, the Riviera Beach City Hall was located at West 23rd and Broadway, which is one of the five sites reviewed in the TAP. In 1978, the current City Hall at 600 West Blue Heron Boulevard was built utilizing a US Department of Housing and Urban Development grant. The facility was recently renamed the Bobbie E. Brooks Sr. Municipal Complex. The current site on West Blue Heron Boulevard is also a potential site for the new city hall.

The City's space needs have outgrown this facility, and a 2008 space utilization study completed by Jordon Jones and Goulding outlined a number of issues with the building's condition, especially in terms of water intrusion problems. The City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2012 for a public private partnership to construct a new city hall, police station, and public works facility. The resulting responses were not deemed sufficient to move forward with a financially viable project, and the RFP was abandoned.



Figure 8



Figure 9

*Figure 8: Originally constructed in 1977 and now woefully inadequate for residents' needs, the existing City Hall and Library Complex, looking north from Blue Heron Boulevard.*

*Figure 9: The existing library building adjacent to City Hall will be replaced with a new facility. A 2016 State grant is providing the planning funds.*

### ***Police Headquarters and Training Facility***

Currently police services are co-located on the City Hall municipal complex campus at 600 West Blue Heron Boulevard. The 2008 space utilization study recommended a new building for the police department, as the current facility is plagued with health and safety issues. In 2010, the City embarked on a reconstruction project at this site and hired architects to design a 50,000 square foot police facility.

However, in 2012, the City scrapped those plans in favor of moving the police department, the fire department, an emergency operations center, and the public works department to a newly purchased 13.3-acre site and building located at 1481 West 15th Street, per a new space utilization study. The West 15th Street site for a new Public Safety and Public Works Complex was purchased for \$6.6 million, and architectural plans costing about \$1.1 million are near completion for this option.

According to the police chief, \$12 million has been set aside for completion of this important project. Today's police department includes 120 sworn officers and 75 additional police department employees.

### ***City Library***

The current library was built in 1977 at the present City Hall site, and is woefully inadequate for current community needs. In 2015, the City received a \$500,000 Library Construction Grant from the State of Florida to construct a new library facility. Architects have been hired. Where that new facility should be located is an issue for this TAP.

### ***Public Works and Purchasing***

The Public Works and Purchasing Departments are currently located on the 6.3-acre parcel located at 2391 Avenue L. Two sets of plans have been completed regarding new space for this department – one to rebuild on the back portion of the Avenue L site, and a second proposal to move public works to the West 15th Street site in conjunction with police and other services.



*Figure 10: Located on Avenue L just south of Blue Heron Boulevard, this site now houses the Public Works and Purchasing Departments, as well as the City's vehicle maintenance facilities and gas pumps.*



## Publicly-Owned Sites for the TAP's Consideration

The TAP was requested to evaluate and make recommendations for placing the facilities and uses described in the previous section on one or more of five publicly-owned sites.



### Sites under the Panel's consideration for the new facilities included:

- Site A: Current City Hall/municipal services buildings site (20.42 acres) at 600 West Blue Heron Boulevard
- Site B: A portion of the 20.49-acre municipal park across the street from current City Hall site at 601 West Blue Heron Boulevard
- Site C: A 2.3-acre parcel located at West 23rd Street and Broadway
- Site D: A 13.3-acre parcel and existing 160,000 sq. ft. building located at 1481 West 13th Street
- Site E: A 6.3-acre parcel located at 2391 Avenue L

Information on each of the sites that were the focus of the Panel is outlined below.

### **600 West Blue Heron Boulevard (Site A)**

This location is currently home to the existing City Hall complex, which includes City Council chambers, Administration, Legal, Community Development, Police, Fire, Finance, and Utility Departments. The City Library is also located in this complex. The west end of the 20-acre site is home to the City's water plant. The site is adjacent to a charter school on the north side. Blue Heron Boulevard running through is a main arterial roadway running east and west through Riviera Beach, and is the entryway onto Singer Island on the east side of the City. This site is also near the Florida East Coast Railroad, which is located just west of the parcel along President Barack Obama Highway.



Figure 12

Figure 12: New signage naming the municipal complex the Bobbie E. Brooks Sr. Municipal Complex was erected in September 2016 on this site.

### **601 West Blue Heron Boulevard (Site B)**

This city-owned site is the location of Wells Recreation Facility, which includes a public gym, 3 baseball fields, 4 tennis courts, and a football field. Recreational facilities, especially the sports fields, are an important and well-used commodity in Riviera Beach, as many top athletes emerge from the community. A Wells Recreation Master Plan was completed in 2005, which contemplated significant upgrades at the site, including an expanded football facility. The gym has been described as an aging facility that needs replacing. This site could be reconfigured to accommodate additional uses, such as a potential Coastal Link transit station in the future.



Figure 13

Figure 13: This city-owned site is currently home to recreational facilities fronting Blue Heron Boulevard across from the existing Municipal Complex.

### **West 23rd Street and Broadway (Site C)**

This 2.3-acre vacant site was previously home to Riviera Beach's City Hall. It now has a future land use designation of Downtown Mixed Use, and is zoned both Downtown Core and Downtown General. A wide array of permitted uses is included in the Downtown Core and Downtown General zoning designations. The City hopes to use this parcel to generate more of a "downtown" use and feel along this corridor, as it is near its considerable investments in the marina area.



Figure 14

Figure 14: Formerly home to Riviera Beach's City Hall, this city-owned property is now vacant.

### 1481 West 13th Street (Site D)

This existing building, which is within the City's industrial core, was originally purchased by the City in 2013 at a price of \$6.6 million to be utilized for a future Public Services Complex. Although \$1.1 million has been spent on finalizing architectural plans to convert the site into a much-needed new Public Safety and Public Works Complex, those plans are now under review. The 13.36-acre parcel is also now a highly-sought after commercial/industrial property, which, if sold, could generate significant property tax income and create new jobs for residents. Current appraisals value the property at \$10.8 million.



Figure 15

Figure 15: This existing building was originally purchased as a possible new site for police, public works, emergency response center, and associated uses.

### 2391 Avenue L (Site E)

This site is the location of the existing Public Works and Purchasing Department Facility. In 2011, a new 33,000 square foot Public Works Administration and Fleet Maintenance Facility was designed to be located on the current site. Construction plans were 95 percent completed when the project was placed on hold to consider consolidating Public Works into the Public Safety Complex at the 15th Street location. The existing City gas pumps are also located on this site, and would remain at this location in either scenario.

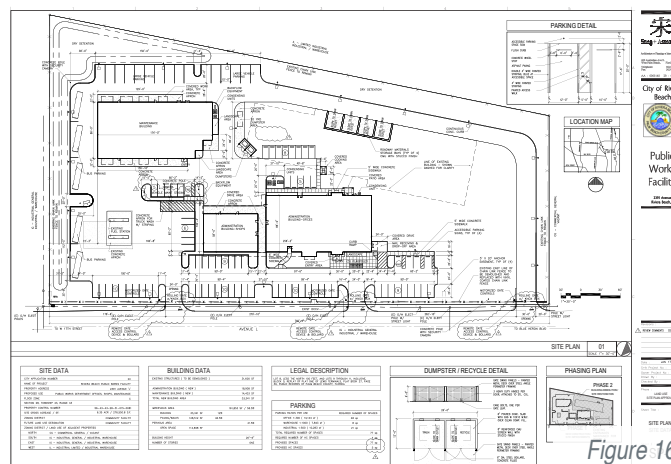


Figure 16

Figure 16: This Public Works site plan, completed several years ago but not implemented, called for rebuilding facilities within the Avenue L site.



## Learning from Riviera Beach Residents, Businesses, and Others

The TAP offered three opportunities for area residents and business interests to provide their thoughts and concerns about siting of the various municipal buildings and plans. Panelists met with the public on both September 8 and 9, as well as additional evening meeting on September 22. The public's comments reinforced the:

- The idea that the city needs to make a comprehensive, coordinated decision on siting of facilities and stick to it
- The concept of co-locating as many services as possible in a single location was viewed as a desirable outcome

In general, additional comments during the three lively public input sessions centered on the desire and/or need for:

- Facilities that are accessible with an easy walk from one building to another
- Free parking
- Planning locations for the three different generations who will be using facilities (an important factor)
- New facilities that include state-of-the-art technology
- Replacing current facilities that are in bad condition due to age and space limitations
- Acknowledging that the siting of facilities is a very controversial subject



Figure 17



Figure 18

*Figures 17 & 18: Residents and other interested parties met with panelists to voice their views and to hear about preliminary recommendations.*



***The public comment that “we need to do what is best for our small city and let’s come to a consensus so that our citizens get better services,” captured the views of many Riviera Beach residents during public input session on Day One of TAP.***

- Recognizing that a citizen’s petition requesting that the question of site selection for City Hall be placed on the ballot was circulating, with a stated goal of keeping public facilities on both of the current West Blue Heron Boulevard sites
- Pointing out that the City has other issues more pressing than new municipal facilities
- Asking that the Panel not be influenced by public comments and instead recommend what is right for the city
- A new police headquarters which was described as a pressing
- Comments from multiple private companies desiring to bid for the 15th Street property
- The City to activate the parcel at West 23rd Street and Broadway
- Recreational facilities that are important to the youth of Riviera Beach, coupled with concerns that using any part of this property for other municipal services would be a problem
- Making a decision and sticking with it

## Issues for the TAP

As outlined earlier in this report, the TAP’s focus was on:

- Which of the sites or combination of sites would best meet the City’s desire to create a walkable town center-type development through public investment, a public private partnership, or other investment
- Which locations would create the best value as locations for municipal services including city hall, the library, public works, and public safety, as well as how any new facilities should be phased
- What should be done with the publicly-owned site(s) not suggested as locations for the new facilities
- Possible funding options for new facilities, and
- Immediate next steps

# TAP Response to the Riviera Beach Questions



Figure 19

Figure 19: TAP Panel met with the public to hear their ideas and thoughts about siting of new municipal facilities at one or more of the five city-owned parcels.

TAP chair Chuck DeSanti began the public presentation of the Panel's preliminary findings by introducing Panel members and highlighting the qualifications of each. The Panel members, he noted, brought the targeted expertise required to address the strategic questions raised by the City and related issues that the TAP was asked to address. The Panel's expertise fields included market analysis, economic and job development, public-private partnerships, legal, planning, municipal building relocation, redevelopment, and office, industrial, and mixed-use development.

***“Now is the time for Riviera Beach to set a course and implement a comprehensive plan for the much needed new civic facilities. By addressing the siting of all the facilities at the same time, the City has the opportunity to create multiple city and resident benefits – a win-win for all sectors. Those benefits include maximizing use of public lands and potential revenue generation through public private partnerships. For residents benefits include better municipal services, more job opportunities, and a reduced tax burden.”***

***Riviera Beach TAP***

The TAP offered three over all observations (discussed below) that provided the guiding framework for its recommendations.

## TAP General Observations that Frame Its Recommendations

- **Making a decision and implementing it**
- **Using municipal facility siting to create a sense of place and destination**
- **Positioning public assets to leverage community benefits**

### Making a Decision and Implementing It

Over the past several years the City has embarked on a number of efforts to upgrade its municipal facilities and civic infrastructure. It appears that election cycles and changing membership on the Council has caused many of those past decisions to be reconsidered after planning for several projects was well-underway but construction was not yet started.

Past indecision has costs, both in terms of dollars and lost opportunities. Public policy swings often negatively impact economic development, a community's perceived business climate, investment predictability, and even how professional a jurisdiction is viewed. They also impact a community's ability to create workable public private partnerships and positive business recruitment activities. Now is the time for Riviera Beach to set a course and implement a comprehensive plan for the much needed new civic facilities. By addressing the siting of all the facilities simultaneously, the City has the opportunity to maximize use of its public lands, potential revenue generation through public private partnerships and other means, and benefits to residents in terms of better municipal services, more job opportunities, and a reduced tax burden.

### Using Municipal Facility Siting to Create a Sense of Place and Destination

One of the questions posed to the TAP was how to best use the siting of new municipal facilities to create a more traditional and walkable downtown area for Riviera Beach. The TAP suggested that the City rethink that concept in favor of creating two unique kinds of places for its public investments.

- With the considerable public investments already committed to the coastal corridor, including the marina area and the Broadway corridor, will become Riviera Beach's commercial center, drawing both visitors and residents to support a variety of new businesses and employers
- New investment in city hall, a library, parks and cultural facilities, and other municipal service buildings on Sites A and B will become Riviera Beach's enhanced civic campus, providing a wide array of services, recreational activities, and cultural opportunities for its residents as well as a "cultural heart" for the City

## Positioning Public Assets to Leverage Community Benefits

The importance of this opportunity to position public assets to generate a well-thought out set of community benefits through the strategic use of the five sites cannot be overstated, the TAP stressed. By developing a coordinated plan that enables the needed new civic facilities to be sited strategically and simultaneously, the City will be able to leverage jobs, job training opportunities, and other partnerships that will enhance the lives of Riviera Beach residents beyond those offered through traditional real estate transactions.

Requirements for such benefits can be included in the development agreements negotiated for private development on any of the recommended sites, provided that such requests still provide sufficient financial returns for developers. The community benefits to be included in each development agreement must, the TAP amplified, be tailored to the characteristics of each property and development and therefore cannot be determined with precision at this time.

Such community benefits might include:

- Establishing training programs to train Riviera Beach residents for the full-time jobs that will be created by the project, with a requirement to graduate an agreed number of Riviera Beach residents from the program by a date certain
- Requiring that an agreed percentage of the construction jobs required for the project be given to Riviera Beach residents
- Requiring that the project retain an agreed number of permanent, full-time jobs, and that an agreed percentage of these jobs be given to Riviera Beach residents
- Requiring a minimum living wage for all employees

Each development agreement should also provide the City with options for enforcing the community-benefits provisions, including monetary damages for coming short of the hiring goals (e.g., a specified amount of dollars for each job short of the target) and retaining the option to terminate the lease and select a replacement developer if the goals are not achieved.



# TAP Recommendations

The TAP organized their recommendations around the five publicly-owned sites and the Panel's suggested uses for each parcel. A summary of those recommendations is outlined in the highlighted box to the right.



Figure 20

## Major Site Recommendations

- Sites A and B, the Blue Heron Boulevard parcels, should be thought of as the centerpiece of the new Riviera Beach civic campus, relocating city hall to Site B, along with the new library. Remaining public uses should be retained on Site A, rebuilding some facilities such as a new police headquarters and training facility. Wells Center and recreational facilities on Site B to be rebuilt, as well
- Site E on Avenue L, a new Public Works Department building, should be constructed within the property at its present location
- Site D, the 15th Street parcel, and Site C, the Broadway property, would best be utilized in creative ways to generate more economic and job opportunities in partnership with private developers and businesses

*Figures 20: This graphic depicts the Panel's recommended uses for each of the five city-owned sites. The Panel's recommendations for the new civic campus include using both city-owned parcels on Blue Heron to create a walkable, connected hub that includes governmental services, the library, public safety, recreational facilities, a possible public/private partnership development parcel, and a future transit station site. Circles indicate 1/4 mile walksheds between and within the sites.*

## Site-Specific Recommendations

### **Site A – 600 West Blue Heron Boulevard**

The TAP recommends that the Utilities Department, Police Department, and Fire Department remain on Site A with expansion or redevelopment of present facilities. New construction through thoughtful urban design with better connectivity to make this part of the new civic campus a walkable and more visually appealing place is imperative. The Fire Department location is strategic. Clustering the public safety functions helps with coordination and provides shared parking and equipment storage opportunities as well as potential partnerships with the school property to the north. Additionally, care should be taken to appropriately buffer the western front corner of the utilities portion of the site to create a better sense of place and more appealing image along Blue Heron Boulevard for the tens of thousands of people who pass the site daily.

It may also be possible to set aside a portion of the Blue Heron frontage as a future site for income generating private development that helps activate the corridor. Possible uses might include senior housing, in keeping with a civic campus. If the City decides to move in this direction, it could also consider structuring a long-term ground lease for the subparcel, as opposed to a sale. A ground lease would provide a better negotiating position for city in determining long-term uses, and aids in enforcement of any community benefits clauses enacted through the contract.

As with all aspects of these recommendations, negotiations for any private development should include community benefits, such as training and hiring of local residents for both construction and long term jobs, including opportunities for appropriate training as needed. If financially feasible for the developer, such benefits might also include contributions for new recreational or cultural facilities as part of the Civic Center district.

### **Site B – 601 West Blue Heron Boulevard**

The TAP recommends that city hall and the new library be moved to the Wells Recreation site across the street from their present location, repositioning them on the south side of Blue Heron Boulevard. In order to reduce the new buildings' footprints and create a symbol of the positive changes in Riviera Beach, both the new city hall and library heights should be at least three stories, be prominently positioned as a terminating structure, and be of high design quality. City Halls in places like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Austin, Texas were similarly situated and designed to convey a strong sense of importance and community pride.

The library has received a \$500,000 planning grant from the State of Florida, and the new facility is in the early design stages, which creates a timely opportunity to coordinate the two facilities. Care must be taken to design and site this facility with the TAP's recommendations for a shared campus in mind. The facility can also be designed to accommodate additional community needs, such as spaces for seminars and other learning environments for residents and entrepreneurs that are beyond the traditional library functions. Other regional facilities, such as the Lauderdale Lakes Library/Educational and Cultural Center and City of West Palm Beach City Hall and Mandel Public Library, are good examples of such facilities.

Also important to the West Blue Heron Boulevard site is rebuilding the aging gym facility, expanding the football facility with a concession stand on the northwest side of the site, and creating a greenspace buffer along President Barack Obama Highway as indicated in the site plan graphic. Shared parking for the city hall, library, and recreational uses can also be developed on Site B. Again, careful urban design will help create a more walkable and connected Civic Center district.

By moving city hall and the library to this new site, the TAP concluded, those offices can remain at their present locations until new facilities are completed, which means a temporary relocation of those functions will not be necessary. In addition, this careful phasing will create significant cost savings.

Thoughtful transportation connectivity, the TAP continued, is also important to the success of these facilities. For example, the County's adopted transportation plan includes a rail transit facility in the area that could also be accommodated on this site, should those plans be implemented in the future. More information on transportation connectivity is outlined in a later section of this report.

### **Site C – West 23rd Street and Broadway**

The TAP predicted that within the next five years, the two-acre parcel at West 23rd Street and Broadway will become an even more important and valuable site within the marina district commercial center. For those reasons, the TAP recommended that the City retain the property for future use as private development. Since the market has not yet reached its anticipated potential, the TAP suggested a phased approach.

- For the short term, the best option is to creatively position the property with a privately-managed income generating activity that drives people to this area, but allows no permanent structures at this time. Such temporary uses, which the city could pursue with the CRA, should reinforce the marine theme of the district, using the site as a marketing tool to recruit businesses and developers to the area



*Figure 21: TAP members discuss optional recommendations during their onsite work in Riviera Beach.*

- For the longer-term, as the market matures, one future use opportunity might include mid-to-high rise residential mixed use. As emphasized throughout this report, any sale or lease of the property for private development should be structured to include community benefits, such as training and hiring of local residents for both construction and long term jobs

***“If New York has a Wall Street,  
Riviera Beach has a Marine  
Street, and it’s Broadway.”***

***TAP Panel***

**Site D – 1481 West 13th Street**

Despite the fact that plans are well-underway to convert this commercial property into a new public safety and associated facilities headquarters, the TAP recommends that the police and emergency command center operations be rebuilt on Site A. That placement will enable this key economic development site to be used to attract a business willing to generate a significant number of well-paying jobs within the City.

Even considering the purchase price and significant public investment in architectural plans to convert the building, the appraised value of this property now well exceeds the City's initial investments. The City should seek to negotiate with a company that will provide additional community benefits, including the hiring and training of local residents. It may also seek to structure a long-term lease agreement, as opposed to a sale. If that route is selected, the transaction should be structured to provide the City with significant up-front income.

**Site E – 2391 Avenue L**

This site is the present home of the Public Works and Purchasing Departments, along with the City's fleet maintenance facilities, gas pumps, and other associated services. The TAP recommends that the City construct a new building for Public Works on the southern end of the current site, moving Purchasing into the new City Hall. Plans that are 95 percent complete already exist from an earlier attempt to rebuild the facility can be used.

This 6-acre parcel does not extend all the way north to Blue Heron Boulevard, as the two frontage acres along the roadway are presently in private ownership. Leaving the publicly-owned portion at the northern end of the site vacant or for temporary storage uses would position a large, able-to-be-consolidated parcel available for a future income-producing private development and its associated additional community benefits. If the City has the opportunity to acquire the front two acres, it could offer the entire piece as a lease hold, rather than through a traditional purchase sale, which would bring the City income over time and more control of multiplier community benefits, as discussed earlier in this report.



# Overall Recommendations

## Providing Transportation and Connectivity

As previously mentioned in this report, transportation options and good connectivity are key to the success of the new civic campus. Plans must accommodate all modes of travel, including auto, transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, commercial vehicles (including marine industry vehicles), and emergency response vehicles. Challenges for non-vehicle related travel currently exists along Blue Heron Boulevard, especially at the President

Barack Obama Highway and the Florida East Coast Railway intersections. All transportation solutions should be coordinated with the Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Florida Department of Transportation, and Palm Beach County. Each of those entities has its own project identification and funding process.

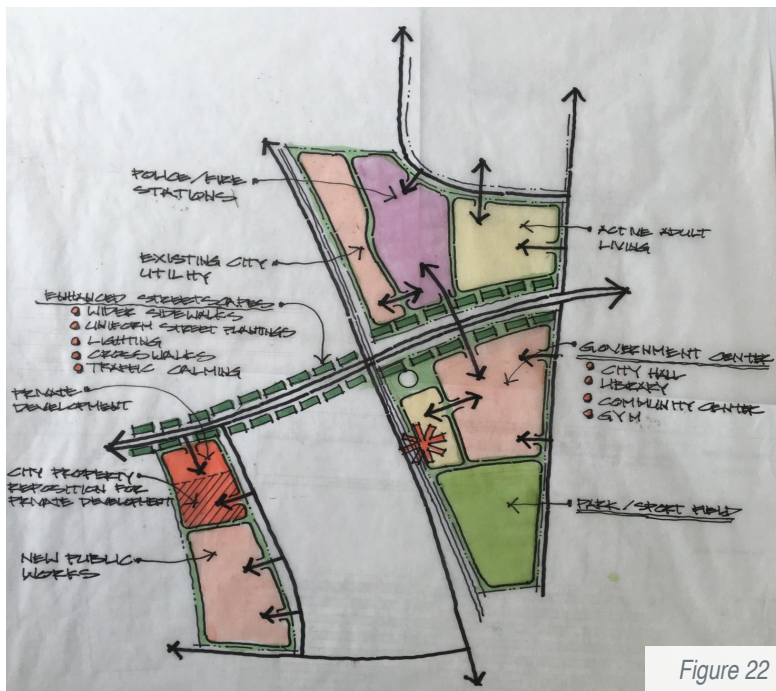


Figure 22



Figure 23

Figures 22 & 23: These graphics illustrate the Panel's emphasis on the importance of connectivity between sites and quarter-mile walksheds. To provide the desired atmosphere, the walksheds will require shaded (natural or man-made such as awnings and arcades) sidewalks, design techniques to shield pedestrians from moving traffic (on street parking and street trees for example), and clearly marked roadway crossings. Also important are buildings that are designed to provide "eyes on the street", contributing to pedestrian safety. Ground floor features should include glass windows and doors that provide both passers-by and people inside with something active to look at.

Throughout the coordination efforts, the City should actively advocate improvements that enhance multimodal connectivity and walkability between City civic spaces as well as within the civic campus specifically. In addition to accommodating all modes of travel, all user types must be considered (i.e., seniors, children, disabled, etc.) when developing connections to the sites and within the sites (i.e., parking and sidewalks internal to the site).

Key transportation goals and recommendations for the corridor include:

- Within the sites:
  - Designing walkable, easy to navigate pathways for all users
  - Including safe and well-lit walkways between the buildings and to/from parking areas
  - Positioning and designing buildings with evening activities in order to keep pathways safe after dark
  - Creating a comfortable, shaded environment
  - Providing adequate parking for all users
- Surrounding the sites:
  - Including safe, comfortable, and convenient designated pedestrian crossing areas between the buildings, transit stops, and nearby sites
  - Planning and expanding nearby transit stops
  - Positioning and designing buildings, including any new housing, with evening activities in order to keep pathways safe after dark
  - Completing an assessment of transit stops and upgrading of these locations with amenities such as shade, lighting, up-to-date maps, schedules, and real-time information (through technology)
  - Creating a citywide shuttle system that connects major civic and other high-traffic locations would address these needs in the long term. As an initial measure, creation of a civic campus shuttle on a more limited route would aid greatly in meeting mobility and connectivity goals and priorities

## Creating a “Sense of Arrival” along the Blue Heron Corridor



Figure 24



Figure 25

Figures 24 & 25: Use of gateway features such as those illustrated would help create a sense of arrival into Riviera Beach’s enhanced civic campus and alert drivers to a more pedestrian-friendly corridor. They also can be used to create a sense of place and an important destination.

A significant section of Blue Heron from Australian to Avenue E should be considered an important ‘sense of arrival’ corridor for the new Riviera Beach civic campus. To achieve that outcome, the TAP recommended:

- Giving careful attention to urban design, including to such factors as walkability, landscaping, public art, and esthetics. That attention will do much to create the desired sense of arrival
- Using gateway features to mark the two ends of the delineated corridor. They will further enhance of arrival and the importance of the area
- Treating the central core of the Riviera Beach civic campus as defined by a cohesive cross-section along Blue Heron Boulevard and President Barack Obama Highway as an asset that will provide residents and guests a clear sense of identity on arrival to this area
- Using any opportunity to reduce the width of vehicular pavement and allocating additional lands to pedestrian movement to calm traffic and at the same time promote safe movement throughout the area
- Clearing identifying intersections through material and color change
- Recognizing the important role of landscaping in defining the corridor(s) visually and through a consistent planting palate. Increasing shade promotes walkability and a healthier life style while reducing heat gain generated by impervious pavement
- Putting in place investments that will activate the community and draw in new business along the corridor

In short, the TAP envisions the civic campus as an initial investment that over time should be expanded on, both to the east, the intracoastal waterway, and the west to the city limits. As President Barack Obama Highway becomes a new front door linking Riviera Beach north and south to its neighboring communities, developing a working relationship with the FEC and the Florida Department of Transportation will take on even more importance. Future expansion can be implemented through funding for future projects.



## Putting in Place a Financial Plan for the New Facilities

In considering space needs, possible costs, and other factors, the TAP created the graphic to the right to summarize a ballpark investment estimate total for some of the major expenditures recommended by creation of a central civic campus. This figure should be used as a basic guide, not a total cost, as that number will be determined by exact facility size, use, final site selection decisions, phasing, and other factors.

By conservative calculations, using existing information provided through the TAP's background materials, and discussions with staff, the combined cost of the discussed facilities will exceed \$62 million. Funding for those pressing needs can be addressed in a variety of ways, including through general revenue bonding for the new facilities. By consolidating the City's governmental functions in the TAP's suggested ways, the need for nearly \$200,000 in annual rent payments by the City for off-site facilities will also be eliminated. This payment alone, if bonded, could yield approximately \$3 million towards new facility costs.

Other funding ideas and options include:

- Maximizing income from non-civic center properties, i.e., leased facilities and land sales
- Negotiating long term leases that are capitalized
- Investigating lease-buy back options through organizations such as National Development Council and others
- Pursuing grant and foundation funding for the library/community center, for example, The Knight Foundation

RIVIERA BEACH FUTURE FACILITIES NEEDS - ROUGH ESTIMATE							
Site I.D.	Size acreage	Existing Building Reuse Potential	New Buildings Required	Critical Vehicle Parking	Vertical Parking Garage Required	Cost/sf	Facility Cost
<b>A</b>	20 (15 net)						
City Hall		26,500					
Library		14,600					
Utilities		5,000	6,000			300	1,800,000
Fire		14,000	15,000			300	4,500,000
Police	<b>*1</b>	18,100	50,000 to 55,000	200		300	16,500,000
Community Center			4,000			275	1,100,000
<b>B</b>							
City Hall			50,000 to 60,000		X	300	18,000,000
Library			32,000		X	300	9,600,000
Football Field & Gym							
Concession			3,000			275	825,000
Ped. Link to A & B							400,000 <b>*4</b>
<b>C</b>	2.0	<b>*2</b>					
<b>D</b>		<b>*3</b>					
<b>E</b>	6.4						
Public Works		31,800	34,400			275	9,460,000
							<b>62,185,000</b>
<b>*1</b> 10,000 sf off site in leased locations (28,100 sf total)							
<b>*2</b> Broadway site hold for value enhancement and potentially inclusion in the Marina Corridor							
<b>*3</b> Sell to the private sector with community enhancements required.							

- Procuring public facilities with a design/bid/build approach, which will obtain the lowest possible construction costs and the shortest possible time frame to completion - demonstrating forward momentum for potential private investors in the public private partnerships.

A master plan to address these facility needs will also shorten time and save money, provided that the plan is adopted and implemented without delays. It is imperative, the TAP stressed, that the City finalize a funding plan for the new facilities as soon as possible. Seeking additional professional financial advice to formulate a master plan based on an in-depth analysis of the City's finances and other funding options should be a high priority.

## ***Phasing the New Plan***

Publicly embracing a comprehensive civic center master plan coupled with clear agreement on how the City should proceed with replacing its civic infrastructure should be the City's first step. After multiple false starts and delays surrounding many of these projects, it is important to deliberate and agree on a clear, complete plan to rebuild, relocate, and move forward. Additional delays will severely hamper the City's ability to address its pressing needs, especially in terms of the library and Police Department space requirements. A careful approach to community involvement is also critical to build strong and lasting consensus for that plan.

Immediate steps recommended by the TAP include:

- Site A – Prepare and adopt the master site plan for the police, fire, and utilities campus. That should include seeking joint master planning with the adjacent school to capitalize on shared opportunities
- Site B – Prepare and adopt the master site plan for the library, city hall, and recreational facilities that includes options for a transit station
- Site C – Pursue interim privately managed use
- Site D - Prepare and pursue the recommended lease/sale now
- Site E – Put the new facility out to bid once the plans are in place

As soon as possible following the site planning actions recommended above, the next phase should include:

- Site B – Construct the new city hall and library/community center
- Site A – Expand and construct the police and fire facilities

To complete implementation of the Civic Center master plan, the following items should be included in a near-future phase:

- Site A – Pursue a private development partnership to develop the Site A set-aside along the Blue Heron frontage
- Site C – Pursue permanent development as outlined earlier in this report
- Site E – Pursue a private income-producing development of the northern part of this site, if the land is not needed for public purpose



## ***Moving Forward with Additional Recommended Steps to Insure Best Outcomes***

The Panel noted that the City would benefit from:

- Placing increased emphasis on developing a better articulated economic development plan that is more data-driven and investor-friendly
- Thoughtfully examining its business friendliness and articulate its highest priorities through a written plan
- Being deliberate about consistent economic development implementation during elections, staff changes, and referendums
- Developing and implementing a thoughtful public involvement process that will help create a clear and lasting consensus that supports the plans and their implementation over time through inevitable changes in leadership

Two important additional steps are to:

- Undertake a formal and professional skills gap analysis. The analysis should be undertaken through a partnership, perhaps with the Palm Beach County Business Development Board, local chambers, and area schools. The analysis must determine how existing businesses connect with existing residents in order to strengthen (or create) those ties. A key question to answer is what skills businesses need and what skills City residents possess or need to possess. Riviera Beach is home to a thriving marine industry, at-capacity industrial areas, and a robust health district. Understanding more about how and where those employers interact with Riviera Beach residents on both a customer and employer basis would yield data

to strengthen the City's economic development plans, especially in terms of future employment opportunities. Better organization of the western business community including the industrial and medical districts is also desirable goal.

- Add important tools that are missing from the Riviera Beach economic development toolbox. Examples include creating a quarterly economic development report with metrics and assembling the information that is important to recruiting businesses in targeted and prospective industries looking to Riviera Beach for location or expansion opportunities. Such a report might include some of the following quarterly information – number of jobs created, number of residents hired, amount of income generated from city-owned sites, square footage constructed/renovated since the last report, increases in the tax base due to new construction/renovations, and in general, a tally of new private investment amounts. Such a report could also be helpful in telling the positive stories of Riviera Beach. Additional spotlights could feature the latest information on the medical cluster, the marine cluster, Singer Island, major attractions such as the water park, or the outstanding magnet schools. All are important attractors for new business looking to locate in the area.

Key to the success of strengthening the City's economic development will be having someone internally tasked with implementation of the recommendations in this section, including tracking information and producing the quarterly benchmarking report. An outside firm could also be retained to fill these responsibilities.

# Summary: TAP Recommendations

## Site-Specific Recommendations

- ⇒ Site A – 600 West Blue Heron Boulevard. Keep the Utilities, Police, and Fire Department on Site A, expanding or redeveloping them as needed using thoughtful urban design that includes creating a connected, walkable, and visually pleasing civic campus. Also look at setting aside a portion of the Blue Heron frontage as a future site for income generating private development that will activate the corridor and bring community benefits.
- ⇒ Site B – 601 West Blue Heron Boulevard. Move city hall and the new library to the Wells Recreation area on the south side of Blue Heron Boulevard, designing the buildings to be at least three stories tall to reduce their footprints. Also design building that contribute to a shared, connected, and walkable campus and position them as terminating structures that convey a sense of place and community pride. Additionally, rebuild and/or upgrade recreational facilities as needed and if possible, add a future transit stop on this site.
- ⇒ Site C – West 23rd Street and Broadway. Retain the two-acre parcel at West 23rd Street and Broadway in city ownership for future private sector use as the site will become more valuable over the next several years. For the short term, find uses that do not require a permanent structure and reinforce the district's marine theme.
- ⇒ Site D – 1481 West 13th Street. Rebuild the police and emergency command center operations on Site A, enabling using this economic development site to attract a business that will generate a significant number of well-paying jobs. Also, if possible, look at a long-term lease with a private sector user, structuring the lease agreement to provide significant up-front income to the City.
- ⇒ Site E – 2391 Avenue L. Construct a new Public Works building on the southern end of the current site and move Purchasing into the new City Hall. Also, to create a larger parcel that could be used for a future income-producing private development, leave the publicly-owned portion at the northern end of the site vacant or used for temporary storage, and, if possible, acquire the front two acres in order to control the whole site.

## Overall Recommendations

- ⇒ Providing Transportation and Connectivity. Plan a civic campus that provides travel modes for all users. Also advocate for improvements that enhance multimodal connectivity and walkability between and within civic spaces, including creating a citywide shuttle system that connects major civic and other high-traffic locations.
- ⇒ Creating a “Sense of Arrival” along Blue Heron Boulevard. Design a significant section of Blue Heron from Australian to Avenue E as the gateway to the civic campus. Also reduce the road width in order to create more safe and desirable space for pedestrians, and make investments that will activate the area and draw in new businesses.
- ⇒ Putting in Place a Financial Plan for the New Facilities. As soon as possible, prepare and adopt a funding plan for the new facilities that employs a variety of funding mechanisms. Also procure public facilities through a design/bid/build approach that will obtain the lowest possible construction costs and the shortest possible time frame for completion.
- ⇒ Phasing the New Plan. Prepare and agree on a civic center master plan for the new facilities and civic campus. Meaningfully involve citizens in the planning process in order to build a strong and lasting consensus for that plan. After the campus and site plans are in place, construct the new city hall and library/community center and expand and construct the police and fire facilities.
- ⇒ Moving Forward with Additional Recommended Steps to Insure Best Outcomes. Develop a better articulated economic development plan that is more data-driven and investor- and business-friendly and clearly sets out priorities. Also undertake a formal and professional skills gap analysis and add missing economic development tools such as assembling the information that is important to recruiting businesses. Critical to success will be having someone (internal or through a service contract) tasked with implementation of the economic development recommendations.

# Conclusion

Given recent transitions in City leadership, a more robust regional economy, substantial progress in the Marina District, and site control of several significant real estate parcels, Riviera Beach is well-positioned to create clear visions for the Civic Center district, the Marina District commercial core, and a progressive economic development strategy. By strategically redeveloping some parcels, partnering for private development on other parcels, and land banking some others, the City has a unique opportunity to create substantial forward momentum that creates investor confidence and long-term success.

In addition, the City has an opportunity to create community benefit agreements with several private developers that create jobs, training, and other benefits for City residents that have long been desired. Finally, these strategic investments can help improve property values throughout the City – as well as tax revenues needed to provide additional services.

At the same time, Riviera Beach faces serious risks that none of these benefits will come to pass. If the City is unable to create clear and lasting consensus about a shared vision – and is unable to make regular progress toward that vision – it risks a reputation as being unpredictable and business unfriendly that will keep investors away. That will require strong leadership that can build and maintain such consensus. Such leadership must come from the civic, business, and resident-activist sectors of the City. This report provides a clear pathway to success, but the citizens of Riviera Beach must make a strong and shared commitment to the path.



# Appendix A: TAP Agenda

## ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) Workshop Riviera Beach Municipal Complex Thursday & Friday, Sept. 8 & 9, 2016

### Agenda

#### Thursday, Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>

- 12:00 – 1:30 pm** Panel arrives, meets over lunch  
**Venue:** Captain Jack's Island Grill  
1146 E. Blue Heron Blvd., Riviera Beach 33404 (on Singer Island)
- 1:30 – 2:45 pm** Van tour of site – panelists to be picked up in parking lot of CRA's Clean & Safe Building across from lunch venue.
- 2:45 – 4:00 pm** Panel discussion and travel to public input session  
**Venue:** CRA's Clean & Safe Building, Conference Room  
1229 E. Blue Heron Blvd., Riviera Beach 33404 (In Ambassador Center on Singer Island)
- 4:00 – 5:30 pm** Panel discussion with community representatives, neighbors, and other interested parties. ***This meeting is open to the public.***  
**Venue:** Riviera Beach City Hall, Council Chambers  
600 W. Blue Heron Blvd., Riviera Beach
- 5:30 – 6:30 pm** Hotel check-in (for panelists staying overnight)  
**Venue:** Hilton Singer Island Oceanfront  
3700 N. Ocean Drive., Riviera Beach 33404
- 6:30 – 8:30 pm** Dinner & panel work session  
**Venue:** Hilton Singer Island Oceanfront, The Mizzen Room

#### Friday, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>

- 7:30 – 8:30 am** Breakfast at hotel with Riviera Beach staff
- 8:45 – 9:00 am** Hotel check-out and travel to Workroom @ CRA Clean & Safe Building
- 9:00 am – Noon** Panel work session (closed to public)
- Noon – 1:00 pm** Working lunch (catered onsite)
- 1:00 – 3:00 pm** Panel work session (closed to public)
- 3:00 – 3:30 pm** Break
- 3:30 – 5:30 pm** Panel review of Draft Report & Travel to City Hall (closed to public)
- 5:30 – 6:30 pm** Presentation of Draft Recommendations (***open to public***)  
**Venue:** Riviera Beach City Hall, Council Chambers

# Appendix B: Panel Questions

## **ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) Workshop Riviera Beach Municipal Complex Thursday & Friday, September 8 & 9, 2016**

### **Questions for the Panel**

*The City of Riviera Beach is seeking advice on siting a new city hall complex, municipal services building (police, fire, public works), and branch library on one or more of several properties currently owned by the City. If feasible, the city hall component would also be used as a catalyst to attract additional investment for a walkable, town center-type development.*

*The sites under consideration include:*

- *Current City Hall/municipal services building site at 600 W. Blue Heron Blvd.*
- *A portion of the municipal park across the street from current City Hall site*
- *A two-acre parcel located at 22<sup>nd</sup> & Broadway*
- *A 13.3-acre parcel & existing 160,000 sq. ft. building located at 1481 W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street*
- *A 6.4-acre parcel located at 2391 Avenue L*

- 
1. Which of the sites or combination of sites would best meet the City's desire to create a walkable town center-type development through public investment, a public private partnership and additional private sector (or other) investment?
  2. Where is the best location for municipal services such as library, public works, fire and police? Same or different site as existing City Hall complex; should this complex contain other city services and governance offices/meeting spaces?
  3. If property located at 1481 W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, 600 Blue Heron(aka City Hall Site), or Municipal Park is not utilized as location for one or more of these uses, what is highest and best use for it?
  4. If a portion of existing City Hall complex is not used for one or more of these purposes, what is highest and best use for the remaining space?
  5. How should these projects be phased?
  6. If possible, discuss funding options for new facilities.
  7. What immediate next steps should be taken?

