

Toward Better Places

The Community Character Plan for Collier County, FL

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Area: Approximately 2,025 square miles

Client: Board of County Commissioners for Collier County

Year Adopted: 2001

Website: colliergov.net/Index.aspx?page=1443

For more information, visit doverkohl.com.



Concept for a hamlet, formed by strategically subdividing a small number of lots in Golden Gate Estates.



Design techniques meet growth demands while maintaining rural character.



US 41 should be transformed into a grand boulevard, a signature thoroughfare of the region.



The Project

The Community Character Plan began at the urging of citizens' groups to improve the character of Collier County. Recent growth and development threatened the character, not so much because of the pace or increase in population, but because of the physical form of development. Natural lands, whether for recreational or agricultural purposes, were being converted to residential or commercial land; a road building emergency had also been declared. The Community Character Plan examines the County's urban design, transportation, and greenspace needs, while attempting to discern and respect the area's varied character. Spikowski Planning Associates, Glattig Jackson, Communities By Design, and UrbanAdvantage contributed to the creation of this plan.

The Process

Toward Better Places: The Community Character Plan for Collier County is the culmination of a year's worth of community involvement and is a blueprint for building a vital community that improves as it grows. The design team and County staff conducted a 10-day charrette, first touring the County by foot, car, boat, and plane. The public participation process kicked off with a Community Image Survey, where 327 participants identified the existing character and desired directions for growth in the County. Hands-on design sessions were held in various areas of the County, including two designed specifically for high school students and elementary aged children. Multiple stakeholder and technical meetings, also held throughout the charrette, helped to complete the specific details of the Plan.

Plan Principles

Nine guiding principles were established for the Community Character Plan. These goals included revitalizing maturing neighborhoods; transforming conventional subdivisions; growing new neighborhoods; regarding gated communities; designing great streets; commercial architectural standards; activating the centers; and evolving the subdivided periphery.

Status

Toward Better Places was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in April 2001. That summer, the Commission held a workshop about implementing the Plan, deciding first to fund citizen-initiated community plans and then specific projects. The Community Character Plan won the EDRA/Places Award for 2001-2002 and an Award of Excellence from the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association.

Neighborhood Connectivity

New neighborhoods should be based on a sound pattern of streets and lots, utilizing the 1/4 mile neighborhood unit as a building block for larger master planned communities. The edges of these neighborhoods are connected, where possible, to the neighboring communities. Each neighborhood has center, general, and edge zones that provide a variety of housing types and sizes and a true mix of uses. A core area is also suggested at the top of the illustration along a proposed new thoroughfare. This core area provides services and commercial uses shared by several adjacent neighborhoods.

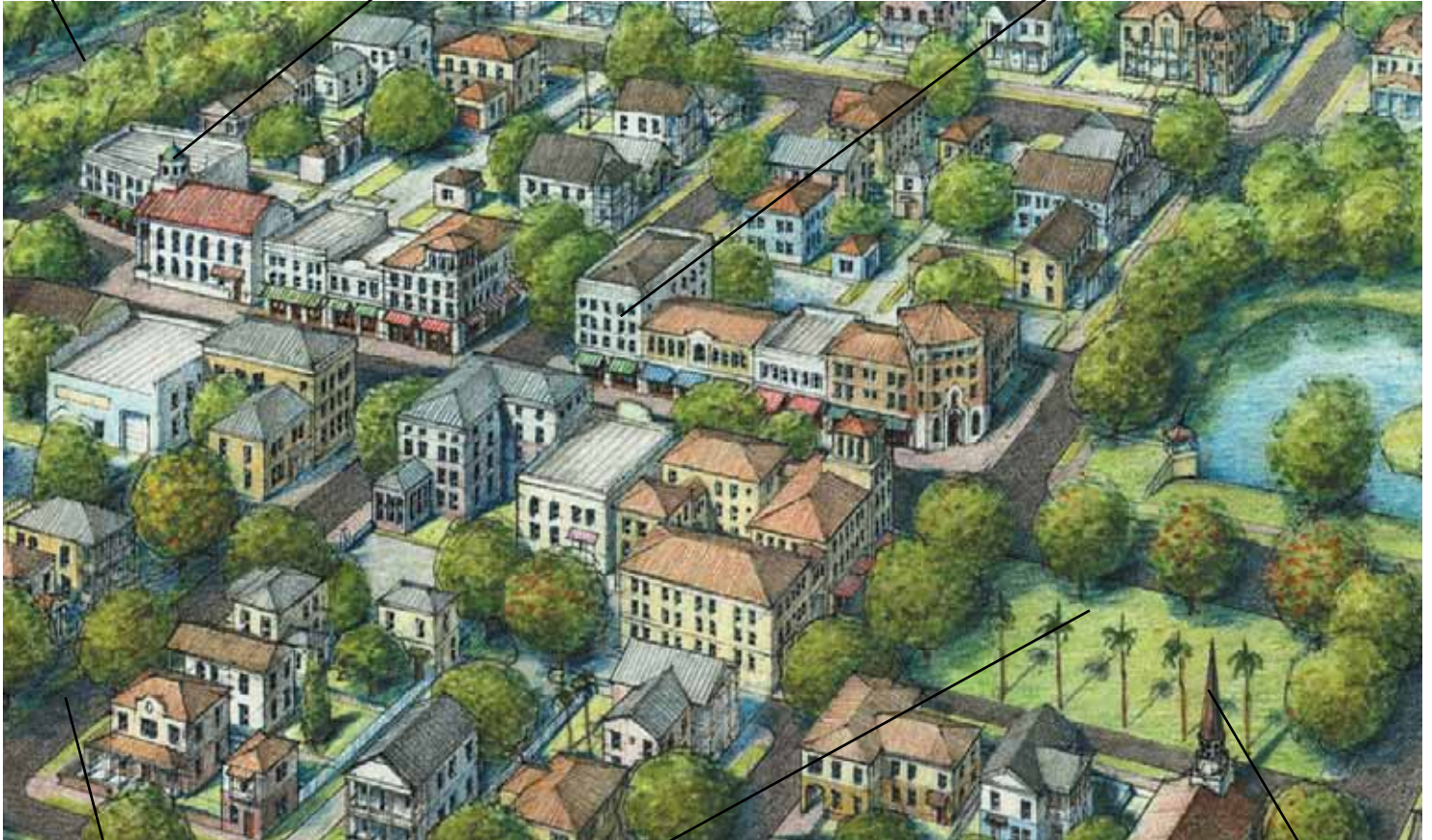
The circled portion at right highlights the proposed Livingston Road Neighborhood, whose edges are within a five-minute walk to the neighborhood center. The corresponding rendering below explores Livingston Road's street connectivity, building types, and special civic and public green spaces that cumulatively work to create a vibrant and sustainable community.



A corridor connects other neighborhoods.

Substantial architecture creates a stronger sense of neighborhood identity than that of the traditional "entry feature."

Retail/office and higher density residential is focused along the "Main Street."



Neighborhood streets lead straight to the mixed-use "Main Street."

The neighborhood is focused around green, public open spaces fronted by buildings.

Special places are reserved for civic buildings.