

Panama City Beach Form-Based Regulations

June Workshops a Success

The Planning Works team conducted a series of workshops during the first week of June to meet with the groups and individuals concerned about development in the Front Beach Corridor. More than 40 people participated in three open community meetings and 20 additional people met in small groups with team members. The week concluded with a well attended joint workshop with the City Council/CRA and Planning Board. Participants listened to a project overview, asked questions and provided many constructive suggestions that will shape the Consultant's work this summer.



Participants learned the following about the City's approach to form-based regulation:

- Building regulations would only apply to redevelopment projects in the corridor – existing buildings and uses will not be required to comply;
- The regulations would be applied through an overlay zone that will be applicable in the Front Beach Corridor;
- The purpose of the regulations would be to increase the quality of the built environment and make the corridor more attractive and functional for pedestrians and transit riders;
- The regulations would be more likely to increase development potential than to decrease it for most properties; and
- Form-based regulations would focus on entries, parking, street level activity, and general building design (height, setbacks, window openings and building materials) – they would not proscribe a specific architectural style.

Participants generally supported the adoption of form based regulations that would strengthen the quality of design throughout the corridor and highlighted the desire to ensure that the regulations:

- Protect residential neighborhoods;
- Require compatible transitions in height and intensity between intensive developments and adjacent residential areas;
- Require compliance with the state and local standards for the disabled;



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- Coordinate stormwater management so that facilities serve multiple sites;
- Design surface stormwater management facilities as amenities;
- Provide safer and more accessible pedestrian environment that also promotes transit use – this includes shifting parking to the rear and eliminating head-in parking that forces cars to back across the sidewalk into traffic;
- Enhance the street environment through the provision of retail/community/active uses at ground or street level of parking structures;
- Increase building articulation and eliminate large expanses of blank walls (both horizontally and vertically);
- Allow greater setbacks in some areas to accommodate properly designed public/civic spaces along the corridor in partnership with private development;
- Can be used in unincorporated areas within and adjacent to the corridor to promote smooth transitions and avoid sudden changes in the quality of development;
- Reduce shadowing effects of commercial development adjacent to residential areas through such methods as terracing or reducing the angle of building mass;
- Use incentives where possible to promote higher quality design;
- Do not allow car oriented uses, such as drive-through businesses immediately adjacent to Front Beach Road; and
- Protect existing single family neighborhoods (e.g., Bid-A-Wee) from incompatible development by:
 - Retaining the maximum building height of 35 feet;
 - Preventing the use of fill to enable houses to increase building heights;
 - Considering height and roof standards that decrease the maximum height for buildings with flat roofs and large homes built across multiple lots;
 - Considering design standards that allow detached accessory buildings and dwellings for larger lots; and
 - Ensuring compatible height transitions on abutting commercial properties.

The consultant team will prepare draft regulations in July and August and return for another round of workshops in September.



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