



City of Holmes Beach
Community Vision Plan

November/December 2002



**Plan facilitated by the
Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
9455 Koger Boulevard, Suite 219
St. Petersburg, FL 33702**

Plan may be reviewed at www.tbrpc.org/hbvision

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Introduction

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. In fact, it’s the only thing that ever has.”
Margaret Mead**

During three sessions over five weeks, 74 citizens and city representatives from Holmes Beach actively participated in three public visioning sessions. The purpose of the meetings was to provide opportunity for citizens to share their ideas of where the City of Holmes Beach should be going and what the City’s vision should be. At its conclusion, the participants identified a vision statement, five objectives, and numerous implementation strategies.



Vision Statement

Holmes Beach is a unique, environmentally sensitive beach community with a small town atmosphere comprised of low-rise, low-density, mixed income neighborhoods; nicely landscaped streets and yards; clean beaches; pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets; and a centralized owner-operated shopping and restaurant district.

Community Value Statements

We strive to maintain our single-family residential character

We protect our environment and keep our beaches and waterways clean

We encourage the redevelopment of our central business district (town center)

We promote landscaping and green space

We recognize the importance of public involvement in civic affairs

We value our public institutions (schools, churches, library, and civic centers)

We support ongoing improvements to pedestrian and bicycle mobility

We support small, owner-operated businesses

We promote diversity in age and income

We value the maintenance of a strong public safety program

We recognize the value of intergovernmental coordination

Objectives and Strategies

The following objectives and strategies were developed during the three public visioning sessions. Their purpose is to guide the City's attainment of its vision statement.

- **Recognize that sensitivity to architectural style and scale are important elements of the preservation of the community's character and charm.**
- **Recognize that the City must continue to be vigilant in enhancing and protecting those environmental qualities which are integral to the community's character.**
- **Recognize that maintaining the community's charm and character requires the diligent and equitable enforcement of all City codes and regulations.**
- **Recognize that improving the efficiency and fiscal operation of city government may require a greater role for intergovernmental coordination and cooperation.**
- **Recognize that the mobility concerns of the community are inter-related with the transportation needs of Anna Maria Island and can best be effectively addressed through cooperative efforts by all affected parties.**

Community Character and Land Development Code

Recognize that sensitivity to architectural style and scale are important elements of the preservation of the community's character and charm.

Strategies:

- Encourage the use of architectural design features and elements as a means of enhancing and preserving the community's Florida beach charm. To this end, encourage new construction to give consideration to incorporating the following into the final development design:
 - Use of Florida beach community elements;
 - Minimize the impact of multi-story structures on adjacent properties;
 - Recognize that landscaping is an integral part of project design;
 - Ensure compatibility with adjacent properties;
 - Ensure the connectivity between the development and adjacent streets; and
 - Incorporate design elements which soften the mass/appearance of the structure.
- Ensure that the Land Development Code contains up-to-date provisions which reflect:
 - Maintaining height restrictions;
 - Limiting the establishment of free standing fast food chains;
 - Ensuring no net loss of green space by new and/or redevelopment activities; and
 - Ensuring that proportional relationship of residential development/redevelopment to the building site is in keeping with that of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Through the use of incentives and appropriate architectural guidelines, the redevelopment of the central business district should take into consideration the following design elements:
 - Creation of public gathering spots;
 - Promotion of public gathering places;
 - Avoidance of repetitive front elevations by staggering entryway/building fronts;
 - Utilization of decorative street lighting; and



- Recognition that landscaping is an integral part of project design.
- Review and, as appropriate, update the City’s Land Development Code to ensure that it reflects the resident’s desire to maintain a beach community character.
- Encourage and promote the development of affordable housing.
- Establish within the Land Development Code provisions which encourage developers to be sensitive to the incorporation of the following general architectural guidelines into site plan/structure design:



- Landscaping
- Relationship of structure to street
- Compatibility with adjacent properties
- Doors
- Window treatment
- Roofing styles and materials
- Porches/balconies
- Railings/balusters
- Non-repetitive facades and elevations
- Exterior building materials



- Encourage the redevelopment of the City’s central business district.
- Encourage and support locally owned and operated businesses (small business development) through activities such as:
 - Establishing maximum sizes for businesses;
 - Developing guidelines for business signage;
 - Developing incentives (e.g., community redevelopment agencies, facade program); and
 - Seeking local, state, and federal financial support for local businesses.

- Revise the landscaping provisions of the Land Development Code to include:
 - Allowing of landscape clustering in lieu of linear landscaping;
 - Requiring that new owners of property with non-conforming landscaping bring such landscaping up to existing landscaping standards; and



- Establishing a monetary threshold whereby remodeling, revitalization, and/or rehabilitation permits trigger requirement to bring landscaping up to current landscaping standards.

Environment

Recognize that the City must continue to be vigilant in enhancing and protecting those environmental qualities which are integral to the community's character.

Strategies:

- Ensure that the provisions of the Future Land Use Elements' Objective 2.2 (*Continue to recognize the intra-relationship of the City's canal system and drainage problems as acknowledged by the 1999 findings of the Canal Commission*) and its supporting policies are implemented with particular emphasis being placed on the establishment of a city canal dredging program.

- Preserve and protect remaining wetland, seagrass, and mangrove areas.
- Establish a dune re-vegetation program.
- Enhance the level of understanding of environmental issues and programs by elected and appointed city officials through ongoing coordination and cooperation with the Manatee County Department of Environmental Management and the Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay Estuary Programs.

- Ensure that the Public Works Department works closely with the Manatee County Public Utilities Department in its efforts to reduce potable water consumption.

- Investigate, in cooperation with the Manatee County Public Utilities Department and the cities of Anna Maria and Bradenton Beach, the feasibility of installing a recycled water system to serve Anna Maria Island.
- Through cooperation with the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay Estuary Programs, establish a public information program to increase public awareness on the need for maintaining the city's drainage system, both natural and manmade.

- In cooperation with the Manatee County Department of Environmental Management, establish a water quality monitoring program.

Code Enforcement

Recognize that maintaining the community's charm and character requires the diligent and equitable enforcement of all City codes and regulations.

Strategies:

- Ensure the proactive and uniform, rather than reactive and selective, enforcement of the provisions of the City's Land Development Code and Code of Ordinances.
- Vigorously enforce those provisions of the City's Land Development Code and Code of Ordinances which deal with rental properties.

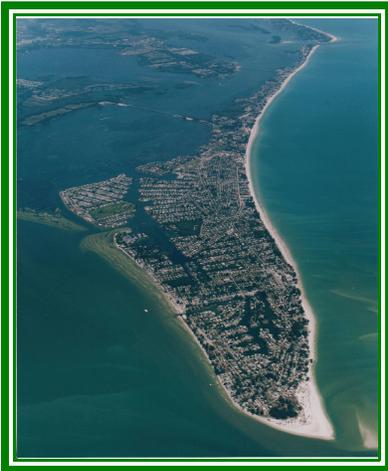


Intergovernmental Coordination

Recognize that improving the efficiency and fiscal operation of city government may require a greater role for intergovernmental coordination and cooperation.

Strategies:

- Utilize all methods of intergovernmental coordination available to investigate the feasibility of improving the operation, effectiveness, and cost-efficiency of the following governmental services:
 - Police protection;
 - Transportation/traffic enforcement;
 - Parking;
 - Purchasing;
 - Road maintenance/public works;
 - Waste collection and recycling; and
 - Building Official.



Mobility

Recognize that the mobility concerns of the community are inter-related with the transportation needs of Anna Maria Island and can best be effectively addressed through cooperative efforts by all affected parties.

Strategies:

- Increase the number of sidewalks and bike paths to enhance the image of being pedestrian friendly.
- Coordinate with MCAT to mitigate community concerns on issues related to the operation of the MCAT trolley system. Such coordination should include discussion of the following:
 - Limiting the number of trolley stops;
 - Installing trolley bays, where feasible;
 - Using smaller, quieter, more energy efficient trolleys; and
 - Installing trolley shelters which architecturally blend with a beach community. Design elements should include benches, landscaping, shading, and sidewalks.
- Institute ongoing dialogue with the cities of Anna Maria and Bradenton Beach and Manatee County on the best manner with which to address current and future parking issues affecting Anna Maria Island.
- Increase enforcement of traffic laws related to cross walks and establish a budget line item for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of pedestrian markings and cross walks.
- In the consideration of the design of any replacement for the Manatee Avenue Bridge, the following concerns should be addressed:
 - Protection of sea life;
 - Limiting access to the Island;
 - Limiting bridge height due to wind speeds during evacuation; and
 - Ensuring that the design of the bridge is in keeping with the character of the community.

