

PALM BEACH COUNTY URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA STUDY: SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS – SEPTEMBER 5-8, 2006

The following outline summarizes the comments made during the course of a series of interviews on September 5-8, 2006. Interview participants included state and local government and agency officials, social service providers, neighborhood representatives, developers, and interested citizens. The interview comments are organized around four topics:

- Issues in the study area and obstacles to redevelopment
- Vision of the study area in the future (what a redevelopment plan should provide for)
- Opportunities for redevelopment
- Neighborhood specific comments

Issues in the Study Area and Obstacles to Redevelopment

Overall Themes and Comments

- The major road corridors, especially Military Trail, suffer from public and private neglect, out-of-date buildings, heavy traffic, and lack of landscaping and greenspace. One comment: “Nobody likes to be on Military Trail.”
- The area has a high concentration of affordable, older housing stock, which provides much-needed affordable housing alternatives in a high-housing cost county. It also has a large number of transitional neighborhoods.
- Drawn by the affordable housing, the study area is the one part of the county that saw an increase in student population for the 2006-2007 year.
- The greatest obstacle to redevelopment is drainage, which is costly to correct. Traffic concurrency is the second greatest obstacle.
- Land use and engineering regulations and codes are suburban-, not urban-, oriented, and a parcel-by-parcel approach has a negative impact on development patterns, traffic congestion, and water management.
- An unpredictable development environment thwarts developers and residents, and the lack of a framework master plan results in piecemeal development that is jumbled and does not contribute to the quality of life.
- A lack of road and pedestrian connectivity contributes to traffic problems, which is exacerbated by the county’s blanket approval of CRALLS in the area. No major new road expansions are planned.
- Public investment in the study area, which has existing infrastructure and a supply of affordable housing, is viewed as a more efficient use of county resources than pushing west with new development. (Going west puts pressure on existing roads because of more traffic driving through to get to new homes in the west.)
- The size of the study area could be addressed by zeroing in on test models.

Code Enforcement and Community Appearance

- Code enforcement is lax in the unincorporated parts of the study area. The result is a high number of neglected properties. The cities are viewed as more attractive because they have their own code enforcement. Continuous hurricanes have had an impact on the roofs of the area's older housing stock. With each storm, the roofs get weaker.
- The county treats its offices in this area differently from other areas. (In other areas, such as Palm Beach Gardens, county offices are nicer.) The same is true for schools, although some school improvements are now underway. The different treatment of public facilities in the study area reinforces the appearance of neglect.
- There is a large number of automotive businesses in the study area, which creates a problem both for community appearance and for the residents. (Many of the car dealers do a big repossession business, which hurts the area's low-income residents who buy a car and then lose it when they cannot make the payments. The result for the residents is bad credit.) The brownfield program and code enforcement could be used to help reduce the number of those businesses.

Economic Development

- The county is losing businesses to other areas because of the lack of industrial and flexible use space (see the recommendations of the county's 2005 Economic Summit.) As a result, existing businesses find it difficult to grow, and new businesses have difficulty finding a site. That problem was underscored by the Palm County Business Development Board's most current annual business survey, which identified the lack of workforce housing and the lack of places for businesses to grow as two top issues. (This is a change from the 2002 survey, which identified education as the top issue.)
- The area needs office space for professionals to serve the community (e.g., doctors and lawyers).
- Reflecting the changing demographics of the area, Hispanic businesses are occupying previously vacant class B, C, and D buildings.
- The average retail expenditure is +/- \$20/capita.
- A good source of information is a real estate consultant 1990s survey of commercial property in a large area that included the study area. The survey documented an average of 60 square feet of commercial space/capita. The numbers were different for the older corridors where there were more obsolete uses (for example, Dixie Highway and parts of US 1). The general standard for commercial space when approving developments is 20-square feet/capita inside the Urban Tier and 12 square feet/capita in the Rural Tier. The actual is more like 12-15 square feet/capita in most areas.
- The income demographics of the area should be considered when identifying future retail development opportunities. (The lower-income population has limited the type of businesses that will come or stay in the area.)

Governance

- The number of municipalities in the study area raises issues of prioritizing one area over the other. The municipalities are viewed as getting all the money for projects, which makes it difficult for the unincorporated areas. Two other problems are the practice of developers playing a city against the county and conflicts between the county's and a municipality's vision for an area. (Several interviewed saw the county as wanting to

control the land uses and what development looks like, which resulted in the county opposing annexations.)

- Governments should initiate programs to locate employee housing close to government buildings.
- Palm Beach County Finance Department noted that water utilities pay for their improvements. Finance is open to special districts. Finance is not an advocate for creating new CRAs because of the loss of the tax increment (the TIF). The county's CCRT program budgets some \$3.5 million for the study area. (The first public hearing for the new CCRT budget was September 7.)

Land Use and Development Regulations

- Land uses are hodge-podge and not well organized. Buildings are neglected, and many are empty. In many places, particularly Military Trail, the neighborhoods behind the properties facing the road are in poor condition, lack water and sewer, and, in some places, have dirt roads.
- A lack of predictability is a big problem. Developers need more certainty regarding what they will be permitted to do, and residents need more predictability regarding what can be built next to them.
- Developments are approved on a piecemeal, parcel-by-parcel basis because there is no overall master plan or vision that provides a framework for making decisions. A master plan that accommodates and guides even the smallest development is needed so that each development contributes to the whole (for example, creating greater connectivity or making transit work).
- The county's land development regulations for this area are suburban-, not urban-, oriented (for example, building placement and setbacks, mix of uses, and parking standards). The plan from this study should be used to create a more urban code for this area. The code should address the form of buildings, not only their use.
- The county's engineering requirements for drainage, access, on-site internal movements, and road widths create an obstacle to urban redevelopment. Engineering has never embraced more comprehensive, area-wide water or traffic management solutions; instead, it makes decisions project-by-project.

Residents

- Because of the demographics of the study area, it is often difficult to organize the neighborhoods. Many of the residents are having enough trouble balancing their family responsibilities with jobs. That means the redevelopment plan needs to focus on getting the residents organized. (Westgate was cited as an area where residents are organized because of the Community Redevelopment Agency [CRA].)
- The demographics of the area is viewed as limiting the type of commercial activities, especially, retail.

Schools and Parks

- A high percentage of students in the study area are on a free lunch program. (Greenacres Elementary, for example, has 85% of its students on free lunch.) Programs are needed to encourage parent involvement, which is often a problem in schools with a higher percent

of lower income students. One solution is a program to import parent volunteers from other schools who could give some time each week to listen to a child read.

- Children in the area need more to do (for example, more community centers and more parks). Activities that could serve youth are a water park, a movie theater, and parks that can be used for baseball, tennis, and soccer, which are popular in the area. School sites could be used for parks on the weekends. Community centers should be located near parks to maximize the use of the park and the center (for example, the area near Sears).
- The area does not have enough small parks for kids to play in. The parks should be where the houses are and should be a part of new housing development. The proximity to housing enables park and neighborhood policing at the same time.
- Gated communities oppose the pedestrian connections that make the Safe Routes to School program work. For example, in one neighborhood near State Road 7, building a bridge over a canal would mean that children could walk to school instead of being bused a much longer route to get around the canal.

Transportation

Road Corridors

- The biggest demands on the corridors are at peak hours.
- No major new road improvements are planned in the area except for Kirk Road. Some intersection improvements are anticipated (at the intersection of Military Trail with Forest Hill and with Congress).
- The area is characterized by a lack of connectivity between neighborhoods and between and within commercial development, a condition that will be hard to change because the area is largely developed. A policy of approving road closures is exacerbating this problem. (Note to map road closures.)
- The area's principal road corridors are designed as expressways to carry vehicles through the area. They are not designed to encourage drivers to stop and buy a cup of coffee or to shop. Techniques to slow traffic need to be used to make the area friendly to pedestrians and to businesses.
- New development turns its back to the main corridors because of the poor quality of the public realm, which in turn makes the public realm worse. The problem is exacerbated because development along the main road corridors (particularly Military Trail and Congress) is not in good condition, resulting in a blighted appearance.
- There are too many curb cuts and stoplights along Military Trail. Congress Avenue is easier to use because it has fewer curb cuts and is less developed.
- The intersection of Military Trail and Okeechobee Boulevard is a hot spot for traffic accidents, and Military Trail has a high pedestrian fatality rate, an important consideration in an area where a large portion of the population does not have access to cars.
- Most of the roads in the study area are local, not state roads, which means that it is up to local government to adopt a level of service (LOS). (The Florida Department of Transportation [FDOT] requires that the local governments show how they will provide for mobility.) The state roads that run through the study area are parts of Forest Hill Boulevard, Congress Avenue, Lake Worth Road, Military Trail, Okeechobee Boulevard, and Southern Boulevard.)

- FDOT is encouraging counties to adopt a “Point System” for traffic concurrency. The Point System is part of a performance-based toolbox for redevelopment strategies. The county approved a point system for Okeechobee three-plus years ago.
- FDOT normally would not consider adapting a state road to an urban standard unless it is involved in a road-widening project.

Transit

- There is a lack of transit in the study area. To make transit work, more money is needed to increase headway frequencies and right-of-way for bus shelters and better bus stop conditions are needed. (Currently, the bus stops are in very poor condition.) The county needs to be willing to buy the right-of-way for bus shelters instead of holding developers responsible for bus stops. A possible approach is to give developers some type of credit in the development approval process when they provide an easement for a bus shelter. Such a credit would help offset liability issues. (When a private landowner grants the county an easement to build a bus shelter, the developer is responsible if someone is injured.)
- To take advantage of the area’s proximity to the airport, shuttle buses or, in the future, a train from key points in the study area to the airport should be considered. Such a shuttle would provide an alternative to the \$50 car service.
- Federal funds for transit operating costs are drying up, and transit (Palm Tran) is treated as a step-child when it comes to county funding.

Water and Fire Services

- Water drainage and storm water management are the number one obstacles to redevelopment. A regional water management facility (e.g., ponds and marshes) is viewed as the solution. The county estimates that a 15-20 percent land area allocation is needed for stormwater retention.
- County resistance to large area, system solutions is a problem. (Water and sewer serve commercial developments on Military and Congress, and there is excess capacity.)
- A number of neighborhoods along Military Trail are not on public water and use wells. With increases in the cost of living, residents in several areas are opting not to pay for accessing public water. (In Haverhill, for example, it costs \$75/foot to get city water, although in the county’s CCRT areas, the cost is \$20-\$25/foot. The cost of getting on sewer is generally three-times higher than the cost of getting on water.)
- Although most of the trailer parks have water and sewer, those that own their water utility used cheap materials and the infrastructure is deteriorating and aging.
- The canals are not well-maintained and are not used as a visual and recreational asset or to provide connectivity (for example, by placing bike trails and greenways along the canals).
- The area has an adequate number of fire stations to accommodate future population growth. No new fire stations are planned.

Vision of the Study Area in the Future (what a redevelopment plan should provide for)

Land Use and Development

- Land use policies that allow a mix of uses and the densities that make walkable places possible and that will create a more urban environment. The nodes where two streets connect are good locations for higher density development, with a step-down of density between the nodes. Allowing a mix of uses will enable building owners and developers to respond to changes in market demand (for example, the current demand for residential development on US 1, which five years ago would not have been seen as feasible). Mixed-use developments also help address traffic concurrency requirements. Mixed-use developments should include opportunities for residents over businesses. They should also include developments that have a mix of uses within a one-quarter mile walking radius. (Mixed-use does not always mean residential over work place. It can be residential next to retail and commercial uses.)
- Policies and incentives that encourage developers to correct the current shallow frontage parcels, frequent curb cuts and intersections, and conflicts with residential areas on Military Trail. Techniques include consolidating curb cuts and allowing step-down development where commercial fronts residential.
- Incentives for redevelopment. Examples include giving developers a more predictable approval process and greater certainty in the land development rights they have. Other incentives for developments that are consistent with the redevelopment plan are impact fee exemptions, expedited permitting, and density by right. Developers commented that it is hard to make up for requirements, such as affordable housing and large impact fee increases, in a down housing market. Land Development Regulations should specify what the county can ask for and not impose additional standards.
- Better architectural treatment of buildings and buildings that are at an appropriate scale for what is around them. A color palette could be used to create more consistent building treatments, and use of traditional Florida architectural styles (for example, Magnolia Court on Dixie Highway in West Palm Beach) could be encouraged.
- Better interface between the commercial buildings that front streets like Military Trail and the neighborhoods behind them (for example, wrapping the back of commercial buildings that back up to a neighborhood).
- Workforce housing, which builds on an existing asset of the area – a high concentration of affordable housing. Housing strategies should include those that prevent displacement of existing residents when redevelopment occurs.
- More “green” and more beauty. More green means more grass, more trees, more parks, more greenways, and landscaped medians. Palm Beach County should become known as a tree county, which builds on the county’s tropical location. Green also means green roofs and green building practices and greater use of pervious surfaces so that surface parking could contribute to water storage. (For example, drivers into Palm Beach Gardens know when they enter the city because of the canopy of palm trees. Another example is Plantation in Broward County, which has hired a tree forester to encourage the planting of trees.)
- Individual parcel decisions made in the context of an overall plan, which eliminates the current practice of parcel-by-parcel decisions that do not contribute to a whole.

- Use of performance-based zoning, which means not giving away zoning that creates higher land values for developers without getting something that benefits the community. Incentives can be used to get developers to do the right thing (for example, to produce workforce housing and to reinvest in the study area). Consider establishing a test area to test these ideas and convening a group of developers to ask them what it would take to make them want to redevelop this area.

Schools

- Use of school facilities for other community purposes, which builds on the study area's unique position in the county as the only area with an increase in student enrollment.
- Making schools the focal point of neighborhoods. Schools can be used for day care, after school care, community meetings, parks, etc.

Transportation

- Methods, such as the use of performance standards, to reduce traffic by requiring greater connectivity and providing more compact development with a mix of uses within walking distance other than blanketing the area with approval of CRALLS. Greater connectivity applies to the street network and creating an interconnected road network and reducing the use of road closures. It also applies to requiring pedestrian connectivity and providing greater access between parcels and using shared driveways and other techniques, such as frontage or rear roads, to remove local traffic from the main arteries. (Emergency services prefer an interconnect road network because it helps them get vehicles in and out of an area. Road closures create a problem for emergency vehicles, a fact documented by county Fire Rescue's study of places where they have an extended response time. In one instance, a road closure disconnected a neighborhood from the fire hydrant that served it. Fire Rescue prefers a grid network over traffic calming.)
- Streetscape beautification similar to what was done for State Road 7 in Broward County, a corridor very similar to Military Trail and Congress Avenue. (One interviewee cited Northwood in Palm Beach County as a good example of a desirable road corridor.)
- Transit and supportive higher density transit-oriented development. Other transit provisions should include more attractive bus shelters (for example, those on State Road 7 in Broward County), dedicated bus lanes with pre-emptive signaling, and possibly an east-west commuter bus stop at Military and the major east-west corridors. To make transit work, it needs to be more convenient and efficient, and the distribution system needs to work when users arrive at their destination. More park-and-rides and more bus stops are also needed. Palm Tran signs could be used for community services (for example, notices about missing children).
- Developments make walking competitive with driving by providing more density, good access, and more uses within a two-block walking area.

Water

A comprehensive systems approach to water management that uses drainage facilities as an amenity. The redevelopment plan should lay out the water management system once the desired land uses are determined. (First, lay out the plan as if money were not a problem, and then focus on the constraints.) To fix the area's drainage problems, drainage needs to be a higher priority for the county in its capital facilities planning. (Show the county how investments in drainage will be more than paid back with the quality of new development.)

Opportunities for Redevelopment

Overall Opportunities

- The study area is in the center of the county, which makes it accessible to a large population.
- The influx of Hispanic businesses, which is reducing a previously high vacancy rate, can be used to help turn around the area by providing uses for the class B, C, and D office space that is prevalent. The Latin flavor creates an asset to build on.
- The cluster of businesses that provide support services to bio-tech businesses, such as Scripps and Torrey Pines, presents an opportunity for new investments in the area. (Look at the type of support businesses around Scripps' location in California.)
- The county's need for workforce housing could be used as an opportunity. The study area could become a receiver site for workforce housing provided by another development, thus providing the county with an alternative to going further west to provide workforce housing.
- The number of large vacant lots in the study area provides an opportunity for mixed-use development. (One interviewee noted a trend of developers wanting a greater percentage of mixed-used developments designated for residential uses, versus retail, which underscores the need for form-based codes that allow flexibility in allowed uses.)
- Areas of government employment could be used as a focal point for creating higher density development.
- Some churches with large lots are having financial problems and may be willing to dispose of some of their land. (An example suggested was to use land from a church as a site for a grocery to serve Haverhill, which would help older residents who cannot drive.)

Schools

The School Board of Palm Beach County needs a 15 +/- acre site for a new elementary school in the northwest corner of the study area, which creates an opportunity to create a model for smaller, urban school sites. Funding is allocated for planning and construction (an estimated \$15,000-\$16,000/student station to construct a school). The school site cannot be in a flight path, and it needs to be between Westgate Elementary and Winbrook Elementary. The size of the site depends on access and retention. The Pleasant City elementary school, which used 5-6 acres, is a good model. (There are discussions of dividing elementary schools into learning centers – one center serving pre-K-2 and the other serving grades 3-5. To date, the School Board has not supported that concept.) The interviewee from the School Board will provide information on the population increases that would trigger the need for additional school sites, which the plan could also provide for.

Special Site Opportunities

- The area around Palm Beach International Airport creates an opportunity for much-needed light industrial space, as well as for uses that take advantage of the proximity to the airport (for example, places to eat or stay if a flight is delayed). The Executive Airport (on Gun Club) could create an opportunity for an aviation community.
- The area west of Military Trail would be ripe for mixed-use development, possibly smaller, incubator space, because the airport does not anticipate airport-related development in that area.

- The Kmart and flea market sites could be good targets for redevelopment.
- The proposed hotel and new Board of Realtors' building near Summit and Congress Avenue could be used as a model for what can be done to improve the study area and to create a catalyst for other investments. The old Zayre's site near the golf course is another opportunity. It could be used for something that compliments the golf course (for example, during golf tournaments). A similar opportunity relates to discussions of preparing a master plan for the dog track, which would include allocating some 40 acres for a hotel/entertainment center.
- The area north of the intersection of Okeechobee Boulevard and Military Trail is deteriorated now but, with new road improvements, could provide an opportunity for economic development-related activity because of the good connection to I-95.
- Greenacres is building a new city hall, which means that their old building would be available for a new use (for example, a Scripps-related outreach center to get kids interested in the sciences). Such a center builds on the high student population in the study area.
- Lake Clark Shore is interested in redeveloping Forest Hill Boulevard, although an obstacle is lack of sewer, and many of the smaller, older rental apartments and some of the smaller businesses do not have the financial capacity to pay for sewer. An advantage is that the area is not far from existing sewer lines. A district approach may be needed (possibly by designating the area as a CRA) to be able to construct the line and then parcel out the costs. A design charrette for the corridor was held about 18 months ago. (The town clerk, Jo Plyer, might have the plan from the charrette.)

Water Opportunities

- Low-lying parts of the study area could present opportunities for drainage improvements that create an amenity. An example is a mobile home park that the county is considering purchasing. Part of the park would be used for water storage by expanding a lake, and the other part with road frontage would be raised by using the fill created by expanding the lake.
- A growing recognition that the current piecemeal, ditch-and-drain approach to water management is not working has resulted in two projects that take a more comprehensive systems approach: the Stub Canal Task Force and the Lake Worth Corridor and Lake Worth Lagoon study. The projects provide a model for the type of approach that is needed in the study area. The hope for the Lake Worth Corridor and Lake Worth Lagoon study is that it will result in a regional stormwater management facility that smaller redevelopment projects can use rather than using piecemeal, on-site solutions. The costs would be assigned to developments as they come along. Features of the plan could include a series of ponds and marshes, use of native plants, and more pervious pavement. The challenge is making that approach work in a developed, versus undeveloped, area.
- In the study area, it will be important to create enough grade (typically 15-20%) to make water flow. It will also be important to avoid long stretches of expensive piping to get water to a water storage area.
- The SFWMD is now open to using pervious surfaces as part of water management solutions. Pervious surface can be used to keep more water on a big mall site, for example.

Transportation Opportunities

- The rising cost of gas, coupled with growing traffic congestion and more population to come, creates an opportunity for investments in transit and land use practices that reduce traffic. Florida's new law that sets the driving age at 18 will also have an impact on the amount of road capacity needed and will enhance use of transit.
- FDOT's District Four is encouraging local governments to adopt a performance-based point system that evaluates the result of alternative traffic improvement strategies that reduce congestion. For example, a development would receive points for proposing a mix of land uses or lot-to-lot connectivity. (The point system works well with a corridor master plan.)
- The county has plans to provide Bus Rapid Transit on Okeechobee Boulevard.
- The FDOT District Four FEC study, which covers an area of one mile on either side of the FEC, could provide opportunities for services and new development nodes to connect to.

Neighborhood- and Project Specific Comments

Greenacres

- Crime on Military Trail trickles through to Greenacres.
- The city wants to annex two trailer parks abutting Greenacres.
- Greenacres views Military Trail as what it does not want to be. As an antidote, Greenacres only allows retail at nodes and encourages mixed-use development in-between. It is currently in the process of approving a development on Jog Road that has offices in the front with residences behind, which protects the residences from the traffic on Jog Road and uses the new residential units to front existing residences. Residents of the area understood the objectives and did not oppose the development. It was also important that both the new and existing residential units were condominiums.
- Palm Beach County needs to start using performance standards rather than blanket the area with CRALLS and then allow roads to be closed, thus aggravating the problem by putting local traffic on through roads, which worsens the problems and limits the ability of Greenacres to redevelop.
- Greenacres provides for parks, but other areas of the study area did not, which means that kids have nowhere to play.

Haverhill

- Haverhill has an annexation plan for the area bounded by Military Trail, the Florida Turnpike, Okeechobee Boulevard, and Southern Boulevard. So far, they have been unable to annex west to Jog Road because of problems with contiguousness. They are negotiating to annex property in the airport buy-out area. The airport and county would control the zoning. Industrial users would sign a 99-year lease, and the airport would own the land. Before annexing, Haverhill wants to make sure that it would receive taxes on the industrial improvements. (Because the airport will own the land, there may be a tax immunity clause.) A driver behind the desire to annex is to get more commercial development to better balance what is now a largely residential tax base. A stronger commercial tax base would enable Haverhill to provide more services. (Currently, it provides limited services [e.g., administrative and code enforcement]. Water, sewer, fire, and police services are provided by the county.)
- There is a desire for workplace and office uses and another grocery is needed. (The nearest grocery is a Publix at Jog and Southern.) Several groceries that were closer by closed (possibly because of changing demographics.)
- The airport fly-over, which stops at Belvedere, limits where residential development can go.

Lake Worth

- Police view Lake Worth as a microcosm of the country – its make-up and how to manage law enforcement. There was a big increase in the number of immigrants in the city when a hotel (at 441 and Lantana Road) used by that population closed down 15-20 years ago.
- How to accommodate approximately 15,000 undocumented immigrants in Lake Worth (whom the census did not count) is a problem. Because of the miscount, the police department is policing a city of 50,000 on a budget geared for 36,000. Some of the

problems include two or three families housed in older, deteriorated homes owned by absentee landlords and people loitering on the streets waiting to be picked up for a job. (When the police department tried to crack down on people living in dangerous conditions or loitering on the streets, the ACLU intervened.) The immigrant community is also a victim of street robbery because many do not use banks.

- Lake Worth has a large number small lots (25 X 60) with shotgun houses from the 1940s. Most of the houses are of wood construction, are now deteriorating, and have largely converted from owner-occupied to rental (one study estimates an 80 percent rental rate).
- An issue in some of the annexed areas is that the city did not annex the roads. The Lake Worth Police Department is working with the county to work out police enforcement issues for those areas. Another issue is the ability of police to close down a business based on nuisance abatement because of a decision in Tampa that held the agency closing a business responsible for the lost rent.

Old Trail Neighborhood

- The Old Trail neighborhood is surrounded by commercial development. The area, which is composed of 180-residences, started to decline when a low-income housing development was built nearby. After the development was built, the neighborhood became a drug center. To address the problem, residents started a Neighborhood Watch program. Through the program, they have worked to eliminate the crack houses. Residents have helped with community policing by having some 37 volunteers who will call a code enforcement officer or police officer if they see a problem.
- An important factor in reducing crime has been a strong community police officer. There are concerns about losing the community police officer if the neighborhood is removed from the CCRT program because it has corrected its problems. The fear is that the neighborhood will decline again without a strong community police officer. A transition is needed.
- The area is changing demographically, with an influx of Hispanic and Haitian residents. (The leaders of the neighborhood organization are finding that the newer residents are not interested in becoming involved in the Neighborhood Watch program, possibly because they do not see crime as a problem because of the earlier successes in getting rid of the drug traffic).

Palm Beach International Airport (PBI)

- PBI's buy-out area is a 100-acre site composed of a number of properties (mostly houses). The purchase process will occur over several years. (Some of the homeowners are older couples who do not want to sell until they retire in a few years.) PBI plans to use the area to create flex-space for light industrial and warehousing/distribution uses, which addresses a need in the county for more industrial land. PBI will lease the land, which gives it control over who it is leased to. A leasing RFP is planned. PBI could lease the entire site or break it up into smaller, e.g., 20-acre parcels. PBI's property group is overseeing the development.
- Traffic concurrency is one of the biggest constraints to site development. A CRALL will be needed. For businesses located on the site, Southern Blvd. is their primary route to I-95 and Florida's Turnpike.
- PBI's noise contours have decreased over last 10 years.

- If PBI is annexed, the annexation agreement would stipulate that it would still go to Palm Beach County for permitting.
- PBI is building a 3,500-space parking garage for \$63 million (approximately \$18,000/space). Future plans are to build a multi-modal building near the dog track. The multi-modal building would contain parking and the car rental facility and would be designed to accommodate a future metro rail spur. A building, such as a hotel and entertainment complex, could be built above the multi-modal center.
- PBI is adding three gates now and three more gates are planned. There are also plans for a new concourse if justified by the growth of the area.

Town of Cloud Lake

- The Town of Cloud Lake has 66 households and 170 residents.
- The town has its own Code Enforcement Department. It is not served by Palm Tran or the Palm Beach Connector.
- The town would like to see more green in the area, which should compliment the Trump Golf Course at the Zayre's site.

Village of Palm Springs

- The Village of Palm Springs is developing a plan to improve the area between 10th Avenue North and Lake Worth Road between Military Trail and Congress. The plan calls for new housing. (Most of the Village qualifies as workforce housing.)
- The Village is using annexation to clean up nearby unincorporated areas. As an incentive for annexation, the Village provides water and sewer without an assessment because residents of the annexed areas cannot afford an assessment. The Village shares the cost with the county. One annexation area extends from Summit on the north, Atlantis on the south, Military on the west (which will abut Greenacres), and Florida Mango and the canal on the east.
- The Village is trying to clean up Lake Worth Avenue. An example is a new flex-use unit at Holly and Congress and new office condominiums on the east side of Forest Hill at Oak Drive.

Westgate

- Westgate views itself as a prototype of the Urban Redevelopment Study Area: “No matter how you slice it, Westgate has it.” Westgate demographics started changing when people displaced from CityPlace moved there. That trend was underscored when Opportunity House (a day care center) wanted to locate in Westgate to follow the children they had served from the CityPlace area.
- Residential development in Westgate is about 30 percent rental and 70 percent owner-occupied. Most of the small infill housing is single-family units. (One developer purchased about 20 lots. The houses are selling for around \$250,000.) Habitat for Humanity is also building some houses.
- Westgate has a CRA, which was created in 1999. It is the only city in the study area that has a stormwater master plan. Westgate is participating in the Stub Canal study (described earlier in the interview summary).
- Belvedere Homes provides a unique housing area of some 1,000 small 1940s homes built when PBI was a military base. Selling for around \$200,000, the homes are built well, and

they all have fireplaces (desired by military personnel from the north). One theory for the construction is that the homes were built during a period of frequent hurricanes. The area is designed on a perfect road grid. There is some crime, but it is not that high. There are some problems with bored kids who hang out in the neighborhood.

- The possible redevelopment of a mobile home park off Okeechobee, which is included in the CRA redevelopment plan, provides an opportunity to create new mixed-income residential development that includes some commercial uses. The lower, southern part of the site could be used for drainage and the northern part for mixed-use development that would include workforce and affordable housing to enable current residents to remain in the area as it redevelops. The CRA may help fund a study to assess what is feasible in terms of redevelopment. Providing mixed-income development helps make the financing work.
- A zoning overlay for the area (adopted in 2004) allows for a maximum density of 150 dwelling units per acre in the redevelopment area. The allowed building height is 20 stories (240') tall. The Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) must approve a development proposing that density. The as-of-right density in the area is eight dwelling units per acre (1.0 Floor Area Ratio), which presents an opportunity to obtain community benefits in exchange for receiving approval of the higher density allowed by the zoning overlay.
- A county feasibility study is looking at connecting Westgate Avenue to Congress. The Westgate CRA redevelopment plan calls for reducing Westgate from four to two lanes by allowing on-street parking. (The town has a road grid system that provides alternatives to using Westgate Avenue). The redevelopment plan is based on a McMann and Associates study which documented that a two-lane road would work. (County engineering has some concerns about the ability of the two-lane sections to carry the projected traffic volumes.) If Westgate Avenue must be four lanes, the CRA has a plan that calls for a boulevard road design that includes trees and other streetscape improvements, as well as on-street parking.

Science Museum

- The science museum is moving to a new county-donated 11-acre tract on Gun Club Road near the SFWMD and the Donald Trump Golf Course. The new site will have room for a much larger building and will give the zoo room to grow. (Currently the museum and zoo share a site east of I-95.) One of the reasons for the move is a lack of adequate parking. (The county does not have separate parking requirements for a museum, which meant that a variance was required to share parking spaces with the adjacent zoo.)
- The major issue associated with the new site is access. Good signage and traffic calming are needed to slow vehicle speeds on Gun Club and Military Trail, which will serve as the museum's front door. Connections to the surrounding neighborhoods are also needed.
- A cultural shuttle bus that runs between the county's cultural facilities, the downtown, and the airport could serve the museum.