

A. Suggestions for Future Consideration

The following issues are presented for future consideration and development of consensus regarding the best approach for implementation. Thereafter, it is recommended that these issues be presented to the City Commission for consideration and action.

1. Executive Director for the South Andrews Avenue Business Association (SABA)

SABA is a business owners' and property owners' membership association whose primary role is to promote the South Andrews market area and to provide comment to the City on all redevelopment proposals that come before the City for approval. SABA would take the lead in the area as an advocate for redevelopment, enhancing the image of the area, and provide direct services to its members.

However, SABA must graduate from a volunteer organization to one that has at least one employee, an executive director, and an office located on the Avenue. The Executive Director would provide the operational time needed to organize and inform its members, plan and implement events, and assist the advisory board in implementing the South Andrews Master Plan. The City of Fort Lauderdale should consider as an interim measure, until such time as SABA can afford to support or secure the funds necessary to support a full-time executive director, the appointment of a planner with redevelopment experience to the position of interim executive director of SABA.

Many cities today are finding that after providing a commercial area or a residential neighborhood with a master plan and an implementation plan that there is little follow up on the implementation. What is generally required is an organization or a person that focuses on elements of an implementation plan. Someone or some organization must provide leadership in the execution of the plan. The City of Fort

Lauderdale has already created several such organizations on a much larger scale to provide the leadership and operational management for the execution of a master plan. The Community Redevelopment Agency provides the focus to execute its approved plan for the Progresso and Flagler Heights area. The Beach CRA provides this function for the beach areas as well. The DDA provides leadership for the downtown. As the City executes more neighborhood and commercial corridor master plans, they may wish to consider assigning a redevelopment planner to assist in the execution of the plan. In the case of South Andrews Avenue Master Plan, a redevelopment planner could in addition assist the neighborhoods of Poinciana Park and Croissant Park once they execute their own master plan. The redevelopment planner would be a position that the City could contribute for a period of no more than two years, and then the local neighborhood association or merchants association would be required to carry on after the city's assistance.

2. South Andrews Avenue Redevelopment Partnership

The Master Plan consultants recommend that an official advisory board (a redevelopment partnership) be established by the City Commission to oversee the implementation of the South Andrews Avenue Master Plan. Several important large urban cities utilize the concept of a redevelopment partnership in which agencies and the city join forces to create an organization to coordinate, communicate and implement redevelopment programs. Examples of cities include Denver, Tampa, and many others. In most cases the partnership is headed by a full-time paid executive director with support staff.

The advisory board could consist of representatives from the South Andrews Business Association, the City, and the North Broward Hospital District. The purpose of the advisory board is to make recommendations to the City Commission for actions related to the

VII. Future Considerations

redevelopment implementation. Their meetings would be open to the public, with legal notice on the City Hall bulletin board.

Furthermore it is recommended that the City assign key staff members from Planning and Zoning, Engineering, Parks and Recreation, and others to assist the South Andrews Avenue advisory board in their discussions. If the Downtown Development Authority were to join in the redevelopment effort of South Andrews, then the DDA could also be represented on the advisory board.

One of the first actions the advisory board could pursue is the creation of an assessment district for the improvements of South Andrews Avenue. The advisory board could ask the County to join in these discussions as well. Another example is the construction of the first public parking garage, whose discussions would include FDOT and the County. It may be desirable to operate the advisory board with a sunset clause of two or three years to permit discontinuation or continuation of the partnership as seen fit by its members.

3. Partnering with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

The Master Plan consultants recommend that SABA, and the City of Fort Lauderdale (first through the advisory board) consider requesting the DDA to expand their district into the South Andrews study area. The DDA currently extends to SW/SE 7th Street, approximately five blocks from Davie Boulevard. The extension of its boundaries would certainly include all of the study area of South Andrews Avenue Master Plan but should also consider incorporating the area to US 1 as well.

The purposes of the proposal are several. First, the DDA has a long history of downtown redevelopment and has had a great deal of experience in managing many programs including downtown transit. Since the DDA is in charge of administering the downtown's Transportation Management Association (TMA), which is promoting mass transit improvements in the downtown and surrounding areas, the

DDA would be an important partner in the South Andrews redevelopment planning, particularly as it relates to mass transit. The DDA could contribute its knowledge and experience to the advisory board and to its members in executing the implementation plan of the Master Plan.

Secondly and equally important, the DDA could contribute funds for projects in the South Andrews Avenue area. The DDA is a 1 mil special taxing district, and all commercial properties would be taxed on its ad valorem assessed value (excluding the NBHD/BGMC properties). Based upon the current assessed value of taxable properties (not including the hospital properties), this would generate income of approximately \$52,390 annually. Although the amount appears to be small in comparison to that which the downtown generates, these funds could be used to support the operations of SABA. However, the real value of being in the DDA is that as the DDA District seeks new projects to fund, they will find that South Andrews Avenue will provide a wealth of worthy projects. The projects would include streetscaping, public parking, events, marketing, land acquisition, and most importantly a strong transit connection to downtown.

4. Assessment District and Business Improvement District (BID)

An assessment district, sometimes more formalized as a business improvement district, is created by a municipal government (under Florida Statutes, Chapter 170) for the purpose of executing capital, (“bricks and mortar”) projects, such as street beautification, or for executing maintenance projects such as providing landscape maintenance on streets, providing security, and executing a marketing program. An assessment district for capital projects can be created by a city without the vote of the property owners. An assessment district that uses its funds for security and marketing must have a majority of the property owners' consent.

VII. Future Considerations

The City can choose to contribute a portion of the funding, thus relieving the property owners of some of the burden of the project costs. The typical method of funding a capital improvement project is for a city to borrow on a short-term basis the funds required to execute the project. The payment of the debt service, usually over a period of 8 to 10 years, is derived from an annual assessment on property and from contributions from other sources such as the City, County or others.

If the property owners contribute to the capital project they may also be charged for interest that is incurred by the City as a result of borrowing funds. The assessment may be based upon the front footage of the property facing the “benefit,” or may be based upon a formula of benefit, such as on a square footage of the land fronting the benefit. In most assessment districts, cities utilize their own staff, such as a public works department, to execute the work.

The difference between an assessment district and a BID is that the BID is a formal organization created by the City to manage and execute the purposes of the assessment district instead of the City assigning the functions of an assessment district to its own staff. In the mid-1990’s, the City of Miami Beach created two assessment districts for Lincoln Road, one for the construction of Lincoln Road and one for the maintenance of Lincoln Road. Likewise the City of Miami Beach created a BID to operate both assessment districts. Creating a BID for the South Andrews Master Plan area is an option that the City may wish to investigate in place of assigning the functions to its staff. In some cases as discussed above, a downtown partnership organization can also act as a BID, as is the case in Tampa.

As discussed in the South Andrews Master Plan, a thorough consideration of an assessment district is recommended for the improvements to South Andrews Avenue, SW 1st Avenue and several side streets perpendicular to these two streets. The creation of an assessment district would be possible since the local business organization, SABA, could provide the grass roots marketing that would be needed to convince property owners of its value.

It should be restated here that NBHD/BGMC has a focus as their primary responsibility to deliver healthcare to the residents of Broward County. Although they are South Andrews Avenue area property owners, their support of the creation of any assessment districts would be limited by their primary responsibilities to the community and by their financial constraints.

Should an assessment district be created, then once the projects are completed, the advisory board may consider creating a BID for the purpose of providing security, landscape maintenance, and marketing funds. The BID’s most important role would be the maintenance of the new streetscaping which includes tree trimming and fertilization, flower planting on a periodic basis, maintaining hanging or street-level flower pots, maintaining signs, benches, street lights, bicycle racks, bus stops, and providing street cleaning and other items.

5. Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)

Although the creation of a CRA could be beneficial to the South Andrews Avenue area, as the Flagler Heights/Progresso CRA has been for the area north of downtown, it is unlikely in the current political climate that Broward County would approve the creation of a CRA for South Andrews. For this reason the suggestions of creating an advisory board, of expanding the operation of SABA and the suggestion that the DDA expand into South Andrews were made as a substitute to the creation of a CRA. However, as Broward County has recently suggested, it wishes to play a part in urban redevelopment in place of a CRA, and this suggestion would be welcomed in the implementation of the South Andrews Master Plan.

In lieu of the creation of a CRA, the City, SABA, and any other interested parties, should begin dialogue with Broward County about its participating in the funding of projects.