

Meeting Date: October 1, 2024

Meeting Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location: Fire Station 1 Community Room

112 Harbor Drive South

Venice, FL 34285

MINUTES

1. Welcome & Introductions

Attendees:

Stakeholders: Kara Morgan, Kathy Lehner, Marty Dover

Venice City Council Members: Joan Farrell

Bob Mudge, Venice Gondolier

City of Venice Employees: Roger Clark, Amy Nelson, Nicole Tremblay, Brittany Smith, Kelsey Shope

An additional resident joined at approximately 11:00 am

Introduction given by Josh Frank, Dover Kohl and Associates, Project Director

2. Scope, Schedule, & Major Milestones

Wrap up will be in a couple weeks. The project has been extended a few weeks from original timeline. The consultant is under contract until final deliverable.

3. Phase 1-3 Recap

Josh quickly covers the history of the area and how the consultant has been using historical information to provide the final deliverable.

Josh gives a recap on the initial impressions from previous meetings.

Josh shows some images from the Charette and discusses the debrief that the consultants held after the Charette.

Josh explains that the final deliverable will be a draft and there will inevitably be changes based on what the community wants.

Josh covers the themes that were covered during the Charette.

Change over time: the biggest theme is "Do no harm." The timeline of the entire project could be 50-60 years down the road, depending on the market and existing businesses. There are short term goals that could help catalyst the change over time. The first focus will be on improving the streets.

Josh provides images of Phase 1, which focuses on creating new streets, alleys, and blocks and improving the city-owned properties. Splitting up large blocks make them more valuable and walkable. John Nolen placed streets very purposefully to provide visual points and those

philosophies will be followed by the consultant. Another important point of Phase 1 is to protect existing businesses during transition and to reduce friction. A lot of buildings can be kept for adaptive reuse. City should encourage adaptive reuse (creative industrial). The consultant is not recommending removing all the buildings and they were careful to draw new streets to minimally impact the existing buildings, and the ones the new streets do impact are not large or structurally significant.

The north side of Seaboard Ave is difficult to access due to the layout of Venice Ave and the bridge. The buildings in this area would be perfect for adaptive reuses, preferably active uses with customers, and are great for live-work situations. Live-work can reduce traffic, keeps “lights-on” in the closed hours. The area where Seaboard goes under the bridge is very important because it’s very visible, “Gateway.” The building here could be heightened and could be a place maker. The north side of Venice Ave could be considered Seaboard as well. The ally in this area does not have two sides because it just opens up to the park. Completing the block and street network in this area could improve the area and bridge the gap between the park/train station and the main Seaboard area. Venice Ave, even across the bypass, could be a “Main Street” and should be the “entrance” to the downtown. A complete streets project on Venice Ave would reclaim the proper Main Street fabric. A new intersection at Warfield on the Bypass would provide more connectivity as well as connectivity North of Ruscelletto Park.

Long Term Draft Plan:

Waterfront

All amenities and streets should find their way to the water eventually

The bus transfer should be moved eventually

Expanding the urban forest

Marina and rookery island, which is where the swing barge bridge would be

Focusing development on waterfront to be taller on the waterfront to take advantage of the views

Green Network

New MLK Park, near the church. This places the church park front

Expanding Ruscelletto Park to both sides of the bypass. This provides more bike/ped connectivity.

Creates a Grove St to Groveland Ave loop

Mobility

Seaboard Ave Cycletrack

Redesign Venice Ave

New block and street networks

New bike/ped priority street through Seaboard

New signalized intersections at Gulf Coast Blvd and Groveland Ave

4. Plan Development – Progress Update

Initial focus area will be the City owned property on the intracoastal. New street could provide great walkability for pedestrians that would be safer to navigate to the water. New industrial (modern) could be introduced. Existing industrial buildings could be wrapped with new buildings that front streets.

Joan asked Josh to point out acquired properties. Josh explains that while there are some possible acquisitions, none of the acquired properties will make or break the plan. Resident asks where the new bus location will be and Josh explains the same thing. It will not make or break the plan.

Roger explains that the County has a deal with the City to have the bus transfer station at the old train station, so moving the bus stop will not happen any time in the future due to that agreement.

Kara asks a rough number of residential units in the plan. Josh said that number won't be calculated until closer to the end of the project. Kara expresses concern about more affordable housing with waterfront increasing the cost of housing. Josh explains that infill development is incredibly hard to build and sell. Kara asks Roger if there's state incentive for owners to turn second floor units into housing. Roger and Josh say they don't believe so but explain density bonuses. Roger also mentions financing available for affordable housing.

The swing barge is described. It's like an "old school" ferry that only provides connectivity on a schedule or on demand.

Josh shows an example rendering of a walkable street preferred for Seaboard Ave and explains that it will be designed with all the standards in mind to allow delivery vehicles, such as an 18-wheeler, but will provide more benefit for pedestrians.

Second focus area will be the northern side of seaboard from the bridge to the proposed marina. Josh covers the proposed additions in this area.

Third focus area is the area north of Venice Ave. Main points are to make the depot campus more approachable and safer. Josh covers the proposed additions in this area. The City's ownership gives them a lot of influence. Josh explains the challenges to closing the Venice Ave bridge to vehicles and to finding a new location for a bridge. Josh also explains the benefits of the existing bridge. Roger mentions the water taxi helping pedestrians find an alternative way to cross the Intracoastal.

Fourth focus area is the intersection of Venice Avenue and the Bypass. Josh covers the proposed additions in this area.

Final focus area is the center of the Seaboard area. Josh covers the proposed additions in this area. Josh discusses the possible zoning change of Seaboard Core vs Seaboard Edge. This could change interpretations to increase assurance for existing businesses.

Josh shows before and after renderings of the entire area. The first 3 steps would be:

- 1: Complete streets
- 2: Working with WCIND on a marina
- 3: Packaging properties together for developer interest

Parking is mid street, hidden between buildings, as well as on-street parking and the parking garage.

5. Questions & Feedback

Kara expresses concern of the “after” renderings and says that they are too shocking and that it makes the buildings look too large. Josh explains that the height can be dialed down but the renderings are a draft. Also, the final renderings will provide more detail. Josh goes into the SketchUp drawings and Kara expresses that these views are much better received than the overview previously given.

6. Next Steps

Josh discusses the final deliverable and what it will include. Renderings, a document, and a spreadsheet with every recommendation and details.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:30 pm.