



Activate Midtown Strategy

The Counselors of Real Estate
Consulting Corps

March 21, 2023



CollaboratorySM



FORT MYERS
— FLORIDA —

CRE[®] THE COUNSELORS
OF REAL ESTATE[®]

The Counselors of Real Estate®

Organization of commercial property professionals known for creative problem solving

- Affiliate of National Association of REALTORS®
- Nonprofit. Founded in 1953
- 1,000 thought leaders
- Membership extended by invitation
- High-level expertise across many specialties
- 50+ Real Estate Disciplines
- Objective real estate advice and counsel
- CRE® credential = Real Estate Problem Solvers

The CRE[®] Consulting Corps

The Counselors' Public Service Initiative

- Members of The Counselors **volunteer** to assist nonprofit or government entities
- 50+ Assignments since Consulting Corps formation in 1997

Real estate strategy and action plans

- Feasible, achievable recommendations
- Cost-Effective: good value
- Objective: nonpartisan, unbiased, no conflict of interest
- Time-Efficient: recommendations provided onsite
- Advisory only: Consulting Corps does not implement the recommendations

CRE Consulting Corps Team

- Cassandra Francis, CRE (Leader)
- Monica Hagewood, CRE
- Brett Pelletier, CRE
- Courtney Pogue, CRE
- Stephen Romine, CRE



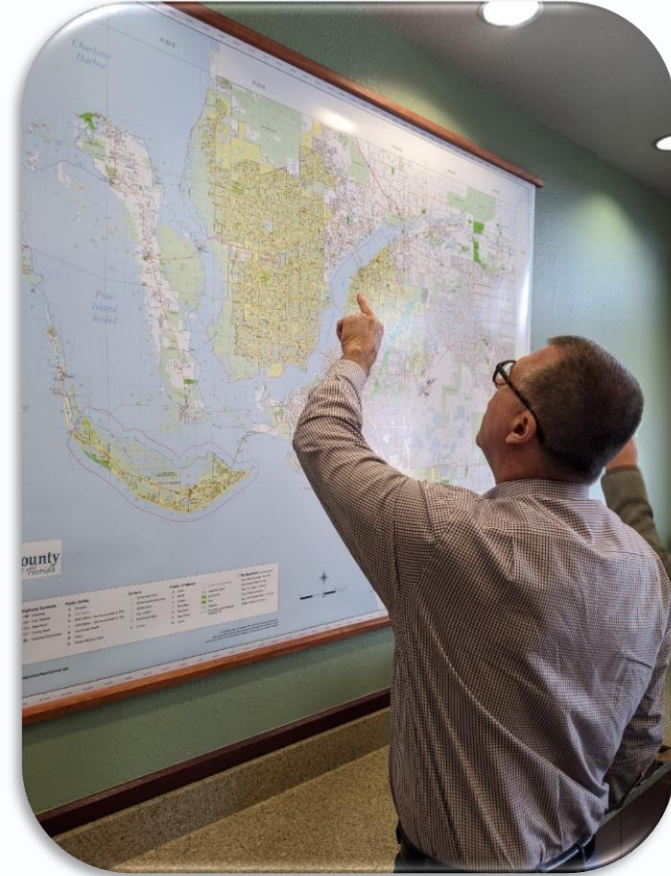
Project Overview: The Team's Process

- Reviewed existing data, plans and background
- Initial Visit by Team Leader – Sept. 18-20
- Entire Team site visit Dec. 11-16
- Interviewed more than 30 stakeholders: elected officials, city staff, local developers, FSW, others
- Preparatory Team meetings via Zoom
- Researched, analyzed, discussed, and developed recommendations



Stakeholder Meetings: 30+ Interviews

- Mayor
- City Councilmembers
- City Staff: Multiple Departments
- Police
- Lee County Economic Development
- Florida Dept of Environmental Protection
- Alliance for the Arts, local Sports Leaders
- Florida SouthWestern State College
- Developers
- Community Redevelopment Agency
- Housing Authority
- Dunbar 21st Century Collaboration
- Business Leaders



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CRE[®] THE COUNSELORS
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A SHARED VISION
or
“WHAT DO WE ALL REALLY WANT?”

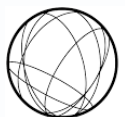
An authentic, vibrant, urban community

A neighborhood where opportunities thrive

Midtown Activation Opportunities

- Shared vision that includes all stakeholder input
- Adaptation of government structure to meet growth pressures and opportunities
 - planning and economic development functions
 - policies and procedures related to public incentives
- Infrastructure investment
 - water and transportation infrastructure
 - connectivity infrastructure including sidewalks, lighting, signage, placemaking
- Leveraging of existing assets
 - waterfront
 - climate
 - business leadership
 - seasonal residents/tourists
- Placemaking and community creation

Midtown Activation Critical Success Factors



Priority Action Steps

- Partner with Lee County and business leaders on regional economic development
- Expand the economic development toolbox with additional incentives, programs, and partners.
- Re-envision the TIF process.
- Identify mechanisms to fund infrastructure
- Develop new policies around a unified economic development strategy

Priority Action Steps

- Invest in banners, streetlights, paver sidewalks and art programs to visually connect Downtown and other adjacent neighborhoods and destinations
- Leverage Stadium, Skatium, and sports in Midtown
 - Update assessment of facilities and market study for sporting activities
 - Commit resources to Stadium to attract sports, concerts, and events for a limited time with a firm deadline and define specific performance measures → then make retention decision
 - Expand Skatium functionality, enhance programming, and build business and institutional sponsorship and support

Priority Action Steps

- Curate the development of the News Press site
 - Plan, market, and pre-develop the site
 - Optimize value by carefully timing development process start
 - Engage a development advisor and prepare and actively distribute both a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and Proposals (RFP) to a national development market
 - Consider attractive and vibrant interim uses for the site



Priority Action Steps

- Assess government buildings in Midtown and Downtown
 - Consider creating a new joint City-County facility near or adjacent to Downtown/Midtown
- Relocate the police headquarters outside of Midtown
 - review alternative sites within the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation (CNI) area
 - request U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) amendment if needed
- Consider relocation of some government services out of the Downtown/Midtown area if they do not align with long-term development aspirations

Government and Institutional Ownership in Downtown and Midtown

Image Source: Fort Myers Integrated Downtown Redevelopment Strategy, City of Fort Myers, Fort Myers CRA, University of South Florida



Priority Action Steps

- Fully engage in post-Hurricane Ian recovery process with federal agencies to maximize resources
- Train and inspire leadership and the public:
 - Economic development, real estate development and other “101-level” workshops
 - Virtual or physical tours to other cities/relevant inspiration projects

Additional Midtown Opportunity Themes

AMBITIONS

- Confidence & Trust Building
- Bold, Long-Term Vision
- Collective Vision & Transparency

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Economic Development System
- Re-envision TIF Process and Culture
- Workforce Development/Jobs Creation/Journey to Work

SHARED VISION

- Preferred Target Markets/Critical Success Elements
- Connections to Adjacent Neighborhoods/Extension of Downtown

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Water Predictability
- Infrastructure Planning/Targeted Public & Private Investment

GOVERNMENT

- Leadership Development
- Government Restructuring
- Need for Early Successes/Revenue & Value Creation
- Land Use & Control/Eminent Domain
- Civic Engagement/Business Improvement District

PHYSICAL PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- Sports as a driver
- Governmental/Institutional Ownership
- Need for Performing Arts & Culture
- Intentional Green Space/Recreation/Public Waterfront
- Innovation Convening Center – Business/Academic
- Academic/Medical Campus or Presence
- Market/Workforce/Student Housing

REGIONAL INFLUENCERS

- Best Practices for Resiliency
- Insurance Predictability

Midtown Activation Leadership Areas to Establish

- Economic Development Joint Regional Committee with Local Focus on Fort Myers (Lee County, Fort Myers Economic Development Department and Broad Business Leadership)
- Government Incentives/CRA-TIF Advisory Committee (incl. independent CRA Board)
- Newly Prioritized Fort Myers Planning Department
- Development Advisor Consultant/Team (must have planning, government incentives, marketing, financial and development advisory services experience)
- Connectivity Committee (transportation, placemaking, neighborhoods, off-site development projects, waterfront, tourist destinations, etc.)

Questions

How to Find a CRE:
cre.org/find-a-cre-search

For More Information:
Visit the CRE website www.cre.org

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THANK YOU

Download the full report: bit.ly/42wuHl1

