



COLLIER
Naplescape '90's

*Collier County's
Streetscape Master Plan*

COLLIER COUNTY, FLORIDA

January 1, 1997

prepared by

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2.0 PROGRAMMING and DESIGN

2.1 PROGRAM RATIONALE

All design work starts with a program of what it wishes to accomplish in both broad and specific terms. In the case of the SSMP, the most important program element is the establishment of a design "theme" which is more broadly referred to as "character". Therefore, the SSMP addresses the issue of Program in the context of identifying and establishing landscape design character for Collier County's urban area roadways.

2.1.1 Goals The following major goals were established in order to provide a system of Landscape Character of major roadways:

- 2.1.2.1 Be responsive to existing conditions and also accommodate future growth;
- 2.1.2.2 Recognize both civic and design issues while at the same time being site specific, memorable, and implementable;
- 2.1.2.3 Minimize problems inherent in streetscape work and maximize opportunities for public enjoyment of its public right of way use;
- 2.1.2.4 Establish the opportunity to create design guidelines which are easily implementable;
- 2.1.2.5 Relate to the community and its standard of life; and,
- 2.1.2.6 Be comprehensive in its use of relevant data (Sec. 1.5).

2.2 ESTABLISHMENT of DESIGN DIRECTION for PUBLIC INPUT

The ultimate goal of the Streetscape Master Plan is to be adopted and implemented by the City of Naples and Collier County governments. In order to achieve this goal, it has been necessary to obtain wide spread community support. Consensus building, as an approach toward establishment of community support was accomplished through an interactive review process. Therefore, the following generalized design concepts were developed as a means of generating discussion and input.

2.2.1 Concept 1: Contextual Relevancy Streets pass through various regions, hence, they do not have a character themselves, but rather, the region does. The street should reflect and interpret the region, not vice-versa.

However, it should be remembered that in some cases the street is expressive of the entire region, and becomes an embodiment of regional character. Pennsylvania Avenue (the Nation's #1 Main Street) in Washington D.C. and the Blue Ridge Parkway through the Great Smokey Mountains, are notable examples. In addition to establishment of regional character, these streets also interpret and reflect their immediate surroundings.

For example, Goodlette Road and Golden Gate Parkway, which have been the subject of an earlier study, have been assigned a "parkway" character which is superimposed over all regions through which these streets pass.



2.2.2 Concept II: Character Zones Since the SSMP network of streets is comprehensive, the entire network should be perceived as being related not only to its particular location, but also perceived as a part of a comprehensive urban area streetscape system.

For this reason, a "zonal" approach to character definition was established. Each street will be assigned a character zone which relates to natural and man made environmental concerns. These zones are defined by a number of criteria, including their regional identity. The establishment of zones will provide for creating streetscape solutions that respond to the immediate area while also establishing design continuity throughout the streetscape system.

2.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF DESIGN CHARACTER

After review of both existing conditions and policies of the Collier County Master Plan, specific streetscape design characteristics emerged. These characteristics can be grouped by their natural and man made features into "zones." In this sense, the "Design Character" of a street create definitions of landscape zones.

2.4 CHARACTER DEFINITION

Proposed landscaping should be inspired by existing, positive site characteristics. The character of a street or place is defined by the following features:

2.4.1 Existing and Proposed Land Uses. (figure 2-0)

Land uses adjacent to streetscape network corridors help to determine the intensity and character of proposed landscaping. In general, more urban land uses can support more formal landscape treatments since architecture tends to be more geometric in character (figure 2-1). It can be argued that one seeks relief from architectural intensity in urban areas by use of a soft, naturalistic landscape. And, a more geometric or structured landscape may seem out of character when placed adjacent to suburban and rural land uses.



figure 2-1 Formal landscape in urban land use areas

2.4.2 Vegetation. Existing native vegetation, adjacent to rights of way, shall be preserved and enhanced to achieve the goals for the Streetscape Master Plan (figure 2-2). This approach reduces the amount of landscaping required to achieve the objectives of the Master Plan which strives to "fit" the landscape into it's setting. Wetland stands of



figure 2-2 Preserve and enhance existing native vegetation



cypress trees, and sandhill vegetation associations dominated by pine and saw palmetto are two primary types of native vegetation. Mature stands of exotic species including Melaleuca, Australian pine and Brazilian pepper are also prevalent. Native plant material is encouraged while the use of exotic plant material is discouraged in the SSMP.

Where possible, the streetscape shall replicate adjacent existing native vegetation within the right of way. The SSMP encourages removal of adjacent exotic vegetation and to discourage its use along roadways, consistent with State and County regulations.

Heavily vegetated edges shall be preserved to create, or maintain a "parkway" character. Much of existing portions of Golden Gate Parkway and Santa Barbara Boulevard have this potential, among others.

Finally, visually significant stands of native vegetation shall be enhanced and preserved to open views from streets. They are a valuable character resource that would be difficult and expensive to replace.

2.4.3 Natural Features / Unique Features. Both natural and unique features including open prairies, wetland bogs and slews, agricultural fields, waterways, and forests all give a strong sense of special character which shall be preserved.

Unique features include cultural elements that are not present in nature. They can be perceived as bad or good. Powerlines, switching stations, land fills, and highly industrialized areas are elements that may otherwise have a negative impact on the landscape. Historic or interesting architecture and man-made waterways can become positive features. Streetscape landscape can assist in buffering or accentuating views of these elements.

2.4.4 Views. Views are critical to establishing the character of a landscape. As mentioned above, views of adjacent features can be enhanced or diminished by the use of proper landscape treatments. Views of landscape elements within the right of way can be identified by analyzing "line of sight" and "view period".

"Line of Sight" determines what, in the motorist's view, is most noticeable, and therefore most important for consideration in landscaping. In general, the motorist's line of sight occurs in an angle from straight ahead to an oblique angle slightly off to one side. By identifying critical sight lines and views, landscaping can be placed in appropriate locations.

As roadways bend, or when a motorist is stopped at a "T" intersection, views become concentrated straight ahead. These locations are especially important to establishment of landscape character.

"View Period" refers to the length of time the traveling motorist has to perceive his/her surroundings. Great levels of landscape detail in the form of small, intricate planting beds are lost to the motorist on high-speed highways. High Speed highways require bold, and dramatic landscape expression to capture attention. At intersections and where travel speeds are slower, landscaping can be more formal and intricate. Therefore, roadway speed becomes important to understanding relevant landscape character.



2.4.5 Topography. The most important aspect of topography in southwest Florida is its flatness. As a result views carry great distances. Therefore, accentuation by landscape can be significant. Any vertical elevation such as a bridge, or highway overpass creates dramatic view opportunities in an otherwise flat landscape.

2.4.6 Minimize problems and maximize opportunities. Most people can agree on what is a good or a bad view; what traffic situations are safe or dangerous; and what unique features need to be buffered (disguised from view), or enhanced. Natural land forms and features create the best opportunities for enhancement, while land fills, weed infested ditches and utility lines create the most commonly occurring problems to be minimized. The newcomer, or casual observer, of the Collier County landscape may interpret this experience as a monoculture with little diversity. However, there is a subtle diversity, in comparison with regions of the country that have a wider temperature range and accentuated topography. This region has vegetation that spans climatic zones between subtropical and tropical. There is a predominate cover of slash pine / palmetto and oaks, punctuated by enclaves of wetlands, both freshwater and saline.

Since wetlands are protected by State, County and Water Management district regulations, they provide opportunities for conservation throughout the region, including within public rights-of-way. Native vegetation stands, be they upland or wetland, represent the best, and least expensive methods of right-of-way enhancement. Preservation where these opportunities occur and relocation of them in adjacent public right's-of-way create a contextually appropriate design solutions for some streetscape network segments. These are opportunities that should be maximized.

Collier County also has it's share of problems to be minimized or mitigated through landscape design. Envisioned as a tropical "paradise", the existing condition and native landscape of Collier County creates great challenges. In conflict with the perceptual notion of "tropics", it is interesting that no habited portion of Collier County lies within this climatic zone. A tropical landscape has been established to create an image of a tropical paradise. While this practice accommodates a marketing objective, there are costs to consider since maintenance of any "imported" landscape is always more costly than that which occurs naturally .

Another common problem to over come throughout the County is a the unsightly network of drainage ditches and culverts, most of which occur within the view of the streetscape network. Several new communities, which have control over their drainage systems, deal with the problem at inception: buried drainage pipes connect various lakes which in turn, connect to out-fall structures.

Public right-of-ways are especially impacted visually since open ditches represent the primary form of storm water run-off conveyance. Open drainage ditches would be acceptable except for the following reasons:

- ✦ They are costly to maintain in a weed-free condition.
- ✦ They are full to over flowing with runoff during the rainy season.
- ✦ They are empty during the dry season.



In all cases, drainage ditches are open to public view within our right-of-way. Mitigation of unpleasing views would be achieved by either screening drain ditches from view or to enhance them as naturalistic aquatic landscapes.

As an example, the "Grey Oaks" community has incorporated the required Airport Road drainage ditch into its' community water amenity (figure 2-3).



figure 2-3

Collier County has many aesthetically pleasing commercial enclaves. The County also has several strip developments that may be benefitted by architectural guidelines. The Streetscape can help improve strip commercial aesthetics by screening views, providing continuity by use of repetitive landscape forms, and thus creating a visual order. In many cases, adequate space is lacking or difficult to use for landscape plantings due to the presence of sidewalks, utilities, and other structures which will require judicious use of landscape materials to achieve the above design objectives.

2.4.7 Remain Responsive to Collier County Comprehensive Plan

In response to State of Florida mandate (Ch 163, FL Statutes) Collier County maintains a comprehensive plan to guide development. This plan identifies several generalized land use categories through which the streetscape network traverses.

These land use categories, while too general to give specific direction to streetscape design, do create a pattern of development suitable for defining character zones. The following use designations represent the major land uses in Collier County which are appropriate for guidance of streetscape development.

2.4.7.1 Urban. These are areas that should contain the greatest residential densities and commercial growth. They are in or close to areas projected to receive support facilities and services.

2.4.7.2 Urban-mixed Use District. This district provides for accommodation of a number of compatible urban land uses including a wide range of residential types with certain commercial and industrial uses.

- Urban Residential Subdistrict - The purpose of this district is to allow the greatest residential densities where few natural constraints occur and maximum concentrations of support infrastructure are expected to occur.
- Urban Residential Fringe Subdistrict - This is a transition zone between the Urban District(s) and Agricultural/Rural District(s). Residential densities of up to 1.5 du/acre are allowed.



- Urban Coastal Fringe - This is a transitional zone between Urban and designated Conservation areas. It generally occurs between U.S. 41 and the Gulf. Residential densities within this District are limited to 4 du/acre.
- Industrial Subdistrict - This allows for the full range of industrial land uses as described in the Collier County Zoning Code for Industrial and Light Industrial zoning districts.
- Commercial Subdistrict - This district occurs in existing Urban Mixed Use districts. Uses include those that already exist or as permitted by zoning.

2.4.7.3 Urban - Commercial District. This district is located within mixed use activity centers which occur at major designated arterial street intersections. A second subdistrict, of limited application in the Streetscape Master Plan, is the PUD Neighborhood Commercial Subdistrict, which is a part of comprehensively planned new communities.

- Activity Center Subdistrict - These are mixed use districts which are anticipated to accommodate most new urban growth. They occur at designated intersections throughout Collier County. While a mix of Urban uses is encouraged, most proposed projects have been Commercial, especially Retail Centers. It is anticipated that these activity centers will help alleviate sprawl or strip commercial development and to create focal points of activity within the County. They represent the best opportunity for urban design expression outside of existing towns and shopping areas.
- Three Activity Centers occur at interchange locations on I-75. These have specific shapes depending on an approved geometry of commercial - residential land use at each interchange. The remainder of the activity centers are all the same size - 160 acres, which are ½ mile on a side with the center of the activity center coinciding with the center of the intersection.

2.4.7.4 Urban - Industrial District. This district permits industrial uses that include light manufacturing, processing, storage and warehousing, distribution centers and other uses as described in the Zoning Ordinance for Industrial & Light Industrial Zoning Classifications.

2.4.7.5 Agricultural/rural Designation. In accordance with the Collier County Growth Management Plan, the Agricultural/Rural Designation are "those areas which are remote from the existing development pattern, lack public facilities and services, are environmentally sensitive, or are in agricultural production." If this zone appears within the context of the Streetscape Network, a xeriscape landscape treatment should be provided since irrigation may be limited. Functional attributes of landscape, such as buffering and view direction may be appropriate and desirable in these zones.

- According to the Comprehensive Plan, Urbanization is not promoted and a limited selection of land uses other than low density residential and agricultural will be permitted. Therefore, if landscape is installed in these areas, it would be protected from change by future growth.

