

Jonathan Kolbe, FRSA

The Wildflower Property

An inclusive alternative

Table of Contents

Table of Figures.....	2
Background.....	3
Location.....	3
Purpose.....	3
Existing Conditions	3
Silver Palm Park.....	3
The Wildflower.....	5
An Exercise in Placemaking	7
Park Design.....	8
Character Imagery	8
Proposed Site Plan	12
Revenue Streams	13
About the Author.....	13

Table of Figures

<i>Figure 1 Panorama of the Palmetto Park Road Bridge</i>	4
<i>Figure 2 Under bridge linkage from Silver Palm Park to The Wildflower</i>	4
<i>Figure 3 Docks, Boat Ramp</i>	5
<i>Figure 4 Panorama of The Wildflower as it is today</i>	5
<i>Figure 5 Current conditions</i>	6
<i>Figure 6 Dock Design Inspiration</i>	8
<i>Figure 7 Public Art</i>	8
<i>Figure 8 Bistro Concept with al fresco Dining</i>	8
<i>Figure 9 Food Truck Concept with al fresco Dining</i>	8
<i>Figure 10 Diner Concept</i>	8
<i>Figure 11 Semi sheltered shade</i>	9
<i>Figure 12 Participatory public art</i>	9
<i>Figure 13 Playground</i>	9
<i>Figure 14 Nautilus type fitness equipment adjacent to playground</i>	9
<i>Figure 15 Labyrinth</i>	10
<i>Figure 16 Waterside shade</i>	10
<i>Figure 17 Dry Deck Fountain</i>	10
<i>Figure 18 Dry Deck Fountain</i>	10
<i>Figure 19 Pathway lighting</i>	10
<i>Figure 20 Iridescent pathway</i>	10
<i>Figure 21 String lights for under the Palmetto Park Road Bridge</i>	11
<i>Figure 22 Example of Public Art / Bicycle Rack</i>	11
<i>Figure 23 Dockside Underwater Lighting</i>	11
<i>Figure 24 Comfortable and Safe Grass</i>	11

Background

Currently the City of Boca Raton is in negotiations with a developer of chain restaurants to locate a middle price-range restaurant with a suburban density development model site on the Downtown parcel. ⁱ The politics of the controversy surrounding this parcel is beyond the scope of the following, with the exception of the author's personal conviction that *an exclusive private use of public property is unacceptable use of the land; especially for a property with the immense intrinsic value possessed by the Wildflower*. The best and most ethical use of the property is one to which the Public has reasonably unfettered access.

The following pages are to illustrate another potential future for the site, a public / private partnership; one which is inclusive of resident's and business' interests, requirements and needs alike.

Location

The Wildflower, is located in Boca Raton and is arguably the best located parcel of land in the Downtown. Bordered on the east by the Intracoastal Waterway, the south by Palmetto Park Road, West by NE 5th Avenue and an adjacent vacant outparcel (currently zoned commercial in the B1 business district) and the north by another adjacent property zoned residential (in a R1B residential zoning district).

Located at 551 East Palmetto Park Road the subject property is comprised of approximately 2.28 acres.

The site and Silver Palm Park (immediately south of Palmetto Park Road and adjoining The Wildflower) are located at the eastern geographical terminus of Downtown at the Intracoastal. The two sites, in conjunction with the Intracoastal, effectively delineate and transition the Downtown / Beach districts of the city.

Silver Palm Park also contains the City's boat ramp. The proximity of the ramp to the inlet makes it quite popular. The park also has benches, restrooms and waterside automobile parking and lures visitors day and night.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this document is to explore the potential for a solution which provides mutual benefits to both sides of the debate: income generation vs. public use.

Existing Conditions

Silver Palm Park

Silver Palm Park is an active water oriented park with the City's boat ramp, restroom facilities and is also a natural linkage to The Wildflower.



Figure 1 Panorama of the Palmetto Park Road Bridge



Figure 2 Under bridge linkage from Silver Palm Park to The Wildflower



Figure 3 Docks, Boat Ramp

The Wildflower

The property now sits vacant as the iconic Wildflower nightclub was razed several years ago.



Figure 4 Panorama of The Wildflower as it is today



Figure 5 Current conditions

An Exercise in Placemaking

The Wildflower site, in conjunction with the adjacent Silver Palm Park site, creates an exceptional opportunity for a significant anchor, or node, Downtown.

The site, plus the existing park is about 5 acres, give or take, in area and presents a unique and irreplaceable opportunity to create a Downtown magnet and eastern anchor prospect for the Public's enjoyment for generations to come.

As noted previously, a park on the north and south sides of Palmetto Park Road at the Intracoastal becomes its own district, is a definitive cue that motorists and pedestrians have reached the extent of Downtown and becomes a strong anchor for the east side of Downtown. Further it creates an urban public gathering space on the Intracoastal which several local cities have but Boca Raton is lacking.

The primary concept behind the proposed Wildflower Park is to create a world class urban oasis to be enjoyed by the Public by day and night by providing:

- A redesigned Silver Palm Park to accommodate additional automobile and trucks with trailers for the ramp and Wildflower.
- Provide a restaurant (for the purposes of this exercise) which will open to the park and provide dining, drinks and refreshments not only to its street side patrons, but park goers plus dockside delivery for meals and catering.
- Architecturally inspired site amenities including shelters, comfortable and ergonomic seating and dockage at the Wildflower.
- No vehicular access to the Wildflower site.
- Homage to Casa Rosa by creating a pool at the base of the existing "sea steps" with lighting to attract fish at night.
- Shade trees inland and palm trees at dock with "sittable" grass (non irritating, toxic fertilizer and pesticide free) throughout.
- Bring a landscape of indigenous wild flowers to keep with the Wildflower motif. Palmetto Park. Road can be screened with giant bamboo which is thick, grows quickly and is aesthetically pleasing.
- A specialty water feature joining the land and the sea.
- A dry deck fountain to view and to cool with an adjoining area for lounges.
- Artistically considered indirect lighting.
- Exhibition niches throughout for local artists and other public art.
- An exterior area for weddings, groups and private parties.
- A mechanism to allow for family friendly entertainers at appropriate times.
- Bicycle racks.

Park Design

Character Imagery

(See corresponding numbers on the Proposed Site Plan)



Figure 6 Dock Design Inspiration



Figure 7 Public Art



Figure 8 Bistro Concept with al fresco Dining



Figure 9 Food Truck Concept with al fresco Dining



Figure 10 Diner Concept





Figure 11 Semi sheltered shade



Figure 12 Participatory public art



Figure 13 Playground



Figure 14 Nautilus type fitness equipment adjacent to playground



Figure 15 Labyrinth



Figure 16 Waterside shade



Figure 17 Dry Deck Fountain



Figure 18 Dry Deck Fountain



Figure 19 Pathway lighting



Figure 20 Iridescent pathway



Figure 21 String lights for under the Palmetto Park Road Bridge



Figure 22 Example of Public Art / Bicycle Rack

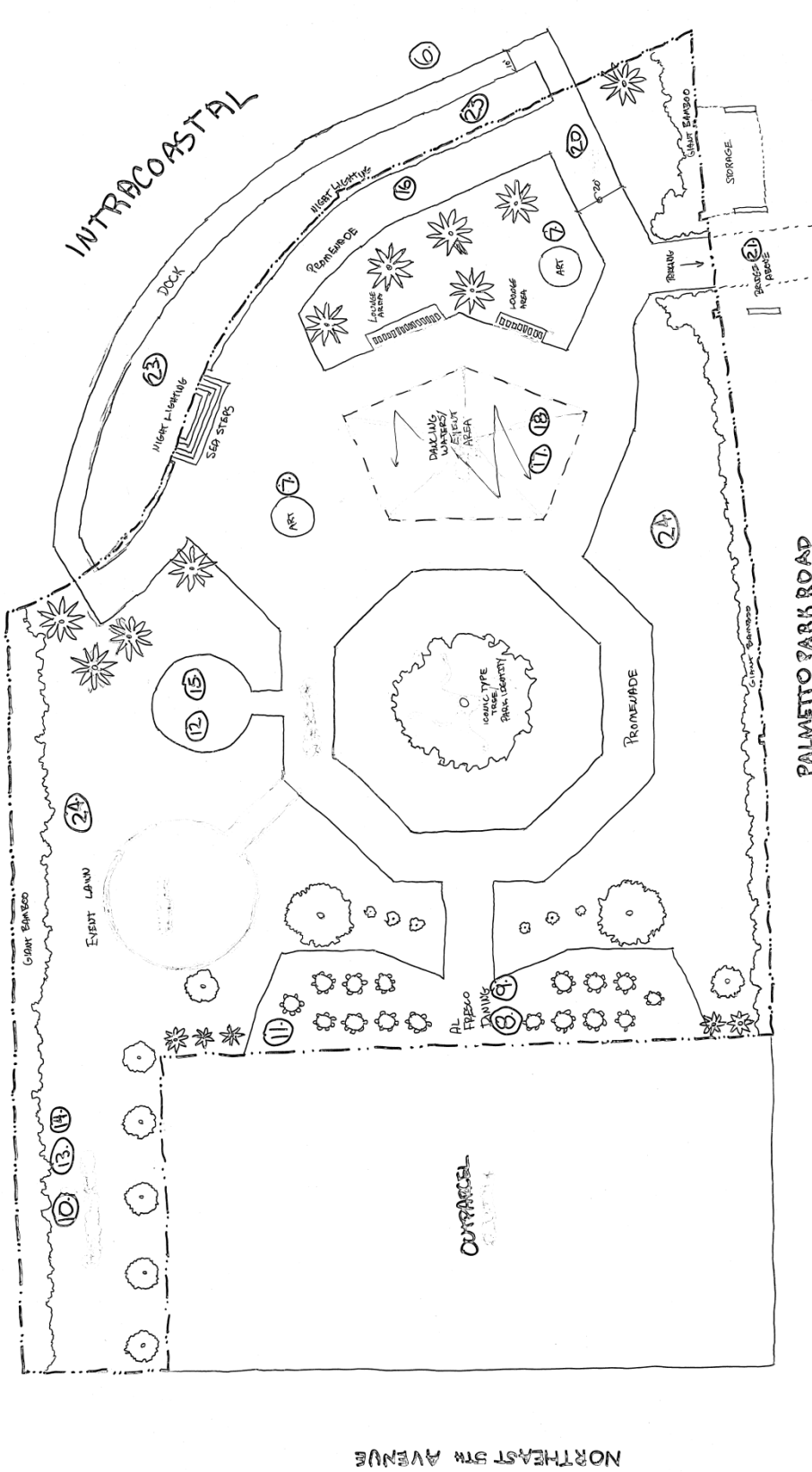


Figure 23 Dockside Underwater Lighting



Figure 24 Comfortable and Safe Grass

Proposed Site Plan



WILDFLOWER PARK
 JONATHAN KOLBE FRSA
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Revenue Streams

Potential strategies for revenue generation:

- Metered parking in an expanded Silver Palm Lot
- Event fees
- Restaurant / Concession agreements
- Expanded boat launch permit schedule and dockage fees

About the Author

Jonathan Kolbe is a thirty year resident of Boca Raton with degrees in urban design and urban planning and a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts.

ⁱ http://www.myboca.us/pages/sites/default/files/Uploaded_PDF/cm/Hillstone%20-%20Boca%20-%20Site%20Plan_0.pdf