



Punta Gorda Resilient *Futures*

Punta Gorda City Council | May 20, 2026

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NATIONAL
ACADEMIES

Sciences
Engineering
Medicine

UF
UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

National Academies of Science, Engineering & Medicine, Gulf Research Program

Gulf Futures Design Studio Program

Gulf Futures supports Gulf communities to better understand, anticipate, and adapt to future challenges and opportunities resulting from a continuously changing coastal environment and climate, shifting energy sources and uses, and impacts on the future health and resilience of communities.

UF is one of 8 universities selected:

- *FL: University of Florida*
- *AL: Auburn University*
- *MS: Mississippi State*
- *LA: Tulane, LSU*
- *TX: Rice, University of Houston, Prairie View A&M University*



Punta Gorda

“In the longer run and for wide-reaching issues, more creative solutions tend to come from imaginative interdisciplinary collaboration.”

– **Robert J. Shiller**, Sterling Professor Emeritus of Economics, Yale University



Punta Gorda

Punta Gorda after Hurricane Milton in October 2024



Punta Gorda Downtown



Punta Gorda Downtown Cat1 Hurricane

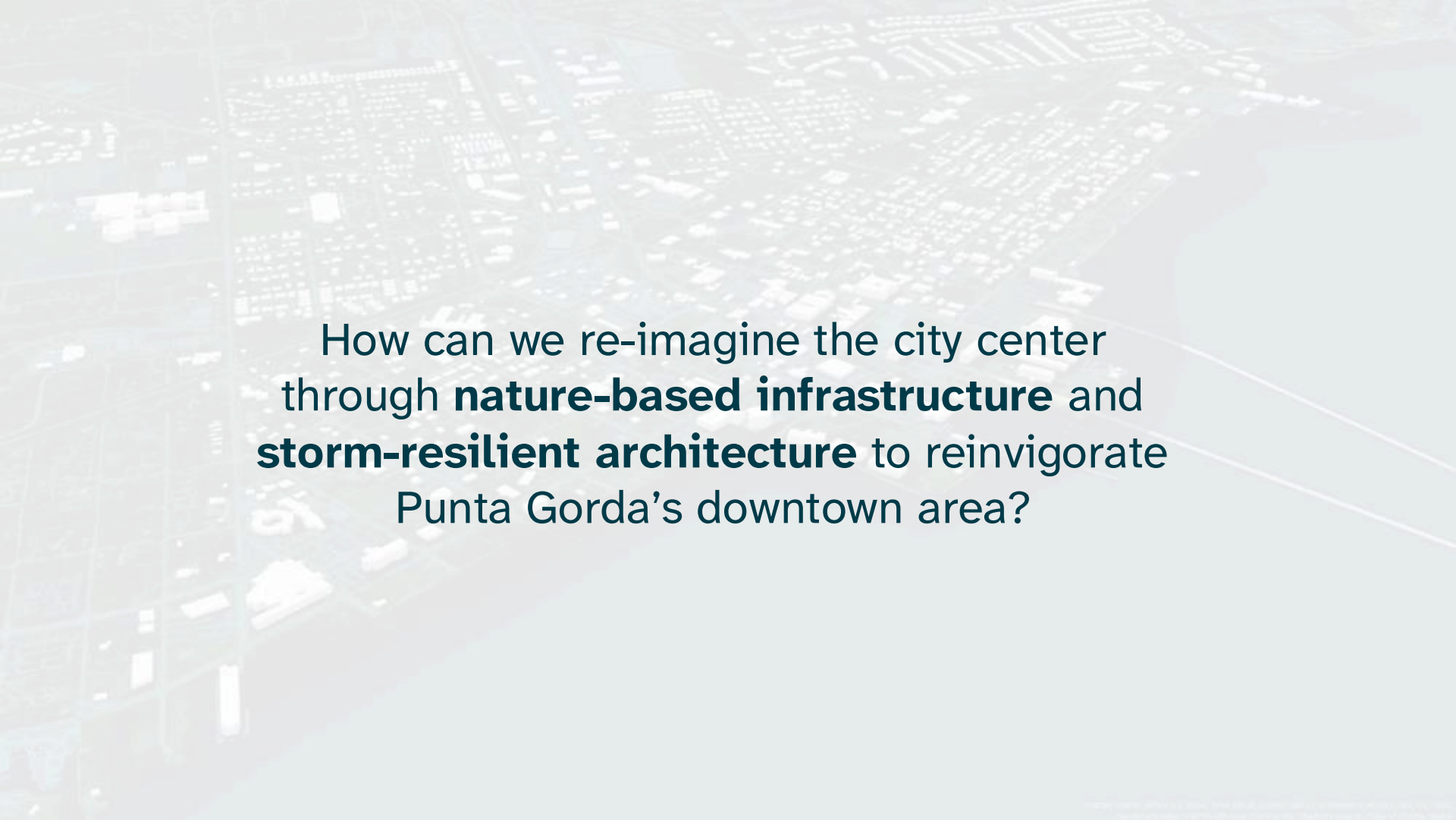


Punta Gorda Downtown FEMA 100yr floodplain

Source: Vector, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, GISPA, GISBC3, N Robinson, NIGAS, NLS, OS, NIMA, GeoInformation and the GIS User Community, Charlotte County, State of Florida, Vector



City Center Site

An aerial photograph of a city grid, likely Punta Gorda, Florida, showing a dense pattern of streets and buildings. A large body of water is visible on the right side of the image. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

How can we re-imagine the city center
through **nature-based infrastructure** and
storm-resilient architecture to reinvigorate
Punta Gorda's downtown area?

City Center Site

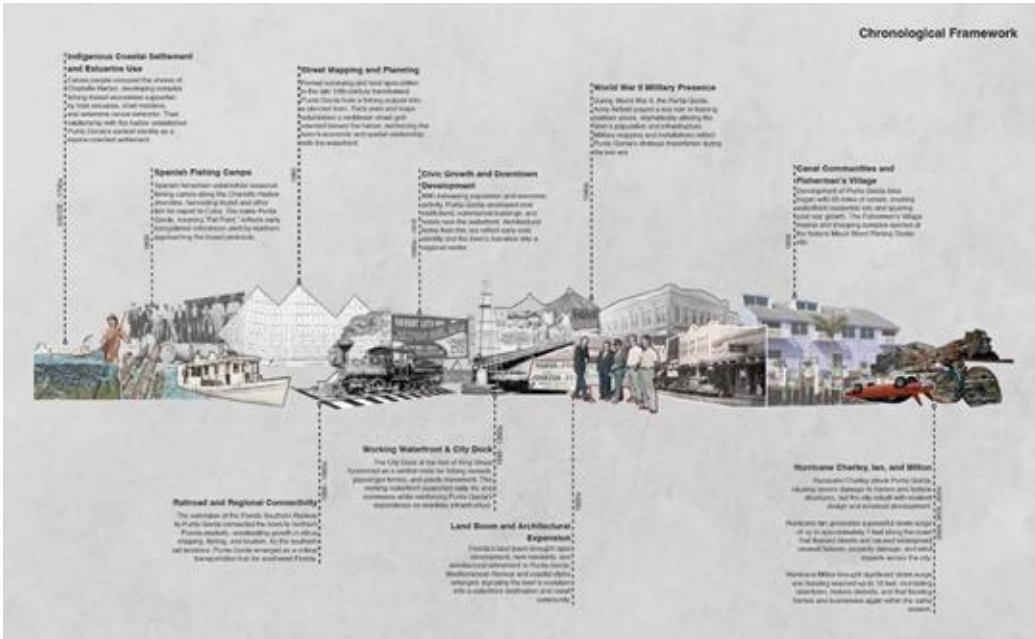


"City Marketplace" Parcel, Downtown PG

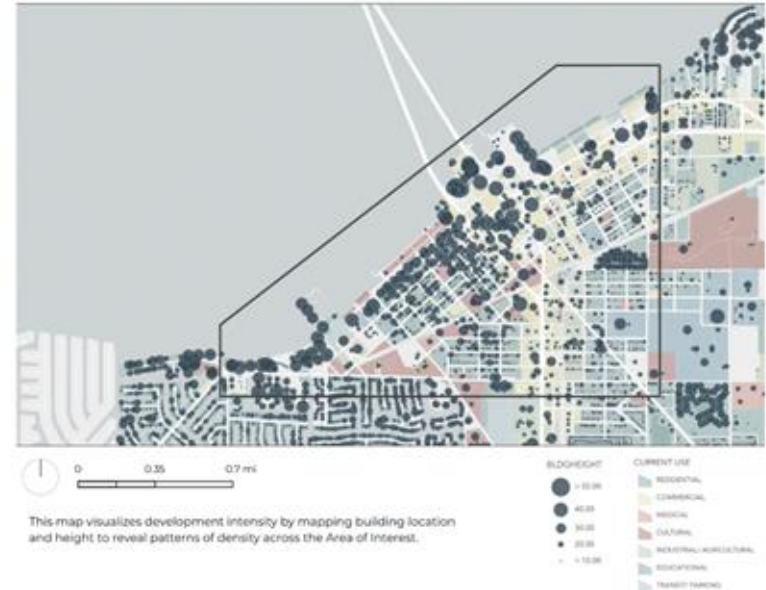


Urban Master Plan Framework for City Marketplace Site

Area of Interest Analysis

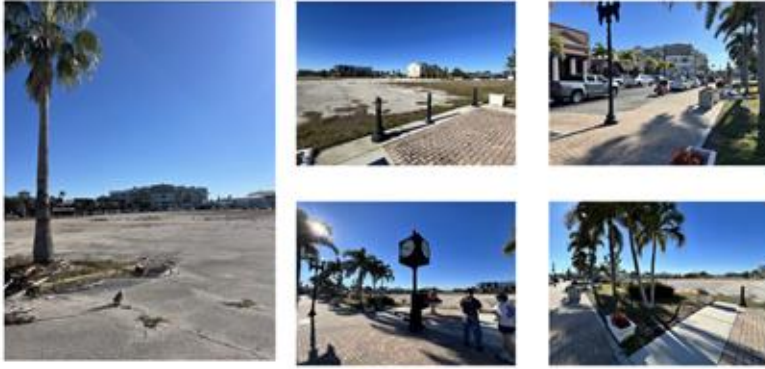


CONTEXTUAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS



Group 1- Chronological Framework, Development Patterns

2-Day Field Trip to Punta Gorda!



Team 2 (Bianca Castillo, Kate Bonnoront)



Site, Scenery, and Surroundings



Team 3 (Sam Kaplan and Noah Kartagener)

Babcock Ranch Preserve



Babcock Ranch Development



Co-Design Charrette



Team Manifestos

Punta Gorda

Coastal Resilience IS Community Resilience

Spencer + Rebecca

Can a single site simultaneously restore ecological function, rebuild social infrastructure, and generate economic value in a landscape defined by uncertainty and change?



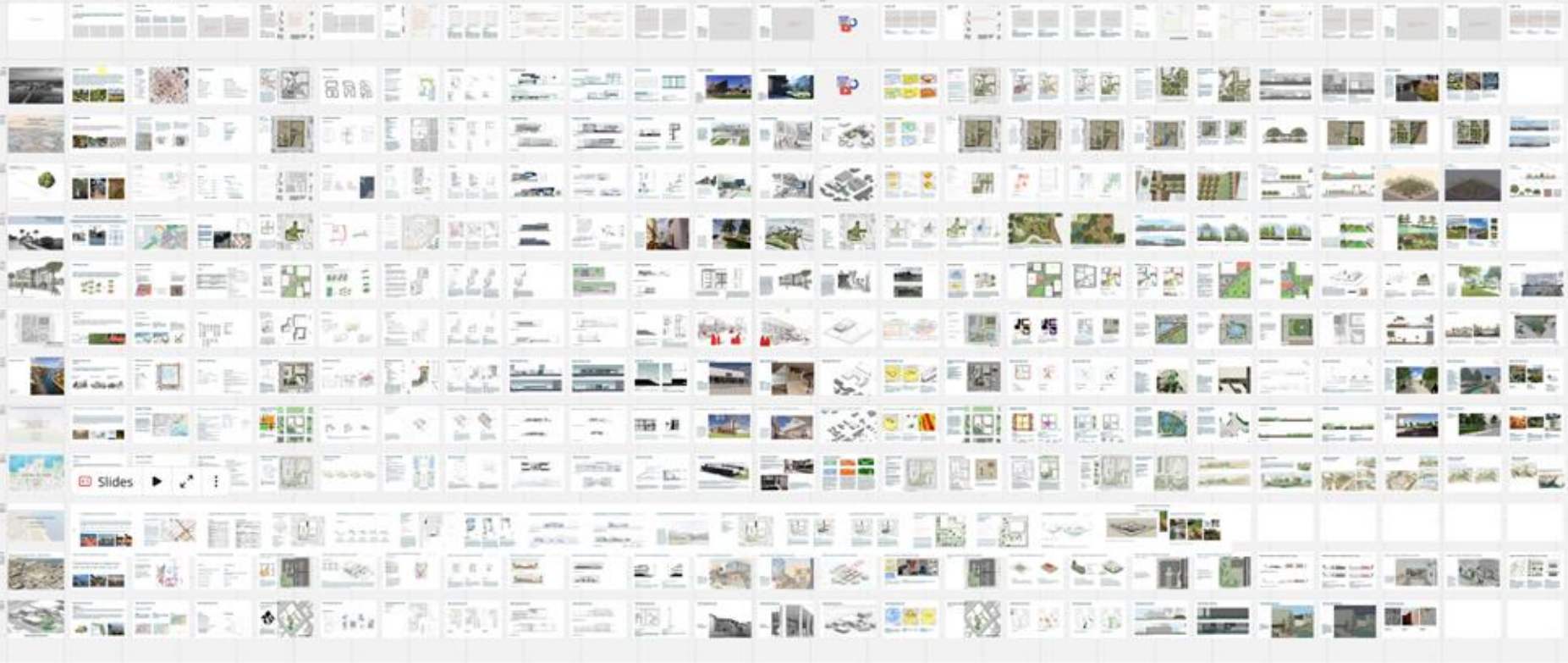
Designing with Water

Our greater vision for the City of Punta Gorda is to **design with water**. Florida's ecological history is centered around water, and we want to not just manage for it, but bring it to the forefront.



Many Design Iterations

Mid-Term Presentation



Final Reviews!

Punta Gorda
Resilient Futures
Gulf South Studio

What new opportunities and better quality of life can be designed to support a resilient and sustainable future for Punta Gorda?

Presented by the Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Studies, the University of Florida, and the University of South Florida.

UF
LAE



Project 1: Welcome the Water

Rosalba Matta, Branden Justin



Project goal is to reimagine the site as a resilient urban landscape where public life, ecological performance, and water management are closely integrated. The project uses landscape as the connective system that organizes movement, supports gathering, and responds to the flood-prone conditions of Punta Gorda. Through this approach, water becomes not only a risk to manage, but also a visible and formative element of place.



Welcome the Water

Rosalba Matta, Branden Justin



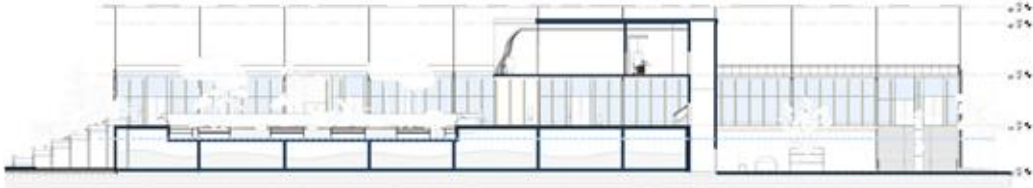
Landscape Section Zoom 1

This section highlights the bioswale as a planted stormwater system integrated with circulation and public space. Grading, planting, and water conveyance work together to slow runoff, support infiltration, and create a visible ecological edge within the site.



Landscape Plan Zoom 1

Welcome the Water

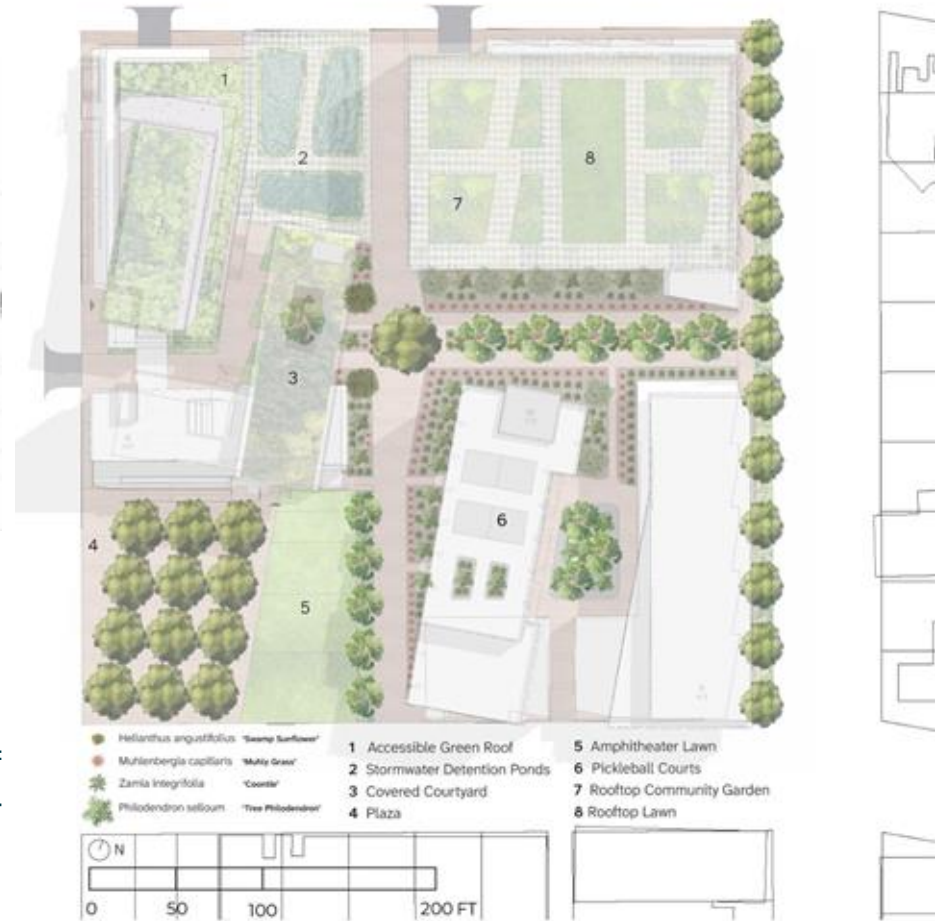


First Floor Scale 1/16"=1'

Project 2: Civic Waters



The City Marketplace site in Punta Gorda has an undeveloped potential to serve as a community hub of activity and culture, located in the heart of the downtown urban context. Our design aims to mesh stormwater management, structural adaptivity, and ecological function to provide the community of Punta Gorda with a comfortable and accessible space for year-round use.



Civic Waters



Landscape Plan Zoom 1



Landscape Section Zoom 1



Project 3: Stitching the Void

Sam Schneider, Anairis Torrado Ruiz



Stitching spaces to enhance community

Our resilient redevelopment proposal focuses on stitching the centralized site back into its surrounding context through enhanced connectivity, active engagement, and integrated water management strategies. By addressing the existing fragmentation within Punta Gorda, the project establishes a new point of connection—transforming the void into a catalyst for future growth that interweaves circulation, landscape, and program.



Masterplan



Stitching the Void

Sam Schneider, Anairis Torrado Ruiz

Landscape Goals

GOAL 1

Stitch city connect vity by intersecting rails, all-terrain, and engaging pathways for biking and walking to different areas of downtown Punta Gorda.

GOAL 2

Create new stormwater management alternatives to store and slowly release and distribute water while keeping the city's low-water table top of mind.

GOAL 3

Proportionally bring engagement back to the empty space of this site.



Sunny Day at Storm Conditions



Key to Plant Markers



Perspective



Project 4: Currents of Community

Rebecca Brown, Spencer Addis

Manifesto

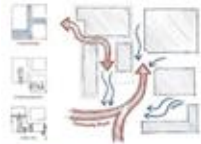
Shaping a coastal community where adapting to change creates stronger connections, healthier ecosystems, and enduring opportunity for all.



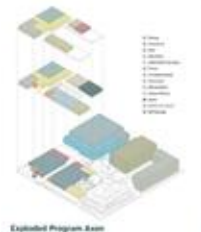
Site Analysis + Synthesis

Going to visit the site in Puerto Sardinia was essential to understanding the site. The most notable thing was the sound around the site. The northwest and southwest side of the site do not have much activity, but the northeast and southeast are very active. Notably, the northeast side has heavy vehicular traffic, while the southwest side has heavy pedestrian traffic, with a very lively vignette. This means that the site will likely get the most attention from people from these sides.

It is also very important to note the storm surge and flood risk of the site to be able to design for mitigation strategies. Understanding the vehicle lanes, and volume of the site is also very important to gather an understanding of the context and the sense of place.



Masterplan Part



Exhibited Program Base



Masterplan

Project Intention

Our mission is to create an adaptable urban district where ecological health, community vitality, and economic prosperity are fundamentally interconnected.

Our vision is a model for coastal development that demonstrates resilience through integrated design, where the systems that protect also activate, where adaptation strategies enhance public life, and where ecological, social, and economic performance are reinforced preferentially.



Perspective Sunny Day w/ Flood Event



Landscape Plan Stormwater



Landscape Plan Eco Center



Landscape Section Stormwater Plaza



Landscape Section Eco Center



Perspective Section



Parti Diagram

Our mission is to create an adaptable urban district where ecological health, community vitality, and economic prosperity are fundamentally interconnected.



Project Information

Our mission is to create an adaptable urban district where ecological health, community vitality, and economic prosperity are fundamentally interconnected.

Perspective



First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



Combination Section

Project 5: Coastal Commons

Spencer Asofsky, Ricky McFarland

This project explores the integration of landscape architecture and architecture in shaping a resilient environment that manages water, supports ecological resilience, and serves the community through integrated programming.



Site Analysis + Synthesis

Situated just inland of the beachfront, the site is highly visible and readily accessible to community members arriving by car, bicycle, or foot. While the site appears relatively flat, it is made grading directly north across the site and north towards the Plaza floor.



Field observations also indicated notable water seepage from the southeast and southwest, influenced by the concentration of surrounding commercial and mixed-use buildings.



Masterplan Form Diagram

Masterplan Form Diagram illustrating the arrangement and sequestration of programs along a 40' edge.



- Green: Community Plaza
- Blue: Hotel
- Orange: Residential
- Purple: Hotel Plinth
- Yellow: Hotel Plinth
- Red: Hotel Plinth
- Black: Hotel Plinth

Asymmetry Making + Use Color-Coded



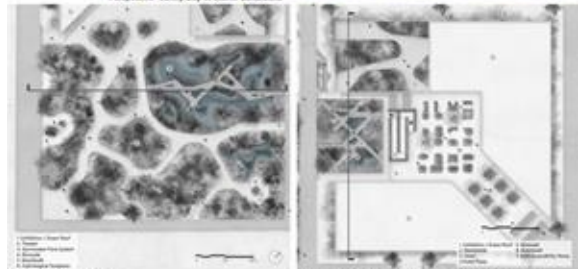
Project Intention

The design is conceived as a modern framework guided by three foundational principles: **Resilient, Reconnect, and Adapt** to the impacts of climate and coastal flooding.

Through regenerative systems and living infrastructure, it captures and stores stormwater, filters it through ecological processes, and releases a gradually over time. Building programming enhances this strategy by sequencing spaces to respond to flood conditions, support long-term resilience, and educate the community about ecological performance.



Perspective - Sunny Day in Storm Conditions



Main Plaza Close-Up Site Plan

Hotel Plaza, Green Roof, and Hotel Plinth Close-Up Site Plan



Plaza Vegetative Manings and Bioswale

Concentrated vegetative manings structure the plaza edge while creating shade habitat, and a half transition between circulation zones and elemental infrastructure. The bioswale and drainage pond are integrated as a visible line of water on part of a bioswale approach to site resilience and environmental performance.

Hotel and Residential Plaza Stormwater Systems

Building how stormwater is managed within the Hotel Plaza through integrated building and site design strategies. It highlights the diversification and movement of water as part of a bioswale approach to site resilience and environmental performance.



Perspective Section



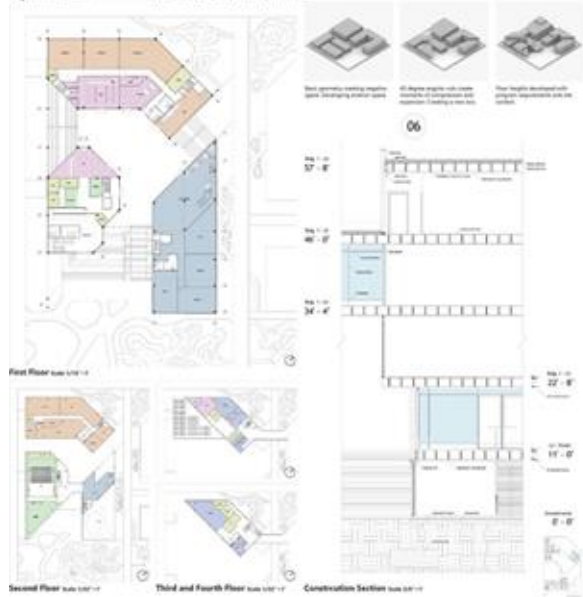
Park Diagram

The diagram illustrates the layout of the park and surrounding areas, including the main plaza, hotel, and residential buildings. It shows the integration of landscape architecture and architecture in shaping a resilient environment.



Perspective - Plaza to Plinth Connection

Project Information



Lessons Learned!

- Resilient **design is not just about storm protection, there are multiple co-benefits** for environment, economy, culture, recreation, etc.
- Resilient buildings can serve **many community purposes** including during "sunny days" as community facilities, arts venues, entertainment centers, and more, while also serving as a **hub for resources** for before and after disasters
- Landscape interventions can achieve **multiple performance metrics** related to biodiversity, pollinator habitat, water quality, stormwater management, etc.
- Opportunities for **new approaches to stormwater management**, however, high water table and seasonal tidal fluctuations also limit the infiltration, creating limits in capacity
- Many opportunities **creative use of public open space** for different community activities, like marketplaces, gathering spaces, outdoor amphitheater, play areas, sculpture gardens, water features, and more!

Lessons Learned!

- We can treat **flood hazard risks as catalysts for community redevelopment**, and create an enhanced public realm that improves both flood resilience and enriches community identity
- Successful projects carefully **integrate landscape and architectural strategies**; intermediate public spaces and other landscape features can create a inviting transition spaces and public amenities
- In commercial areas, **buildings can be designed to safely accommodate water without losing their civic functions**; split-level programming and mezzanines can allow a floodable ground level that still supports vibrant commercial use



University of Florida

Landscape Architecture

- Spencer Asofsky
- Kate Bonnoront
- Sam Kaplan
- Veronica Cancio Amadeo
- Andrea Otalora
- Samantha Schneider
- Matt Sinclair
- Aerille Agnew
- Ana Castro Monteiro Borges
- Rosalba Matta Machado
- Rebecca Brown
- Yiyi Liu
- Rosa Shuman
- Sebastian Martinez-Wittingham

Architecture

- Ricky McFarland
- Bianca Castillo
- Noah Kartagener
- Marc Burrell
- Anairis Torrado Ruiz
- Elwyn Hofmann
- Alejandro Murillo-Sanchez
- Gina Roca Camacho
- Branden Justin
- Spencer Addis
- Chase Stottlemire
- Luke VanDenBergh