



City of Indian Rocks Beach

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For immediate release

February 17, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH DISCUSSES PARKING/ PARKING GARAGE

The City of Indian Rocks Beach City Commission, at their regular meeting on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, will discuss public parking and the pros and cons of a parking garage in the narrows business district.

Interested residents, business owners and the general public are cordially invited to attend the Indian Rocks Beach City Commission Meeting, at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 8th, in the auditorium at 1507 Bay Palm Boulevard Indian Rocks Beach to participate in the discussion.

GREGG MIMS
City Manager
e-mail: gmims@irbcity.com
PH: 727/595-2517

Hi City Manager Gregg Mims,

The businesses of Indian Rocks Beach have established a unified message. We want to communicate our message to the city, and hope the message is received in the spirit in which the topic was originally broached. Although we don't know the answer we hope for serious consideration and discussion that will help solve the parking and traffic issues on our beach. We believe this may be a possible solution and encourage a discovery process to develop a better answer to traffic and parking in IRB. We appreciate the commission and the difficult position they are in to consider a solution that impacts all our community. We only ask for open minds and forward movement in finding answers.

Thank you all,

The Businesses Of The Indian Rocks Beach Business District.

A Message From The Businesses Of The IRB Business District

Our beach is attractive, it's one of the last bastions that still exists with the small-town feel. It's old Florida. We have residents, we have visitors, and unless we put up a gate barring entry, people will continue to come experience what's special about Indian Rocks Beach. Without the ability to have a centralized and strategically placed public parking option we, businesses, and residents alike, will continue to share the same issues, those issues as we see it are:

Traffic- unfortunately as we all know, everything runs north to south on 2 lane Gulf Blvd. Far too often Gulf Blvd is backed up and traffic is not pleasant. Because people are so enamored by IRB, we will continue to see people flock here in droves and traffic will only get worse. As businesses we watch day in and day out, cars come from all direction and they circle, and they circle, and they circle, looking for an opportunity to park their vehicle either at our businesses or trying to find beach parking. This consistently keeps vehicles on the road and stuck in traffic throughout the day.

Street Parking- while parking is so limited, people will park on the street in front of residential housing. With that, they will likely throw trash and create congestion in the residential areas. Although without other options street parking is a necessity, otherwise many families, children, and visitors would be turned away from our beautiful community

Private Parking- as private and business parking exists, often visitors or residents use business parking to visit the beach. Due to the hospitality nature of the businesses that exist here, businesses cannot tow or create parking issues as it would create a negative connection to the business our beach and future visits, so businesses lose the ability to establish parking for guests.

We all care about this community and keeping it what it is, which is why we find ways to support community and civic organizations in the IRB community. We are advocating for a centralized parking structure in the business district of no more than 3 levels (ground, second, third) that will be for public use to pull beach parking out of the residential areas, as well as alleviate parking congestion up and down the beach. While we are not experts on the matter, we encourage the discovery process of what traffic experts would suggest as fixes. Misconceptions that state the proposal of the discovery process is anti-Indian Rocks Beach or inconsiderate of our community is wrong. We don't know the answer, but we know a solution to our problem is needed and we support the investigation into the parking structure as a possible solution.

Here is what the businesses of IRB Business District support:


- We support alternative eco-friendly transportation options such as bikes, electric scooters, shuttles, and other environmentally friendly transportation from the centralized parking structure, while taking cars off the road and out of traffic.
- We support a parking structure designed in a way that provides aesthetics and blends into the surrounding community with murals or other environmentally focused features such as greenery, solar panels, etc. We'd also would advocate for public restrooms at the structure too, as there are no public restrooms available for visitors in this area.
- We support that if there was a proper public parking solution, we would rally around our residents to help find solutions that alleviates the burden of street parking in front of their homes.

We love the IRB community and understand the challenges that come with a consideration like this. We feel the solution will benefit all the community and help ease the pain we have all felt by traffic and parking as listed above. Although we are advocating for THIS solution, we recognize it may not be THE solution. We welcome all dialogue and hope that this discussion opens a deeper conversation on our community, our desire to retain its charm, and better prepare ourselves for what lies ahead. As a business community we appreciate your support in finding answers.

The Businesses of The IRB Business District



**INDIAN ROCKS BEACH CITY COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

MEETING OF: March 8, 2022 **AGENDA ITEM:** 8A
SUBMITTED BY: Brently Gregg Mims, 
City Manager
SUBJECT: **Parking in the IRB Narrows Business District**

Background

For decades the City of Indian Rocks Beach (the "City") has studied and discussed parking in the IRB Business District. (the "district") The City received three studies that provided comments and suggestions on various topics, including enhancements to parking in the district. Since 2013 the City has added thirty-four (34) additional parking spaces and seven (7) motorcycle spaces in the district. Fifteen (15) of the total spaces added were constructed at the site of the City's previous solid waste operation.

In approximately 2014, I asked the Public Works Director to approach the IRB Holiday Inn about the designation of 18 public spaces in connection with the property's development agreement entered into more than twenty years ago. As a result, signage was installed to make these spaces available to the public. In addition to these public efforts, Plumlee Gulf Beach Realty provides sixteen (16) spaces, twenty-four hours a day and a total of twenty-seven (27) after 6:00 PM as paid parking daily. Paid parking lots are a permitted use in the district.

On January 13, 2022, the Honorable Governor Ron DeSantis held a rally at Crabby Bills. I was invited by the Loder family to come to the event and meet the Governor. Before the event, Matt Loder, Jr. told me that they planned to mention to the Governor the ongoing need for additional parking in the district. I individually informed each member of the City Commission of the forthcoming visit and the Crabby's Team's intention to bring up the topic of parking. The discussions were informational in nature and did not involve decisions or commitments by individual Commissioners or the City in general. During these discussions, I made it clear to all involved that if the conversation resulted in the possible funding of a parking enhancement project the only way it would move forward would be by action of the City of IRB City Commission in a public hearing. The Commission is the legislative body for the City and therefore approves all significant capital projects.

The Loder family brought up the topic of parking with the Governor during his visit. The Governor and his staff responded that they would investigate possible State funding for parking related projects, including the construction of a parking garage. After the Governor's visit, representatives of his Staff followed up with communication to Crabby's concerning the request.

On February 7, 2022, a conference call was held with representatives of Crabby Bills, the Governor's Staff, Dean Scharmen of our staff and me. There was a general discussion of funding options and requirements.

On February 15, 2022, I informed the IRB City Commission that the general topic of parking and the discussion of a parking garage in the district would be placed on the March 8, 2022, Agenda as a work session item.

On March 1, 2022, the City's Finance Director, Public Works Director and I had a conference call with representatives of Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity to discuss available grants for infrastructure projects. The result of the phone call was that even though there are State grants funds available, the likelihood of receiving a grant for the entire cost of a parking garage is unlikely and there would be many conditions or mandates attached to the funds received. Therefore, the City Commission can assume that complete funding from these state funding sources is not a possibility.

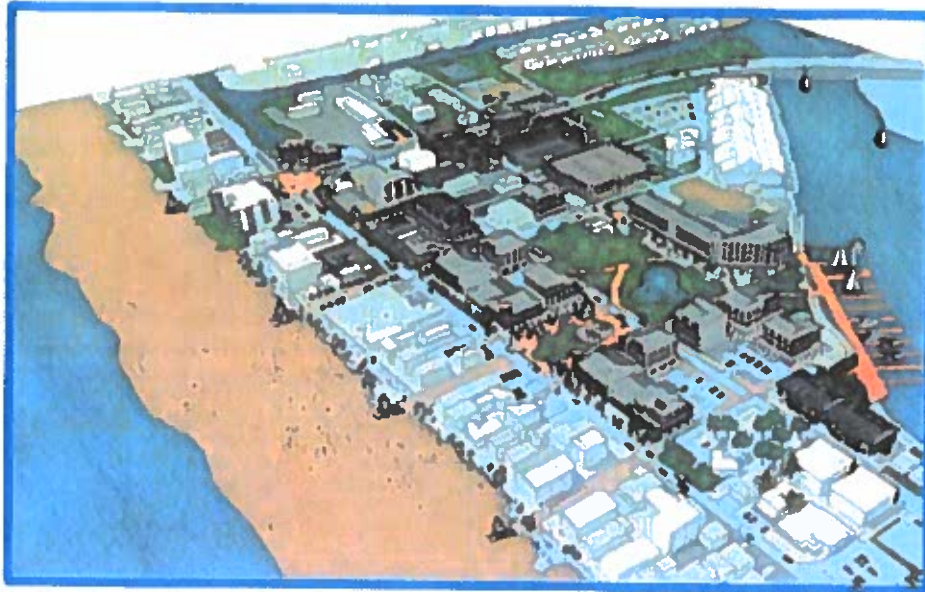
As your City Manager, I am obligated to bring this topic and consideration of a possible funding source to the City Commission in a public setting. Not doing so would have placed the City in a position where someone could have questioned later why we did not do due diligence and report the information in a transparent fashion to the City Commission.

The City Commission has received and will receive, at the March 8th meeting, valuable input from the community concerning parking and development in the district. This is a policy making process and everyone will benefit from an open dialogue.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not address the misinformation spread on the Indian Rocks Beach Life Facebook Page and the IRB Nextdoor App. Many comments were posted to both sites that are not based on facts. For example, one individual posted on multiple occasions that the location of the "parking garage" was the large parking lot on the Westside of the Holiday Inn. This seemed to be based on the sighting of a survey crew that was seen on the property. The activity the person saw was a private survey crew that was hired by the owners and operators of the Holiday Inn for the purposes unrelated to the topic of a parking garage. Another post stated that the proposed structure was a multi-story garage. This post is not true, most especially because no one has been commissioned to design a structure to consider. Many comments were made that this was a done deal. The IRB City Commission is the only body in IRB that can approve a significant public capital project. The discussion at upcoming March 8th meeting is in a work session format and even if the Commission wished to authorize a public capital improvement project it could not be done as a work session item. The Indian Rocks Beach Life Facebook Page and the IRB Neighborhood Application are not reliable sources for City operational information.

Attached to this Memorandum are excerpts from three different studies that were completed with IRB Business District parking related findings.

**INDIAN ROCKS BEACH - SPECIAL AREA PLANS
"A VISION FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT"
CITY OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FLORIDA JUNE 2009**



*FLORIDA CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN + RESEARCH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA*

6.5 EXISTING PARKING INVENTORY

The lack of public parking in the area seems to be a factor in limiting the area's commercial potential. At present, the area has less than twenty-five designated public parking spaces along 1st and 2nd Avenues. In addition to these, there are twenty-five spaces available for general public use on the Holiday Inn property. All total, the area appears to have critical shortage of parking spaces during the weekend evening peak. This shortage in public parking spaces is also directly related to the area's inability to attract private sector investment.

9.1 THE NARROWS

At present, the Narrows appears to be at a transitional stage in its development as a business district. The area has at least one viable business in most of the use categories identified in the Plan. However, this does not represent a threshold or critical mass of business activity needed to define the area as a vibrant neighborhood commercial center. With so few businesses and the inability to foster a greater level of synergy and viable commercial activity, the area is likely to continue to struggle in a loosely defined manner or fall into irreversible decline. While some businesses may prosper in the short-term, others will be challenged in attracting and sustaining a market for their goods or services. As a result, local residents would likely find little reason to go to the area or patronize any of the area's businesses.

However, the area does have the potential to reverse the current trend and evolve into a more cohesive, small scale commercial district. The "Village Center" plan envisioned for the Narrows,

proposes a rational framework for realizing these conditions. Implementing a re-development plan for the Narrows will however require a number of public and private sector initiatives that are both strategic and coordinated in order to achieve the type of neighborhood center conditions desired by the community. The feasibility of any future development projects in the area depends on both entities willingness to work together to realize new opportunities.

In order to move towards implementation, one of the primary issues that should be addressed is that of regulations. Prevising current regulations will be crucial in any redevelopment scenario for the Narrows. While current zoning and site development standards have been in effect for some time, they seem to have had the effect of discouraging investment in the area. In order to ensure the area's orderly growth and help bring about the conditions desired by local residents, the City should consider modifying certain zoning standards. Three restrictions that should be reconsidered are: two habitable floors over parking; relief from on-site parking requirements; and relief from on-site stormwater requirements. These restrictions, combined with the small size of many of the commercial parcels in the Narrows, have made it economically infeasible to invest in the area. Relieving private-sector interests of these requirements, while providing a public-sector response to these basic infrastructure elements could be an effective incentive in fostering redevelopment in the Narrows. This would also ensure the area evolves in a coordinated rather than piecemeal manner.

Coupled with regulatory relief for these two site development requirements, the Plan for the Narrows encourages the City to explore constructing a joint-use central parking facility (with Holiday Inn) and a central storm-water pond (on an expanded Chick-A-Si Park). The proposed joint-use parking structure anticipates the long-term future parking demand for additional public parking in the Narrows and for the Holiday Inn's expanded conference and hospitality business. Over three-hundred new spaces and over 10,000 square feet of leasable space could be realized in a modest-scale structure that would be mutually beneficial to both entities.

These public-sector investments represent the most promising strategy for meeting these essential infrastructure requirements. These types of investments on the part of the City would be an effective tool in leveraging future private sector investment in the area and would communicate a renewed commitment to redeveloping the Narrows on the part of the City. (While it is understood that on-site stormwater retention is a requirement of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFMD) on an in-dividual property basis, the proposed central stormwater facility is intended as a "regional pond" and would be adequate for the level of new development envisioned).



City of Indian Rocks Beach

PARKING REPORT

Summary of Issues, Conditions, Findings & Recommendations

November 2010

Submitted by:



RENAISSANCE PLANNING GROUP



Parking Study

City of Indian Rocks Beach
November 2010

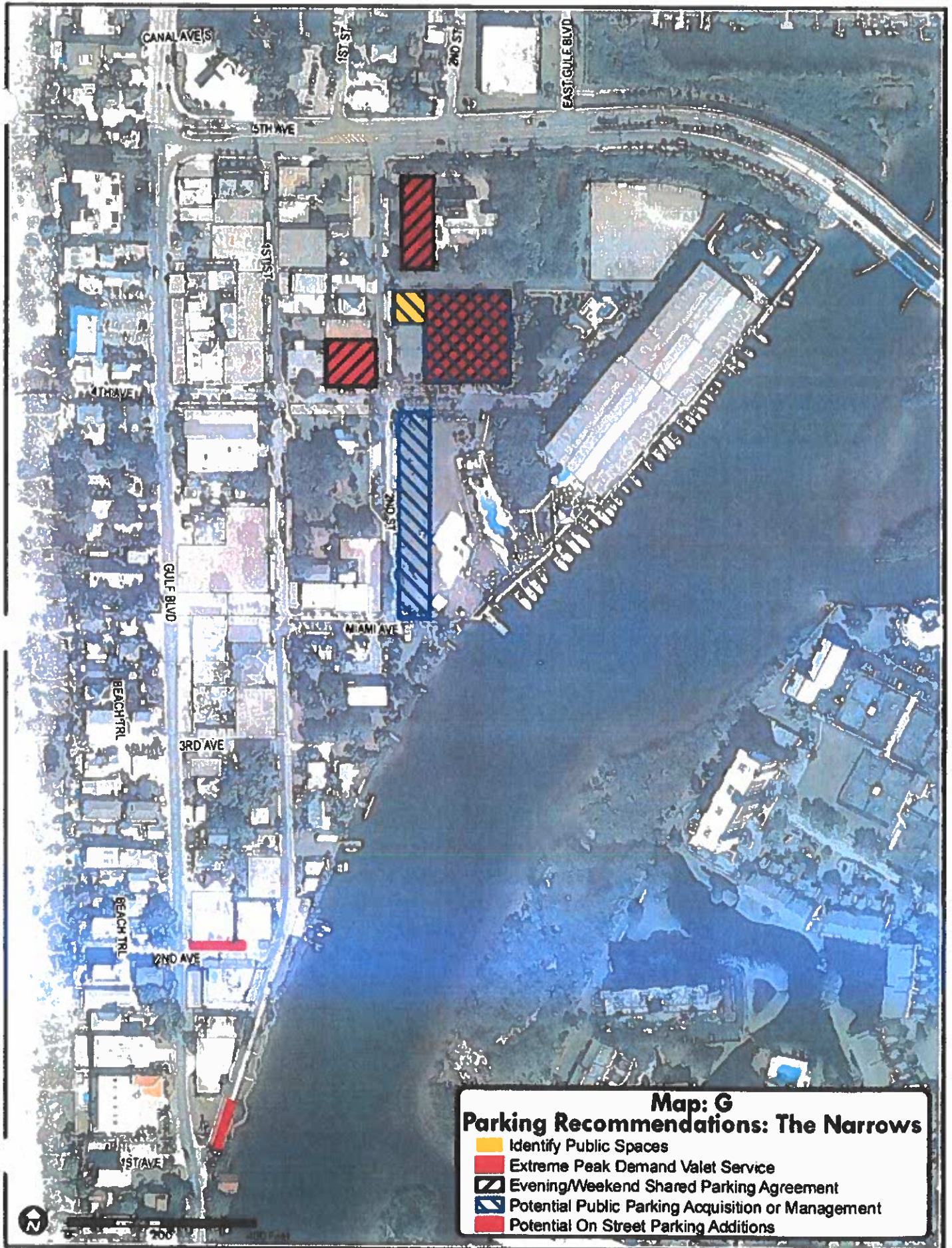
Identify unsigned public parking spaces

The existing surface parking lot located at the northeast corner of 2nd Street and 4th Avenue is mostly private parking for the Holiday Inn. However, there are 18 public parking spaces located in the northwest quadrant of the lot, directly north of the tennis courts. Parking area signage should identify these spaces as public and directional signage along adjacent roadways should be strategically located to assist visitors in finding these spaces.

Potential new public parking structure and surface parking area

There is limited space in The Narrows to sufficiently accommodate future public parking. The existing Holiday Inn surface parking lot located at the northeast corner of 2nd Street and 4th Avenue may be able to accommodate a future public parking structure. Eighteen of the 120 total parking spaces within this area are officially designated as public parking spaces. The City should first explore opportunities to either acquire and manage or reach an agreement with the property owner to convert the remaining spaces into public parking spaces. Parking space fees could potentially be collected by the City and used as a means of compensating the property owner and/or contributed to a fund to support future area-wide parking improvements. A parking structure can eventually replace the surface lot at the appropriate time, and when needed.

Property located along the east side of 2nd Street between 4th Avenue and Miami Avenue may be able to accommodate a future public parking lot. The City should explore opportunities to acquire the property, develop and manage as a surface parking lot. The property is fairly centrally located to the district and is currently vacant open space.



Map: G
Parking Recommendations: The Narrows

- Identify Public Spaces
- Extreme Peak Demand Valet Service
- Evening/Weekend Shared Parking Agreement
- Potential Public Parking Acquisition or Management
- Potential On Street Parking Additions



City of Indian Rocks Beach

Gulf Boulevard Visioning Study

Prepared For:

The City of Indian Rocks Beach
1507 Bay Palm Boulevard,
Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785

Prepared By:

Forward Pinellas
310 Court Street,
Clearwater, FL 33756



**FORWARD
PINELLAS**
Integrating Land Use & Transportation



Transit ridership within the City is most concentrated in the business triangle, as can be seen in **Figure 14**, which shows the average total daily ridership (combined on boardings and off boardings) at each stop from February to June 2019.

To address bicycle and pedestrian safety, the community has identified a commitment to maintaining a 30-mph speed limit on Gulf Boulevard. The community could consider the incorporation of a series of safety strategies, including the use of "bicycle friendly city" signs to raise awareness and enforce the slower speed limit within the community. Additional safety strategies include the incorporation of shared lane markings along the Gulf Boulevard corridor or keeping the paved shoulder and reinforcing signage. The community could also increase the enforcement of existing traffic laws and launch an educational campaign to raise awareness of bicycle and pedestrian safety laws. To promote bicycling within the community, the City could incorporate additional bike parking and incorporate a bike valet service at events. The LDC could also be modified to require bike parking as part of the approval process for new projects. The current LDC allows for bike parking to provide an offset for regular parking. Bike parking facilities that are at least 50 square feet in size, which allows space for five bicycles, can replace one required vehicle parking space for all uses except single-family, two-family, multifamily and bed-and-breakfast establishments.



Parking

The community has identified a concern that there is insufficient parking in commercial areas. Indian Rocks Beach is currently the last beach community in Pinellas County to offer free beach parking. This provides an incentive for visitors to park in Indian Rocks Beach and walk to the beach. However, in the commercial areas, this can be an issue. People often park in business parking and walk to the beach or attempt to park on residential side streets and cause congestion. The creation of a parking deck or shared parking garage was proposed as an option, however some residents were concerned over the costs associated with this type of project, whether it would fit within the community, and were unsure as to whether it would solve the issue. Other options proposed include the incorporation of metered parking and providing a two-hour parking maximum. The public seemed open to these ideas, however some people were concerned that charging for parking might hurt local business revenue, as people might be more hesitant to patronize the businesses if they were forced to pay for parking. One strategy to determine if parking is needed and where it is needed would be for the community to conduct a parking study. This study would provide the information needed for the community to better assess their parking needs to determine the parking inventory and occupancy at key peak times. The parking study can also provide recommendations

**City of Indian Rocks Beach
Gulf Boulevard Visioning Study**

for amendments to the LDC to better address parking requirements. The LDC requires on-site parking for each type of use identified, and the community could consider relaxing these standards to allow for more flexibility. The community currently allows bike parking to offset vehicle parking, but the community could also consider incorporating golf cart parking and e-scooter parking as a contribution to the parking requirements as well. The City could also consider offering incentives, parking in-lieu fees, and parking reductions for developments that include additional bicycle parking or covered trolley/transit stops. The City could also consider providing wayfinding and signage to potential shared parking locations and points of interest. In the future, the community can revisit the parking issue through the use of the strategies in this study to determine the best course of action moving forward.

To create the vision that the community has for a safe, accessible environment, the City should consider strategies to increase connectivity, improve safety, and reduce congestion. It is important for the City to decide which strategies the community is interested in incorporating and use them to foster a better transportation network within the community.

