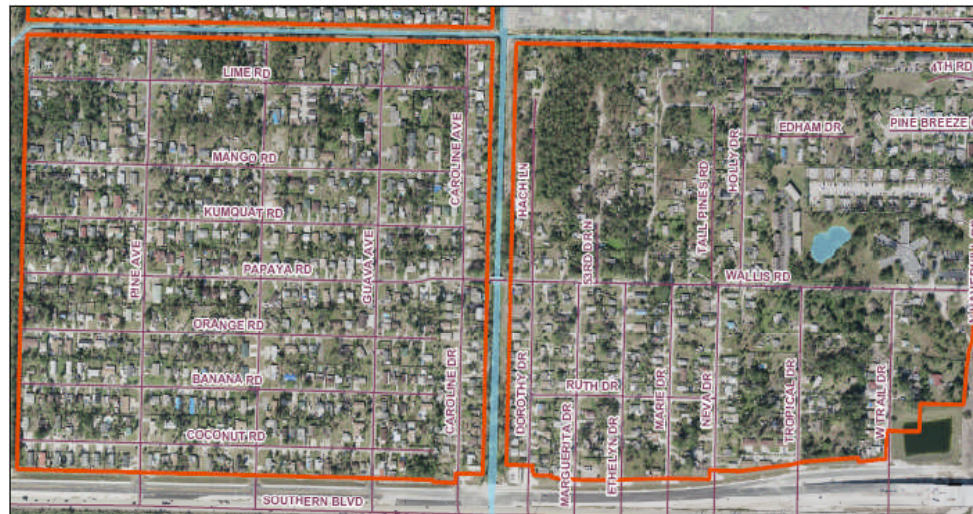


# **ROYAL PALM ESTATES/WALLIS ROAD WEST COMMUNITY PLAN**



**Prepared by:  
Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West Neighborhood  
Resident Steering Planning Committee**

**with the assistance of:  
Palm Beach County Office of Community Revitalization  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**SUMMARY:** This Community Plan is the result of a community-visioning workshop held on October 1, 2005, to develop consensus on needs and strategic actions to revitalize the Royal Palm Estates/ Wallis Road neighborhood. At the workshop, participants gave their opinion on assets, needs and strategic actions to create a more livable and attractive community. The information and consensus ideas collected at the workshop were used as the basis for developing specific recommendations for revitalizing the community.

This Plan provides: an overview of the existing conditions in the area, including its current physical and social characteristics, as well as the various services provided to the neighborhood; an analysis of issues identified through the visioning process; and recommendations to facilitate improvement and revitalization of the area. The recommendations provide the foundation for which future efforts can be focused to achieve the desired vision.

**INPUT ON DRAFT PLAN AND PLAN ADOPTION:** A follow up public meeting was held on February 16, 2006, to present and obtain feedback on the work in progress. The Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West Community Plan was then submitted to the Planning Steering Committee for adoption at a special meeting held on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006. After Committee review, it was unanimously adopted as a guide, and primary reference, for future community improvements.

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:** The following summarizes the recommendations based on the analysis presented in the Plan. A complete list of recommendations can be found in Chapter IV of the Plan. Property owners, property managers, businesses, and residents are expected to dedicate their time, energy, and personal resources, as well as procure outside assistance to make these recommendations a reality.

- The Community should work with the County Engineering Department to address issues regarding neighborhood traffic and streets, such as improvements to traffic circulation, intersection upgrades, and impact of the Southern Boulevard Widening Project, as well as to explore ways to improve accommodations for pedestrians. Specifically, sidewalks should be placed along Wallis Road and other streets.
- Community residents, with the assistance of PBSO Deputies and the Office of Community Revitalization, should develop a plan to provide for the installation of streetlights at appropriate locations throughout the neighborhood.
- Community policing efforts should continue, and be expanded, to re-establish a sense of personal security among residents. Efforts should be focused on: locating a police station within the neighborhood; assigning an additional community policing officer; and increasing community participation in the Crime Watch Group.

- The Community Policing and Code Enforcement Involvement Team should continue to coordinate their efforts to ensure safety and security.
- Code enforcement should continue to be heightened and coordinated with the PBSO and the Crime Watch Group to minimize ongoing code violations. This can be achieved through a variety of resident participation events, educational workshops, distribution of literature and partnerships with the Solid Waste Authority to assist in cleaning up the neighborhood.
- Community residents should seek assistance from the Animal Control and Care Department to ensure compliance with laws and education regarding pets.
- A volunteer group should be organized to assist the elderly and/or those physically limited residents with home improvements and repairs.
- Community residents should identify, with the assistance of the Parks and Recreation Department, suitable sites for the development of a more comprehensive park that could serve all age groups with a variety of facilities, including a community center if feasible. Residents should procure funding assistance for this project.
- Community residents should increase participation in civic activities. Increased involvement in the CCRT monthly meetings, additional promotion of the Crime Watch Group and its efforts, and participation in County grant programs such as the Neighborhood Partnership Grant Program, the Home Beautification Program, and the Resident Education to Action Program are important for increased civic involvement.
- The Crime Watch Group, with the assistance of OCR staff, should begin working towards forming a 501c3 organization. This will allow the group to be eligible for a variety of funding opportunities beyond the County resources.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN: This report is organized into four chapters:**

- Chapter I. Introduction
- Chapter II. Neighborhood Profile/Current Conditions and Inventory
- Chapter III. Community Visioning Workshop Results
- Chapter IV. Recommended Actions/Implementation

## **CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION**

The Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road Community Plan presents the findings of a community's visioning workshop that was held to create a vision and strategy to revitalize the Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road area. At the workshop, input was solicited from area residents and businesses on what they would like the area to look like and what changes or improvements they felt were necessary to achieve the desired revitalization. The information and ideas collected at the workshop were used by the community's core group, with the assistance of staff from the Office of Community Revitalization, as the basis for developing specific recommendations for revitalizing the community.

### **Purpose of the Plan**

The purpose of this Plan is to provide an overview of the existing conditions of the area, an analysis of the issues identified through the community visioning process, and recommendations to facilitate the improvement and revitalization of the area, both on a short and long term basis. The recommendations provide the foundation for which future efforts can be focused to achieve the desired vision.

The Plan is intended to:

- 1. help guide the community's decision-making and serve as a foundation for which future efforts can be focused;*
- 2. inform County agencies, neighborhood residents, and other interested parties about neighborhood assets, activities, issues, strategies, and priorities;*
- 3. improve responsiveness of County agencies, community residents, and other partners to the priorities and opportunities involved in this plan;*
- 4. target available resources based upon clear priorities in order to strengthen the neighborhood;*
- 5. achieve feasible and coordinated project and program planning and implementation within the neighborhood; and*
- 6. promote collaboration between County government, community residents, and other interested parties.*

Residents hope that this plan will guide the continuously changing physical characteristics, demographics and character of the neighborhood.

## **Countywide Community Revitalization Efforts**

In 1997, the Board of County Commissioners established the Countywide Community Revitalization Team (CCRT), an interdepartmental team in charge of coordinating and delivering services to neighborhoods in Palm Beach County in need of special or additional assistance to improve residents' living conditions. The CCRT identifies neighborhoods that face challenges such as lack of basic infrastructure components, poor physical condition of buildings, substantial crime and code enforcement issues and a lack of recreational facilities and social services that are tailored to the community's population. The CCRT is a coordinated approach to addressing these challenges using available County and community resources. In 2003, through the CCRT process, the County identified Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West area as a community with critical needs that would benefit from a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan to guide its improvement.

### **Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West as a Priority Focus Area**

On August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the CCRT presented to the Board of County Commissioners the CCRT "Focus Area and Recommendations Report." One of the recommendations endorsed by the Board was to make the Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West one of the next three CCRT priority focus areas for revitalization efforts. This recommendation was based on data collection and a needs assessment, which demonstrated that the neighborhood experienced deficiencies that detracted from the quality of life and thus was in need of revitalization efforts. In an attempt to help improve the quality of life for residents, the Board directed staff to prepare and submit a community plan for the area. This plan would include issues in need of attention and strategies needed to improve the area.

### **County Efforts Underway in Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West**

Since then, and prior to the development of this Plan, the Board has already committed, through a variety of funding sources, over 1.6 million dollars to help address some pressing issues in the community. The approved projects, which are currently under design, include water, paving and drainage improvements. In addition, a neighborhood park is currently under construction, and a community policing deputy was assigned to the neighborhood to help reestablish a sense of personal security among residents. Additionally, a core group of neighborhood residents formed a crime watch group whose mission is to monitor and report criminal activity, as well as help to coordinate neighborhood improvement activities and initiatives. This core group also created a community newsletter, published quarterly, to keep residents informed about their efforts. Regular community monthly meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at the Azalea Court Personal Care Home. The Office of Community Revitalization has been providing technical and coordination assistance for some projects and continues to work with service agencies and community members on neighborhood improvements.

## **Visioning Planning Process**

In response to the Board's direction, the Palm Beach County Office of Community Revitalization (OCR) facilitated a community visioning workshop for the Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West CCRT area. The workshop was held on October 1, 2005, at the Clayton Hutcheson Agricultural Center. The purpose of this workshop was to bring the community together to identify issues and concerns and, to the best extent possible, garner consensus on recommendations to facilitate the improvement and revitalization of the area.

This Plan is the result of this community planning and visioning workshop, and identifies strategies to revitalize the community building upon the existing neighborhood strengths. This Plan is anticipated to act as a catalyst for community revitalization.

## **Plan Adoption**

The Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West Community Plan was submitted to the Planning Steering Committee for adoption at a special meeting held on March 13, 2006. After Committee review, it was unanimously adopted as a guide, and primary reference, for future community improvements.

The Community Plan was developed to better understand issues that affect the neighborhood and to determine initiatives needed to help enhance the quality of life in the neighborhood. Now that the plan has been successfully completed, the challenge shifts to bringing projects to fruition based upon existing resources, community support, and priority of need relative to other community planning initiatives

The Steering Committee understands that every project outlined in the plan cannot be undertaken at the same time. The secret to success is making steady progress by completing projects in a prioritized manner. The Steering Committee has demonstrated the knowledge, persistence, and collaboration skills necessary to implement this plan. Focus should be first placed on those projects recommended in the plan which are doable, not overly costly, and which can result in a significant difference to the neighborhood's quality of life. After small successes are achieved, and the group further develops its organizational capacity, efforts can be focused on the more involved projects, which will probably require the procurement of funding sources beyond Palm Beach County, whether through grant, in-kind donations, or future fundraisers.

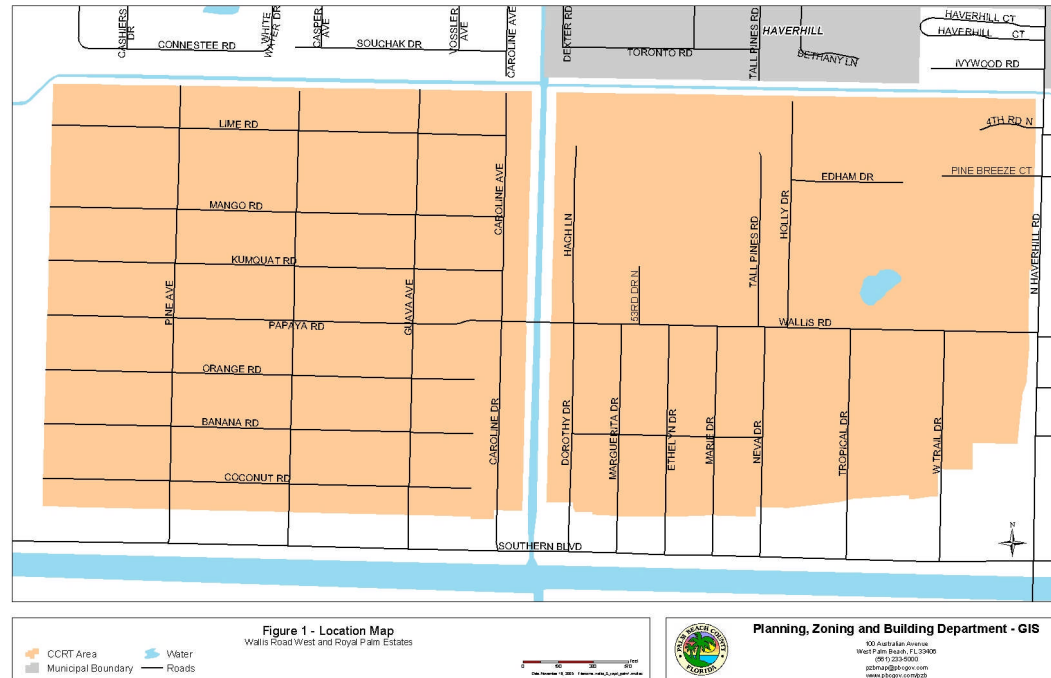
The biggest challenges will be to garner additional community support for the plan, as well as networking and learning how to procure, and leverage, human and financial resources. Another challenge is to expand and formalize the existing community group to oversee and work towards plan implementation and, most importantly, keep residents involved and motivated over the years.

## **CHAPTER II – NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE/CURRENT CONDITIONS AND INVENTORY**

This chapter provides a description of the area, including its geographic location, general characteristics, and development history; and presents both an assessment of the physical condition of the neighborhood and other background information.

### **Geographic Location**

The Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West area is bounded by the L-4 Canal to the north, Southern Boulevard (SR 80) to the south, Haverhill Road to the east, and Lake Worth Drainage District E-3 Canal to the west (see figure 1). The area is located in Commission District 6.



This neighborhood, like many other eastern areas in unincorporated Palm Beach County, experiences a range of problems associated with older neighborhoods. The area is characterized by a lack of basic infrastructure components, such as water; lack of sidewalks and streetlights; unpaved roads; varied condition and value of housing stock; and the negative impacts of a major highway construction project (SR 80 widening). The area also experiences code enforcement problems, a need for recreational facilities and social services that are tailored to the community's population, and an overriding concern with public safety. In spite of these obstacles and challenges to address, the area has great potential to become a vibrant and safe residential area.

The area is conveniently located, in close proximity to the Turnpike and I-95. In addition, the area contains a good mixture of housing types. Lastly, the area has a diverse mix of cultures and ethnic backgrounds, there exist lifelong friendships among neighbors, and there is community interest and willingness to participate in revitalization efforts. The diverse and challenging problems facing the area, together with the area's characteristics, provide the basis for developing strategies for the area's revitalization.

### **History of Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road Area**

The subdivision plat for the Royal Palm Estates was laid out in 1947 and was centered near Guava Avenue. Within a year, three additional subdivision plats were laid out for this area and, for the most part, they represent the boundaries of the present neighborhood.

At the time, there was little residential development this far west, so the neighborhood was isolated and rural in nature. Over the years, with the development of the Military Trail corridor, the neighborhood was no longer isolated, and became surrounded by a more urban environment.

Until the 1980's, the population of this area was predominantly white with few minorities. With an increase in immigration in the 1980's, and the westward movement out of the older neighborhoods, the neighborhood saw a large influx of a Latin population and other races. Today, there exists a cultural mix of residents throughout the community.

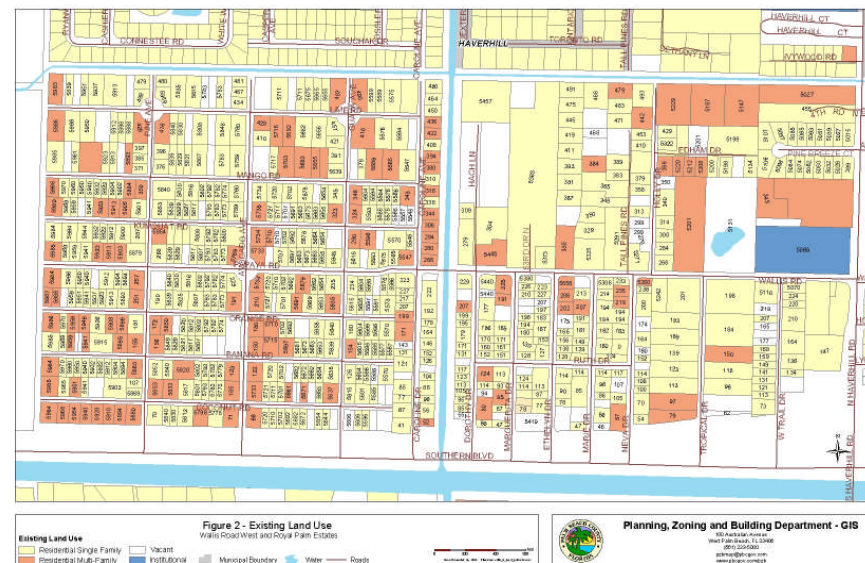
### **Demographic and Socio-Economic Conditions**

According to 2000 Census data, population for this area is 1,263. According to the 2005 Planning Division's Unincorporated Existing Land Use Data Base, there are a total of 1007 housing units in the area, 499 of which are single-family and 508 are multi-family. Out of this total, 41% of the units are owner-occupied, 50% are renter-occupied and 9% are vacant.

Based upon information provided by the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), 70% of the area's households are considered to be of very low, low and moderate income based on HUD guidelines. Please note that the Census data is provided in an aggregated format, covering a larger area. In addition, the poverty rate in this area is 23% compared to the County's rate of 9.9%.

## Existing Land Use

The existing land use in the Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West area is predominately residential (see figure 2). The residential land use is comprised of single-family (52%) and multi-family (48%) dwelling units fairly evenly distributed throughout the area. Larger multi-family facilities are located in northeast section of the Wallis Road West neighborhood.

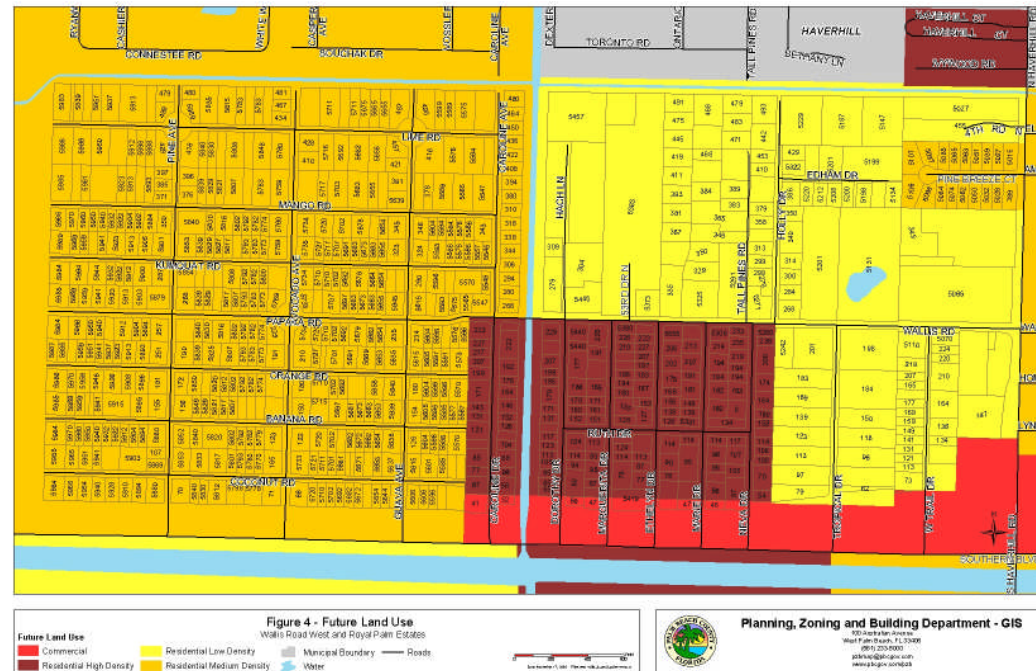


## Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road West



## Future Land Use

The future land use, based on Palm Beach County's Comprehensive Plan, establishes the general type of use as well as the density range for each development for the future (see figure 4). The area west of Caroline Ave., and the properties located along Pine Breeze Ct., west of Haverhill, has a Medium Residential Density (MR5) future land use designation, which allows for a maximum of 4 units per acre unless it is developed as a Planned Unit Development. The area west of Haverhill, north of Wallis Road, has a Low Residential Density MR-2 designation, which allows for a maximum of 2 units per acre. The area south of Wallis and East of Holly Drive, and properties abutting Southern Boulevard, have a General Commercial designation. Most of the commercial establishments, which were once prevalent along this area, have been mostly taken for drainage and right-of-way for the Southern Boulevard widening project.

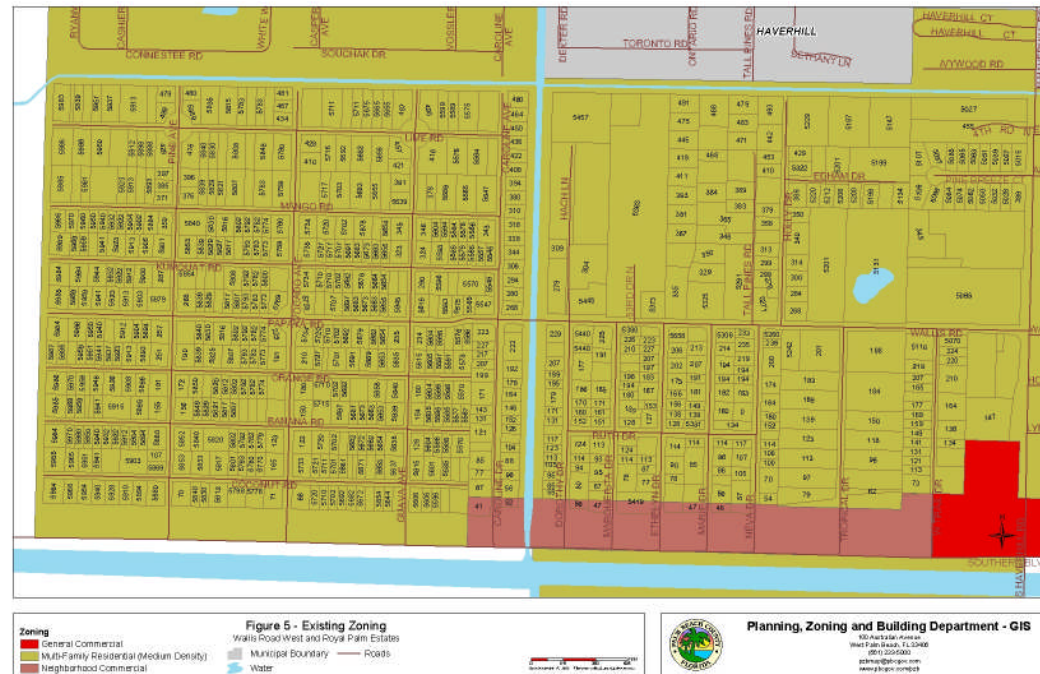




The south end of the neighborhood borders the recently widened SR 80. Photo is facing east. Many of the commercial establishments located here have been taken for right-of-way and drainage.

## Zoning

Zoning specifies the type of use allowable for each property and establishes development regulations associated with each use (see figure 5). Zoning regulations determine the setback, frontage and parking requirements for a given property. It is a legal requirement to have consistent zoning and future land use because it permits compatible development. The majority of the area has been zoned *Multi-Family Residential* density residential, which allows both multi-family and single-family. The remaining properties along Southern Boulevard are designated as *Neighborhood Commercial* (CN) with some areas designated as *General Commercial* (CG). These properties are no longer available as they have been set aside for right-of-way and drainage for the highway project.



## Housing Characteristics

According to a windshield survey completed in 2003 by the Housing and Community Development (HCD) Department staff (*Study to Identify HCD Planning Areas for the Community Development Block Program, 2003*), the condition of housing structures in this area is as follows: Out of 1158 housing structures surveyed, approximately 49.6% were categorized as sound, 42.2% exhibited minor deterioration, 4.95% exhibited major deterioration, and 0.6% was dilapidated. This information was for the HCD's Southern Boulevard Target Area, which includes this and the Wallis Road East area.



Single-Family homes in the Royal Palm Estates Neighborhood



Multi-Family dwelling units in the neighborhood.

## Potable Water and Sewer

Potable water mains were installed on Caroline Drive, Dorothy Drive and Tropical Avenue in 2003 at a cost of \$168,800. Property owners contributed \$20.00 per abutting foot through a County special assessment. Construction of water mains on the remaining streets, south of Wallis Road, began in August. The streets include: Marguerita Drive, Ethelyn Drive, Marie Drive, Neva Drive and West Trail Drive.

The area is currently on septic tanks for wastewater disposal.

## Paving and Drainage

Dorothy Drive was improved through the County's MSTU Program several years ago. The rest of the roads in this area are courtesy maintained shell rock roads and in need of improvement.

The paving and drainage improvement project for Marguerita Drive, Ethelyn Drive, Marie Drive, Neva Drive and West Trail Drive is currently under design, and will be completed as soon as funding becomes available. The total estimated cost of this project is 1.6 million dollars.

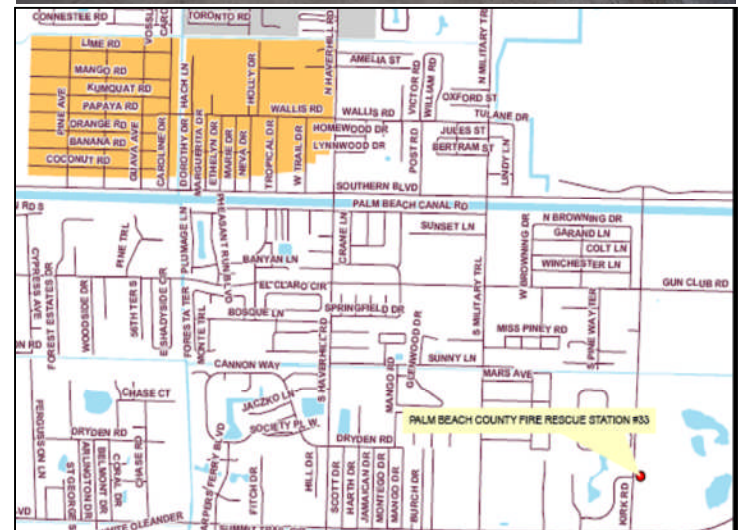
Streets with unpaved and poor drainage characteristics are a concern and improvements are programmed.



## Fire Rescue

Station 33 serves this community from 3.1 miles away according to information provided by the Palm Beach County Fire Rescue Department. Although Station 34 is closer at 2.5 miles, Station 33 is assigned to the area because response time is faster. Adequate hydrants exist west of Dorothy Drive and Hach Lane. East of this area, fire hydrants are inadequate.

The Palm Beach County Fire Rescue Department has offered smoke detectors to residents by going door-to-door. Additional canvassing is needed.



Location of Station 33.

## Parks and Recreation

The neighborhood has long needed a park to serve the recreational needs of residents. To address this issue, the BCC, in 2005, agreed to purchase a .24-acre parcel at the northwest corner of Caroline Drive and Southern Boulevard to develop a neighborhood park. The estimated cost of this project is \$300,000. The park is currently under construction and should be completed in mid-2006.

After this park is completed, and based on the existing population count for the area, approximately 1.75 acres of neighborhood parkland is still necessary to provide adequate recreation to support the population (.65 acres per 1000 residents).



Future location of neighborhood park along Caroline Drive

## Code Enforcement/Solid Waste

According to the area's code inspector, this area can be described as somewhat blighted, as there are extensive code violations throughout the community. Extensive litter, illegal dumping, vacant lots, tires, and auto parts are an ongoing concern. The area is comprised of many owner-occupied, older single-family wood frame structures, many of which exhibit substantial decay and deterioration. The area is also home to a sizeable rental population. Education on proper placement of garbage, trash and vegetation could relieve a lot of these problems.



Litter and unsightly scrap metal detract from the appearance of the neighborhood.

## Law Enforcement

The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office has a community policing officer assigned to this area. The area experiences a high volume of residential and vehicle burglaries, illegal narcotic dealings, and some juvenile delinquency are common criminal issues. Speeding vehicles and the lack of adequate street lighting and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood are also a great concern.

## **CHAPTER III. COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP RESULTS**

This chapter provides a summary of the results of the Visioning Workshop that was held to solicit input from residents on what they felt are the needed improvements to revitalize their community. This section is divided into two parts: Part A outlines the community visioning process; Part B presents a summary of the results.

### **A. COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS**

As part of the planning process for revitalizing the Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road area, the Palm Beach County's Office of Community Revitalization and Planning Division staff hosted a community visioning and planning workshop for area residents and other community stakeholders. The workshop, held on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005, attracted over 35 participants. Notices and materials were provided in English, Spanish and Creole.

The workshop gave participants the opportunity to formulate ideas and a vision of a revitalized area. Members of the OCR staff facilitated this workshop and were able to interact with participants as well as learn about their concerns and ideas.

### **B. SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP RESULTS**

During the morning session of the workshop, participants were divided into breakout groups and asked to share their thoughts regarding: 1) current strengths of the community that should be preserved and maintained; and 2) community concerns or problems that need to be addressed, as well as ideas and/or recommendations that could aid in addressing the problems identified. The following is a summary of the results.

#### **1. Community Strengths**

Workshop participants felt that the following strengths and assets currently exist and should be preserved and built upon:

- The neighborhood with its trees and larger yards possesses a rural atmosphere. These characteristics set it apart from many other neighborhoods in the County.
- Housing is affordable in the neighborhood compared to other areas of the County. Housing affordability, combined with a family-friendly atmosphere, makes Royal Palm Estates/Wallis Road a wonderful place to reside in. Additionally, there is no HOA in the neighborhood, which adds to the affordability.

- The community is conveniently located in close proximity to SR80 – Southern Boulevard, I-95 and the Florida Turnpike.
- The area is a multi-cultural community, and there exist lifelong friendships and good neighbors. There is a community interest and willingness to participate in revitalization efforts. Many residents have lived in the neighborhood for years. This creates a certain degree of stability in the neighborhood, which is conducive to good relationships between neighbors, as they have known each other for several years.
- The response time for fire rescue is good. Although, the addition of fire hydrants in the community would enhance fire fighting and response.



A primary asset of the neighborhood is its rural ambience characterized by many trees, not often found in other neighborhoods throughout the County

- The community has formed a crime watch group to look out for the safety of its residents. A community policing officer has also been assigned to the neighborhood to enhance crime deterrence. The crime watch group and the Community Policing Program are seen as great assets to the community.

## 2. Community Concerns and Recommendations

During this session, participants were asked to provide input on community concerns and /or issues that need to be addressed to achieve the desired revitalization of the area. Participants were also asked to provide ideas and/or recommendations that could aid in addressing the problems identified. Following is a summary of the results of this portion of the workshop.

### a. Streets and Traffic

Workshop Findings: Participants expressed a concern with the need to install streetlights throughout the community to increase visibility and curtail criminal activities. Participants also expressed a concern with speeding as well as current vehicular safety and circulation issues at the Wallis/Haverhill intersection. In addition, concern was expressed regarding the lack of sidewalks primarily along Wallis Road, which is the main thoroughfare within the neighborhood. Sidewalks would make it safer for the pedestrians and the whole community. Participants also expressed concern with the need of ongoing road maintenance and completion of paving and drainage improvements.

Workshop participants discussed the impacts of the Southern Boulevard Widening Project. Many streets have been blocked along the south boundary of the neighborhood due to this highway expansion project, causing circulation issues within the community. Traffic noise was another stated concern related to the widening project.



Wallis Road is the primary thoroughfare into and out of the neighborhood. Residents desire to see sidewalks constructed along this and other streets to enhance pedestrian safety.



The intersection of Wallis Road and Haverhill Road, a primary concern of area residents, is currently being upgraded.

### Community Recommendations:

1. Residents should partner and work with the County to seek funding assistance for, and move forward with the installation of streetlights in appropriate locations throughout the neighborhood. Input should be sought from the entire community, either through the community meetings or mailings, on the desired light locations.
2. Sidewalks should be provided along Wallis Road, and possibly other streets as needed, to provide a safe environment for pedestrians.
3. A turning lane should be installed at the Wallis Road/Haverhill Road intersection to improve traffic and pedestrian safety and mobility.
4. Planned paving and drainage improvements must be completed.
5. Stop sign road markers at key intersections should be painted on the road surface.
6. Residents should continue to work towards identifying the benefits, impacts and the feasibility of installing a **pedestrian only** bridge across the L-4 Canal at Caroline Ave.
7. A noise barrier wall should be erected along Southern Boulevard.
8. Traffic calming devices, such as a roundabout/traffic circle, should be installed at the intersection of Papaya and Avocado Road.



Poor drainage in the community is common on unpaved streets.



The end of Caroline Street at the L-4 Canal. Some residents recommended the installation of a pedestrian bridge at this location.



A typical street blockage in the community due to the SR 80 Widening Project, which presents access problems.

## **b. Public Safety/Crime Deterrence**

Workshop Findings: While workshop participants cited a somewhat safe environment in which to live as a primary community strength, criminal activities and residential safety are still problems that need to be addressed. Much of the crime revolves around drug use and dealing and thefts.

While the neighborhood has established a crime watch group that oversees efforts to curtail criminal activity, and a community policing officer has been assigned to the neighborhood, participants strongly feel that more enforcement may be needed, and this could be accomplished by assigning a second community policing officer.

Residents also cited ATV's and go-karts in the neighborhood as a nuisance. Not only are they illegal, but they also create noise and pose a safety risk to residents and themselves, as they typically drive recklessly.

Community recommendations:

1. Police presence should be increased by requesting the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO) the assignment of one more community policing officer.
2. Residents should work with the Sheriff's Office to see if a PBSO Sheriff's substation could be established in the neighborhood to house assigned community policing officers.
3. The Royal Palm Estates Crime Watch Group should work towards increasing community participation to help to enhance the ability of the group to deter crime and initiate community enhancement efforts.
4. Efforts should be focused on enforcing the proper operation of ATV's and go-karts throughout the neighborhood.

## **c. Code Enforcement/Housing Conditions**

Workshop Findings: Workshop participants expressed the need to address prevalent code enforcement problems throughout the neighborhood, primarily those related to: abandoned and unkempt properties, yards and lots; trash and debris; abandoned cars; and illegal commercial activities. Concern was also expressed regarding rental properties, mostly owned by absentee landlords, which negatively impact the overall appearance of the neighborhood. Lack of or poor communication with landlords is an ongoing community concern.

Another concern relates to properties owned by senior citizens who are sometimes unable to keep up with needed repairs on their properties or landscaping maintenance due to physical limitations. Assistance needs to be provided to them with their properties.

**Community Recommendations:**

1. A Code Enforcement officer should be assigned specifically to this neighborhood to address ongoing code violations.
2. Blighted vacant parcels should be identified and addresses forwarded to Code Enforcement to ensure proper follow up and code compliance.
3. A proactive code enforcement approach should continue to be used by the Code Enforcement Department to address ongoing code violations in the community. In addition, property owners should be requested to attend education classes when fines are not paid. Furthermore, both property owners and tenants should be requested to attend specific education classes to learn about proper property upkeep and landscaping.
4. Education should be provided to the community on garbage presentation and cleanup. Residents should be encouraged to get informational flyers on code enforcement regulations and hazardous waste/building materials from the Community Policing Office or by contacting the Solid Waste Authority.
5. Landlords should be more closely monitored to ensure that they are held responsible for improvements needed on their property as well as make sure they are renting to responsible tenants.
6. A list of older and/or physically limited residents, who are unable to adequately perform tasks around their house and need some assistance, should be created. In addition, volunteers should be recruited to assist those residents with needed improvement and ongoing property maintenance.

#### **d. Airport Impact/Noise**

Workshop Findings: Concerns over noise from the low-flying aircrafts was cited as an issue. The neighborhood lies within a mile of the runway at Palm Beach International Airport (PBIA). While residents accepted that this noise is part of living in the area, their concern focused on the arrival and departure times in the morning. Some residents felt that planes were flying overhead too early in the morning – before 6:00 A.M. They aim to seek clarification on the rules governing flight schedules.



Low-flying aircrafts are common in the area, given the neighborhood's close proximity to the Palm Beach International Airport

#### **Community Recommendations:**

1. Residents should report incidents of small aircrafts flying over the neighborhood at early morning hours to ensure FAA guidelines compliance.
2. Residents should keep open and frequent communication with the Noise Abatement and Technical Services Division of the Palm Beach County Department of Airports.

#### e. Animal Control

Workshop Findings: Workshop participants identified animal control as a primary concern. Of primary concern reported was the spilled garbage due to animals getting into the garbage cans, which many times are not properly sealed and stored for pick-up. This garbage is then dragged through the streets by the loose animals. Additionally, loose animals such as dogs and cats pose a safety problem for residents, and there is even an opportunity for health risks, as some animals may not be properly vaccinated.



Loose animals sometimes pose a safety and garbage problem in the community.

#### Community Recommendations:

1. Codes regarding animals should be rigorously enforced and education should be provided to residents (dogs on leashes, illegal fowl, etc.). In addition, residents should be educated on the rules regarding their pets.
2. Garbage should be placed in plastic bags, and placed in cans outside the night before pick-up so it can be collected by the end of the next day.

## **f. Parks and Recreation**

Workshop Findings: Workshop participants discussed the need for recreation opportunities in the neighborhood. Haverhill Park is the nearest recreational facility, but requires a long walk or people must drive to get there. Fortunately, the County is developing a neighborhood park on a parcel located at the south end of Caroline Drive. Additional neighborhood parks and recreational opportunities will be still needed for all ages to address the needs of the community's population.

Community Recommendations:

1. Residents should continue to work with the County's Park and Recreation Department to ensure that the development of the neighborhood park is maintained on schedule and that the community continues to participate and provide input on its design.
2. Additional larger parcels (vacant or abandoned sites) should be identified for acquisition to develop a multi-purpose park. This park could include a swimming pool. The park should be well lit and include a heavy police presence.
3. The community should participate and be involved in the design phase. This will increase community pride, help build community commitment and bond community relations, and encourage the maintenance of facilities.

## **g. Civic Involvement**

Workshop Findings: Some participants felt that to be more effective in carrying out community revitalization initiatives, increased resident participation in civic activities is necessary. There is no local community board devoted to improving the community, but there is a Crime Watch Group, primarily structured around crime watch activities and works to provide an open line of communication between the community and the Sheriff's Office. The group meets once a month to review and discuss a variety of concerns within the community

There are a few potential leaders engaged in community activities but, as a group, they are not wholly reflective of the diversity in the area. There is indeed a great need for leadership skill development: working collaboratively, innovative problem solving, etc. Citizens have started to cultivate a sense of unity, but there is a need to increase community participation.

### Community Recommendations:

1. The core community group should investigate ways to increase the visibility of the Crime Watch Group.
2. The core community group should seek technical assistance from the Office of Community Revitalization to obtain 501© 3 status.

### 3. Community Consensus Exercise

To conclude the community visioning process, and to prioritize the information that was gathered throughout the workshop, a consensus exercise was performed. All of the items that were identified during the breakout sessions were consolidated, and a new summary list was prepared of all of the identified problems or issues to be addressed and the proposed solutions and/or recommendations to revitalize the area.

Each participant was then asked to identify the top priority items for further discussion. This included information on both community concerns and proposed solutions.

Each participant was given five (5) green dot stickers to vote for what they felt were the most critical items to be addressed. Each participant was also given five (5) green dots and asked to vote on the ideas and recommendations presented by the different groups to determine a consensus of major priority items. Finally, participants were given three (3) red dots to vote against items they disagreed with or felt were not in the best interest of the neighborhood. The process was undertaken to ensure that the final plan recommendations address items that have community support. Following are the results of this exercise:

#### Streets and Traffic

- Install streetlights – **16 votes**
- Install sidewalks – **16 votes**
- Install a sound barrier along Southern Boulevard – **11 votes**
- Construct pedestrian only bridge at L-4 Canal (Caroline Avenue) – **6 votes**
- Paint stop sign lines/lettering on roads – **3 votes**
- Install turn lanes on Wallis Road – **3 votes**
- Improve Papaya/Wallis Road intersection – **3 votes**

### **Public Safety/Crime Deterrence**

- Deter burglaries – 11 votes
- Assign additional community policing officer – **6 votes**
- Enhance efforts to deter ATV's and go-karts – **5 votes**
- Continue to enhance community policing – **3 votes**

### **Code Enforcement/Housing Conditions**

- Enhance code enforcement – **10 votes**
- Enhance homeowners' efforts towards property maintenance – **7 votes**
- Monitor landlords and rental properties – **5 votes**
- Investigate Illegal Commercial Activities – **5 votes**

### **Airport Noise/Impacts**

- Enforce FAA noise regulations – **10 votes**

### **Animal Control**

- Enforce animal control laws regarding loose animals – **6 votes**
- Clean up spilled garbage – **4 votes**

### **Parks and Recreation**

- Provide for more recreational opportunities in the neighborhood, including passive recreation, open space, pool and a community center – **5 votes**

### **Civic Involvement**

- Increase participation in the Community Crime Watch Group – **3 votes**

### **Items that Received the Highest Number of Opposition Votes**

- Install speed humps on Wallis Road – **9 votes**
- Establish commercial opportunities – **8 votes**
- Provide public sewer infrastructure – **7 votes.**

The following Chapter provides specific recommendations developed by the community's core group to address the issues identified by residents through the visioning process.

## **CHAPTER IV. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/IMPLEMENTATION**

### **A. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

This section of the plan provides actions recommended in order to achieve the desired revitalization of the area. The specific recommendations that follow, organized by related topics, address consensus items and other issues discussed during the community visioning process.

- **Streets/Traffic**
- **Street Lighting**
- **Public Safety and Crime Deterrence**
- **Code Enforcement, Housing and Animal Control**
- **Airport Impact**
- **Parks and Recreation**
- **Community Involvement and Civic Activities**

#### **Streets**

- Community residents should seek assistance from the Engineering Department and community policing officers assigned to the area to evaluate the current traffic situation based upon the concerns identified during the visioning workshop. Focus should be placed on analyzing current traffic circulation, intersection configuration, and the impacts of the Southern Boulevard project, as well as exploring ways to improve the traffic situation and enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Sidewalks should be provided along Wallis Road and other neighborhood roads.
- Community residents should work with the Engineering Department and the Department of Transportation to determine the feasibility of installing a sound wall along Southern Boulevard.
- Community residents should determine if the construction of a **pedestrian only bridge** across the L-4 Canal at Caroline Avenue has consensus within the community and support from residents of the Lake Belvedere Estates. At this time, there is no consensus on this item, so no further actions should be undertaken until such consensus is reached.

- Community residents, with the assistance of community policing deputies and the County Road and Bridge Division, should identify critical intersections which are in need of stop warnings, stop bars, and crosswalks painted on Wallis and other streets as the become paved and improved.

### **Street Lighting**

- Community residents, with the assistance of area deputies and Office of Community Revitalization staff, should develop a plan to provide for the installation of needed streetlights throughout the community. Input should be sought from the entire community, either through community meetings or mailings, on the desired locations for lights.
- Community residents should submit an application to the Office of Community Revitalization to seek funding assistance for the installation and maintenance of up to 20 lights through the Neighborhood Street Lighting Program. Other potential funding sources available for installation and maintenance of streetlights should be identified and procured.

### **Public Safety and Crime Deterrence**

- Community policing efforts should continue and be expanded to work toward reestablishing a sense of personal security among residents. Efforts should focus on:
  - locating a permanent police station in close proximity to known crime spots to help curtail criminal activity;
  - assigning an additional policing officer to provide appropriate coverage;
  - continuing to work toward the elimination of all the drug houses. Houses and rental units where suspected drug activity is taking place should be identified and monitored, and legal action should be pursued against landlords whose homes are being used by drug dealers.
  - continuing to assist the *Crime Watch Group* to involve the broader community in crime prevention activities to achieve long term stabilization; and
  - establishing a Citizen Observer Patrol program.
- Community residents should identify the repeated ATV and go-kart violations and locations, and inform PBSO so warnings and citations can be given to violators.

- The Community Policing and the Code Enforcement Community Involvement Team should continue to coordinate their efforts to achieve positive and sustainable results in making this area a safe, secure, and better place to live.

### **Code Enforcement, Housing and Animal Control**

- The assigned code enforcement officer should continue a targeted approach in the neighborhood to ensure code compliance, coordinating its efforts with the Sheriff's Department, the Solid Waste Authority, and Animal Care and Control. Efforts should be concentrated on closing abandoned structures used for drug use and dealing, and checking home businesses operating without permits. Efforts should also be focused on: addressing unkempt properties, yards and lots; trash and debris; loose animals; inoperable and/or unlicensed vehicles; and illegal parking of commercial vehicles.
- The area's code enforcement officer should attend the monthly crime watch group meetings to be kept informed about specific community problems in need of attention.
- The crime watch group and area residents should identify and list the addresses of all overgrown and unkempt vacant properties and submit this information to the code enforcement officer for special attention.
- Residents should be encouraged to notify the Code Enforcement Division regarding code violations.
- Community residents should work in partnership with the Solid Waste Authority, the Sheriff's Department and the Code Enforcement Division to undertake neighborhood cleanups, provide collection education to residents, and work toward an overall blight abatement effort.
- The crime watch group, with the assistance of the Code Enforcement Division, should distribute informational packets to all property owners and tenants that contain literature on maintenance responsibilities, rules and regulations, and County programs and services. This information can be posted on public areas in the neighborhood as well.
- Educational workshops should be offered to both property owners and tenants to provide information on their rights and responsibilities regarding maintenance activities to ensure that all exterior and interior building conditions comply with County Codes and permits. The workshops should also provide information on what constitutes a violation and explain the code enforcement process. In addition, the workshops should provide information on ways they can contribute to the quality of their homes/units and the neighborhood, proper maintenance techniques and available County programs and services.

- As part of its ongoing education efforts, the Solid Waste Authority should send mailers to every home detailing the level of service and method of preparation necessary for garbage collection, vegetation pick up and recycling.
- Community residents should seek assistance from Animal Care and Control to ensure compliance with laws through enforcement and education to the community.
- A volunteer group should be organized to assist the elderly and/or physically limited residents with home improvements and repairs.
- Community residents should work with the Housing and Community Development Department, the Solid Waste Authority, the Christmas in April Organization, the Homeless Coalition, and other appropriate agencies, to undertake housing rehabilitation projects to repair deteriorated homes throughout the community and bring them into compliance with current codes.

### **Airport Impact**

- Community residents should seek assistance from the Noise Abatement and Technical Services Division to coordinate a public information meeting to educate the residents on the rules and regulations that pertain to the Airport.

### **Parks and Recreation**

- Community residents, with the assistance of the Parks and Recreation Department and community policing deputies, should identify vacant or abandoned sites suitable for recreational use and possible acquisition by the County.
- Community residents should identify, with the assistance of the Parks and Recreation Department, the appropriate actions that need to be undertaken to acquire proposed park sites and develop the desired park facilities.
- Community residents should work with OCR and the County Office of Real Estate Management to determine the feasibility of acquiring property for, and to develop a community center.
- Community residents should identify, and procure, funding sources at the local, state and federal level for site acquisition, development of a neighborhood park and a community center, as well as ongoing maintenance of facilities.

## **Community Involvement/Civic Activities**

- The crime watch group should continue to attend monthly CCRT meetings to be kept abreast of projects and other issues affecting the neighborhood.
- In efforts to increase participation and membership in the Crime Watch Group, a flyer should be sent out on a quarterly basis (with the newsletter) that focuses on membership recruitment, and describes the specific functions of the Group. The Group should consider promoting, through its flyers, newsletters, etc, the other activities the group is involved in. at they are more than just crime watch activities, and cite where the group needs additional members to carry out their varied activities.
- Community residents should seek funding through OCR's neighborhood Partnership Grant Program to obtain funding for improvement projects.
- Select residents should attend the OCR-sponsored Resident Education to Action Program (REAP). This educational program offers information on a variety of facets of neighborhood revitalization such as leadership, fund-raising, neighborhood planning, etc. The course is free of charge.
- The crime watch group, with the assistance of OCR staff, should begin working towards forming a 501c3 organization. This will allow the group to be eligible for, and apply to a variety of funding programs to be able to implement desired community improvements.

## **B. IMPLEMENTATION**

The success of the Royal Palm Estates/ Wallis Road Community Plan depends upon strong commitment from Royal Palm Estates/ Wallis Road property owners, residents, and businesses to implement the ideas contained in the Plan and to contribute to long-term, positive changes in the neighborhood. The Plan provides a framework for revitalizing the neighborhood, and describes the commitment of community members necessary for successful implementation of this Plan. The Plan builds upon the progress of current County efforts in the neighborhood, including concentrated police and code enforcement efforts and the community outreach activities of Parks and Recreation, the Solid Waste Authority and OCR staff.

The County can continue to contribute to the revitalization effort by targeting County programs and resources into the area, such as increasing police and code enforcement resources (at least in the short term) and improving public infrastructure and County services, if resources become available. Property owners, property managers, businesses, and residents, however, are expected to dedicate their time, energy, and personal resources, as well as procure outside assistance to make the recommendations of the Plan a reality.

The Royal Palm Estates/ Wallis Road Neighborhood Steering Committee will ultimately be the lead group responsible for implementing this Plan, and will play a role in the implementation of each recommendation contained within the Plan. The Palm Beach County Office of Community Revitalization (OCR) will continue to provide technical assistance, as needed, and facilitate the coordination and communication among County departments and between the County and community for the implementation of applicable recommended actions. The OCR will also continue to support the revitalization effort by providing suggestions on implementation approaches.

The Steering Committee, comprised of community members and representatives, will transition into an implementation role to carry out the Plan. The people who live, work, and/or own property in the Royal Palm Estates/ Wallis Road area must also assume responsibility for improving the condition of the neighborhood and commit to making long term, positive changes to the area.

Property owners need to be responsible for maintaining decent, safe, sanitary, and attractive dwelling units. Residents need to assist with the upkeep of their units and should report needed repairs to their landlords. Community members should participate in crime prevention programs and community improvement events. In addition, all Royal Palm Estates/ Wallis Road constituents need to contribute to the safety and appearance of the area by reporting crimes to the police, and registering complaints regarding code violations to the Code Enforcement Division. Most importantly, all neighborhood residents must work together for the betterment of the community.

Only an active partnership between the community, the County, and other organizations will enable the Royal Palm Estates/ Wallis Road area to return to a safe, desirable living environment. The County is committed to this partnership as a way to ensure that the conditions in Royal Palm Estates/ Wallis Road improve through the implementation of already approved projects in the area. Through the partnership, positive changes will have a lasting effect in the Royal Palm Estates/ Wallis Road community.

Adequate funding is essential for the successful implementation of this Plan. For that reason, and in addition to the funds already allocated by the Board of County Commissioners to complete some of the needed infrastructure improvements, other sources of funding should be pursued by the community to supplement funds already allocated and enable the spirit of this Plan to be realized. The implementation group should apply for grants for neighborhood improvements such as DBG and grants offered through various non-profit organizations.