



Town of Golden Beach Narrative – City Spirit Award

Golden Beach is among the oldest municipalities in Miami-Dade County. The Town has grown tremendously in both population and property values, and is now working to maintain and retrofit its infrastructure.

In trying to identify the various infrastructure needs the Town held various Town Hall Workshops and surveyed the residents. The initial list of projects identified exceeded \$40-million dollars. In its original scope, support for the projects was not achieved. In early 2006 the Mayor and Town Council tried to rally support from the residents for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), but fears of overly ambitious goals and past failures, kept the community from agreeing to move forward with the improvements. Earlier Town projects had suffered from cost over-runs and failures

By late 2006 / early 2007, the Administration feared that the CIP would fall to the wayside. In January of 2007, three of the Town Council Members were up for re-election (the Mayor included), and the residents of the Town were split more than ever before on the Town's CIP.

The February 2007 Town Elections gave way to two newly elected Town Council Members, and the Re-election of the incumbent Mayor. With the new Town Council in place, the Town hired a new Town Manager. The Mayor recommended, and the Town Council unanimously approved, 29 year-old Alexander Diaz.

In the first 100-days following his appointment, the new Manager took control of the CIP, holding meetings with various Town Committees to understand the resistance and concerns of the residents. There were three dividing factors keeping the Program from moving forward: cost and scope of the proposed projects; management and delivery of the projects; and fear of an increase to the Town's Millage.

The Manager reviewed what was proposed and recommended cutting the proposal from \$40 million dollars to just over \$17 million dollars, \$14.5 million dollars of which would require a voter approved bond.

Two management teams were created to help the CIP move forward, a finance team and a design, management, and inspection team. The Town then focused its attention on its operating budget, cutting out areas the Town could do without. The Administration reduced approximately \$988,444 million of recurring expenditures, which represents approximately 1.41 mills. The Mayor and Town Council approved the Administrations recommendation of dedicating these revenues, annually, to the debt service of the proposed bonds. The Administration vowed to residents the Towns combined millage would not increase from 8.59 mills. The Manager was able to reduce the millage by .09 mills, setting the Town's millage at 8.50 mills, with 1.41 mills for dedicated capital.

The revised CIP, including costs, funding source, and management plan was presented to the residents in a series of open workshops. On July 17th, 2007 the Town Council unanimously approved the Bond Resolution.

Now the Administration had to conduct an aggressive marketing campaign to promote the CIP. The Town put together an Integrated Marketing Campaign, with outside help from a marketing company and internal aide from every employee. The Town was rebranded during the period leading up to the election. It went from "A Town of Excellence," to a Town with a golden future. The new motto during this period, "Our Future is Golden", became a staple in every aspect of the Town's governmental structure. Employees wore t-shirts baring the slogan, letters were mailed with new letterhead to reflect the Town's vision, door-to-door campaigning was implemented, weekly informative sessions were held, and residents received weekly informational packets on all aspects of the project. Needless to say, the bond passed with a 74% approval rating.

The CIP is the culmination of ambitious planning that began back in 1988. The result is a \$20.8 million CIP that will replace the Town's infrastructure to meet the needs of residents and guests for many years to come.

Infrastructure growth and management is achieved in accordance with the state's 1985 Growth Management Act. This act requires communities to develop Comprehensive Plans and maintain and update these plans by preparing periodic Evaluation and Appraisal Reports (EAR). The town is required to formulate and adopt sets of Goals, Objectives and Policies which must meet State Level of Service Guidelines, and are intended to guide all further planning, improvements and developments. The Capital Improvement Plan is based on these Goals, Objectives and Policies.

A key component of the Golden Beach CIP is to complete a multi-phased Stormwater Utilities Project begun in 1995/1996. The remaining phases of the Stormwater Project have been funded by the General Obligation Bond, allowing the town to fully implement construction of all unfinished drainage collection, treatment and discharge facilities.

The Town is also undertaking a Stormwater Infrastructure Project, to replace its existing, and outdated stormwater infrastructure. The new system is designed to effectively control flooding problems due to rainfall runoff as well as flooding due to tidal surges. It calls for the construction of systems of inlets and culverts to collect and direct stormwater runoff to pumping stations, which in turn will discharge stormwater into the Intracoastal Waterway. It also addresses pre-treatment of stormwater drainage to reduce pollutants before outflow to the Intracoastal. In lieu of a well system, sediment boxes have been/will be installed to collect stormwater, capture sediments, and allow clean waters to discharge.

Utilities undergrounding is one of the major capital improvements earmarked for the future of Golden Beach. Approximately 80% of the Town's residences are connected to the existing above-ground electrical and utilities system. However, the active hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005 provided powerful evidence that overhead systems lack reliability are prone to outages and long period of disrupted service, pose severe life safety issues, and have a negative impact on the overall aesthetics and visual appeal of the town.

Underground power is more resistant to wind and weather; significantly less vulnerable to severe weather incidents such as hurricanes; and more reliable

than above ground power. Statistics show that outage duration for areas with underground power has been reduced by 20% during major storms, and this reduction may even be greater for Golden Beach since the Town's primary transmission line is also underground. Other benefits of underground utilities is a reduced likelihood of electrocution due to downed power lines or tree trimming, and significantly improved visual appearance of the Town.

Improvement of the town's streets is another major aspect of the capital projects. Golden Beach streets do not have sidewalks. They also lack curbs, gutters, adequate lighting, irrigated landscaping, and traffic calming measures. The absence of these elements severely detracts from the Town's overall aesthetic value and quality of life. This absence poses potentially significant life and safety issues.

The project also calls for streetscaping on Golden Beach's most fully developed and urban street, Ocean Boulevard/A-1-A. This roadway has a landscaped median, cobra-head lighting, curbs, and gutters. However, it is missing sidewalks, key landscaping, and safety elements. Because it is an FDOT roadway, Ocean Boulevard/A-1-A must adhere to design, construction, and permitting guidelines unique to State highways. Therefore the Town is working in conjunction with the state to accomplish all of these things.

Despite our growing pains brought about by all of this change, just remember that "Our Future is Golden."