



May 8, 2019

Village of Estero
Attn: Mary Gibbs, Community Development Director
9401 Corkscrew Palms Circle
Estero, FL 33928

Dear Mary,

You requested a review of the Master Concept Plan for Estero Crossing for compliance with the Placemaking Elements of the Village's Comprehensive Plan. Per our discussion, I have finalized that review and plan, and am sending two copies of the Plan and a pdf of the plan and letter.

In reference to the review documents, please note the following:

I tried to rework the plan without starting from scratch. If I had been the original designer, I might have done some things differently. For example, I would have preferred to see some townhouses or lower scaled housing types mixed in with the multi-family buildings in order to transition to the single-family houses beyond. But, I chose to focus on making one great public space (i.e., placemaking) and not try to reinvent the plan.

Disclaimer: I only reviewed the plan based on the Placemaking principles you provided. I cannot say definitively whether the recommendations contradict other sections of the zoning code.

One comment may fall on the Village's side. The attached sidewalk along Corkscrew Road is not ideal along such a busy (and fast) thoroughfare. So, I proposed that a new sidewalk and/or a shared bike path be constructed that would be separated from the fast-moving traffic (ideally with a row of trees between). The other alternative would be to incorporate the sidewalk within the 20ft landscape buffer.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if you need me to attend any meetings or public hearings.

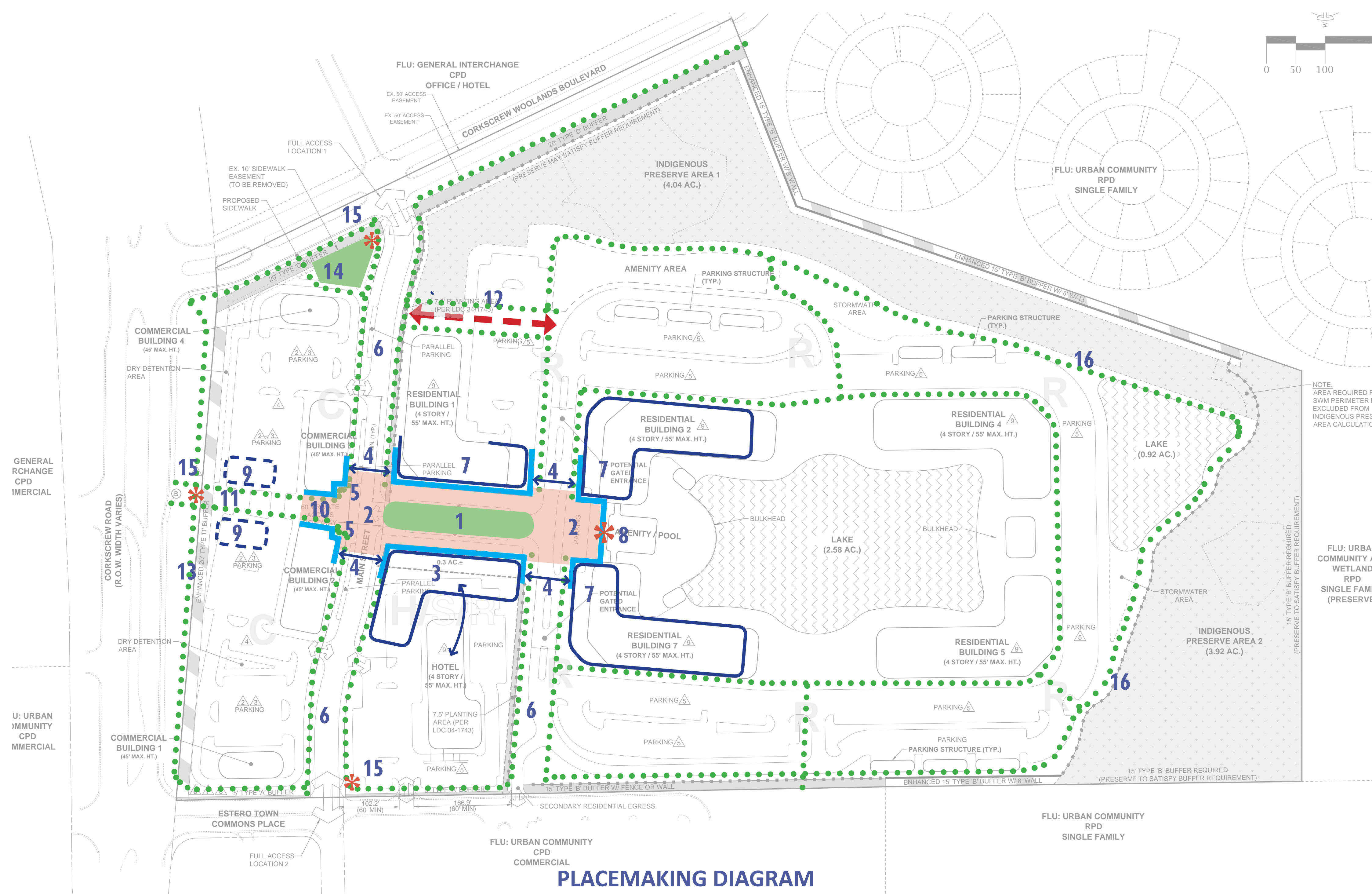
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Huston", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael Huston, AIA
Urban Arts Inc.

Urban Arts Inc

Urban Design + Master Planning + Form-Based Codes + Architecture
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PLACEMAKING DIAGRAM

REFERENCE PHOTOS



Example of a 1-story commercial building with a pedestrian passage and cafe seating.



Example of a hotel that provides an urban edge for the open space. A secondary entry connects the sidewalk to the lobby space inside.



Example of a multi-unit residential building that has a shallow setback, which helps to define the public open space.

DIAGRAM LEGEND

- "A-GRADE" FACADES
- REPOSITIONED BUILDING LOCATION
- - - FUTURE BUILDING
- SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS
- PROPOSED PUBLIC GREEN
- PROPOSED PLAZA



Examples of a "Placemaking" where a public space is created in a suburban environment. At left, a view of Avalon in Alpharetta, Georgia (Image from Google.Earth). At right, an image from the Summit in Lexington, KY. In this example, the public greenspace is activated with a one-story commercial building and outdoor games.

PLACEMAKING : START WITH ONE GREAT PLACE

The subject property has been reviewed under the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use section 1.9.1. The project most closely follows the prescription for an *Integrated Horizontal Mixed Use* development. This paragraph states that components of the mixed use program should be placed so that "separate uses are perceived as unified live, work, play, and shop destinations." Further it says that "Placemaking design elements are spaces and infrastructure meant to function for public access, use, and interaction."

Using this approach, the reviewer recommends that the proposed buildings (commercial, residential, and hotel) be arranged to create **one great public space** that can function as a community gathering space. In this case a block-long urban green and plaza is proposed in place of the street that connects the Main Street to the residential amenity building. This is easily achieved by turning the proposed hotel approximately 90 degrees and aligning it with a proposed block-long street with a large center green-space that can be used for public functions. The public space must be defined by buildings that are situated close to the sidewalk (distance of 15-20 ft from the curb is generally recommended). The sidewalk should be wide with street trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting. The street around the perimeter can be one-way with parallel parking on the sidewalk side of the street.

Buildings along the perimeter of the public space should have "A-grade" facades (refer to diagram for extent) and active uses on the ground floor that may include commercial, residential, and hotel functions. A-grade facades refers to facades that are given special attention to detail, material, articulation, and with generous fenestration in the form of doors and windows (overly complex facades and roofs are not warranted). Multiple entries along the facade are encouraged. The facades at the ground level should have generous glazing in the form of windows and storefronts. Surface parking lots (other than street parking) should not be visible from the public space. Upper floors should have windows and, where desirable, balconies to foster interaction with the street.

Internal drives should be treated as part of the open space network and as **future streets**. The drives should have sidewalks, street trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting. This establishes the street and block network for future buildings.

Proposed alternates to hotel: The developer proposes two alternates to the proposed hotel: a storage building or a residential building. With either option, the urban form should match that of the hotel, that is, it should define the western edge of the proposed urban green-space. In the case of the storage building there should be some attempt to mitigate the negative impact of this "passive use" on the urban space. Therefore, it is recommended that active commercial uses (office, retail, etc.) be placed at the sidewalk level along the urban green with multiple entries along the sidewalk. The depth of the commercial uses can be shallow, but should not be less than 15ft. The upper floors of the storage building should have windows with a spacing similar to the residential buildings along the A-grade facades.

ANNOTATIONS (refer to #'s on Plan Diagram)

1. An **urban green** (20-40ft) is proposed. The green-space should be simply designed as a flat plane, with grass, pavers, and trees along the border. The space may be used as a quiet passive space, or be programmed at certain times to accommodate markets, music, etc.
2. **Traffic calming** achieved by using an alternative paving material for the public space to signify its importance and signal cars to slow down. The sidewalk can be raised or flush with the street and separated by planters and bollards.
3. Reposition Hotel/Residential/Storage building parallel to the proposed public space. At least one entry that connects to the building lobby should orient toward the public space.
4. Neck down the distance from building-to-building at the entrances to the public space to provide a greater sense of enclosure in the public space.
5. Wrap storefronts around corner of the commercial buildings to orient activity toward the public space. This is an ideal location for restaurants and cafes. The buildings can be notched to accommodate outdoor cafe seating.
6. Treat internal drives as future streets with street trees and sidewalks (min. 5ft).
7. Reposition residential buildings to define the street and create the urban open space.
8. Design the amenity building as an **identifiable landmark** of the plaza, give it vertical emphasis and "civic importance."
9. Recommended location of future commercial buildings to provide a gateway to the pedestrian zone. Alternatively, these could be open air structures, kiosks and other "lean" elements to help define the pedestrian connection.
10. Paseo- pedestrian connection between commercial frontage and urban greenspace.
11. Extend pedestrian paseo to Corkscrew Road. This would be an optimal location for a transit stop.
12. Consider an additional vehicular connection here. This would facilitate the closing of the urban greenspace for events like farmers markets, and concerts.
13. A detached sidewalk is recommended in place of, or in addition to, the existing sidewalk which is attached to the curb. This could be incorporated within, or adjacent to, the 20ft landscape buffer.
14. Proposed urban green with sidewalks on all edges. Could be used for outdoor seating.
15. Signage element that doubles as gateway element.
16. Proposed trail around the edge of the preserve. Ideally, this would be connected to trails on adjacent properties.