MEMORANDUM

Date: February 26, 2014

TO: Town Commission

FROM: Dave Bullock, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Update on Town Center

Since the 1980s the developers of Longboat Key have envisioned a Town Center to include space for shopping, business, and civic activities. The 1978 Comprehensive Plan recognized that a "potential town center" was "emerging around the Bay Isles commercial area" and that a "hierarchy" was needed to "attain commercial structure to meet the island shopping needs" to include "Town Center, Community and Resort Commercial."

In 1978, Arvida commissioned a Provisional Development Plan for a Bay Isles Civic and Commercial Center that was heavily vehicle-oriented. By 1981, that plan had evolved into a "Town Plaza" concept, developed for Arvida by SWA Group and designed primarily for pedestrians, with broad walkways and open gathering places.

We have seen Arvida's vision for a Town Center integrated around the old Avenue of the Flowers. The community has discussed further developing activities around the existing buildings for many years. From my first day as Town Manager I have heard citizens talk about the Town Center as it is today (grocery, banks, post office, religious facilities, tennis center) and how it could be enhanced, altering it from the center of town to a vibrant Town Center. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan addresses the Town Center concept as follows:

> Policy 1.6.1
> "The Town may encourage the realization of a vibrant Town Center that includes the Town Hall and public tennis complex as well as commercial, office, institutional, residential and tourism uses. The Town may maintain a Town Center zoning overlay district within the MUC-1 future land use category..." and "The zoning overlay district may also provide additional incentives for design flexibility and expedited permitting to encourage the development of a central place within the Town for civic and community life."

The Vision Plan, formally adopted in 2011, also addresses the Town Center as follows:

> Goal 3: Encourage improvement, redevelopment, and development of commercial
> "...Redevelopment of the Bay Isles Parkway and the Town Plaza I and II developments, including the adjacent bank properties and the adjacent

vacant residential parcel (formerly known as MODA); raise awareness of the advantages of combining adjacent commercial properties for greater flexibility per site;..."

In 2011 I had my first discussions with the owner of 2.81 acres of vacant land at 594 Bay Isles Road known as Parcel B-1. This land is bordered by Publix, Sun Trust, the old Northern Trust building, the Post Office, Tennis Center and the now-closed Plaza Restaurant. The property has access to Bay Isles Road. This property can be a vital piece for realizing the envisioned Town Center. Attachment 1 shows the location of the property which is currently for sale.

One of the questions asked of the ULI panel was about a Town Center:

- How important is the concept of a "Town Center" to Longboat Key? If important, what would be the best attributes of a Longboat Key "Town Center" and where would be the best location for it to be successful?

Their response was that the existing Bay Isles Road / Parkway area is the best location to develop a Town Center by adding a cultural/community center with related open space or park, medical services, library, potential residential, and additional commercial/retail space. The importance of vibrant center of community space was also recognized as a strengthening element in civic life of the Town.

For the past several months Town staff has been working to put the pieces together for the foundation of such a Town Center addition. Discussions have been occurring with property owners, interested developers, and community members about how best to achieve such an objective. The key piece of land is the 2.8 acres referenced above. The current owner has had the property for sale, has stated he has a buyer, and intends to sell if the Town does not act immediately. The terms of that purported sale were described in detail to me. I have negotiated with the owner and have reached an agreement that is now before you.

After more than two years of discussion why is now the right time to acquire this land?

- The owner states he is going to sell the property to another buyer if the Town does not purchase it. If sold there is no assurance the property will be available for any of the activities cited above.
- The Town is about to start the Town Center overlay plan which will result in a zoning plan that will add value to the land when completed.
- There is community interest in developing a cultural center and a medical services area that may result in shared funding.

What are the options if the Town is unable to develop the amenities referenced above itself or through a public private partnership?

- The property value will be enhanced through the Town Center overlay zoning and the land can be sold.
- Portions of the property can be developed (as a park and or cultural center) and the balance sold.

What has to be done to develop the facilities such as a Town Center, community park, medical services, library, possible residential, and additional commercial/retail space?

- A plan for the property has to be developed with broad community input and adopted
- Partnerships with private or not for profit entities must be developed for various aspects of the plan
- The site will have to be filled and prepared for development
- Site work such as access, utilities, fill, etc. will have to be completed
- Each facility will have to be financed, designed, and constructed

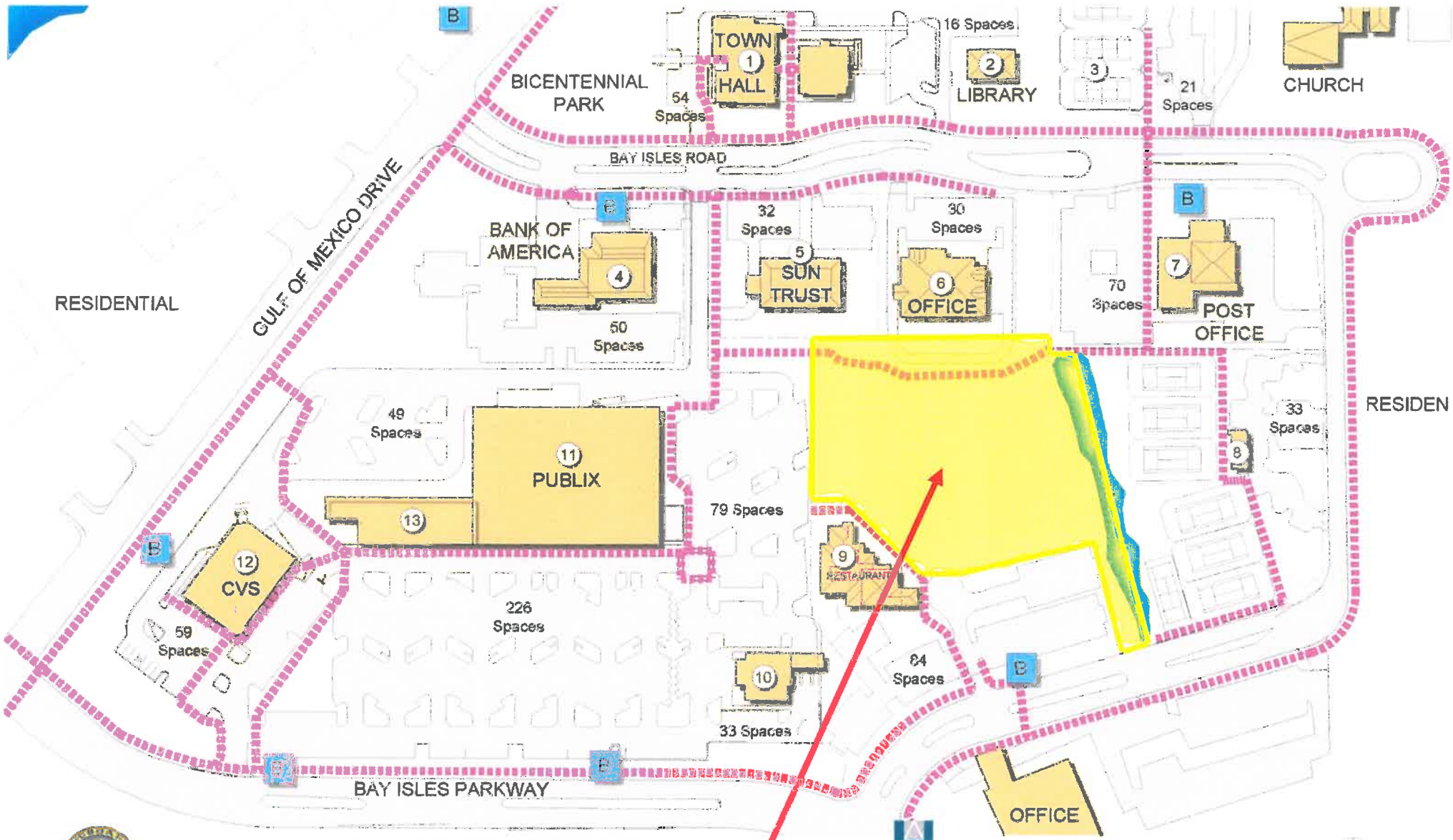
What are the current zoning and allowed uses?

- Essential Services
- Community residential homes with six or fewer residents plus staff
- Residential – predominately senior living communities including but not limited to age-restricted, independent living senior communities
- Government buildings and services
- Commercial/Office

If the Town Commission decides to purchase the property an outline of activities to develop the Town Center are listed below:

- complete and adopt the Town Center planning overlay identifying uses, form of development, densities, and infrastructure
- develop public/private partnerships to implement the plan including the infrastructure that will support the activities included in the plan
- if any property is surplus to the plan, sell it

Development of an enhanced Town Center is a multi-year undertaking that will likely require the Town to work with various partners from the private and not for profit sector. If the Town Commission is ready to commit to the serious work of Town Center planning and implementation then securing the site now is the next logical step. If we are not sure about the concept then we can pass on the opportunity to secure the property, do the planning work and determine if future owners are willing and able to implement the plan.



EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN

Longboat Key Town Center

594 Bay Isles Road

Attachment 1

594 Bay Isles Road Property