

PINECRAFT



In December 2003, the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners authorized staff to begin working with the Pinecraft community on a neighborhood plan. Several meetings were held with the leaders of the community and staff attended a community function held in Pinecraft Park. The following document is a compilation of the identified issues and concerns of the community and offers a variety of solutions.

The Pinecraft Plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on September 28, 2004.

EARLY PINECRAFT

In the Mid 1920's Sarasota's trailer parks were becoming filled in the tourist season with what locals called "Tin Cannerys," small travel trailers. A parcel of cheap land was available just outside the City of Sarasota limits. Bordered on the north by Bahia Vista Street and the west by Phillippi Creek. The lots were platted at 40 feet square. Between each two rows of lots, a street, thirty feet wide, ran south from Bahia Vista. Eleven streets in all, they were numbered from one to eleven on the original plot. There were nearly 500 lots laid out and called the National Tourist Camp. This area later became known as Pinecraft.

A few years later another allotment was laid out adjoining Pinecraft on the east and named Homecroft. This was bordered on the north by Phillippi Creek, the east by Beneva Road and the south by Forest Lakes Estate. Homecroft was laid out in 360 lots which were 50 X 122 feet, with some corner lots a little bigger.

More lots were added to Pinecraft on the north side of Bahia Vista and in Homecroft, lots were added between Hacienda St. and Phillippi Creek. Both allotments grew together and both are today referred to as Pinecraft.

The only way to enter and exit this little village was crossing a one-lane wooden bridge over Phillippi creek. From there Bahia Vista Street was two lane and surfaced with shell and clay material. At first it only went as far as 11th Street, now known as Kaufman and later to Hines. Beneva Road was not built yet.

The population of Pinecraft and Homecroft grew very little during the 1930's, like much of the country suffering from the Depression. In the first half of the 1940's more people were buying lots and building small cottages. In 1945 Homecroft building lots (50 x 122) were selling from \$15 to \$50 per lot. Building materials were hard to get during this time because of the war and the rations.

(Special note: thanks to Mr. Noah Gingerich for contributing the above information.)

Like most of Sarasota County, housing values have increased at a similar rate as their surrounding neighborhoods. Today, thousands of Amish travel to Pinecraft each year to escape the cold weather in the north. Pinecraft has become so popular that a feature article "A Piece of Paradise" was written in Cleveland, Ohio's *The Plain Dealer* Sunday Magazine on March 14, 2004, by Christopher Evan and with photographs by Gus Chan. The article noted "between the months of October and April thousands of

Amish brethren trade the sleet and snow of Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania for the sun and surf of Sarasota."



The article further ed stated that so many have begun traveling south that a bus line has started to transport them.

The bus line transports between 4,000 to 4,500 people in the winter time, 75 percent being Amish and the remainder being



Mennonite or English. Pinecraft has become such a major destination that competing bus lines in Indiana have started providing weekly shuttles to Florida as well.

Pinecraft is also well known for its Amish Restaurants – Yoder's, Mom's and Dutch Heritage, but if you try and go during season be prepared for a wait.

A similar news piece on the Pinecraft community was featured on CNN, Paul Harvey, New York Times. Pinecraft is becoming recognized around the nation.

SAFETY

The safety of these residents is the number one concern of the community. Whether they are biking or walking, the community realizes that something needs to be done to



provide a safer means of traveling from one side of Bahia Vista Street to the other. Better-defined crosswalks are one option and are described under Streets/Crosswalks.

Lighting was also noted as a safety concern and is addressed under the lighting section of this plan.

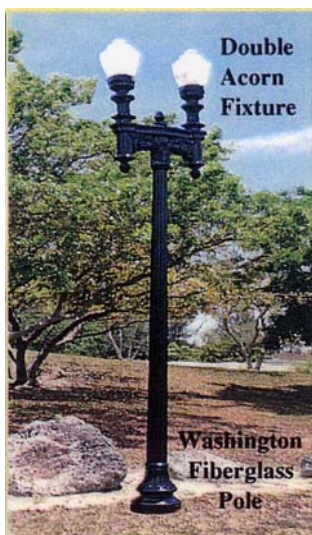
The need to establish a crime watch group for Pinecraft was discussed. There are so few summer residents in this area that it was decided to address the crime watch group in January 2005. Representatives from the Sheriff's Office,

Crime Prevention Unit, will attend the functions in the Park in January, February and March in order to assist the residents in forming a crime watch group and addressing any other crime related issues in a manner appropriate to the area's cultural and religious standards.

LIGHTING

The Pinecraft community was established as a Special Lighting Taxing District on April 21, 1972 by Chapter 71-911, Laws of Florida, House Bill Number 1492. The District has a Board, which oversees the lighting and assessments for the community. The Board is in the process of having their documents codified as required by the state and during this process, they will be modifying the special assessments. The bill currently allows the Board to assess each business a sum of \$25 per year, each household a sum of \$10 per year and each vacant parcel the sum of \$.50 per year. The bill does not have provisions for the increase in future costs. The amount they currently collect each year would not allow for an increase in lights in the area and in the future may not cover future Florida Power and Light (FPL) rate increases. FPL representatives anticipate future rate increases to be approximately 5% per year. Based on current billing information, a budget projection for the next twenty years will be prepared and appropriate language will be incorporated into the new bill. This will allow the Board to increase the assessments, annually if necessary, according to their needs. The community has asked Representative Donna Clarke to sponsor the new bill and district codification.

As noted under the safety section of the plan, lighting on Bahia Vista Street requires improvement. Subsequent to staff's presentation of the plan to the Commission in June 2004, staff further research lighting alternatives and found that the most economical means to provide appropriate lighting would be to lease the fixtures from FPL. By installing double acorn fixtures as seen below, adequate lighting for both the pedestrian and vehicular traffic can be provided. The installation of 90 double acorn light fixtures (45 on each side of Bahia Vista Street) from Phillippi Creek on the west to the Rail Road tracks on the east, set 100 feet apart, required lighting standards for vehicular traffic can be



maintained. At the same time we would be creating an awareness that you are entering a neighborhood/pedestrian setting. In working with representatives from FPL, the up front cost for installation of the lights has been estimated at \$315,556, which the County will pay and then enter into a lease agreement for the maintenance and operation of the lights for the next 20 years. At the end of the term, a new lease will be negotiated. The yearly lease, maintenance and energy cost is estimated at \$61,824.00 for the next 20 years. The addition of the lights and the enhanced pedestrian crossings should provide the residents with a safer environmental in which to travel. It is further noted that the existing street lighting will be removed as a part of the overall installation project.

Lighting on the residential side streets in neighborhood appears to be adequate at this time. Future additions could be added by the Lighting District Board. The lighting in Pinecraft Park will be addressed in the Pinecraft Park section of the Plan.

STREETS/CROSSWALKS

Streets

Once a quaint neighborhood, Pinecraft is now divided by a four-lane collector with a center turn lane and struggles everyday with pedestrian and bicycle safety issues. Residents and visitors in the area do not depend on automobiles for transportation. They would rather bike and walk to area business or to the bus stop if they wish to visit another part of Sarasota, such as the beach.

According to traffic information, 85% of the vehicles utilizing the portion of Bahia Vista Street in the Pinecraft community are traveling in excess of 10 miles over the speed limit. There is a bike lane on both sides of Bahia Vista Street, but the residents seem to prefer riding their bicycles and tricycles on the sidewalks, which are five feet wide. This does not allow for the passing of two bicycles. The slopes of the curb cuts along Bahia Vista Street prevent easy access from one street to another.

Another concern was that some of the residents of this community are not aware of the cycling rules and may have never been on a bicycle before. Staff will be providing some educational opportunities during January, February and March at the various gatherings in Pinecraft Park. Proper riding techniques as well as safety literature will be distributed to the residents. Pedestrian safety crossing will also be addressed at this time, emphasizing the importance of using crosswalks and signalized intersections.

Since Bahia Vista Street is a collector, and traffic calming is not permitted, alternatives, which could provide a safer environment for the residents, were proposed. Four options were discussed:

- Option 1 - remove the bike lane and replace with a 10-foot sidewalk. (The residents did not feel this was a good option because the bike lane is used by other County residents passing through the community and it would not be fair to inconvenience them.);
- Option 2 - reduce the driving lane widths and restore the bike lanes and create a wider sidewalk with the gained space in the right-of-way. Add enhanced crosswalks and medallions at Kaufman and Beneva intersections. Add two mid-block crossings on Bahia Vista with pedestrian islands and enhanced resin crosswalks. (This seemed to be the favorite option.);
- Option 3 - do away with the turning lane, (create small raised medians) and widen the sidewalk. (This was not considered to be the best option, since there are so many driveways onto Bahia Vista Street that it would inconvenience too many people and it may actually cause a greater danger with people making u-turns.);
- Option 4 - leave travel lanes as is. (This seemed to be the second choice.)

The community's preference was Option 2 which could be accomplished with a waiver of the minimum width requirement and a modified drain and curb. This would allow for a wider sidewalk on both sides of Bahia Vista Street. Cost is estimated at \$822,000.

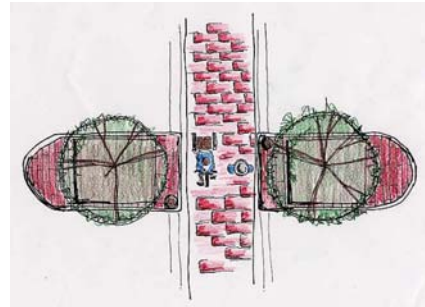
Crosswalks

A serious (or major) concern is pedestrians crossing Bahia Vista Street. Residents and visitors seem to cross at unidentified areas along the roadway and not at the marked intersections. Unpredictable pedestrian crossings can lead to a driver's confusion and a possible accident. Some residents repeated that pedestrians don't trust the signals or the vehicles at the signalized intersections and many feel that crossing outside the designated area is less hazardous. Some pedestrians will even stop in the turn lane and wait for traffic to pass before continuing across Bahia Vista Street. The timing of the crosswalk lights has been checked for adequate time to cross. This is another area to be addressed in the bicycle and pedestrian safety brochures.

Several locations were discussed in order to provide a safer path across Bahia Vista Street. A designated, textured brick-

type, crosswalk is desired. A pedestrian refuge in the median would provide a safety area should the traffic become too heavy for the pedestrian to cross to the other side. The locations for the proposed crosswalks discussed are:

- One near the Dutch Heritage Restaurant; and
- One mid-block between Kaufman and Hines.



(Preliminary sketch – to be engineered after approval)

The locations for proposed textured crosswalks at signalized intersections include:

- Bahia Vista Street and Beneva Road
- Bahia Vista Street and Kaufman

At the crosswalks at the Dutch Heritage Restaurant and the one mid-block between Kaufman and Hines the residents have requested additional lighting in the form of pedestrian lights on each side of the crosswalk. It is also suggested that the County install two (2) bollard lights in each crosswalk to provide additional light in the area.



(Preliminary sketch – to be engineered after approval)

With the raised pavement treatment and the additional lighting it is felt that this may slow the traffic and at least make them aware they are entering an area where pedestrians cross.

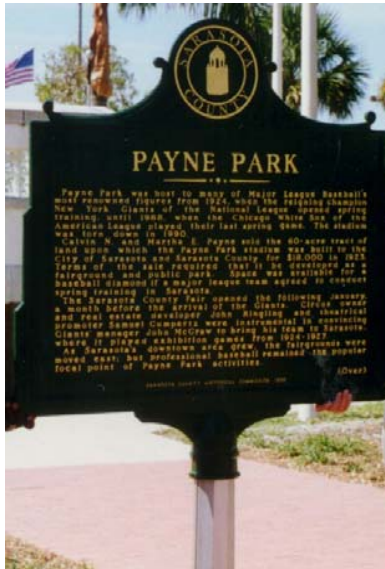
Another option is the use of medallions, textured pavement or paver brick, at the intersections of Kaufman and Bahia Vista Street and at Beneva Road and Bahia Vista Street. The residents felt this would provide assistance in identifying this space as a pedestrian traveled area and discourage speeding. A similar design used for the crosswalks should be utilized for the medallions.

SIGNAGE

Gateway identification signs are being proposed in the medians of all four entrances into the Pinecraft community as follows:

- **WEST:** As you cross Phillippi Creek heading east on Bahia Vista Street in a median.
- **EAST:** In a median on Bahia Vista Street before you cross the rail road tracks going west on Bahia Vista Street;
- **NORTH:** As you cross Phillippi Creek at a median on Beneva Road;
- **SOUTH:** At a median on Beneva Road at Bimini Street.

One of the unique qualities of this community is the handy craftsmanship of its residents. It is the desire of this community that they be allowed to design and construction the signs themselves. This project may also utilize the Neighborhood Grant Program as a source to supplement the costs.



(Sample Historical Marker)

Avenue, will need to be modified to identify that the Historical Marker is located in the park. The marker will be produced approximately 2 years after receipt of an application. This will allow staff additional time to further discuss the site location with the residents.

PINECRAFT PARK

The residents of Pinecraft utilize the park on a daily basis. Various activities take place here including, picnicking, volleyball, and the most popular – shuffleboard. Residents have shared that the women especially enjoy the additional shuffleboard courts recently installed in the park. Prior to the installation of additional courts, the men were known to dominate the shuffleboard courts. Now the women enjoy the sport as well.



During the peak season, January through the end of March, large social events are held in the park with the attendance ranging from 600 to 1000 participants. Musical and vocal groups provide the entertainment for the Bar-B-Q's. These events are often used as fundraisers to help supplement improvements to Pinecraft Park. For example, last year the residents contributed funds to assist in the installation of three new shuffleboard courts.



In February 2004, county staff was invited to attend a gathering in the park, which enabled us to interact with the residents and obtain ideas for improvement in the community. The number of participants at this event surpassed the 1000 mark and we understand that several thousands of dollars were raised as contributions for additional improvements to the park. In the future they would like to have a community building, but for now the Park pavilion will satisfy that need.

Staff met with residents and discussed possible improvements. Key issues were prioritized in the following order:

- Expansion of the existing pavilion.
- Improved electrical power (amperage) and outlets for events held in the park.
- Improved lighting in the park.
- Additional restrooms.
- Relocation of the volleyball court with appropriate lighting.

- Construction of an additional volleyball court.
- Locking of the park.
- Unlocking of the restrooms.
- Locate, if possible, additional areas, which could be utilized for parking.
- Removal and/or relocation of the horseshoe pits, if possible.
- Construction of 3 two-pole picnic shelters (small covered shelter with a concrete pad and picnic table) along the walkway bordering Phillippi Creek like those along the Levee project.

The number one priority in the park is to expand the existing pavilion. The number of residents utilizing the park has grown over time and in order to provide adequate space for reunions, small concerts and community gatherings, the pavilion needs to be expanded to twice the size of

the existing structure. Other associated amenities considered with the pavilion expansion include a performance area and additional restrooms.



One of the unique qualities of this community is their sense of worth and their willingness to partner with Sarasota County to accomplish their goals. They have contributors willing to donate the funds towards construction of the pavilion. Parks and Recreation has suggested that the community contribute funds to "The Friends of the Parks". This Friends group is modeled after the Friends of the Library concept where the local community identifies their needs and collects contributions for those projects. The residents also want to be involved in the construction and by utilizing the Friends of the Park, this can happen. The opportunity also exists for a Friends group to work with other matching funding sources, such as the Neighborhood Grant Program.

Parks and Recreation staff identified some minor maintenance issues at the park and they are currently making those repairs.

Phillippi Creek borders Pinecraft Park to the west and is a part of the Bahia Vista/Lockwood Reclamation Project (a.k.a. Levee Project) which was constructed in 2003 to provide flood relief for 100 residences in the Oakshores and Bellevue Terrace communities along Phillippi Creek. Prior

to construction 30 homes were purchased and demolished by the County to provide room for a half-mile long storage facility that runs parallel to Phillippi Creek. The storage facility retains water overtopping the banks of Phillippi Creek that used to severely flood the communities during a high level event. A second part of the system collects storm water runoff into a large underground vault then pumps it into Phillippi Creek. The third element of the system is located at the parcel formerly known as "Two Lakes".



The lakes were increased in size to hold additional storm water runoff and the surrounding area will be used as a public park called Lockleer Park.

The parallel storage facility provides shelters, picnic tables, and a beautiful 1-mile pedestrian trail around the storage facility.



As a part of this project, the portion of Phillippi Creek which abuts Pinecraft Park, is being dredged and is almost complete. Once it is completed, the walkway along Phillippi Creek will be reconstructed.



It is along this walkway that the three (3) small picnic shelters will be located similar to those along the Levee as shown above. Safety along this walkway at night is a concern.

Parks and Recreation will also be addressing overall lighting concerns in the park by installing additional lights and trimming vegetation around some existing poles.

In response to the request for unlocking the restrooms earlier in the day, Parks and Recreation has installed timed locks on various other park facilities and suggest this as a possible solution. The timers could be set to open at 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. as agreed upon by the neighborhood and Parks & Recreation.

The Pinecraft community currently pays a security company \$2,500 (for 3 months) to lock the gate in the evening at 10:00 p.m. during the peak season. January, February and March seem to be the high volume use months, during the remainder of the year the park is generally empty by 10:00 p.m. and does not require hiring security.

Another significant change to the park will be the construction of a vacuum station as a part of the sewer project for this community. The project start date for Area "C" is fall 2005. The vacuum station is residential in appearance and has a mulch bed immediately adjacent to the structure for absorbing any potential odor. The residents discussed the landscaping and fencing for the project and expressed the desire for a white vinyl picket fence around the mulch bed instead of a chain-link fence. The County will install a minimal amount of shrubs around the structure and fence and if the community feels that additional landscaping would be appropriate, it will be planted and maintained by the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Grant program may be utilized as a match for this project as well.

SEWER PROJECT

This small community is awaiting the installation of sewer lines in this area. Area C plan will be 100 percent designed by end of 2004, and will make sewers available to approximately 730 homes. The completion of construction will be scheduled to coincide with the completion of the Bahia Vista force main and road widening projects. Wastewater from Area C will be treated at a newly expanded Bee Ridge Water Reclamation Facility (WRF).

will increase the treatment capacity of the plant from 2.1 to 9.0 mgd (million gallons per day) based on maximum monthly average daily flow. Critical transmission projects include several new pump stations and force mains. For example, the new South Gate Pump Station and the Bahia Vista force main (from Beneva to Cattlemen) project. The design and construction of the Bahia Vista force main and road widening (from McIntosh to Cattlemen) will be planned so these two projects can be built simultaneously. Combining the Bahia Vista force main and road improvements into a single integrated design/construction project rather than two separate projects may possibly result in savings of up to a million dollars. If the Bahia Vista force main is built as an integrated project, it is anticipated that construction could start as early as March 2005 for the force main segment from Beneva to McIntosh. The time schedule for the remaining portion of the Bahia Vista force main from McIntosh to Cattlemen will coincide with the road project, running from November 2005 through January 2007.

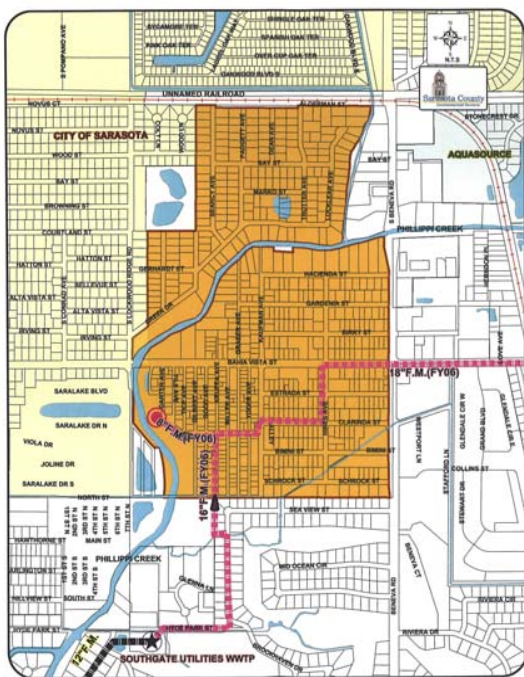
Residents of this community are anxious for this project to be completed. They are concerned that this project is still five to tens years out. They are so concerned, that some local business owners are considering hiring a private engineering firm to study the feasibility of constructing their own sewer lines and lift station before the Area C sewer project begins, which could eventually be connected into the County's project.

As a part of this project staff has proposed the construction of a vacuum station in Pinecraft Park. Utilities earmarked \$20,000 for improvements to the park as a trade-off for locating the vacuum station there. The vacuum station is being designed as a one-story, concrete block, residential scaled facility. Consideration is currently being given to different architectural materials on the exterior of the building to have a design that blends in with the neighborhood. The height of the structure from the proposed final grade elevation is approximately 9.5 feet to under the eaves and 17 feet to the top of the roof. The proposed final grade elevation at the building is approximately 3 feet above the existing ground surface at this location.

The community discussed the proposed location at length. The residents inquired whether the structure could be located on the west side of Phillippi Creek in an area, which was not easily accessible to the community. The consulting engineers for the project explained that elevations, flows, and a need for central location, the alternate location suggested was not feasible.

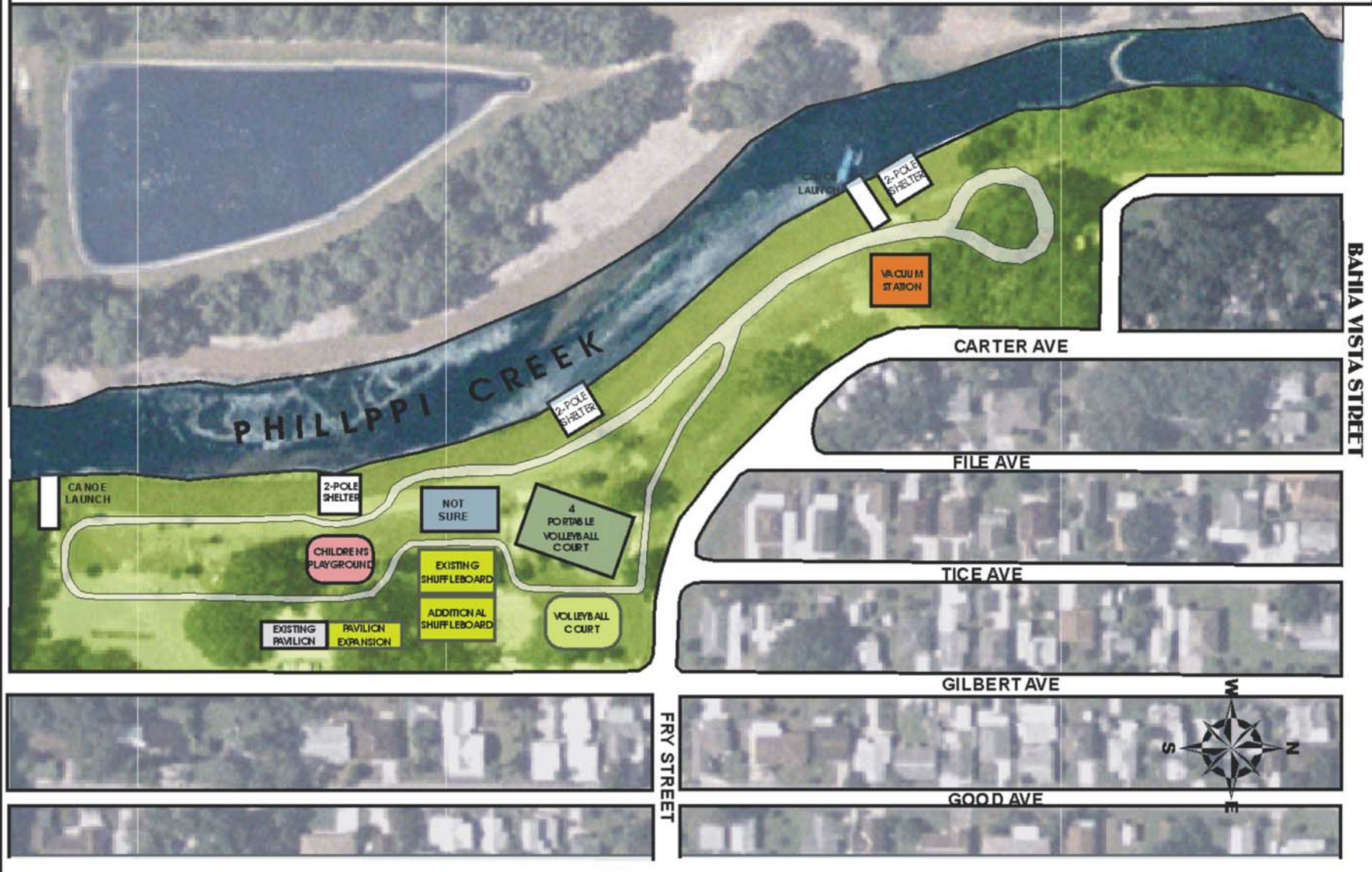
Residents noted that the proposed site is in what appears to be a low lying area and the water coming from Bahia Vista Street often flows down into this area and out into Phillippi Creek. As this project progresses, possible alterations in the park may be required to ensure that the flow of water is not obstructed and there is no flooding of nearby homes.

PHILLIPPI CREEK SEPTIC SYSTEM REPLACEMENT PROGRAM



A number of critical transmission projects are needed to convey wastewater collected in the Phillippi Creek Septic System Replacement Program (PCSSRP) to the newly expanded Bee Ridge WRF. The timing of these projects will dictate when the Area C project will begin. The expansion of the Bee Ridge WRF, which will be completed by March 2005,

Pinecraft Park Concept Plan



	Proposed: 6/16/2004	Proposed: 6/16/2004	Proposed: 9/29/2004	Proposed: 9/29/2004	Proposed 9/29/2004	Proposed: 9/29/2004	Proposed: 9/29/2004	
PROJECT	OPTION #1 RESIN	OPTION #2 RESIN & CORE LIGHTS	OPTION #3 RESIN & EXTENDED LIGHTS	OPTION #4 RESIN, EXTENDED LIGHTS & WIDE SWKs	OPTION #5 BRICK PAVER & FPL LIGHTS	OPTION #5 BRICK PAVER & "SCROLL" LIGHTS	OPTION #6 BRICK, WIDE SWKs & "VENICE" LIGHTS	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
1. Dutch Heritage Restaurant	\$15,885	\$15,885	\$15,885	\$15,885	\$51,500	\$51,500	\$51,500	Nghb.Init. &/or Intersection/Safety Program
2. Mid-block between Kaufman Avenue and Hines Avenue	\$15,885	\$15,885	\$15,885	\$15,885	\$51,500	\$51,500	\$51,500	
1. Kaufman Avenue and Bahia Vista Street	\$38,542	\$38,542	\$41,900	\$41,900	\$133,000	\$133,000	\$133,000	Neighborhood Initiative
2. Beneva Road and Bahia Vista Street with crosswalks	\$74,550	\$74,550	\$74,550	\$74,550	\$220,600	\$220,600	\$220,600	
Design Cost	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$133,750	\$133,750	\$133,750	
Construction Engineering and Inspection			\$25,000	\$25,000	\$80,250	\$80,250	\$80,250	
Right-Of-Way (Temp Construction Easement for 3,220 LF of roadway for as local traffic detours)					\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	
Resurfacing (9,000 LF of local public and private roads used for local traffic detours)					\$315,000	\$315,000	\$315,000	
Traffic Detection			\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	
Future Maintenance Cost			\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	Neighborhood Initiative
1. Reduce lane widths to maximize side walk width with a modified curb and gutter				\$622,778			\$622,778	Sidewalk Program
2. Resurfacing in conjunction with changing the lane width				\$200,000			\$200,000	Sidewalk Program
1. FPL-leased decorative acorn lights		\$160,000	\$315,556	\$315,556	\$315,556			Neighborhood Initiative, Roadway Lighting Program, &/or Intersection Safety
2. County-owned "Scroll" lights						\$675,000		
3. County-owned "Venice" lights							\$709,000	
4. Four (4) bollard lights - two at each crosswalk		\$16,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	
5. Signal mounted intersection lighting - four at Kauffman and four at Beneva (Intersection Safety Fund)		\$16,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	
TOTAL	\$179,862	\$371,862	\$637,776	\$1,460,554	\$1,520,156	\$1,879,600	\$2,697,378	

NOTE: Option #4 was approved by the BOCC



(Photo taken 5/27/04 – 3434 Bahia Vista Street)



We would like to thank the Pinecraft Community for their dedication and hard work to this neighborhood planning effort.

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