

Greenways, Blueways, New Street and Neighborhood Designs Among Ideas Offered by Citizens at Hands-on Workshop

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Open Design Studios Offered for Public Participation This Week

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Lead planner Victor Dover of DK&P introduced Paul Owens, president of the influential 1000 Friends of Florida, emphasizing the statewide significance of the Lake Wales Envisioned effort, which has also drawn support from the University of Miami, Rollins College, and a host of other organizations including Lake Wales Heritage, Bok Tower Gardens, Mountain Lake, and the Lake Wales Area Chamber of Commerce.

A creative group of [Lake Wales](#) area citizens joined with urban design and traffic planners Saturday morning at the James Austin Center to begin the process of designing an alternative future for the [City of Lake Wales](#).

Future neighborhood development types, street designs, greenways, preferred placement of residential developments, and even a "blueway" trail connecting to Winter Haven were among suggestions that emerged from teams working around maps and charts.

The process, called an "hands-on workshop," generated ideas for a group of professionals heading the [Lake Wales Envisioned](#) process. Their task is to consider "Olmsted's Garden City in 10, 25, and 50 Years," according to lead planner Victor Dover of Dover, Kohl & Partners.

The process will continue to involve the public this week, as four days of "open design studio" workshops will take place, allowing residents to comment and suggest changes as preliminary designs are created.

Concerns that a wave of development might produce undesirable results and "urban sprawl" have led city leaders to initiate the [Lake Wales Envisioned](#) process that may lead to adopting more ambitious standards for new housing projects.

The effort grew from an aborted 2022 attempt to create a "future land use map" for areas outside the city limits but within the city's [utility service area](#). Those areas carry the potential to be annexed and developed at higher densities in the future.

The process will also address the future location of commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.

"Greenways" might link a network of parks through walking and biking trails, similar to Boston's "Emerald Necklace" of urban parks designed by Frederick Law [Olmsted](#). Similarly, a "blueway" through low-lying areas west of [Lake Wales](#) might offer a canoe and kayak trail leading to Winter Haven's planned "Sapphire Necklace," a series of water conservation and recharge areas surrounding the city.

The months-long [Envisioned](#) process is expected to produce a series of specific recommendations that may be adopted by the city commission to define and direct future development.

Workshops will take place this week at 253 East Stuart Avenue from 12:00 to 6:00 pm on Sunday before moving across [Scenic Highway](#) to the [Lake Wales](#) Woman's Club auditorium for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. The studio will be open from 9:00 am until 6:00 pm on those days.

For those unable to attend the daytime sessions, a special Monday evening interactive Zoom conference will allow public participation and comment, breaking into small groups to discuss ideas. [Registration for that session is available by clicking here.](#)

The week-long efforts, which began with a Friday-evening reception under a tent downtown, will wrap up with a "work in progress review" beginning at 6:00 Thursday evening at the [Lake Wales Arts Center](#), 1099 East SR 60 in [Lake Wales](#).

[Lake Wales](#) News.net will continue to follow the [Envisioned](#) program closely and will publish details of the proposals as they emerge.



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Team ideas were displayed and discussed at the conclusion of the three-hour planning effort. Several dozen citizens brought their ideas and suggestions to share with planners, who will continue working this week to create a "work in progress" presentation Thursday evening at the [Lake Wales Arts Center](#).

