

March 20 "Envisioned" Events to Shape Future of Lake Wales in Face of Explosive Growth

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"Kick-off" Session Will Share and Invite First Comments

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Save the dates!

MAR 20
KICK-OFF DAY
 at Bok Tower Gardens
 2-5pm: Best Practices
 6:30pm: Community Meeting

APR 14-20
VISION CHARENTE
 April 14, 6pm
 Opening Reception
 April 15, 9am
 Hands-On Design Session
 April 17, 6pm
 Online Design Session
 April 20, 6pm
 Work-in-Progress Review

LAKE WALES ENVISIONED
 OLMSTED'S CITY IN 10, 25, AND 50 YEARS

A host of proposed housing developments that could more than double the population of [Lake Wales](#) have created worries that the once-quiet community will be overrun by sprawling growth. In response, citizens are being encouraged to join in a process to help prevent bad outcomes.

A March 20 afternoon "symposium" at [Bok Tower Gardens](#) will be a key part of a months-long project called "[Lake Wales Envisioned](#)."

"Olmsted's City 10, 25, and 50 years" is a tagline for the process, and a reference to the famed landscape architect who created [Bok Tower Gardens](#) and designed the plan that made [Lake Wales](#) "A City in a Garden" in 1930.

A week-long charette in April will allow citizens a deep dive into the nuts and bolts of the planning process.

Courtesy Lake Wales Envisioned

A busy schedule of events will shape the process of defining the future shape of Lake Wales and citizen input is welcome throughout, according to Victor Dover of Dover Kohl.

[Lake Wales Envisioned](#) will offer citizens a roadmap to the future of [Lake Wales](#) as a host of experts from across the United States gather to share "best practices" that can defend and enhance quality of life as the city grows.

The three-hour symposium will bring together "industry leaders and experts in neighborhood design, conservation, and development to share experiences and help spark conversation about the future of greater Lake Wales," according to materials promoting the effort. That presentation will be followed by an evening session to review the concepts and share citizen ideas for the future of [Lake Wales](#).

Those wishing to attend one or both events are encouraged to [register on the Envisioned website HERE](#) so that organizers may prepare for the expected numbers of attendees.

The new effort by the [City of Lake Wales](#) to engage and seek citizen input resulted from a 2022 effort to create a "future land use map" that many saw as a failure. City Manager James Slaton described it as "disorganized," and promised a new approach.

The [Envisioned](#) project is seen as significant to the entire state and has drawn sponsorship from a range of organizations including 1000 Friends of Florida, Rollins College, [Lake Wales Heritage](#), the University of Miami, [Lake Wales Area Chamber of Commerce](#), [Bok Tower Gardens](#), [Lake Wales Main Street](#), and [Lake Wales News.net](#).

The entire process is expected to be completed by the autumn of 2023 and will form the basis for future decisions about where development may occur and the appropriate areas for residential, industrial, commercial, and other land uses. It will also address the needs for mobility, conservation, and recreation.

In two initial public sessions, seven prominent leaders and visionaries will present examples of both successes and failures to demonstrate the principals that lead to quality cities. The team will be led by Victor Dover of Dover, Kohl & Partners Town Planning. Victor is nationally recognized as an innovator in city planning, traditional neighborhood design, and street design. He also led the team that created the award-winning [Lake Wales Connected](#) plan, which is expected to reinvigorate the city's core business areas.

Three separate sessions, entitled "Livable Community Design," "Community Development that Builds Lasting Value," and "The Big Green Network," will discuss neighborhoods, transportation, and conservation, as well as related topics.

In the first session Dover will be joined by Wade Walker, an engineer and "advocate for complete streets and context sensitive solutions." Walker will share concepts that promote walkability and livable design. Also presenting in the first session will be Jonathan Paul, the principal of NUE Urban Concepts. Paul is a respected transportation planner "specializing in integrating mobility, land use, and parking strategies for communities across the country."

The second session will introduce community developer Vince Graham, president of the I'On Group, who will share "the business case for human-scaled urbanism" and his experience in building "livable communities focused on sustainability and creating enduring economic value." He will be joined by Marcela Cambor-Cutsaimanis, a town planner and former Urban Design Director at the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

The third session, covering topics including environmental conservation, parks, and trails. Steve Nygren of Serenbe will "principles for economic vitality and lives well lived," based on building a community that connects people to nature and each other. He will be joined by Dr. Jay Exum, an expert in responsible urban design and "planning that can aid conservation efforts and protect vital ecosystems."



Courtesy Dover Kohl & Partners

The presentations will set the stage for an evening "interactive kick-off meeting" at the [Bok Tower Gardens Auditorium](#) to review initial project goals and findings from the afternoon Best Practices Symposium and invite public input and ideas for the future of [Lake Wales](#).

Open workshops and public charettes will draw from public comments and suggestions about the future needs of a growing community. The process, expected to be completed this fall, will provide a "roadmap" to Lake Wales in "10, 25, and 50 years," according to project managers.

Again, those wishing to attend are encouraged to [register on the Envisioned website HERE](#) so that organizers may prepare for the expected numbers of attendees.