



A COMMUNITY CENTER SCHEME

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & CIVIC AMENITIES 2.4

- 2.4.1 INTRODUCTION
- 2.4.2 COMMUNITY CENTER
- 2.4.3 CONSENSUS CONCEPTS

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & CIVIC AMENITIES

General Principles

From an urban design perspective, community facilities and civic amenities, such as libraries, schools, town halls, post offices, etc., often perform unique roles, and typically follow a set of guidelines unique to, and different from, that of the general fabric of a town or city, as a whole. Generally speaking, they are usually placed very consciously and deliberately within the overall community plan -- in both location and setting -- as befitting their special contributions to the communal fabric of place, and are frequently held to more liberal standards, in terms of both coding and architectural style, than the background context they reside in.

They typically provide a collective gathering place and focal point where citizens can foster or promote shared interests, or pursue common goals. They often have a social and/or recreational aspect about them as well, in the form of associated parks and plazas, and/or can reflect a shared or diverse culture, heritage, or history, as in say -- in the form of a community museum, or performing arts center.

Civic structures frequently play a critical role in defining our sense of place, or in forging a community's identity, and can help to articulate what makes one community unique and distinct from another. And of course, they also represent an integral part of our public realm -- the shared places between the buildings, where residents engage with one another in a larger community context.

Observation

The existing Community Center does little to promote a unique or communal identity for the Town of Surfside. While somewhat distinct in form and centrally located, it is nonetheless functionally obsolete, in terms of the community's existing and anticipated needs, and does little to help reinforce or convey a sense of civic pride or relate well to the Town's other civic structures, including the Town Hall, across the street. The town, overall, lacks visual identity and a sense of place, and community facilities are not well located relative to underlying land value and/or their ability to be equitably utilized by the community as a whole.



ABOVE: EXISTING COMMUNITY CENTER
RIGHT: EXISTING TOWN HALL



Discussion

These issues, above, as well as specific data provided by the Community Center Committee, concerning the spatial and functional requirements comprising an ideal community center, were considered both discreetly as it related to the community center itself, and as part of the broader discussion regarding the community, overall, and the role of the community center in that discussion. In general, the consensus was that the community center would remain in its current location and that its role as both a civic and recreational amenity would be retained.

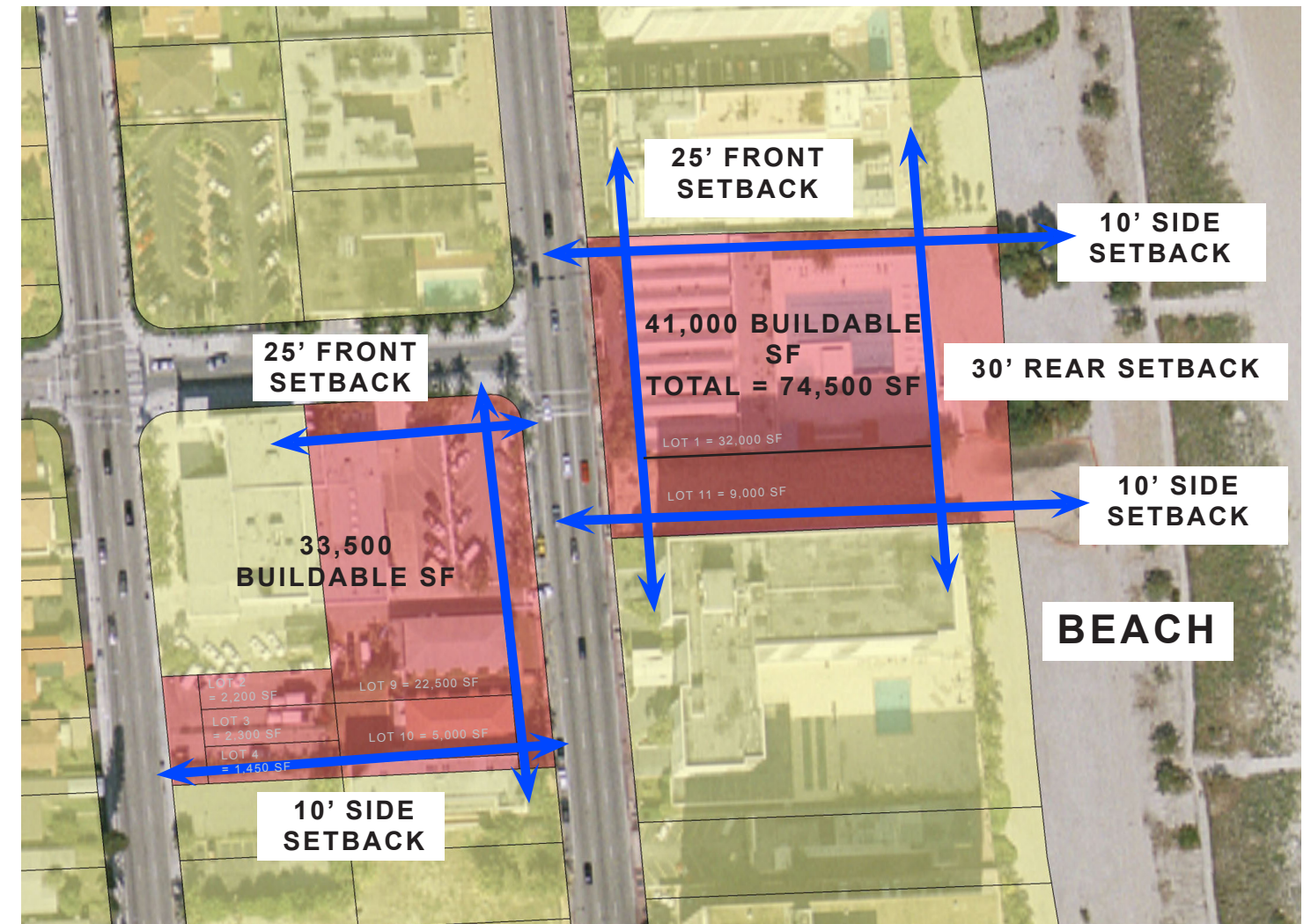
One of the main concerns for citizens with regard to accessing the community center in its current location, is the difficulty in crossing Collins Avenue by foot, especially with small children. Another is how to incorporate within the design a large, multi-function swimming pool and outdoor activity area that could accommodate all age groups.

This resulted in discussions about creating a flexible outdoor area that could be used for multiple functions. The program for the redesigned community center recognizes the need for more meeting rooms and function spaces, raising the square footage to 10,000 sf and adds a 10,000 sf fitness center. Of course, a community library remains one of the most important and critical components for inclusion in the redesigned Center.

Many residents also expressed that they wanted a band shell incorporated into any Community Center design. An early conceptual design proposal suggested that a “reversible” stage could be located next to the beach dune such that it could accommodate a large audience on the beach side and/or a smaller, more intimate audience on the other, community center side, looking out past the stage, toward the ocean beyond. A comprehensive set of massing and shading studies were undertaken during the charrette (see images), clearly illustrating the specific implications associated with the proposed functional requirements and their disposition on the site, relative to the various proposals considered.

A fundamental concept that emerged early on was the integration of both the Community Center and Town Hall into a single “Civic” Center, with special pavement treatments and other urban design strategies deployed such that the entire area would be perceived as single place. This has the added benefit of permitting the street in front of the Town Hall (93rd Street) to be closed to vehicular traffic for special events and to help signal to drivers transiting the area and passing in front of the Community center, that they were passing through a pedestrian zone, and to take extra precaution, as appropriate.

Beyond the primary focus on the new Civic Center, two other areas were identified as critical to reinforcing and conveying a unique sense of place. Community entrances were another civic amenity that generated considerable discussion, both for the town overall, as well as for the individual neighborhoods, the latter also part of the consideration given to traffic management.



COMMUNITY CENTER TOTAL BUILDABLE SQUARE FOOTAGE AND SETBACKS

In terms of community entrances, the south entrance, and the deflection of northbound Collins Avenue at that location, was identified as a site that could accommodate both a relocated Public Works Department (the existing tennis center would be relocated) and/or another civic use, housed in an iconic new structure, providing an opportunity to both extol the history of Surfside, as well as create a new entrance statement commensurate with Surfside's newly manifest civic pride.

On the north and western sides of Surfside, two other new entrance feature opportunities were considered. The first at the intersection of 96th and Harding, in the form of a traffic calming device and civic art amenity (a landscaped roundabout) and the proposed new urban plaza; the other being at 96th Street where the bridge crosses over into Surfside from the town of Bay Harbor Islands, to the west. In the latter case, newly improved facilities at the 96th Community Park were also recruited to serve as an effective entrance marquee when entering the town from that direction.

As an additional nod to community and neighborhood identity enhancement through civic art, each neighborhood street will be identified through the use of architecturally prominent and distinct entrance features that -- best case scenario -- simply mimic and/or suggest gated entrances, or... depending upon the relative success of the comprehensive traffic management strategy -- form the basis of an incremental traffic calming strategy of an increasingly overt nature, limiting cut-through traffic originating from outside of the neighborhoods.

Specific Recommendations

The most significant and profound proposal, however, in terms of creating a unified and effective sense of community and place, remains that of creating a single comprehensive Civic Center, through the deliberate placement and design of various community and civic amenities in a central location within the community fabric. And again, the consensus is clear that this should be located at the eastern terminus of the 93rd Street axis, and span from the beachfront itself, all the way to the eastern edge of the residential communities, west of Harding Avenue.

In addition to this single, comprehensive civic center, community and neighborhood entrance features -- some incorporating additional community elements or functions, are to be placed at prominent entrance locations at the principal portals into and out of the Town and its neighborhoods.

And in a similar vein, additional community and neighborhood identity can be achieved by improving and celebrating the easternmost, beach-side terminuses of the primary east-west streets, thereby effectively linking the residential neighborhoods in the west to the greater community amenity of the beachfront and beach walk linear park system.

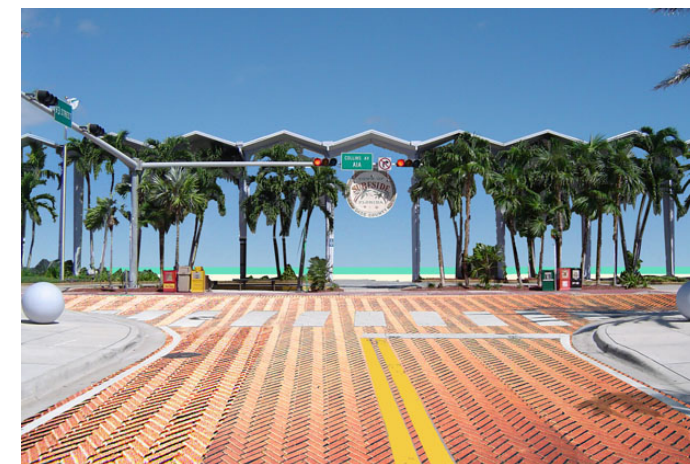
RIGHT: A series of early conceptual analysis and design proposals, exploring various issues and opportunities relating the existing community center.



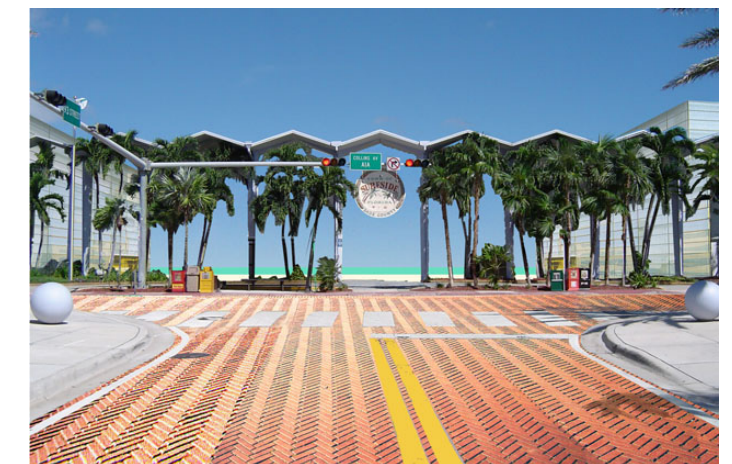
1. EXISTING COMMUNITY CENTER
The current center masks the greatest asset of the Town of Surfside, the ocean.



2. EXISTING COMMUNITY CENTER WITH NEW PAVING CONDITIONS
A simple change of the street paving material in front of the center would help to create a more defined outdoor space an sense of community place.



3. A NEW VISTA
Redesign of the building could allow for the opportunity to create framed ocean views.



4. REASSIGNMENT OF FUNCTIONS
Community Center function and administrative space could be reconfigured in a number of ways that would allow for views through to the beach and provide the community with an open and inviting place to spend time.

COMMUNITY AND CIVIC ZONE

One of the fundamental cornerstones of Surfside's proposed community master plan is the creation of a comprehensive Community and Civic Center, which would anchor and define the physical heart of the community, as well as provide a wide array of community services and amenities in one convenient, central location. The rationale for this proposed new Community and Civic Center is the proximate juxtaposition of the existing beachside community center, and the Town Hall, which is located directly across Collins Avenue from it.

By relocating the Town's Public Works department to a less valuable site elsewhere within the Town, and combining the resulting surplus land with several other available adjacent and nearby parcels, a substantial platform for re-imagining Surfside's Civic precinct is made possible. Many ideas were suggested and evaluated during the charrette, from live performance venues to rooftop tennis courts, and most have been recorded and cataloged in this document. However, several key ideas ran consistently throughout the discussion, with a few major distinctions remaining to be debated.

The primary consensus focused on the shared perception that the existing community center was the emotional and social heart of the community, and that though functionally obsolete, any new structure proposed for the site should retain a recognizable element of

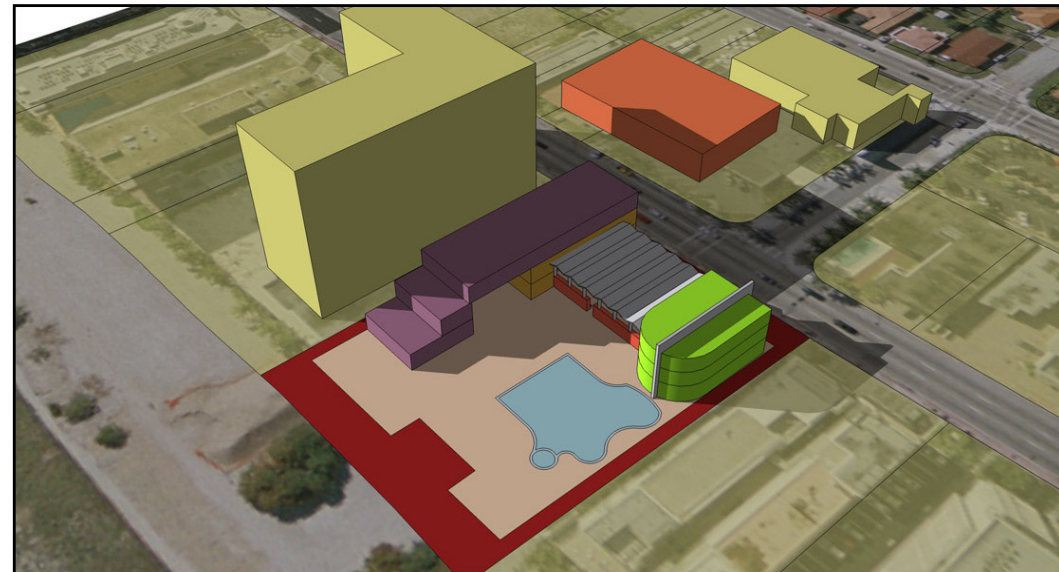
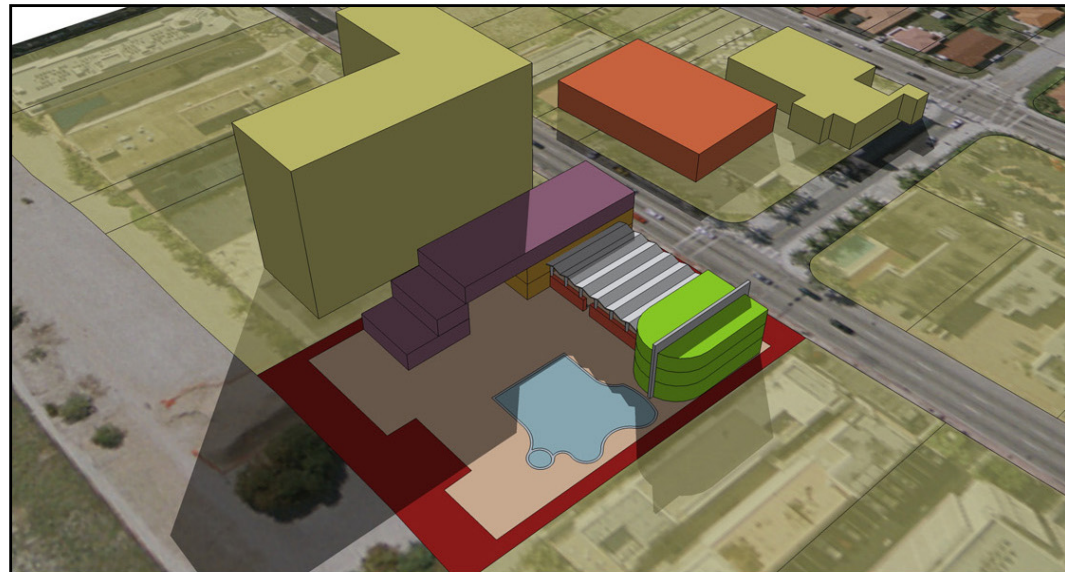
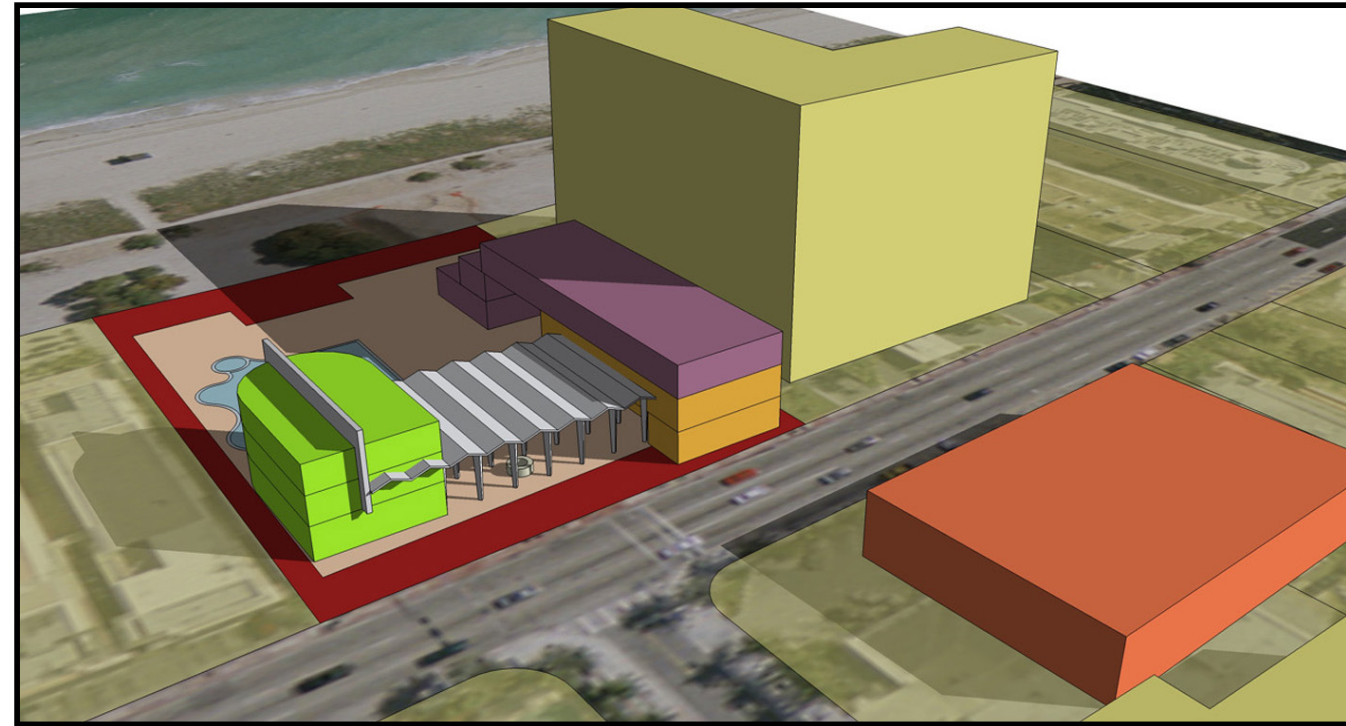
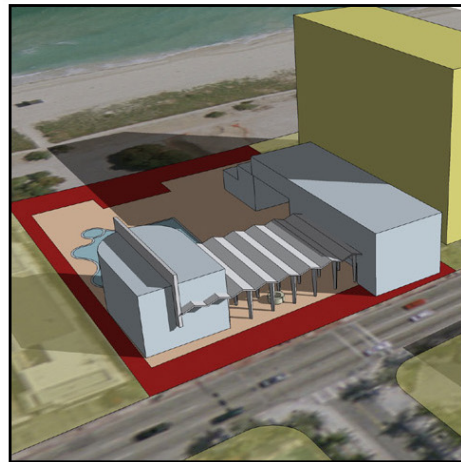


its current form as both a symbolic, as well as sentimental, manifestation of how connected the community remains through it.

To that end, its iconic crenulated roof form remains discernible and intact, regardless of the particular design concept considered. However, the question of whether or not to "wall" the beach off from the street and the rest of the Civic precinct, and/or to allow the Community Center to articulate a framed portal to the sea, reinforcing the notion of Surfside, as "beside the surf," remains for further deliberation.

SURFSIDE, FLORIDA COMMUNITY CENTER: SCHEME A

- MEETING/ADMIN.
(approx. 10,000sf)
- LIBRARY
(approx. 10,000sf)
- FITNESS
(approx. 10,000sf)
- GYMNASIUM
(approx. 15,000sf)



COMMUNITY CENTER MASSING MODEL

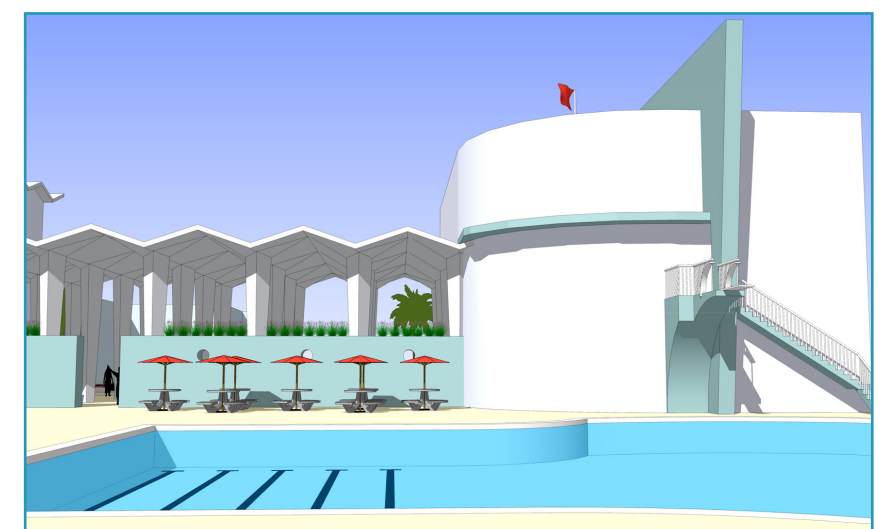
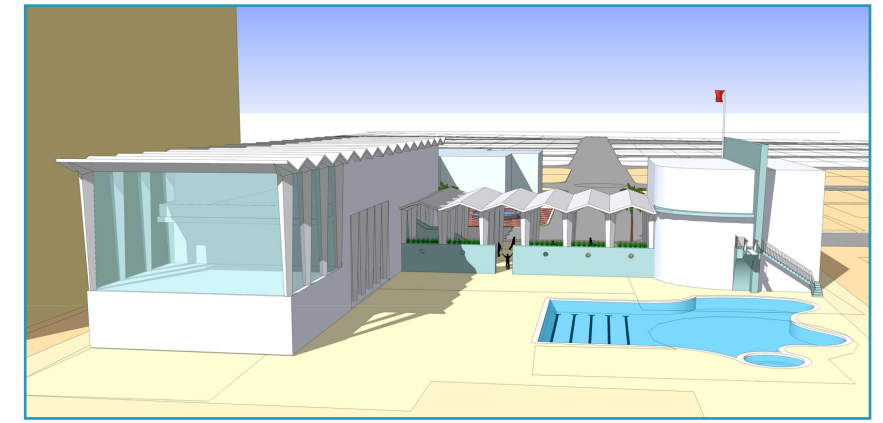
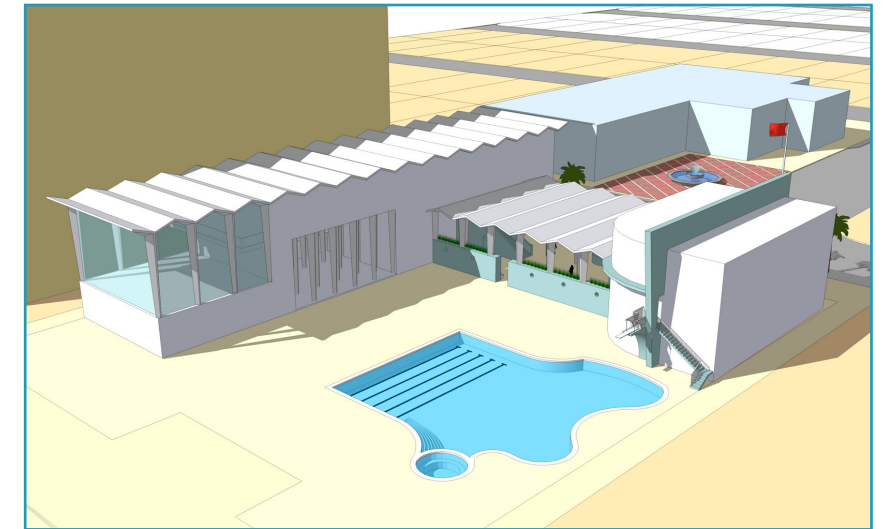
The purpose of these modeling exercises is to show, at a very basic, schematic level, the massing of various proposed community center schemes. The following 3-D models show potential building forms and the shadows they cast. The bottom-left image is taken at 3 PM, and the bottom-right image is taken at 9 AM. The intention is give the community more precise tools with which to weigh the merits of the concepts being considered.

In Scheme A the idea was to create an open loggia on the street, which would visually connect the “Civic Center” more directly to the beach, and to the activities within the Community Center. This configuration also creates a large open courtyard for programmable and multi-use activity.



3-D MODEL MODEL VIEWS OF ONE OF THE PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTER

Conceptual designs clearly shows many of the fundamental design and massing concepts, including a large, open loggia, and the expression of the crenelated roof form from the original Community Center.

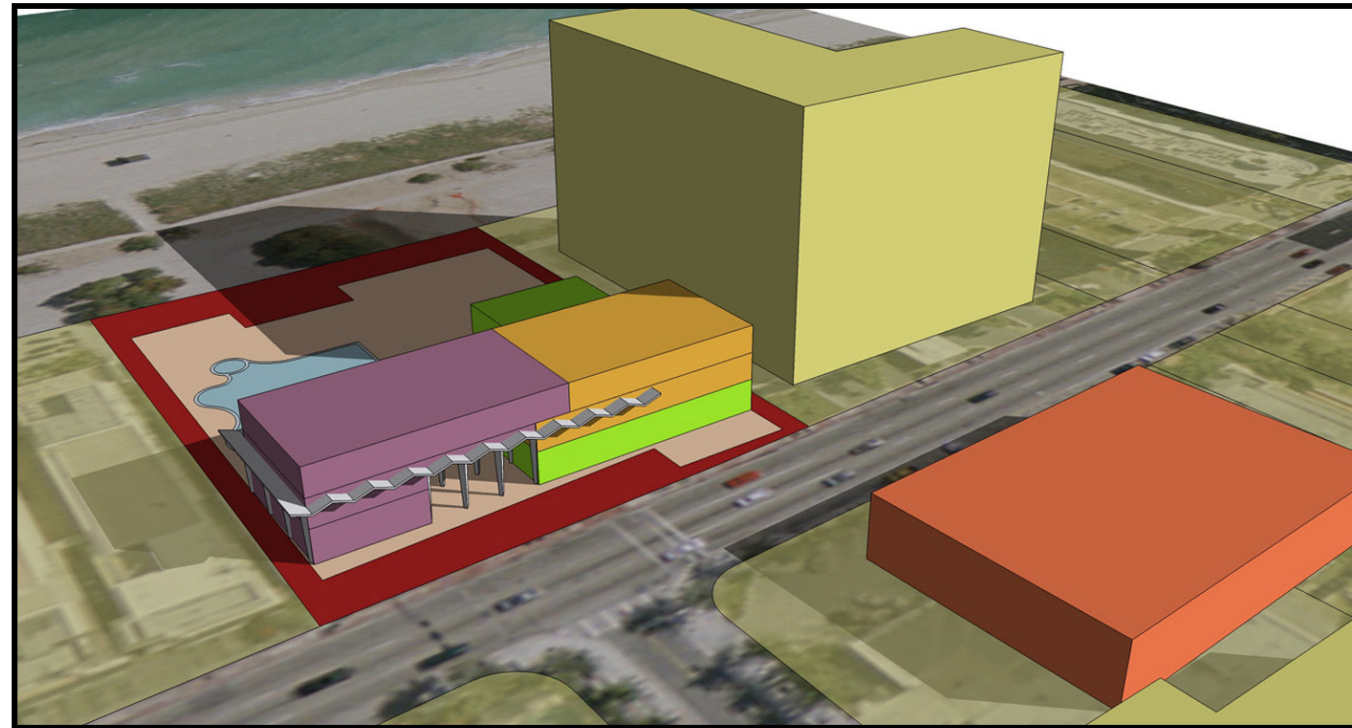
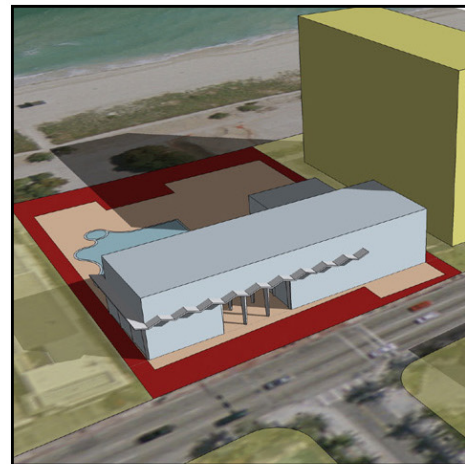




3-D MODEL RENDERING OF ONE OF THE PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTER
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FROM THE CHARRETTE

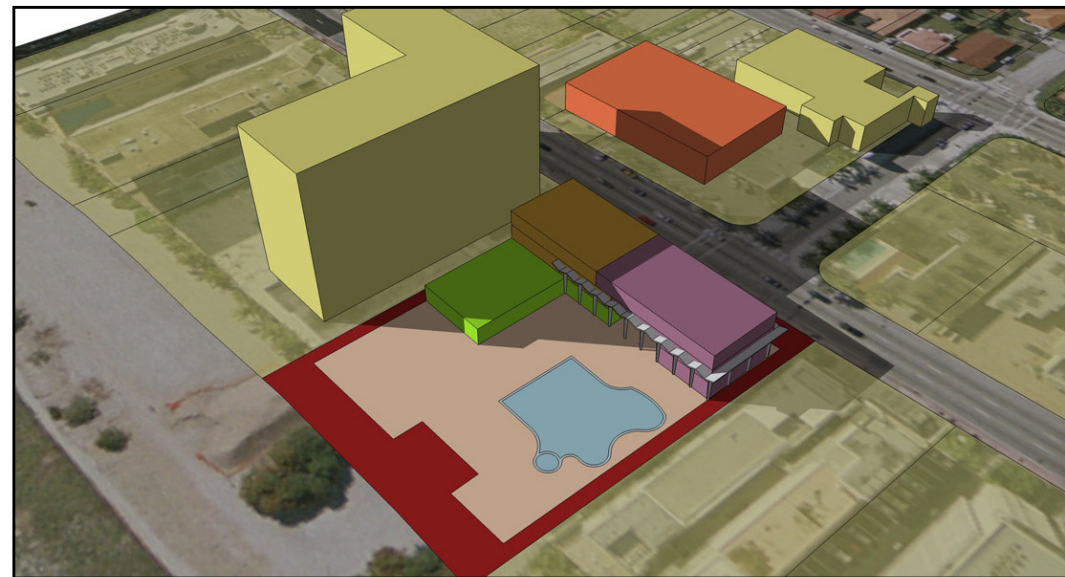
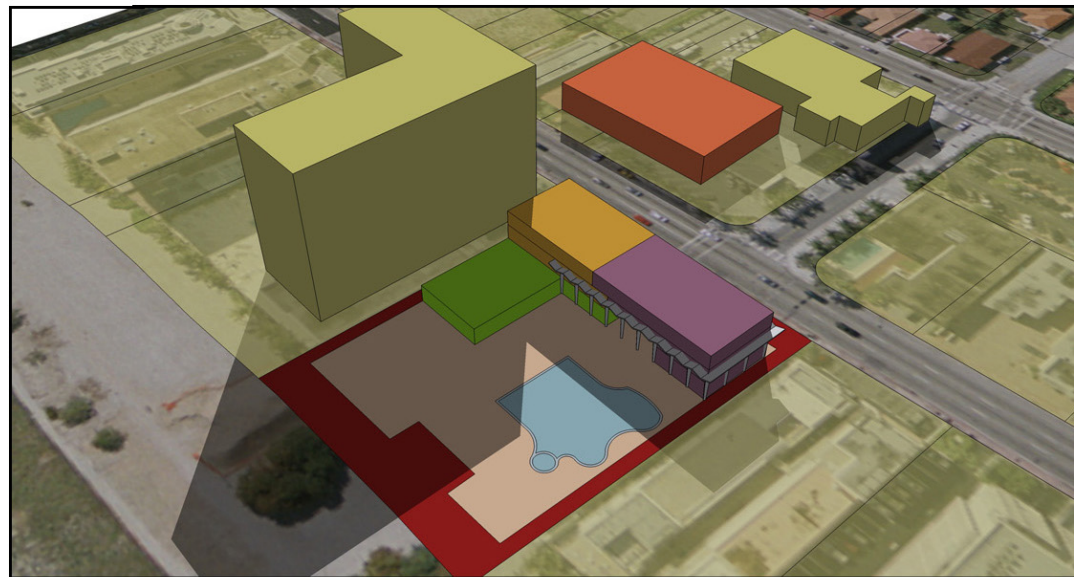
SURFSIDE, FLORIDA COMMUNITY CENTER: SCHEME B

- MEETING/ADMIN.
(approx. 10,000sf)
- LIBRARY
(approx. 10,000sf)
- FITNESS
(approx. 10,000sf)
- GYMNASIUM
(approx. 15,000sf)



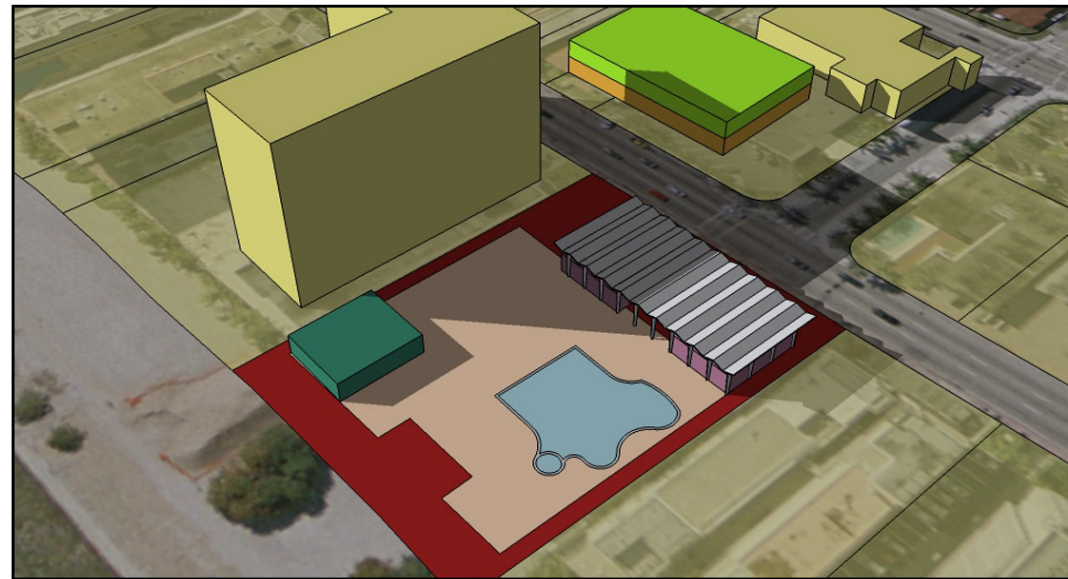
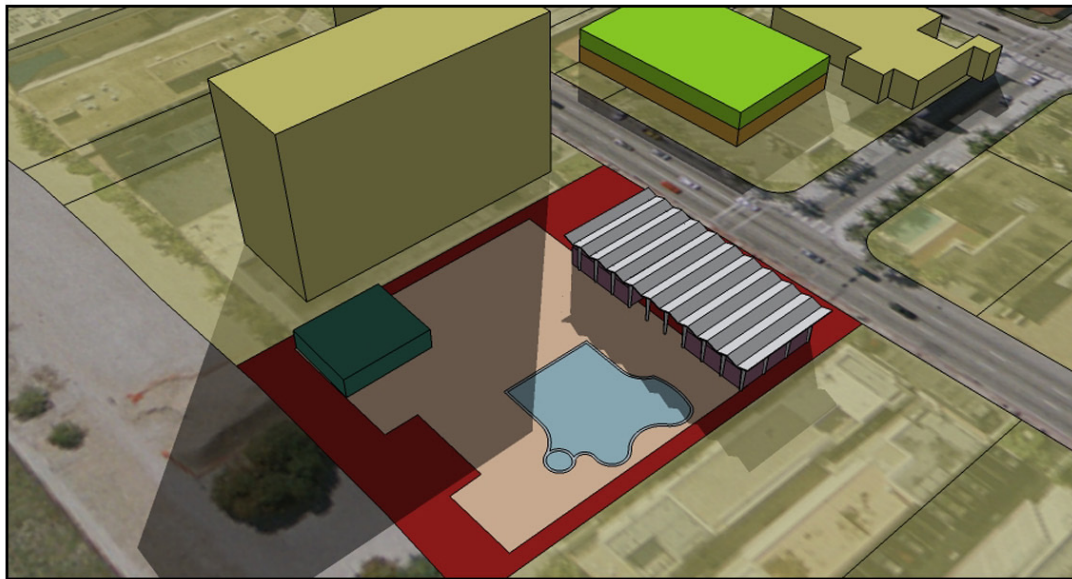
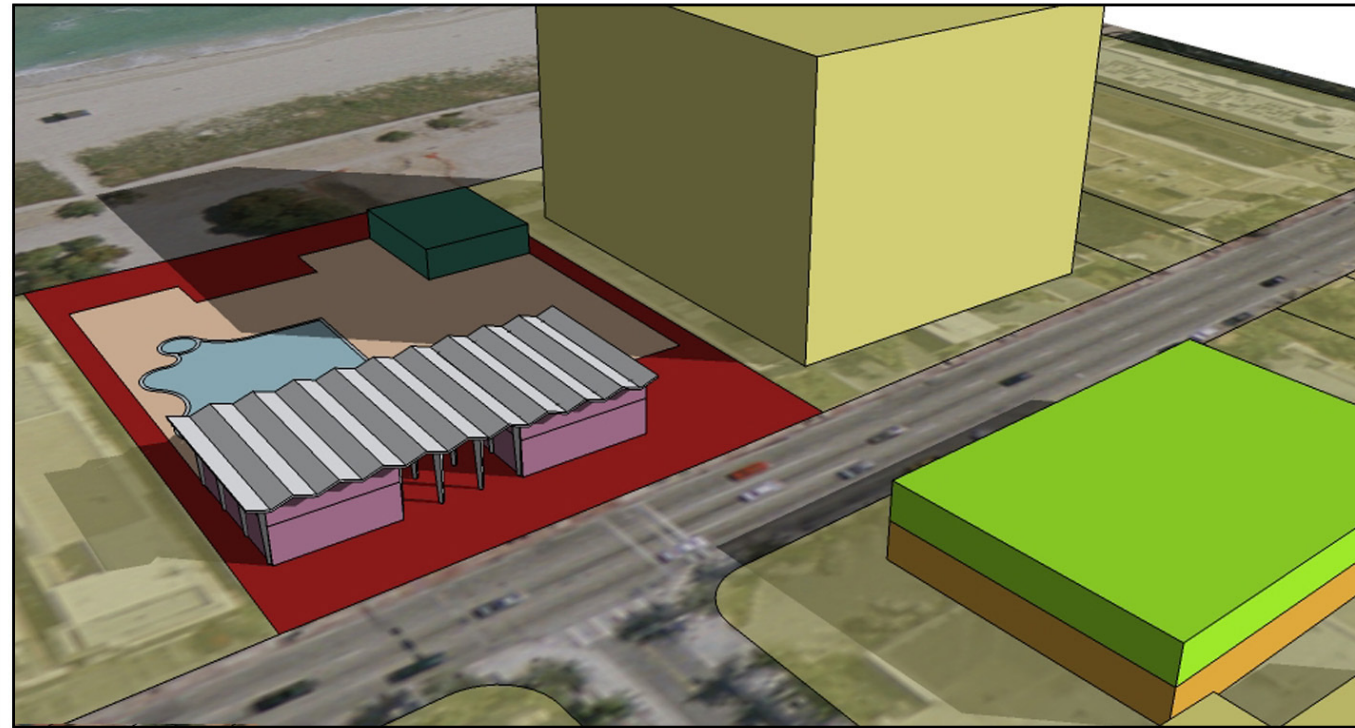
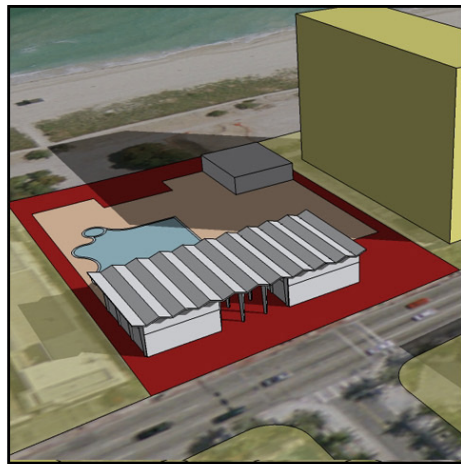
COMMUNITY CENTER MASSING MODEL

Scheme B brings most of the building mass to the front of the street, while retaining a small loggia as a transition from the street to the interior of the site. Orienting the building parallel to the coastline allows sweeping views of the ocean from inside.



SURFSIDE, FLORIDA COMMUNITY CENTER: SCHEME C

- MEETING/ADMIN.
(approx. 10,000sf)
- LIBRARY
(approx. 15,000sf)
- FITNESS/GYM
(approx. 15,000sf)
- GRILL
(approx. 2,500sf)



COMMUNITY CENTER MASSING MODEL

Scheme C moves a considerable portion of the program across Collins Avenue to the lot behind Town Hall. This minimizes the impact on the Community Center site.

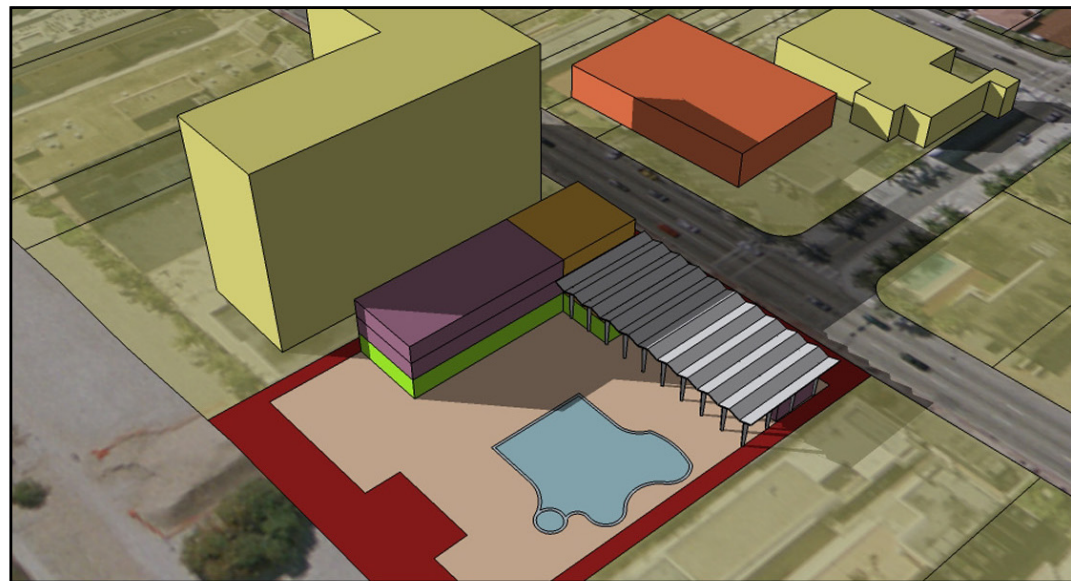
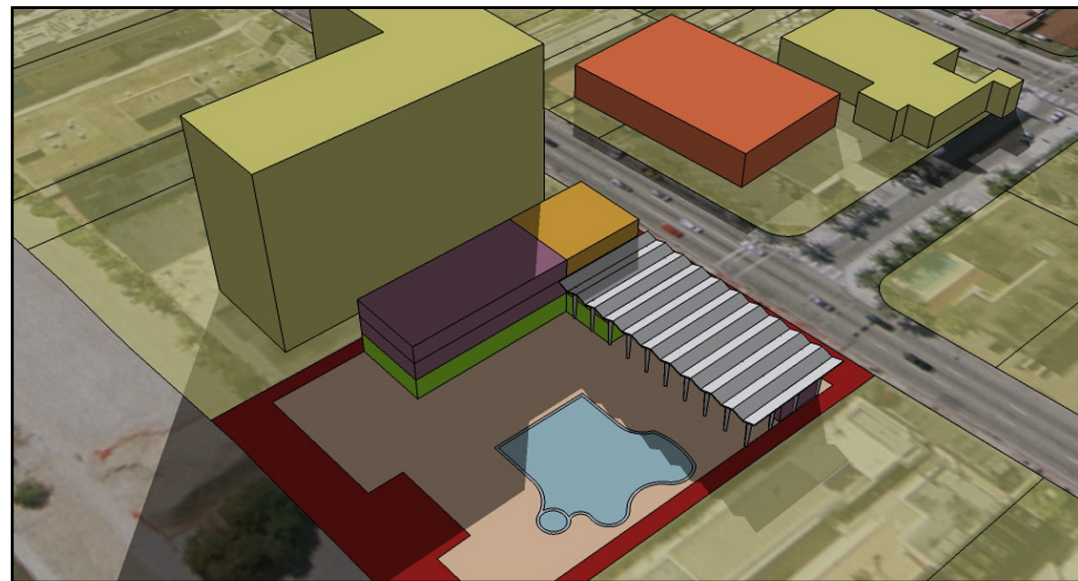
SURFSIDE, FLORIDA COMMUNITY CENTER: SCHEME D

- MEETING/ADMIN.
(approx. 10,000sf)
- LIBRARY
(approx. 10,000sf)
- FITNESS
(approx. 10,000sf)
- GYMNASIUM
(approx. 15,000sf)



COMMUNITY CENTER MASSING MODEL

Scheme D has a large open loggia on the first floor, but with the Meeting rooms on the South side, allowing for a better visual connection to the beach.



Consensus Concepts

The preceding pages outline a variety of different physical representations the various Community Center concepts proposed during the charrette. Though no hard consensus was achieved regarding any particular scheme, there were a few key ideas that emerged from the exercise which should serve to inform any subsequent detailed design effort associated with this concept.

They are as follows:

- *Build a multi-story structure toward the front (west side) of the lot, to maximize ocean views from each room.*
- *Provide a high and open breezeway through the center of the building, allowing for a terminating vista of the ocean and the horizon beyond.*
- *Split program elements on the east side, from other components, such as the gymnasium, that don't benefit as much from the ocean location, on the west side of Collins.*
- *Consolidate family-oriented uses together.*
- *Create a single, unified pedestrian-friendly district, highlighted by special paving patterns, plazas, fountains, etc., which will help reinforce the perception of a coherent sense of place.*
- *Building on the idea immediately above, design the public realm such that 93rd Street can be closed to host special community events. Also, as part of this idea, use urban design features and traffic calming techniques to enhance pedestrian crossing safety at 93rd and Collins at all times.*
- *Relocate low-value municipal functions elsewhere in the community, to free up additional space within the Community/Civic Center precinct.*
- *Relocate high-value, high-use community functions from around Surfside, to within the new Community/Civic Center precinct.*
- *Build new multi-use parking decks in close proximity to the proposed Community/Civic Center to allow more convenient resident access to program activities.*
- *Explore options for adding additional cultural venues, such as a performing arts center, to the overall programmatic mix to help improve/enhance Surfside's community stature.*
- *Incorporating the concept of the iconic crenelated roof form of the existing Community Center in any new design.*
- *Use an architectural language that specifically reflects Surfside's history and traditions.*



Surfside residents engage in collective discourse over the relative merits of various conceptual proposals for a new Community/Civic Center.

