



James E. Karas, Strategic and Community Planning

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Professional Synopsis

Versatile, Certified Facilitator and Coach for organizational, community visioning, and strategic action planning. Public engagement specialist. 35 years of accomplishments in local, regional, and state government advocacy and management. Group facilitator using consensus-building techniques to compose strategic plans for local governments, businesses, and not-for-profits.

Relevant Experience

- **Principal, Community Marine & Water Resource Planning** (15 years and current): Sole Practitioner consultant applying planning, engineering, and design talents to develop, revitalize, or preserve communities, businesses, properties, or organizations. Full suite of planning services in partnership (entitlements, master, comprehensive, visioning, transportation, strategic, LDRs, etc.) for sustainable economic development, jobs centers, marine/waterside redevelopment, conservation and resource management. Diverse strategic plan portfolio from small companies to local governments (8,000-180,000 population), and master planning, engineering solutions, and strategic capital improvements planning up to \$250M in more than 15 Florida Counties, Oklahoma, Arizona, and the Caribbean. VP of Business Development for a \$20M Florida engineering/ urban design firm.
- **Public Engagement & Outreach Specialist/Facilitator** (15 years and current): Apply advanced facilitation, various nominal group workshop, and Charrette-style planning techniques to consensus visions and strategic priorities plans for local governments, not-for-profits, neighborhoods, economic development zones, landowners, and businesses. Develop visions and branding/re-branding. Plan and execute consensus campaigns/outreach strategies ranging from media interviews to opinion surveys and social media interaction.
- **Co-Director of VHB Miller Sellen** \$2M Stuart branch office (5 years). Delivered community and resource planning, civil engineering, and design/full suite of planning services to public and private clients for over 35,000 acres in Florida Treasure Coast region.
- **Director, South Florida Water Management District** (7-1/2 years). Broward County Service Center. Implemented agency policy seeking symmetry between economic development/urban growth and sustainable water resources. Managed land use, utility /water supply planning including over \$50 M water resource partnership contracts. Staff to Governor's Commission for Sustainable South Florida. Ex-Officio Member, South Florida Regional Planning Council. Expert witness defending Everglades Restoration Plan. Timer Powers Efficiency Award.
- **Legislative Manager, Broward County** (4 years). Executed legislative agenda as registered lobbyist to secure multi-millions in appropriations including for regional economic drivers - Port Everglades Seaport, Ft. Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport, and Tri-Rail (RTA). President, Florida Association for Intergovernmental (City/County) Relations.
- **Policy Coordinator for Speaker of Florida House**, and Growth Management House Subcommittee Chief Analyst, Senior Legislative Aide in the Florida Senate. (8 years) Specialties in growth management, intergovernmental coordination, water and natural resources, and special districts. Assisted with major legislation such as Preservation 2000 and inflation-indexed gas taxation.
- **Adjunct Professor, Environmental Planning**, Florida Atlantic University (3 years).

Education/ Certifications

- Master of City and Regional Planning, Ohio State University, 1983.
- Certificate, Liberal Arts and Architecture, Oxford University, England, 1981
- Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, Southern Illinois University, 1980
- Certificate, Charrette Planning, National Charrette Institute, 2007.
- Certificate, Advanced Facilitation, Broward County Board of County Commissioners, 2003.
- Merchant Mariner Credential, (Sea Captain) 50 Ton Master, United States Coast Guard (25 years).

Select Memberships/Activities (past & current)

- Marine Industries Association of the Treasure Coast. Board Member.
- Sustainable Treasure Coast, Inc. Vice Chair.
- Urban Land Institute. Vice Chair, Southeast Florida/Caribbean Advisory Board.
- American Planning Association (Florida). Legislative Policy Committee.
- Chambers of Commerce & Economic Councils. Various affiliations & presentations.
- South Florida Regional Planning Council (Gubernatorial appointee). Ex-officio member.
- Florida Redevelopment Association, Member.

Select Projects/ Clients

Strategic Priorities Plans / Oviedo, Miami Lakes, Stuart, Indiantown, Miami Beach, Key Biscayne, Opa-Locka; Lincoln Park Mainstreet (Ft. Pierce), Muskogee, OK; in Martin County- County Commission, Business Development Board, Enterprise Zone, Education Foundation and Guardians of Martin County; St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce; Downtown Business Owners Associations (Stuart and Vero Beach); Florida Emergency Medical Association.

Strategic Redevelopment & Waterfront Planning / Stuart CRA, Palm Bay Waterfront CRA, North Miami CRA "Chinatown"

Best Practices for Citizen Participation in Florida Planning (Primary Author)/ American Planning Association Florida

Strategic Planning in Tight Budget Times State Conference seminar leader. #FLCitiesStrong Expert Strategic Plan Webinar Panelist/ Florida League of Cities

Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida/ South Florida Water Management District

Strategic Plan Steering Committee for \$250M+ solar-designed future urban prototype/ Cosanti and Arcosanti Foundation, Arizona

Multi-modal Logistics Centers, Seaports & Railroad-Navigation Planning/Ft. Lauderdale Marina Mile Coalition; Florida Inland Port, St. Lucie County; Port of Ft. Pierce; Grand Cayman Island