

Public Works Building / Zoning

“We have one opportunity to get this right.”

This was the repeated theme throughout four public workshops to discuss the newly acquired property. It is also the reason that this is on this agenda package.

The city has been looking for an alternate location for an office and for storing and maintaining Public Works vehicles and equipment for years. The city has considered purchasing multiple properties to meet the request over the years but has consistently come up short. Most recently, the BOC was very close to authorizing the purchase of the church property which is zoned Retail Commercial (C-3). Later the discussion was the property behind the Kava Shack which is also zoned Retail Commercial (C-3).

City staff tell us that rezoning approval could take up to a year, but what makes the marina property different as it is zoned Marina Commercial (C-4) which does not allow for Public Works use. The answer is the Madeira Beach Town Center Special Area Plan that was published and adopted over a decade ago in 2014. It is important to note that the Public Works building that was located at the marina had been demolished in 2013 when this Special Area Plan was being drafted.

The Special Area Plan is 89 pages long. Public Works is mentioned in four paragraphs. Here are the excerpts:

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MADEIRA BEACH TOWN CENTER
SPECIAL AREA PLAN

Improvements to Public Works Site

Public works should be provided a new or renovated building to improve the appearance of this area. The site plan should be reconsidered to take into account both frontages along 150th Avenue as well as visual impacts to the adjacent marina. Landscaping on the site can be used to improve the visual screening and aesthetics of the site.

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Next, in the area southeast of 150th Avenue extending along the Causeway, there are commercial, multi-family residential, public, and some marine land uses. The commercial uses in this area include motorcycle and automotive shops, marine-related retail, and a vacant restaurant. The far eastern edge of the study area includes the Municipal Marina and land occupied by the Department of Public Works. Plans are underway to redevelop the marina property by rebuilding wet slips, offering more transient slips, as well as a high and dry boat storage facility, a new public works complex, and a new ship store.

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Overall, the City's existing zoning districts closely follow the current land use pattern. One exception is that Archibald Park is currently zoned R-3. Also the current Public Works building is in the C-4 Marine Commercial zone.

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The public works / municipal marina complex is approximately 5.74 acres. The structures on the City's property total 9452 square feet. As established in the City of Madeira Beach Charter a referendum vote of the electors is required prior to the sale of any real property possessed by the City. Plans are underway to redevelop the property for use of the municipal marina. There will be no opportunity for the development of temporary lodging or permanent dwelling units on this site.

Why was the Public Works building at the marina demolished? We are told that the roof leaked and instead of fixing the roof, the BOC voted to tear it down. Does this indicate that the existing building was not meeting the needs of the Public Works Department, or that the BOC was considering relocating the Public Works Department to the mainland?

Late 2012 – Early 2013: The Public Works building at the marina was demolished

July 9, 2013: BOC spoke of 12,000 sq. ft. leased space in Bay Pines with bathroom and office. The intent was to use the space where the old Public Works building used to be at the marina to dock boats in the space at the marina to make money for the city.

August 13, 2013: BOC voted unanimously "to approve the LEASE AGREEMENT FOR BUILDING WITH STORAGE FOR GARBAGE TRUCKS AND VARIOUS PUBLIC WORKS EQUIPMENT". The agreement was for a 3-year lease with (2) 1-year options to renew.

Fast forward to 2021:

2021 Workshops: In 2020, newly elected Mayor John Hendricks stated that the Marina property was a "gem" and needed to be developed as a revenue generator for the city. Mayor Hendricks proposed a combination of high & dry with Public Works space. The proposal never went to a vote.

2025 Summary:

February 12, 2025: The commission approved starting the design process for a new Public Works building at a site in front of the Madeira Beach Municipal Marina. This was a **split vote** (4-1 in favor), with Commissioner Kerr casting the dissenting vote due to objections over the location's impact.

April 2, 2025: The commission approved a change order for design services. This was a **split vote** (3-2 in favor), with Vice Mayor Kerr and Commissioner Ghovae casting dissenting votes due to objections over the engineering costs and the location's impact.

October 1, 2025: The commission **unanimously voted 5-0** to approve the purchase of a 4.6-acre waterfront parcel (at 555 150th Ave.) for \$18 million. This property was explicitly intended (in part) to provide a new home/site for the Public Works facility/department, alongside marina relief and potential recreational/commercial development. (Note: This is a land acquisition vote enabling the building project, not a final construction authorization.)

To be clear, Ray Kerr's vote to approve in October 2025 was to reject the idea of the PW building to be built on the newly purchased property. It was not an endorsement to build it on the marina property.

2026 Public Opinion:

Based on a 48-hour post on Nextdoor the public overwhelmingly does not want the Public Works Department to be located at the marina. The post was directed only to Madeira Beach community, and all respondents were from Madeira Beach. The post did not allow anyone to respond after 48 hours to prevent other board members from responding and violating the Sunshine Laws. A copy is included in this agenda.

Conversations with residents throughout Madeira Beach confirm the results of this inquiry.

Holton Property & Marina Development Plans:

Both properties are zoned Marina Commercial (C-4) and are largely undeveloped. The only exception is the marina's ship store at the water's edge. The results of the four public meetings strongly support a long-needed parking garage as without it, the marina prohibits charter boat captains from using the marina property to pick up their guests. This impacts the revenue generated by the marina in the sale of bait, food, drinks, ice, fuel and retail merchandise.

The combined 10-acre waterfront development plan should be designed by professionals such as Kimley-Horn who developed the city's Master Plan. It should be noted that the Public Works building is not included in either the Duany Plan (2002) or the recently adopted Master Plan (2025).

One Possible Solution:

The public need for a parking garage and the Public Works need for equipment storage (excluding garbage trucks) may not be mutually exclusive. A portion of the Ground Floor parking level could be dedicated to Public Works vehicles and equipment that needs to stay on the island. The garbage trucks should not be stored, staged, or repaired on the island.

The parking garage for Johns Pass Village could also be designed to accommodate the storage of equipment used to service Johns Pass Village and the beach.

Public Works office(s) and meeting space could share the Kava Shack building if the city acts fast as it is currently for sale. Note that the Kava Shack building is at an elevated ground level but did not flood during the 2024 hurricanes. A previous owner had engineering study done that confirmed a second level could be added but unfortunately, they have passed and the engineering study is no longer available.

The lease of the Big Blue building and yard would continue to be used for garbage truck storage, staging and vehicle service and maintenance. The option to purchase Keller's garage may also remain an option.