

EXPANDED ANSWER 45: LAND USE

As new owners of a tremendous amount of prime land, it will be incumbent upon us to manage it well for the long term benefit of the island and its residents. An overall plan will be required to guide us through measured growth. On the one hand, we will have control of valuable property that could bring a small fortune if sold off efficiently. On the other hand, if too much land is developed too quickly, the infrastructure will be overtaxed, the population density too crowded, and the quality of the island we love so much would be lost. The past overall master plans for the development of Vieques were not very responsive to the will of our people and are obsolete in view of the potential now to take charge of the big picture.

We must determine the nature and the image of the island that we want to see decades into the future. We need to evaluate the qualities and attributes of the various land areas, the needs of the population, the economics of development, the existing/required infrastructure, the environmental impact, the target growth rate of the community, and many other factors.

If we decide to encourage agriculture, fertile soil areas with lesser slopes will need to be zoned for such. If we elect to solicit aquaculture, coastal areas may be necessary. High end residential venues will be drawn to waterfront areas and higher hill parcels for views. We could lead the market and the rational development of the country through phased infrastructure implementation.

The majority of the existing roads in Vieques were built years ago, and buildings were placed very close to them. Consequently, many streets are much too narrow to accommodate parking, sidewalks, or bike/horse trails. Taking land from street-front property owners for such purposes is a legal option, but it is not necessarily a good idea in many neighborhoods. New development should reflect eco-tourism infrastructure such as mini parks and hiking/biking/horseback trails. Planned Unit Development techniques should be favored over simple subdivision.

The plaza and surrounding municipal buildings form an attractive and unifying theme for Isabel Segunda. An Old San Juan kind of feeling might be a stretch, but a quaint, historic flavor could be expanded upon. Concentration of most national buildings and consolidation of offices near the plaza might create a "capital city" for both beautification and efficiency. Amenities could be added to encourage more walking and less driving in town: park and walk. More one way streets and angled parking could significantly help traffic flow. Removing some derelict buildings and using the land for parking would assist the effort. Wider walkways in some areas are needed. A large parking lot at the ferry would help with congestion considerably. The ferry dock area should be redesigned and include a marina for both fishermen and private boats to moor safely at a network of docks with services. The cargo ferry should be moved to the Rompeolas immediately.

Mosquito Pier should also be configured to accept the ferry, and barges. Container ships or others requiring heavy infrastructure would use our Roosevelt Roads facilities. New facilities

would be designed to minimize the environmental impact and be consistent with our eco-island approach to everything.