

# PHASE 1

WATERFRONT



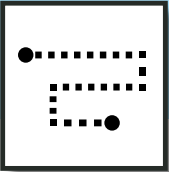
HISTORY



CHARM



CONNECTIVITY



DEVELOPMENT



The master planning process for Downtown Green Cove Springs yielded numerous opportunities and capital improvement projects. One of the most common obstacles to implementation of these types of plans are the lack of a clear starting point.

This 20-Year Vision for the future of Downtown Green Cove Springs begins by implementing the projects and improvements outlined in Phase 1. These projects are listed by order of importance within the Phase 1 Table and are shown spatially on the following page. The key objectives for Phase 1 are to set the stage for current and future growth by capitalizing on Downtown’s **WATERFRONT** vistas via a destination restaurant, establish a Downtown brand which captures the **HISTORY** and **CHARM** of the Study Area, identify funding and regulatory mechanisms to support future **DEVELOPMENT** projects within the public and private realm, and seek to coordinate (and lead as necessary) roadway improvement projects which enhance **CONNECTIVITY** between existing and future Downtown assets.

Phase 1 (1-5 Years)		
1	Leverage City-owned Catalyst Site to attract a Destination Restaurant	\$\$\$
2	Establish a Downtown Community Redevelopment Agency	\$
3	Adopt Downtown Brand and Logo	\$
4	Establish & Adopt Form-Based Code	\$
5	Pursue grants for restoration of the Judge Rivers House	\$
6	Identify use for unfinished/unoccupied rooms in City Hall	\$\$
7	Increase Downtown Parking Supply (within Focus Area)	\$\$\$
8	US 17 and Walnut Street Intersection Enhancement	\$\$\$\$
9	Improve Walnut Street Corridor (From Palmetto Ave. to the River)	\$\$\$\$
10	Magnolia Avenue - Festival Street	\$\$\$
11	FDOT Improvements to US 17 Corridor (Oak Street to Governor’s Creek)	\$\$\$\$
12	Design and Construct City Hall Park	\$\$\$
EST. COST: \$ = <\$100,000   \$\$ = \$100,000-\$1 Million   \$\$\$ = \$1-5 Million   \$\$\$\$ = >\$5 Million		





# PHASE 1 OVERVIEW



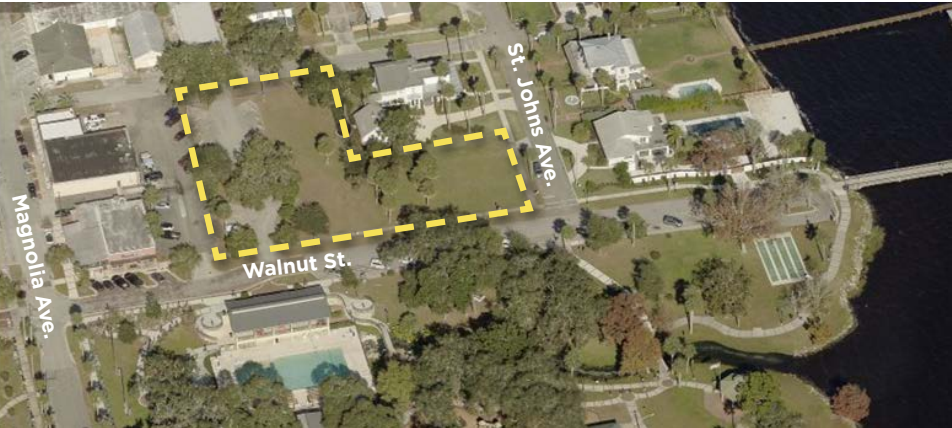
# 1. Leverage City-owned Catalyst Site to attract a Destination Restaurant

Walnut Street, between North Orange Avenue and the St. Johns River, is the original commercial Main Street of Green Cove Springs. Today, there are only two operating commercial uses along this segment: the Clay Theatre and Ronnie’s Wings. Re-establishing the urban form and function of this corridor, in an architectural style and massing compatible with the community character, should be the fundamental first step in restoring the historic vitality of Downtown Green Cove Springs.

The City owns four contiguous parcels totaling approximately .92 acres along Walnut Street just north of Spring Park. This property is well-positioned for a destination restaurant that could offer convenient onsite parking and beautiful waterfront vistas.

The City was recently awarded a \$400,000 grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. This grant would help to fund Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater measures such as pervious parking spaces, tree boxes and bioswales on this property and along Walnut Street from the River to Magnolia Avenue.

Utilizing the state authorized redevelopment tools provided through the establishment of a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), the City should position the property as a ‘pad-ready’ site with parking and solicit proposals for development that would include a destination restaurant. Preparation of the property should include appropriate site civil, geotechnical and environmental analyses as well as a conceptual design for parking and stormwater.



Utilizing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), instead of a Request for Proposals (RFP), would allow the City to select a development partner and work collaboratively towards establishing a commercially viable project that complements the rich character of Downtown Green Cove Springs.

Development of the site should be of traditional urban form and compatible with the existing architectural styles in Downtown Green Cove Springs. Consistent with an anticipated form-based code, the site provides the opportunity for the development of two or three buildings fronting Walnut Street. The buildings should be limited to no more than three stories with a maximum setback of ten feet, as measured from building face to the northern edge of sidewalk/right-of-way line. Parking should be behind the buildings. The City should also retain the right to approve the architecture of the building to ensure that the development complements the existing character of the community.

The revitalization of the entire Walnut Street corridor is an important long-term objective of this Downtown Master Plan. This segment (between North Orange Avenue and the River), with its proximity to the popular Spring Park, was prioritized in order to spur additional redevelopment within the Study Area.



### Catalyst Site Development Process

1. Identify potential development partners to invite to respond
2. Prepare and issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a development partner that clearly states the City's vision for the property
3. Review, short-list, and interview the top three respondents; make selection
4. Negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (City/Developer) to establish a process and schedule for the creation of a development plan
5. Advance the following site planning efforts:
  - a. Developer performs their due diligence and commences planning efforts
  - b. City performs environmental and geotechnical investigations of the site
  - c. City identifies relevant City investments affecting the project site (e.g., streetscapes, park enhancements and other capital improvements)
  - d. City identifies potential assistance that may be available to the Developer (e.g., design assistance, grants, TIF rebates, fee waivers and/or discounts)
  - e. Developer proposes a development plan and requests incentives
  - f. City and Developer negotiate terms of a Development Agreement
6. Prepare and execute Development Agreement
7. Commence Construction





## 2. Establish a Downtown Community Redevelopment Agency

The establishment of a Community Redevelopment Agency is a critical first step towards revitalization and the implementation of the Downtown Master Plan.

Community Redevelopment Agencies are authorized by Chapter 163, Part III of the Florida Statutes. Under Chapter 163, Part III, local governments are able to designate areas as Community Redevelopment Areas where “slum and blight” exist. Examples of conditions that can support the creation of a Community Redevelopment Area include, but are not limited to: the presence of substandard or inadequate structures, a shortage of affordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient roadways, and inadequate parking.

To determine if those conditions exist, the City would evaluate the proposed redevelopment area and prepare a Finding of Necessity report. If the Finding of Necessity determines that the required conditions exist, the City may create a Community Redevelopment Agency to provide the tools needed to foster and support redevelopment of the targeted area.

The activities and programs offered within a Community Redevelopment Area are administered by the Community Redevelopment Agency, a five to seven member CRA “Board” created by the City that directs the agency. The Community Redevelopment Agency is responsible for developing and implementing the Community Redevelopment Plan that addresses the unique needs of the targeted area.

The plan includes the overall goals for redevelopment in the area, as well as identifying the types of projects planned for the area. Potential projects and programming contained in CRA Plan include: streetscape and roadway improvements, building renovations, new building construction, water and sewer improvements, parking lots and garages, neighborhood parks, streetscape, sidewalks and street tree plantings. The CRA Plan can also include redevelopment incentives such as grants and loans for such things as façade improvements, building stabilization, business recruitment and business retention programs.

Many of the proposed strategic investments and projects within the Green Cove Springs Downtown Master Plan are typical of the those contained within a Community Redevelopment Plan. As such, this Master Plan could easily serve as the base document for the creation the Green Cove Springs Community Redevelopment Plan.

### CRA Establishment Process

1. Coordinate redevelopment goals and objectives with Clay County
2. Prepare and adopt a Findings of Necessity report to identify conditions of slum and blight within the targeted area
3. Develop and adopt the Community Redevelopment Plan to address the unique needs of the targeted area via the identification of goals, objectives, and projects
4. Receive Delegation of Authority Resolution from the County
5. Establish the Community Redevelopment Agency and its Board
6. Create a Redevelopment [Tax Increment] Trust Fund to direct the increase in real property tax revenues back into the targeted area

### 3. Adopt Downtown Brand & Logo

The inspiration for the branding of Green Cove Springs started with an assessment of the character and personality of the City. Through interviews, a walking audit, and branding research, it was clear to see the rich history and natural beauty deserving of celebration within the logo for the Downtown.

The physical elements of the City that are showcased in the final logo composition include oak trees, charming brick streets, decorative lamp posts, and the re-imagined historic buildings along Walnut Street. The spring and river elements are honored in the waves below and “Cove” is emphasized in the City name above. The badge design compliments the City seal and the colors reflect a cohesive brand approach.

The objective of this branding initiative was to establish the Downtown area as a unique place within the City. This guided the emphasis of “Downtown” in the final design. The tagline speaks to the geographic significance of the City along the St. Johns River and nods to the residents’ cherished Floridian lifestyle—Where Cove Life Happens.

Full-color logo



3-color logo variations

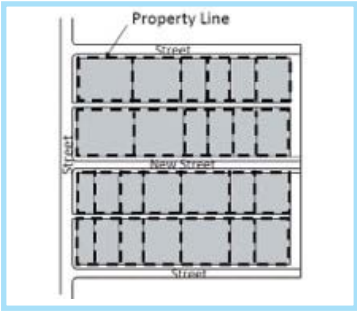


## 4. Establish & Adopt Form-Based Code

The Land Development Code and Zoning Map are the most important tools for implementing the vision for Downtown. Most sites in the Downtown are zoned Central Business District (CBD), the north and south gateways into downtown (US 17) are zoned Gateway Corridor Commercial (GCC), and the south side of the Ferris Street corridor and the west side of Palmetto Avenue are zoned Gateway Corridor Neighborhood (GCN). There are a few sites on Magnolia Avenue zoned R-1. Public sites are zoned Institutional (INS). While the current zoning standards have tried to address infill, redevelopment, and quality of design, transitioning to a Form-Based Code for the Downtown area and the US 17 and SR 16 commercial corridors as they enter the downtown would be the best option to achieve the vision.

The intent of the Form-Based Code (FBC) will be to preserve the existing character of the Downtown, while promoting quality infill and redevelopment in a walkable and mixed-use urban environment. The new FBC will contribute to streamlining the current zoning and development review process and provide developers, builders and residents with a more predictable and transparent process for development and redevelopment. Implementation of a form-based code would also lead to greater interest in the city for new investment and economic growth that would be fueled by the creation of a richer and more vibrant urban environment in the heart of Green Cove Springs.

Recommendations for implementing a Form-Based Code within the City are detailed within Supplemental Document B.



### Block Layout / Connectivity

Block size is key to achieving good urban form and transportation connectivity. Shorter blocks improve the pedestrian experience as well as foster a street network that supports the efficient distribution of traffic. The urban core gridded network shall be maintained and improved.



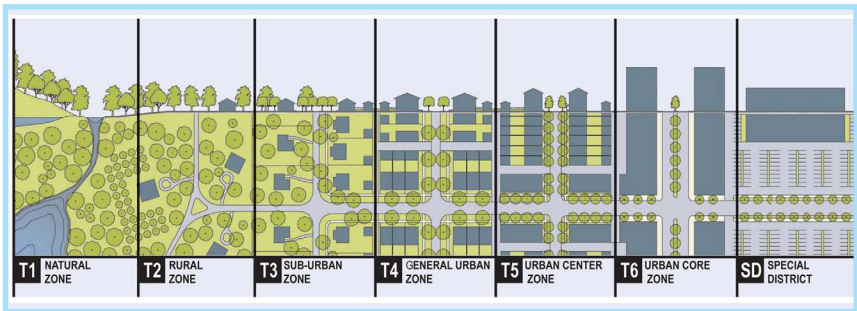
### Building Placement / Orientation

The placement of a building on a site is critical to creating a vital and coherent public realm. Buildings must be oriented to the street; parking areas must be placed behind the buildings. Building orientation can also be defined by locating prominent entrances along the principal street.



### Public Realm

Sidewalks in commercial areas must be wide enough to accommodate pedestrian activity, landscaping and streetscape furniture. Due to the lack of right-of-way along certain corridors, some sites may need to dedicate an easement to the city to accommodate such elements.

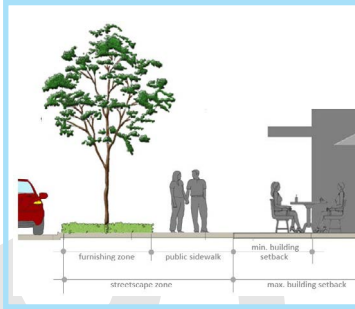


### Regulating Plan

The organizing principle of a FBC is the regulating plan, a two-dimensional graphic that depicts the geographic distribution of the transect zones. Generally, the T-Zones range from T-1 to T-6, depending on the local context but not all FBCs include all 6.

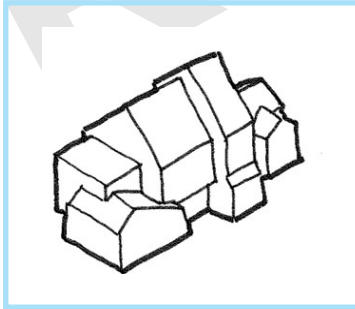
Source: Form-Based Codes Institute





### Building Frontage and Setbacks

Minimum building frontage (the length of the façade along the street) and consistent front setbacks are important to creating a continuous urban form. Buildings need to be constructed close to the streets and sidewalks but not so close that the public realm is diminished.



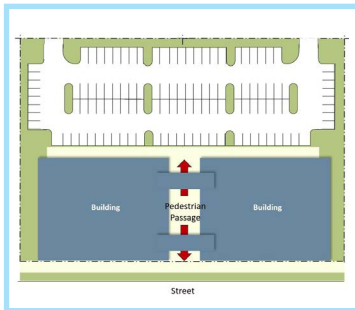
### Building Form, Massing and Scale

Standards must be adopted to ensure buildings have certain components (e.g., base, middle and top) and large building volumes are divided to appear as smaller volumes grouped together. Volume breaks may be achieved by volume projections and recesses, and varying heights and roof lines.



### Façade Articulation & Fenestration

Facades must be designed to reduce the monolithic appearance of large unadorned walls. Fenestration (the arrangement of windows and doors along a façade) is a critical part of façade articulation. The percentage of fenestration shall be regulated to ensure transparency and adequate façade design.



### Circulation, Access & Parking

Vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic must be addressed. Curb cuts along primary streets should be minimized. Rear alleys, secondary roadways or joint use driveways should be used instead. Parking flexibility is needed in the core, especially if the city is committed to providing public parking in the Downtown.



### Landscaping, Lighting and Drainage

Landscaping standards should focus less on buffers and use separation and more on providing shade and accentuating buildings and public spaces. Lighting should focus on safety and compatibility. Low Impact Development practices (e.g., green roofs, rain gardens, rain cisterns, or other design techniques) should be encouraged.



### Signage, Wayfinding & Murals

Sign regulations must ensure redevelopment and infill projects have adequate signage in line with the vision for Downtown. Standards must also address storefront signage location, materials, and size to ensure a consistent environment. Murals and wayfinding should be addressed separately from the Code and instead be managed the city.



### Public Art / Murals

Art (sculptures and murals) are an important part of urban life. Vibrant downtowns are made more unique when sprinkled with local art. The city should consider adopting an art program that would allow sculptures and murals throughout the core. Murals should not be regulated as signs as they are not intended as advertisement but rather as works of art. They should be allowed as part of a program managed by the city. Many cities in Florida have established their own programs and include requirements such as prior experience of the artist, size and placement limitations.



5. Pursue grants and other funding sources for restoration of the Judge Rivers House

The Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, offers *Special Category Matching Grants* up to \$500,000 on an annual basis. Development projects with the mission of Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation or Reconstruction of historic properties that are both owned by local governments and are regularly open to the public are eligible for this grant.

A formal announcement of the City’s intent to preserve and restore the Judge Rivers House can help galvanize community support for this effort. A local non-profit organization, formed by supporters, could help raise funds for restoration and foster momentum for the project.





## 6. Identify use for unfinished/unoccupied rooms in City Hall

The combination of City Hall’s classical architecture and prominent location on the corner of Walnut Street and Orange Avenue render this important civic facility as one of Downtown’s most prolific symbols of local character, history, and beauty. However, much like the Downtown itself, City Hall is full of underutilized potential. With a wealth of arched windows overlooking Downtown Green Cove Springs, two of the facility’s most prominent rooms in the building are amongst its most beautiful, yet these spaces are currently being used for storage. The City should seek to immediately remedy this issue by identifying and cultivating strategic partnerships to finish and activate these spaces. Potential uses for these rooms should be those which seek to further enhance the vibrancy and activity within Downtown, as identified below.



### COMMUNITY MEETING SPACE | SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATOR | ART GALLERY





7. Increase Downtown Parking Supply (within Focus Area)

THA Consulting completed a parking study in 2022 which examined existing and projected parking conditions within the greater Downtown area of Green Cove Springs. During their analysis, THA Consulting found that the City currently possesses a parking surplus within the overall Parking Study Area on both weekdays and weekends. However, when the firm examined conditions within the Core Sub-Area (loosely defined as the area west of US 17 between Palmer and Ferris St.), it found that although the weekday parking supply was sufficient, the Core Sub-Area experienced a shortage of 41 spaces during the weekend. Furthermore, projected parking demand for the overall Parking Study Area (based upon 2031 population projections) was not expected to exceed the Area’s current supply by 2031, but the existing weekend parking deficiency within the Core Sub-Area is expected to marginally increase throughout the next nine years.

The City should begin the process of incrementally increasing the parking supply Downtown. Five potential parking improvements (three on-street and two off-street) are proposed for Phase 1, which are identified in the following Table and illustrated on the Phase 1 Parking Map. These potential parking improvements were selected based on their potential to increase the area’s total supply for parking, their location to major parking generators (e.g., Spring Park, the Walnut Street business corridor), and their estimated feasibility based upon the properties’ current ownership status (*note: Projects A and C will require the acquisition of private property*).

As Downtown Green Cove Springs further develops and the projects identified within Phases 1, 2, and 3 of this Master Plan continue to be implemented, the City should remain vigilant of the Study Area’s changing parking demands before moving forward with additional parking improvements (particularly if they would hinder walkability within the Study Area or fail to consider alternative modes of travel, such as bikes, scooters, transit, ride-sharing apps, etc.). However, if the demand for vehicular parking clearly escalates within the Study Area to such a degree that it effectively discourages further private sector investment, two potential locations for structured parking have been identified in Phase 3.

Phase 1 Proposed Parking Improvements (Est.)

Parking Type & Location		EXISTING Spaces	PROPOSED Spaces	Net Change
A	Mid-Block Palmer Street Parking Lot (Between Magnolia & St. Johns Ave.)	18 spaces (60°)	48 spaces (90°)	30 spaces
B	Walnut Street On-Street Parking (East of Magnolia Ave.)	22 spaces (30° & 60°)	41 spaces (30° & 90°)	19 spaces
C	Palmetto Ave. & Spring St. Intersection Parking Lot (Northeast Quadrant)	22 spaces (90°)	60 spaces (90°)	38 spaces
D	Magnolia Ave. Festival Street Parking (Between Walnut & Spring Street)	0 spaces	29 spaces (90° & Parallel)	29 spaces
E	Magnolia Ave. On-Street Parking (Between Spring & Ferris St.)	0 spaces	21 spaces (Parallel)	21 spaces
F	City Hall Off-Street Parking (See City Hall Park Project)	26 spaces (45° & 90°)	12 spaces (45°)	-14 spaces
G	Walnut Street On-Street Parking (Between Orange Ave. and Palmetto Ave.)	20 spaces (Parallel)	10 spaces (Parallel)	-10 spaces
Total Increase				113 spaces





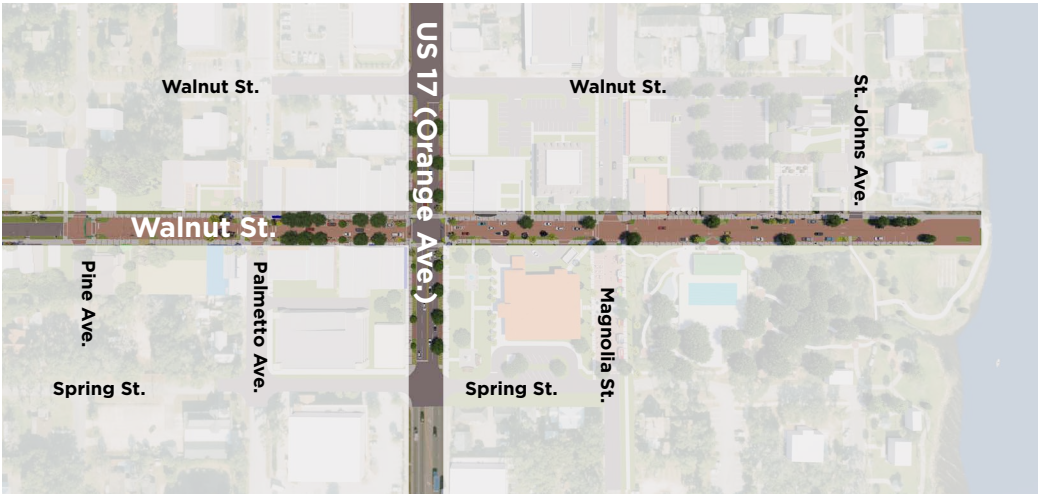
# PHASE 1 PARKING



## 8. US 17 & Walnut Street Intersection Enhancement

Approximately 25,000 cars per day cross Walnut Street via US 17 and this amount is expected to double by the year 2045 with the completion of the First Coast Expressway. How many people in these vehicles realize they are driving through Historic Green Cove Springs, the Clay County seat? Furthermore, how do these fast-moving cars serve as a divide to pedestrian movement from the east to the west side of the City?

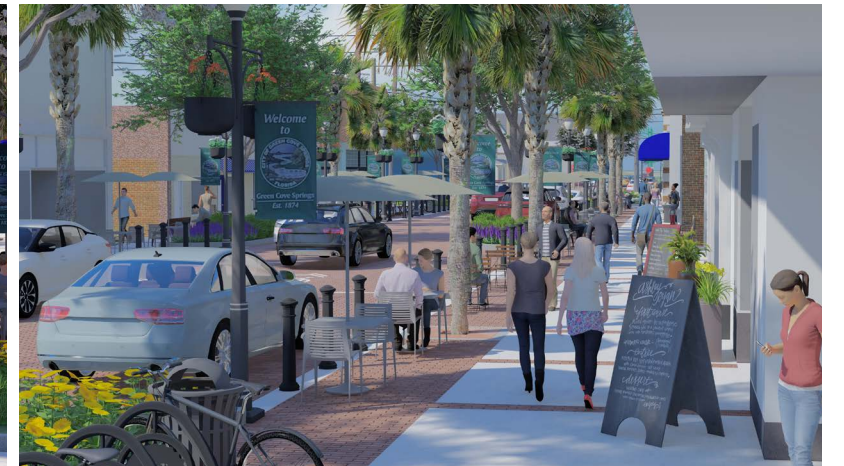
As part of the Walnut Street Conceptual Design Project, we identified Connectivity, Improved Access, and Use for Pedestrians as key design drivers for the corridor. Our proposed improvements for the intersection include removing the center turn lanes, adding curb extensions, and narrowing travel lanes—all of which reduce the pedestrian crossing distance across US 17 and also provide traffic calming. Other proposed improvements include landscape areas and street trees which provide shade and natural beauty and also provide additional traffic calming. Installing new mast arms and pedestrian signals enhances safety and reduces overhead wires. These proposed improvements will not only make this intersection more pedestrian-friendly, but will also provide a clear sense of arrival into Downtown and serve to effectively bridge the eastern and western portions of the Downtown.





## 9. Improve Walnut Street Corridor (from Palmetto Avenue to the River)

Walnut Street has served as the primary civic and commercial area within Downtown since the City's founding. As part of the Walnut Street Conceptual Design Project, we identified the need to create a 'sense of place' that would activate the corridor and encourage redevelopment and revitalization. The proposed design would create a flexible curbless street with expanded sidewalks and on-street parallel parking on the north side of the street. Expanded sidewalks can accommodate outdoor seating as well as provide areas for streetscape improvements such as furnishing zones for bike racks, litter receptacles and benches. Pedestrian-scale light poles create opportunities for hanging baskets and banners along the corridor, providing additional beautification. Planter pots and landscape areas are proposed to soften the streetscape environment and create a comfortable and welcoming pedestrian experience perfect for window shopping, outdoor dining, boutiques, and other types of activated retail spaces. Removable bollards can be placed at the end of each block to close down specific areas for evening and weekend events creating a true festival street experience. Underscoring the importance of connectivity and walkability, the Walnut Street Conceptual Design proposed landscape and lighting improvements to the existing paseo (pedestrian connection) from Walnut Street to the City-owned parking lot to the south of the corridor.





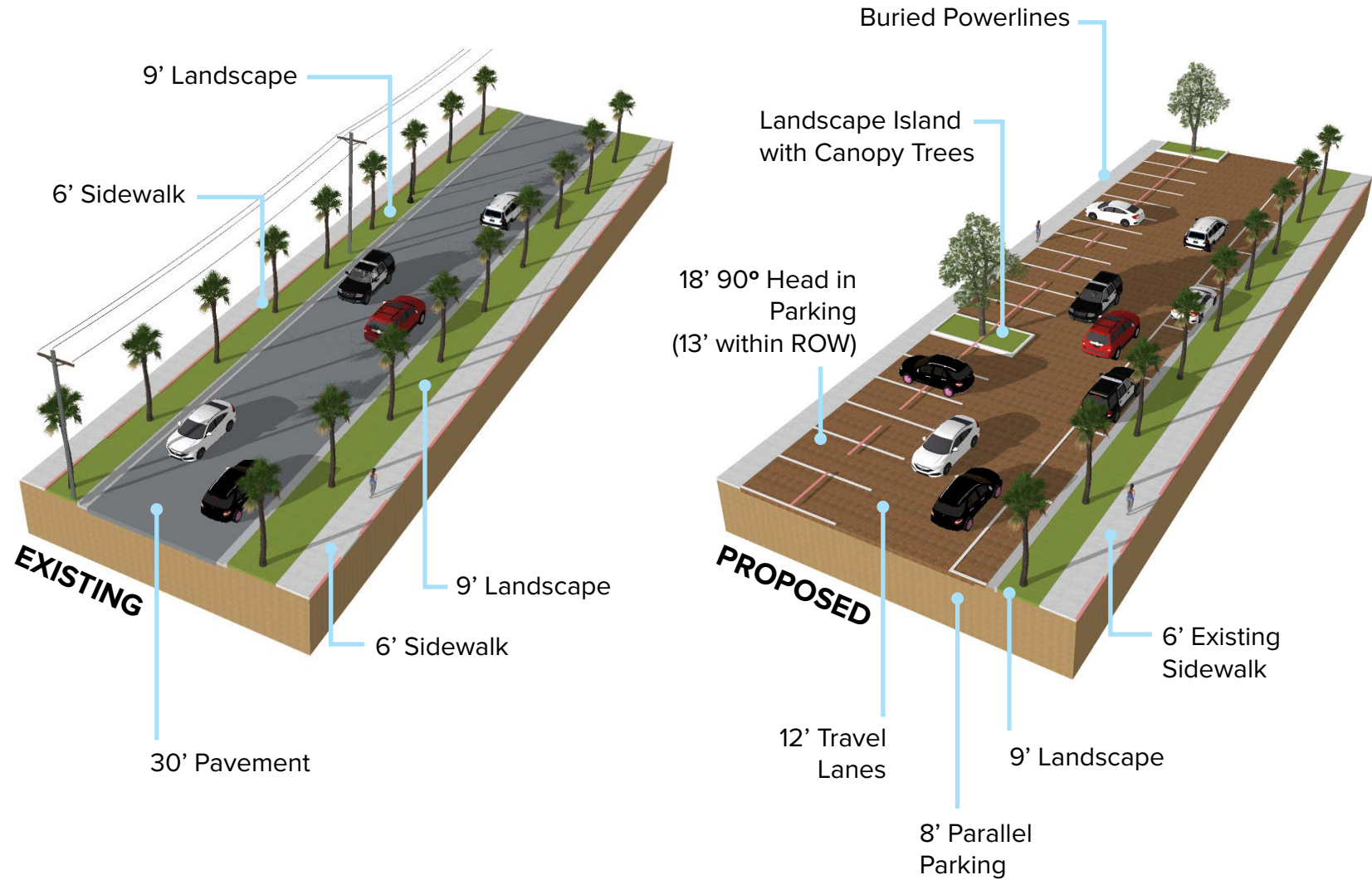
10. Magnolia Avenue - Festival Street

Magnolia Avenue is a north-south local collector which acts as Springs Park’s western-most boundary. Today, this 52-foot right-of-way features two lanes of travel with no opportunities for on-street parking—indicating to drivers that the corridor (and the buildings and amenities which line the roadway) is something to travel through rather than a destination in of itself.

As such, this Plan proposes to transition a critical portion of Magnolia Avenue located between Walnut and Spring Street into a ‘festival street’, which are roadway segments designed to allow for frequent and temporary closures of vehicular traffic for pedestrian-oriented events and activities. By implementing this project, the City could effectively expand the size of Spring Park and thus, increase the capacity and programming for Downtown events such as Food Truck Friday and 3rd Saturday Market in the Park.

As shown on the PROPOSED typical street section, the conversion of Magnolia Avenue into a festival street would render the sidewalk flush with the street, install landscape treatments, equip the roadway with removable bollards, underground utilities (as part of the City’s CIP), and provide both angled and parallel parking to increase the supply of parking within the Study Area.

MAGNOLIA AVENUE - Festival Street  
(Looking North)  
60’ R.O.W. with 90° & Parallel Parking





## ENHANCED FOOD TRUCK PARK



## FLOWER BEDS



## ADDITIONAL PARKING



## REMOVABLE BOLLARDS





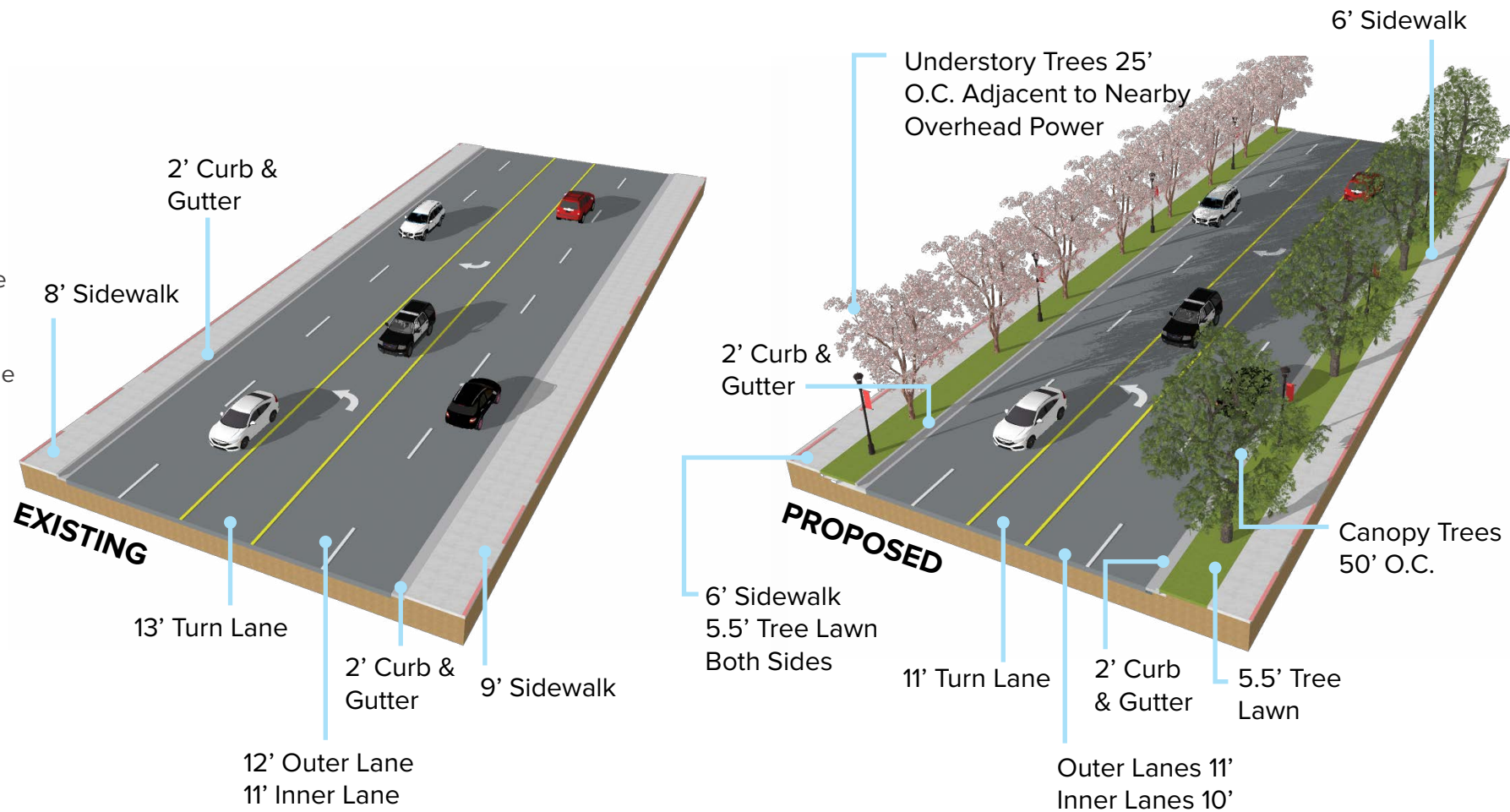
11. FDOT Improvements to US 17 Corridor (Oak Street to Governor’s Creek)

The FDOT Context Classification of US 17 from just south of Oak Street to the Sheriff’s Office driveway north of Governor’s Creek is C4 – Urban General.

Walking along Orange Avenue (US 17) in Downtown Green Cove Springs, where the sidewalk extends directly to the curb, can be a harrowing experience as cars barrel past the posted 30 mile-per-hour speed limit. This is an uncomfortable and potentially unsafe condition that should be improved.

As shown in the PROPOSED typical section, this classification provides the opportunity to reduce travel lane widths, provide and expand landscape buffers, install street trees and provide sidewalks with a six foot minimum width. These improvements will serve to enhance pedestrian comfort, safety, community aesthetics and provide a greater sense of arrival to Green Cove Springs.

ORANGE AVENUE  
(Looking North)  
80’ R.O.W.





## 12. Design and Construct City Hall Park

City Hall, with its architectural integrity and prominent location, serves as an important and compelling structure within Downtown Green Cove Springs. Unfortunately, the surface parking spaces along the front of the building undermine the property's full potential as a welcoming civic gateway.

The proposed design seeks to relocate parking spaces to the rear of the building and redevelop the front of City Hall as a small park/ plaza. This design would seek to reinforce the improvements to the US 17/Walnut Street intersection; improving the pedestrian experience and accentuating a sense of arrival into Downtown Green Cove Springs.



**PROPOSED PARK SPACE**



**INSPIRATION: ST. AUGUSTINE**