

RESOLUTION NO. R-03-2022

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, RELATING TO COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT; FINDING THE EXISTENCE OF BLIGHT IN AN AREA OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA; MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS AND DETERMINATIONS; FINDING A NEED FOR CREATING A COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 163, PART III, FLORIDA STATUTES; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Green Cove Springs ("City Council") expressed its intention to consider the creation of a community redevelopment area, authorized a study to consider whether a finding of necessity resolution should be adopted, and defined a proposed redevelopment study area within the City of Green Cove Springs ("City"); and

WHEREAS, a study has been done, and shall be identified as Exhibit B, supported by data and analysis, of the conditions in that part of the City, known and referred to as the Green Cove Springs Redevelopment Area, depicted in Exhibit "A" hereof (such area being referred to herein as the "Area" or the "Redevelopment Area"); and

WHEREAS, the results of the study have been presented to the City Council for its consideration and included in the public record; and

WHEREAS, after having considered the study's determinations and the facts and evidence of the conditions in the Area and having received and considered such other evidence of the conditions in the Area as have been presented to it, the City Council has determined that the conditions in the Area meet the criteria described in Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the City seeks approval from Clay County that the Area meets the criteria described in Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes, and requests delegation of authority to create a Community Redevelopment Agency, adopt a Community Redevelopment Plan, and establish a Redevelopment Trust Fund.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. FINDINGS OF CONDITIONS. Based upon the evidence, data, analysis, and facts presented to it, the City Council does hereby find that the following conditions are present in the Area of the City to be considered a "Blighted area" as specified in Section 163.340(7)©, Florida Statutes (2021):

- (C) *the existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes. (Sec. 163.340(8)(a), F.S.);*

SECTION 2. FINDINGS OF CONDITIONS. Based upon the evidence, data, analysis, and facts presented to it, the City Council does hereby find that the following conditions are present in the Area of the City to be considered a “Blighted area” as specified in Section 163.340(7)(c), Florida Statutes (2021):

- A. Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities.
- B. *Aggregate assessed values of real property in the area for ad valorem tax purposes have failed to show any appreciable increase over the 5 years prior to finding of such conditions (Sec. 163.340(8)(b), F.S.);*
- C. *Deterioration of site or other improvements (Sec. 163.340(8)(e), F.S.);*
- D. *Inadequate and outdated building density patterns (Sec. 163,340(8)(f), F.S.);*
- E. *Residential and commercial vacancy rates higher in the area than in the remainder of the municipality (Sec. 163.340(8)(i), F.S.);*

SECTION 3. FINDING OF NECESSITY. The City Council does hereby make a legislative finding that the conditions of the Area meet the criteria described in Section 163.340(8), Florida Statutes (2021) and the following:

- A. *One or more slum or blighted areas, or one or more areas in which there is a shortage of housing affordable to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, exist in the City; and,*
- B. *The rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or combination thereof, of such area or areas, including, if appropriate, the development of housing which residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, can afford, is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the City.*

SECTION 4. COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA. Based upon the facts presented and contained in the public record, the City does hereby find the Area contains conditions of blight as defined in Section 163.340, Florida Statutes (2021), and that such Area constitutes a Community Redevelopment Area as defined in Section 163.340(10), Florida Statutes (2021).

SECTION 5. COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY. The City Council does hereby expressly find that it is necessary, appropriate, proper, and timely that a Community Redevelopment Agency be created to carry out the community redevelopment contemplated by Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes (2021), to further cause, promote, and encourage rehabilitation, conservation, and redevelopment in the Area.

SECTION 6. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY. The City Council seeks approval from Clay County that the Area meets the criteria described in Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes (2021), and requests delegation of authority to create a Community Redevelopment Agency, adopt a Community Redevelopment Plan, and establish a Redevelopment Trust Fund.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its passage.

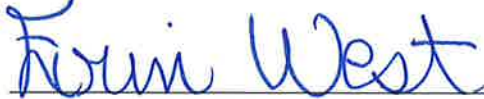
DONE AND RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, IN REGULAR SESSION THIS 19TH DAY OF APRIL, 2022.

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA




Edward R. Gaw, Mayor

ATTEST:



Erin West, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



L. J. Arnold, III, City Attorney

Exhibit “A”



0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

Green Cove Springs
Development Services Department
March 2022





Through this, we encourage new development and redevelopment to improve quality of life, enhance economic conditions, increase vibrancy, and better realize the sense of place in key districts of the City.

Downtown / US 17 Finding of Necessity

City of Green Cove Springs, FL

Heather Glisson, Planning Technician



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1. Executive Summary

This study has been prepared to fulfill the requirements for a Finding of Necessity (FON) in accordance with the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969, Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes. This report has reviewed data from multiple sources including the Clay County Property Appraiser and field observations, which lead to analysis to determine if conditions of slum and / or blight exist within the study area. This report represents the first step in creating a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) which will use Tax Increment Financing to invest in the area and improve its conditions. There are three statutory conditions that may be evaluated to determinate a slum condition and fourteen statutory conditions that may be evaluated to determine a blight condition. For a slum condition, only one of the three is required to be met to make a finding of slum. For a blight condition, only two of the fourteen are required to be met to make a finding of blight.

One of three factors of slum was identified as being met, and seven of fourteen factors of blight were determined as being met, satisfying the statutory requirements to determine the Study Area is a slum area as well as a blighted area. With the adoption of this FON, the City Council of Green Cove Springs may designate a Community Redevelopment Area.

Table 1. Slum Factors

Factor	Met?
(a) Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces;	No
(b) High density of population, compared to the population density of adjacent areas within the county or municipality; and overcrowding, as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies and the requirements of the Florida Building Code;	No
(c) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.	Yes

Table 2. Blight Factors

Factor	Met?
(a) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities.	Yes
(b) Aggregate assessed values of real property in the area for ad valorem tax purposes have failed to show any appreciable increase over the 5 years prior to the finding of such conditions.	Yes
(c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness.	Yes
(d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions.	Yes
(e) Deterioration of site or other improvements.	Yes



(f) Inadequate and outdated building density patterns.	Yes
(g) Falling lease rates per square foot of office, commercial, or industrial space compared to the remainder of the county or municipality.	Data unavailable
(h) Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land.	Not analyzed
(i) Residential and commercial vacancy rates higher in the area than in the remainder of the county or municipality.	Yes
(j) Incidence of crime in the area higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality.	Not analyzed
(k) Fire and emergency medical service calls to the area proportionately higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality.	Not analyzed
(l) A greater number of violations of the Florida Building Code in the area than the number of violations recorded in the remainder of the county or municipality.	Not analyzed
(m) Diversity of ownership or defective or unusual conditions of title which prevent the free alienability of land within the deteriorated or hazardous area.	Not analyzed
(n) Governmentally owned property with adverse environmental conditions caused by a public or private entity.	N/A
(o) A substantial number or percentage of properties damaged by sinkhole activity which have not been adequately repaired or stabilized.	N/A

Recommendations

The Study Area meets the criteria established in Section 163.340, Florida Statutes. It is staff recommendation that the City of Green Cove Springs adopt this Finding of Necessity by resolution per F.S. 163.355 and create a Community Redevelopment Agency for the Study Area as defined herein.

2. Introduction

The City of Green Cove Springs seeks to determine the feasibility of designating the Downtown and US 17 Corridor as a Community Redevelopment Area through the development of a Finding of Necessity and would also like to implement redevelopment in this area through the adoption of a Redevelopment Area Plan.



2.1. Background

Green Cove Springs is a city located along the west bank of the historic St. Johns River and since 1971 has served as the County Seat of Government for Clay County. The 2020 Census identified the population count to be 9,786, a 41.66% increase from the 2010 Census.

The city's name originates from the three physical characteristics. "Green" refers to the perennially green vegetation characterized by its tree scape and foliage. "Cove" refers to a bend in the St. Johns River creating a safe area for mooring of boats during inclement weather periods. "Springs" refers to the natural spring (one of 600 in Florida), originating from the Floridan Aquifer with an estimated flow rate of approximately 2,200 gallons per minute. The spring water flows into the west side of the municipal swimming pool and then flows out the east side forming a stream eventually emptying into the St. Johns River.

The first inhabitants of the area were attracted to it because of the warm mineral spring, known as "The Boil." The medicinal qualities of the spring and its location along the St. Johns River served as major contributors to the community's development as a prominent attraction and destination for tourists during the 19th Century.

Green Cove Springs has had a storied history. It was home to Gustafson's Farm, a family dairy operation owned by Frank and Agnes Gustafson that began in 1908. In the 1930s, the federal government located Benjamin Lee Field within the City. The United States Department of the Navy opened a flight training facility. In the 1950s, major American automakers had dealerships in Green Cove Springs along US 17, which led to the City being known as "the Little Detroit."

The City grew economically and geographically, annexing land to include Magnolia Point Golf and Country Club and Magnolia West to the northwestern end, Cove Plaza on the southern end, and to the southeastern edge, FCT-granted land proposed to be the Ed Gustafson Regional Park as well as 560 acres intended to develop as a 2,100 unit residential subdivision.

In 2005, the City of Green Cove Springs adopted "Tomorrow's Vision" as the guiding vision document for the future of the city. This document established goals for the City such as: maintain the small-town character; provide affordable housing; promote redevelopment in the corridors (US 17 / SR 16); improve traffic circulation; expand recreational opportunities; promote a business-friendly environment; strengthen Code Enforcement. One implementation mechanism included in the visioning document was the potential for a Community Redevelopment Agency. In 2014, the City adopted a Finding of Necessity, but the Community Redevelopment Agency was unable to come to fruition at that time.

Since then, the City has experienced additional growth and undergone further planning activities. In February 2021, the City began the process of updating the comprehensive plan, which was adopted a year later in February 2022. The 2045 Comprehensive Plan is designed to prepare the City for upcoming growth. The Future Land Use Map was amended from 13 categories to 6 categories: Neighborhood (NBD), Downtown (DT), Mixed Use (MU), Mixed-Use Reynolds Park (MURP), Industrial (IND), and Public (PUB).



Further, the Future Land Use element established an objective to continue to redevelop and invest in blighted areas of the City, with Policy 1.6.1 directing the City to explore the creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency / Area.

Additionally, the Future Land Use elements directs the City in Policy 1.6.2 to develop a Downtown Master Plan and assess Walnut Street to determine how to increase safety and attractiveness of the streetscape. The Walnut Street assessment was completed in late 2021 and the Downtown Master Plan is underway, with a goal of adopting the plan by mid-April 2022.

2.2. Study Purpose

This Finding of Necessity will determine if the Study Area meetings the statutory criteria to be designated as a Community Redevelopment Area. With this, the City aims to establish said area in an attempt to halt and reverse the decline within it in order to encourage new development and redevelopment to improve the overall quality of the area, leading to improved economic conditions, increased vibrancy, and a more established sense of place in the area.

If the Study Area meets the statutory criteria, the City will adopt this Finding of Necessity and seek to move forward with adopting a Redevelopment Plan.

2.3. Community Redevelopment Act Overview¹

The Florida Legislature enacted the Community Redevelopment Act (Act) in 1969. The legislature created the law to allow local governments to improve declining areas, as defined in the Act and detailed in subsections below. Such areas are detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of residents as well as being a nuisance to growth and the provision of adequate infrastructure and housing; the Act provides a way for the local governments to create a Redevelopment Area and fund redevelopment within it.

The Statute defines *community redevelopment* as local government or community redevelopment agency lead projects in an established community redevelopment area “for the elimination and prevention of the development or spread of slums and blight, or for the reduction or prevention of crime, or for the provision of affordable housing.” This may include slum clearance, redevelopment, rehabilitation, or conservation in a community redevelopment area, or any combination or part thereof, pursuant to the community redevelopment plan.

The Act establishes that powers granted by the Act are “for public uses and purposes” which involve the spending of public money and the potential exercise of police power, for which reason public interest, meaning a legitimate concern for general health, safety, and welfare within the area, is a requirement to implement the Act.

The Act further establishes the legitimacy of tax increment financing (TIF) as a method of successfully preserving and enhancing the tax base of an area, which will then serve to increase tax revenues for all taxing authorities for the area, enabling them to carry out

¹ The 2021 Florida Statutes, Title XI Chapter 163, Part III



their respective objectives more effectively. A redevelopment trust fund may be established by ordinance after the approval of a Community Redevelopment Plan to allow for the deposit of funds to be used by the agency to finance or refinance redevelopment. This fund must be established prior to receipt of any increment revenues. The statutes further state:

“The annual funding of the redevelopment trust fund shall be in an amount not less than the increment in the income, proceeds, revenues, and funds of each taxing authority derived from or held in connection with the undertaking and carrying out of community redevelopment under this part. Such increment shall be determined annually and shall be that amount equal to 95% of the difference between:

1. The amount of ad valorem taxes levied each year by each taxing authority, exclusive of any amount from any debt service millage, on taxable real property contained within the geographic boundaries of a community redevelopment area; and
2. The amount of ad valorem taxes which would have been produced by the rate upon which the tax is levied each year by or for each taxing authority, exclusive of any debt service millage, upon the total of the assessed value of the taxable real property in the community redevelopment area as shown upon the most recent assessment roll used in connection with the taxation of such property by each taxing authority prior to the effective date of the ordinance providing for the funding of the trust fund.”

Florida Statutes additionally require counties or municipalities seeking to exercise the power granted by the Act to adopt by a resolution “supported by data and analysis, which makes a legislative finding that the conditions in the area meet the criteria” of a slum or blighted area, detailed in 163.340(7) and 163.340(8) and defined below in subsections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2. To make this legislative finding, governing bodies draft a Finding of Necessity (FON), which supports this legislative finding through in-depth analysis of the study area. The analysis contained in this report evaluates the existing conditions and identifies the existence, if any, of a slum or blighted area. This FON will be used by the City in designating and creating the Community Redevelopment Area, if it is determined the area meets the statutory requirements to be classified as a slum or blighted area.

2.3.1. Definitions of Slum Area

According to the Florida Statute Section 163.340(7), “slum area” is an area having physical or economic conditions conducive to disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, poverty, or crime because there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential, which are impaired by reason of dilapidation, deterioration, age, or obsolescence, and exhibiting one or more of the following factors:

- (a) “Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces;
- (b) High density of population, compared to the population density of adjacent areas within the county or municipality; and overcrowding, as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies and the requirements of the Florida Building Code;



or

(c) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.”

2.3.2. Definitions of Blighted Area

According to the Florida Statute Section 163.340(8), “blighted area” means:

an “area in which there are a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures; in which conditions, as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies, endanger life or property or are leading to economic distress; and in which two or more of the following factors are present:

- (a) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities.
- (b) Aggregate assessed values of real property in the area for ad valorem tax purposes have failed to show any appreciable increase over the 5 years prior to the finding of such conditions.
- (c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness.
- (d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions.
- (e) Deterioration of site or other improvements.
- (f) Inadequate and outdated building density patterns.
- (g) Falling lease rates per square foot of office, commercial, or industrial space compared to the remainder of the county or municipality.
- (h) Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land.
- (i) Residential and commercial vacancy rates higher in the area than in the remainder of the county or municipality.
- (j) Incidence of crime in the area higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality.
- (k) Fire and emergency medical service calls to the area proportionately higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality.
- (l) A greater number of violations of the Florida Building Code in the area than the number of violations recorded in the remainder of the county or municipality.
- (m) Diversity of ownership or defective or unusual conditions of title which prevent the free alienability of land within the deteriorated or hazardous area.
- (n) Governmentally owned property with adverse environmental conditions caused by a public or private entity.
- (o) A substantial number or percentage of properties damaged by sinkhole activity which have not been adequately repaired or stabilized.”



The term “blighted area” may also be used for any area in which at least one of the factors identified in paragraphs (a) through (o) is present and all taxing authorities subject to 163.387(2)(a) agree, by interlocal agreement or by resolution, that the area is blighted.

2.3.2. Assessment Process

City Staff assessed the Study Area through a multitude of resources, including but not limited to existing data, especially that included in the Green Cove Springs GeoHub; data collected from other departments, especially Public Works and Police; desktop reviews of the area; in person / walking review of the area. Staff assessed the area for many aspects of blight as defined in the Florida Statutes, and this report describes the existing conditions as they relate to these factors.

2.4. Study Area

The specified Study Area encompasses ±172.8 acres and is known as the Downtown and US 17 Corridor. The corridor spans Orange Avenue from Governor Street on the north end to Oak Street on the south end. The Corridor lies between St. Johns Avenue and Magnolia Avenue on its eastern edge and Pine Avenue on its western edge. The Downtown portion reaches slightly farther to the west and east. On the western side, it is bound by Palmer Street, Green Street, and Bay Street. On the eastern side, it expands diagonally eastward from Magnolia starting at Center Street, culminating at the river's edge with Spring Park property. The area is shown in Map 1.

The Study Area contains primarily commercial and institutional uses. Well known locations within the Study Area include: churches such as Springs Baptist Church, First Presbyterian Church, Doxa Church, and United Methodist Church; County government buildings including the Courthouse, Jail, Supervisor of Elections, and Administration Building; food / beverage service businesses such as Spring Park Coffee, Dunkin' Donuts, Burger King, La Casita, and Sweet Sensations; financial institutions, including Wells Fargo and VyStar Credit Union; automobile sales lots such as Green Cove Auto and Good Guys Motors as well as service businesses like Jesse's Auto Services and Darren's Custom & Restorations; retail uses like CVS, The Treasure Box, Walgreens, SS Something Special, and Green Cove Liquors; office uses including Exit Magnolia Realty, Vallencourt Construction, and Action Medical Staffing; and an event venue, Clay Theatre. Additionally, there are numerous vacant properties, including the recently demolished 1050 N Orange Ave, which previously housed an abandoned automobile sales lot, as well as the corner of North Street and Orange Avenue, which once housed two buildings and businesses. The Study Area also contains Spring Park, a well-known and loved park featuring the natural spring, a public spring-fed pool, walking trails, swinging benches, play structures, and great views of the St. Johns River. The foregoing list is not meant to be exhaustive but instead meant to provide a feel of the activity within the Study Area.

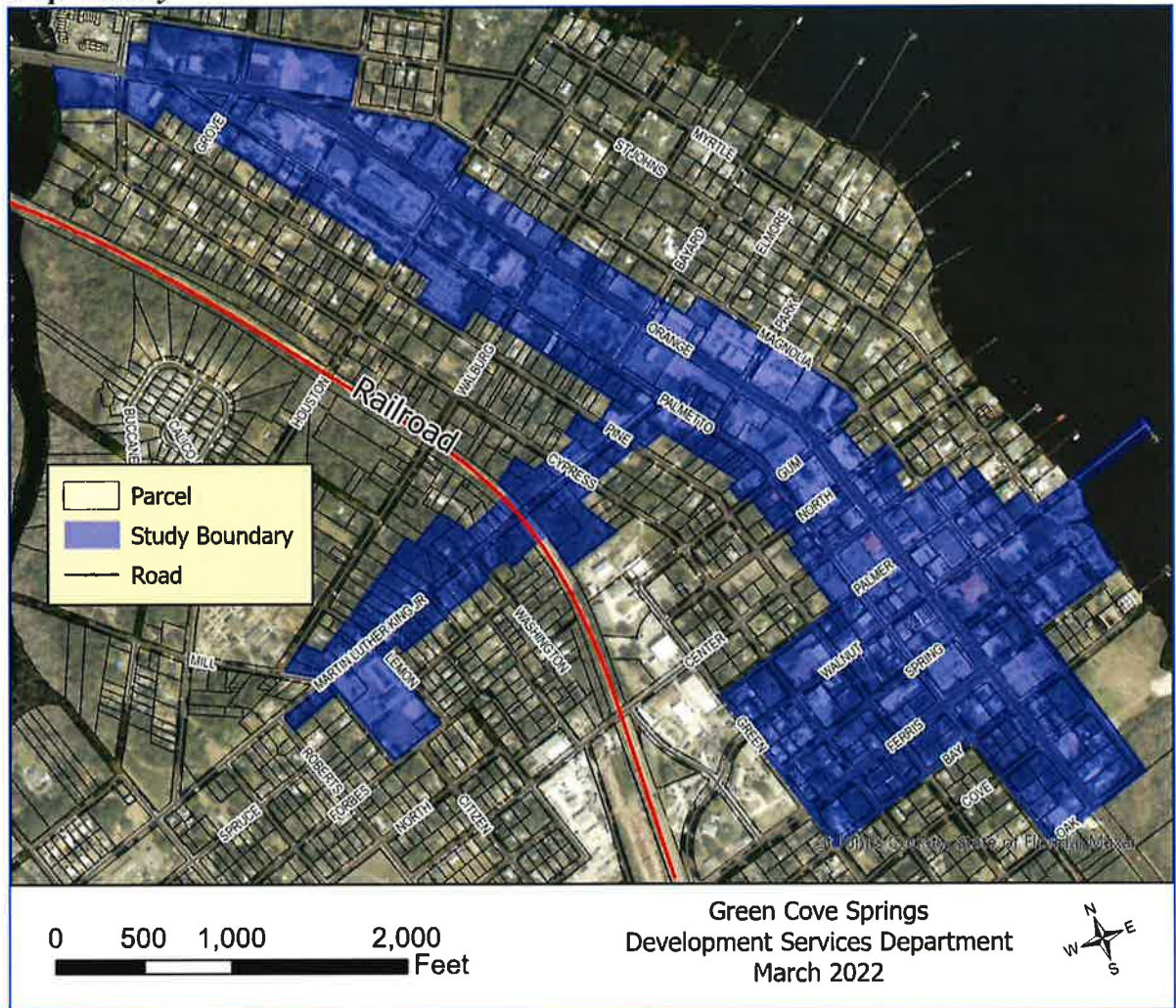
The expanse around the Study Area is primarily residential in nature, with some exception specifically along Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, which features some commercial spaces, as well as east of Green Street, which features County School Board property and related uses.

Within the Study Area, there are some planned or potential improvements. These include a proposed freestanding emergency medical facility operated by St. Vincent's as well as



the Palmetto Trail project which will see an eight-foot multi-use path constructed along Palmetto Avenue from its southern end up to the Governors Creek Bridge. As part of the Walnut Street assessment, the City is also planning improvements to Walnut Street, particularly the block between Palmetto Avenue and Orange Avenue.

Map 1. Study Area

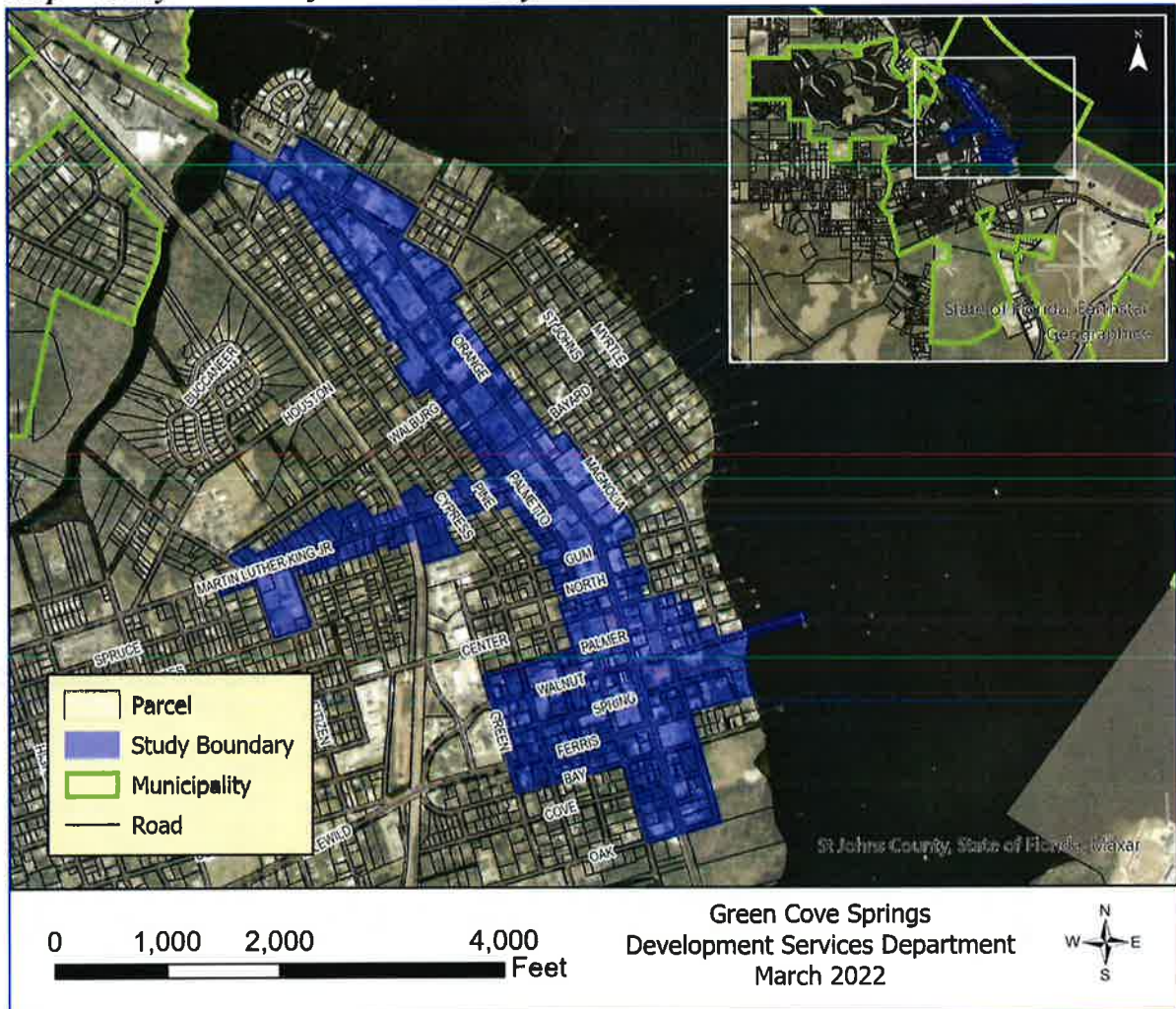


The Study Area is located somewhat centrally within the City, particularly for commercial development. Its location within the boundaries of the City can be viewed in Map 2. The northwest portion of the City consists of two subdivisions and the southeastern portion of the City consists of Reynolds Park / Clay Port – a future mixed-use development operating as an industrial site at present. The Study Area is contained within what is referred to as the Core City. The western portion of the Core City is dominated by residential development with a smattering of institutional development, namely School Board related properties. US 17 / Orange Avenue, Martin Luther King Blvd, and Palmetto



Avenue, all within the Study Area, feature commercial development with some residential development as well.

Map 2. Study Area in Reference to the City



3. Slum and Blighted Area Analysis

City Staff reviewed the Study Area in relation to the statutory requirements for an area to be determined a slum area or a blighted area.

3.1. Slum

The condition of slum in the Study Area is met under the following criteria:

(c) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.

Documentation of existing conditions provided in subsequent sections in this analysis indicates life and / or properties are endangered, specifically by dilapidation; unsecured inhabitable properties; deteriorating roadways, sidewalks, and accessibility features; abandoned homes; and overall deterioration of the Study Area.



3.2. Defective or inadequate public transportation facilities

The City of Green Cove Springs does not have locally operated public transportation facilities. Public transportation within Clay County, called Clay Community Transportation, is operated by the Jacksonville Transportation Authority². Of 4 available lines, 2 lines travel through Green Cove Springs. These lines operate from 6am to 7pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. The lines do include a flex service option wherein customers can call a reservation line to schedule a pick-up from their location that will be accommodated *when time allows*. The deviation will go as far as a ¾ mile off the route.

The Blue Line (Map 3) has one stop within the Study Area, the Clay County Courthouse (825 N Orange Ave), and one other stop within City Limits, at the Clay County Health Department. There are two stops moderately close to City Limits – the Pier Station stop west of town on State Road 16 and the Challenge Enterprises stop on Enterprise Way just north of town. There is two to three hours between pickups at the local stops, excluding Challenge Enterprises which only has one pickup time and one drop-off time.

The Green Line (Map 4) has one stop within the Study Area (and the City at large), the Clayton and Mildred Revels Senior Center (604 Walnut St). There are three hours between pickups at this stop, and similarly three hours between drop-offs to the location.

There are no options for local transit from residential to commercial or recreational areas of town. Additionally, the sidewalk and roadway conditions through the Study Area are in a poor state. Many streets show deterioration, especially with top layers breaking down, revealing the older brick streets beneath, which creates uneven surfaces. Sidewalks show significant deterioration as well with the following conditions being regularly observed throughout the Study Area:

- **Cracking:** Locations where the paved surface of the sidewalk has cracked or crumbled
- **Uplift:** A vertical change in height along a sidewalk (generally where “panels” of the sidewalk meet or where cracking has occurred)
- **Fixed Obstructions:** Anchored objects (such as utility poles) that reduce sidewalk width
- **Non-Fixed Obstruction:** Vegetation, non-anchored objects, or uncleanness that reduces sidewalk width or walkability
- **Spalling:** Surface deterioration that appears as small indentations in the surface
- **Standing Water:** Locations where there is or there is evidence of standing water on the sidewalk
- **Loss:** Locations where a piece or pieces of the sidewalk were removed, whether purposefully for work or through erosion.

Examples of the above defined items are provided in the figures below.

² Jacksonville Transit Authority, <https://www.jtafla.com/ride-jta/regional-services/clay-community-transportation/> accessed 3/14/2022



Further, there are many places in the Study Area completely lacking sidewalks, primarily on local streets or only on one side of the street and often without excellent road crossing conditions to get from sidewalk to sidewalk as needed.

Such road and sidewalk conditions reduce the ability of the community to safely traverse the Study Area on foot, by micromobility³ device (bicycle, scooter, skateboard, et cetera) or by motorized vehicle.

Figure 1. Sidewalk Cracking, Palmer St, near 14 N Magnolia Ave



Figure 2. Sidewalk Cracking & Loss, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd



Figure 3. Deteriorating accessibility feature, Corner of Orange Ave & Center St



Figure 4. Deteriorating accessibility feature, Southwest Corner of Orange Ave & Palmer St



³ Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, <https://www.itdp.org/multimedia/defining-micromobility/> accessed 4/7/2022

Figure 5. Road Disrepair, Walnut St



Figure 6. Road Disrepair, Intersection of Green St & Walnut St



Figure 7. Non-Fixed Obstruction, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd



Figure 8. Non-Fixed Obstruction, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd



Figure 9. Sidewalk Spalling, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd



Figure 10. Sidewalk – Standing Water, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.



Figure 11. Sidewalk Uplift & Spalling, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd

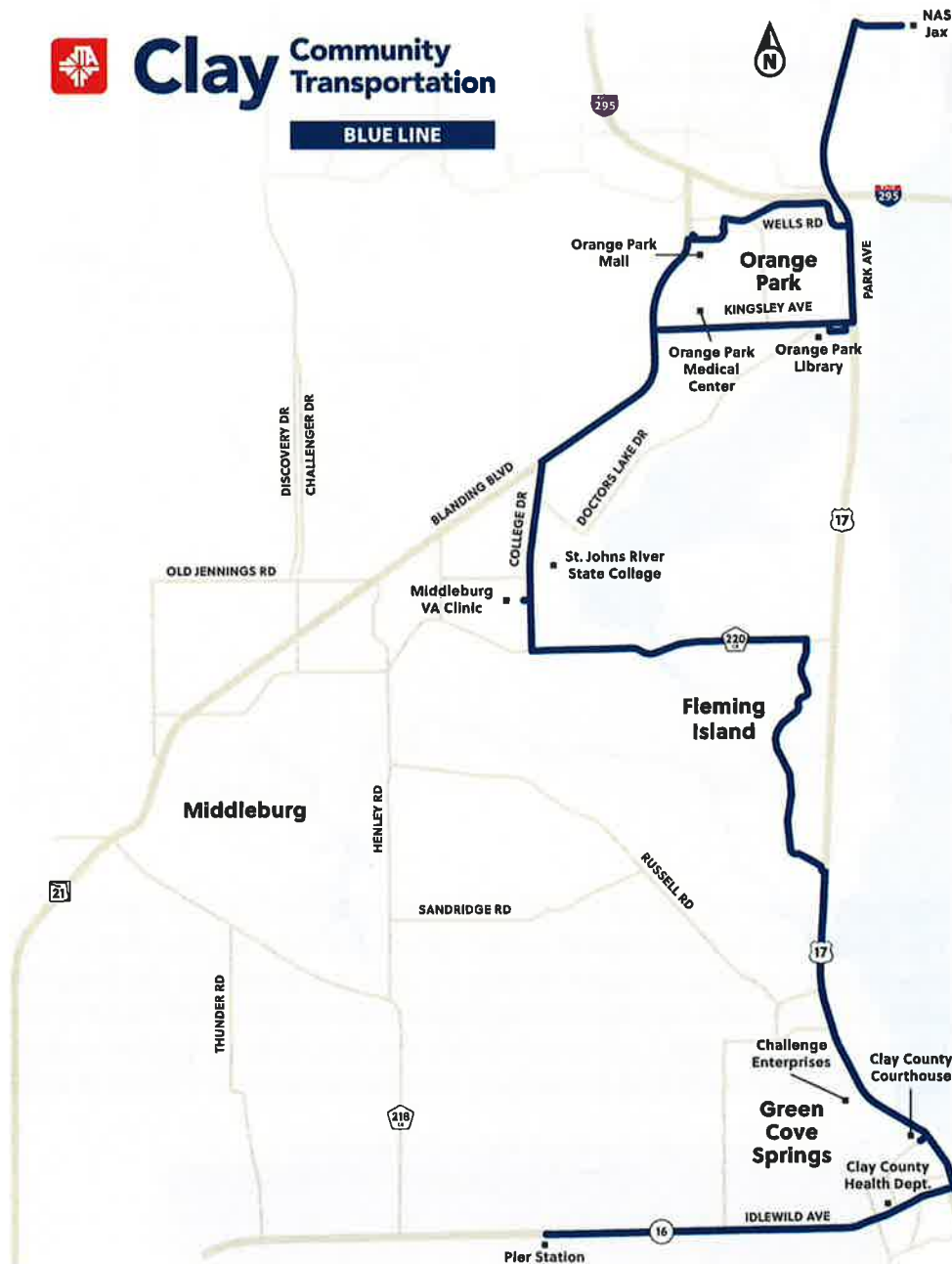


Figure 12. Sidewalk Loss, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd





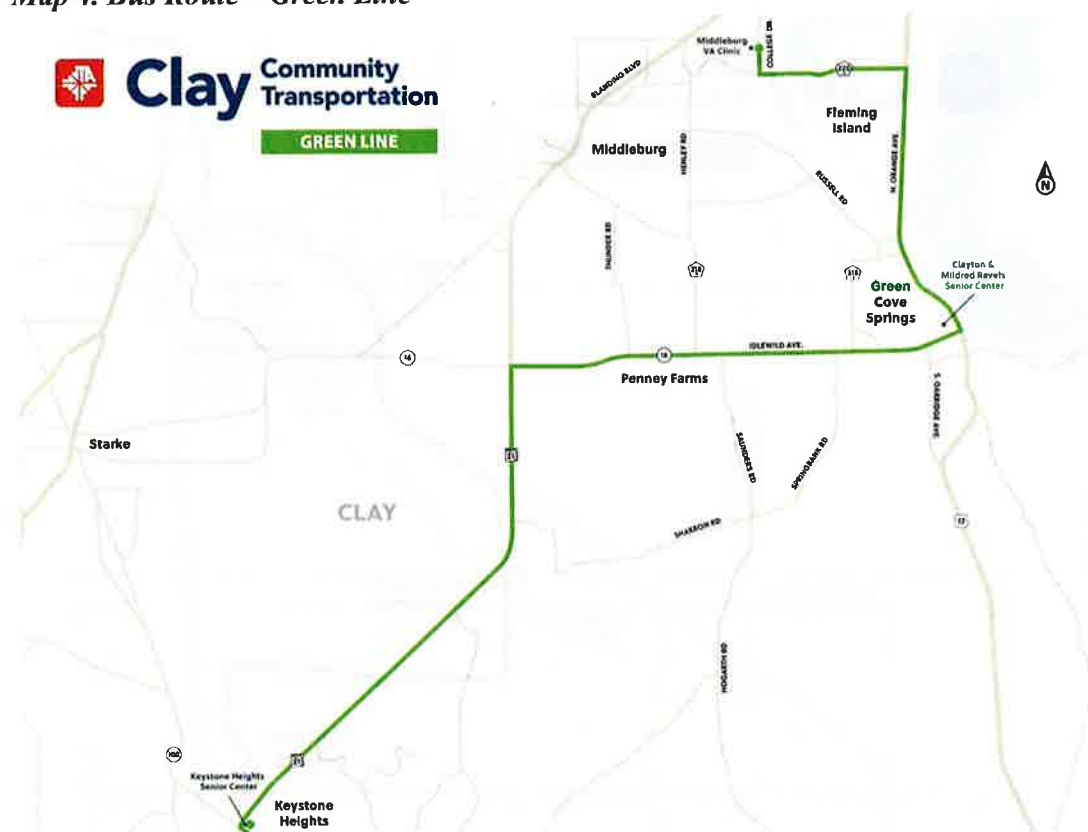
Map 3. Bus Route – Blue Line⁴



⁴ Jacksonville Transportation Authority, <https://www.jtafla.com/ride-jta/regional-services/clay-community-transportation/clay-blue-line/>



Map 4. Bus Route – Green Line⁵



- 3.3. Aggregate assessed values do not show appreciable increase over past 5 years
- The Study Area has experienced some redevelopment in the past five years, but the deterioration present, as shown in later sections, has prevented the Study Area from seeing an appreciable increase in its aggregate assessed value (AAV) as compared to the City as a whole. In Table 1, it is demonstrated that the City as a whole has experienced an increased AAV of 50.71% while the Study Area has only seen an increase of 20.53%.

Table 3. Aggregate Assessed Value Comparison

Year	Study Area	City
2017	\$ 85,088,819.00	\$590,524,531.00
2018	\$88,913,992.00	\$642,232,893.00
2019	\$95,646,152.00	\$802,652,764.00
2020	\$95,809,061.00	\$802,652,764.00
2021	\$102,557,978.00	\$890,001,640.00
% Increase	20.53%	50.71%

⁵ Jacksonville Transportation Authority, <https://www.jtafla.com/ride-jta/regional-services/clay-community-transportation/clay-green-line/>



3.4. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness

Within the Study Area, approximately 25.6% of the lots could be considered faulty (Map 4). The criteria for this determination were as follows:

- **Size:** Commercially zoned lots with less than approximately 75 feet of frontage and approximately 100 feet of depth – despite the zoning code identifying no minimum lot requirements in commercial districts, the size of these lots is not suited for adequate commercial development, assuming they are developed individually given the diversity of ownership.
- **Adequacy:** Lots deemed inadequate are shaped in a manner which decreases their developability.
- **Usefulness:** Lots deemed less than useful are shaped in a manner which will likely completely prevent or deter their development or redevelopment.
- **Accessibility:** Lots deemed inaccessible are landlocked.

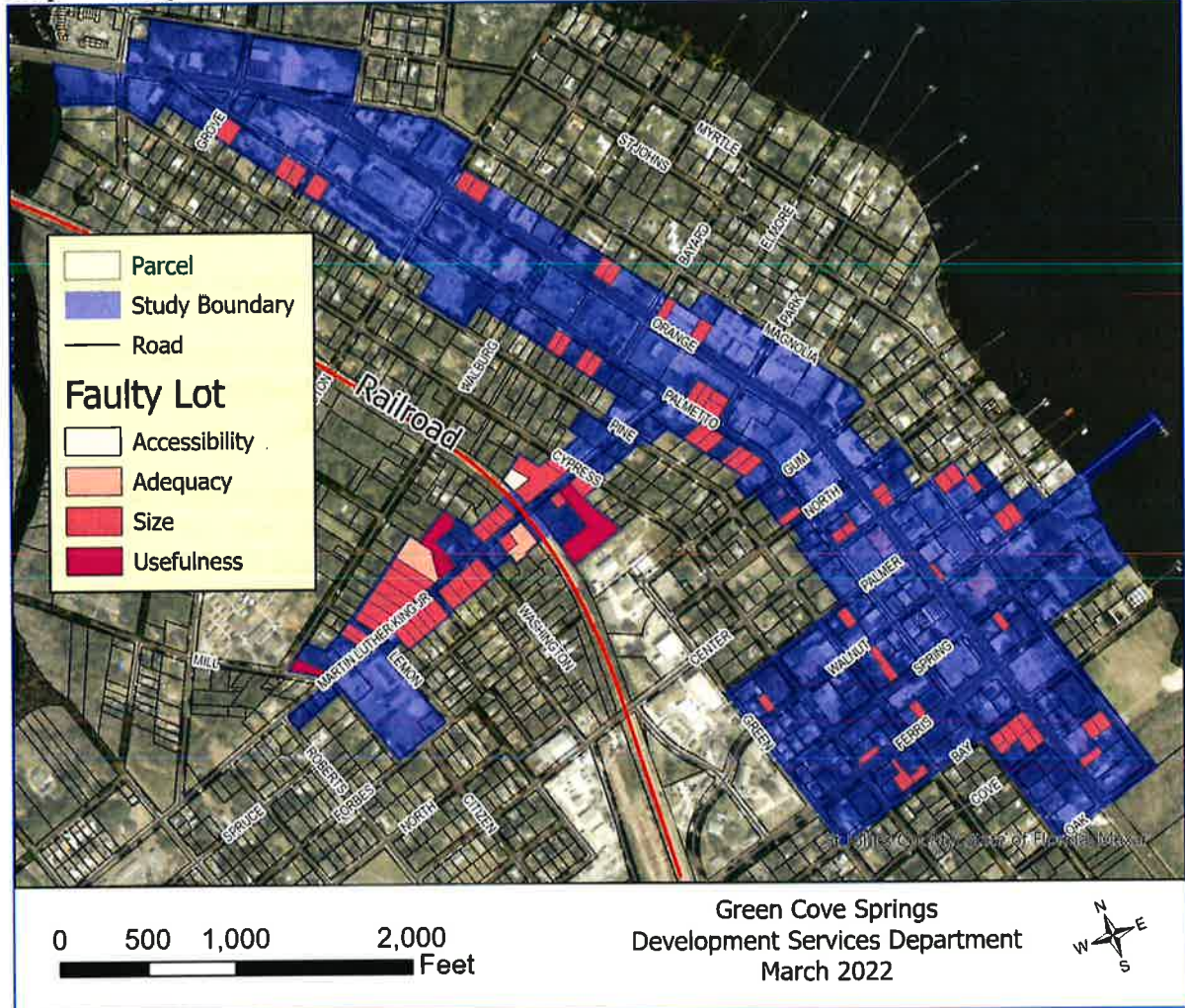
The City does permit residential development within many commercially zoned areas, and some of the identified lots have historically or recently been developed residentially as a consequence. Ideally, as identified in the Future Land Use Map, these lots would develop commercially or with a mix of uses to better support the neighborhood.

Recent development exemplifies the difficulties with developing commercially on narrow or otherwise small lots. Between 2019 and 2020, Dunkin Donuts constructed a new location within the Study Area – 610 N Orange Ave. The site is approximately 250ft along Orange Avenue (the primary roadway) by 125ft deep. The development received a variance from the City's Zoning Code requirements, which require parking to be to the side or back of a building in the Gateway Commercial Corridor. Due to the depth of the property and the type of development (drive-thru fast food), the lot layout was inadequate to permit development without a variance.

On the basis of the plight of Dunkin Donuts and the criteria identified above, additional lots are truly eligible to be considered faulty within the Study Area, but being that they are already commercially developed, at this time, they are not being considered faulty.



Map 5. Faulty Lots



3.5. Unsanitary or unsafe conditions

There are several sites with unsafe or unsanitary conditions located within the Study Area. Figures 13-29 (following) demonstrate the conditions for a portion of these properties.

Field inspection and Google StreetView inspection of the Study Area identified sites with deteriorating or damaged structures which pose a threat to building occupants, condemned or abandoned buildings, incomplete construction projects, lack of sidewalks or blocked rights-of-way (ROW[s]), as well as brownfield sites. There are unsafe commercial spaces where there is either a lack of defined pedestrian versus vehicular space or a lack of maintenance that would keep the area safe for traversing to and from a business.



These figures represent some of the many deteriorating, unsafe, and at times abandoned structures in the area.

Figure 13. Unsafe, Deteriorating Roof, 116 N Magnolia Ave



Figure 14. Unsafe, Condemned Building, 428 N Orange Ave



Figure 15. Unsafe, Boarded Openings, 115 N Magnolia Ave



Figure 16. Unsafe and unsanitary, Openings / Junk Storage, 115 N Magnolia



Figure 17. Unsafe, No Sidewalk, ROW used for RV Parking, 327 N Orange Ave



Figure 18. Unsafe, No Sidewalk, across from Figure 5, 425 N Orange Ave





Figure 19. Unsanitary, Discontinued Gas Pumps, 201 N Orange Ave



Figure 20. Unsafe, Collapsed Canopy, Petroleum Contamination Site⁶, 100 N Orange Ave



Figure 21. Unsafe, Low hanging power lines, concrete drive in disrepair, south of 25 N Orange Av



Figure 22. Unsafe, ROW in disrepair, busines parks in ROW, 3 S Palmetto Ave



Figure 23. Unsafe, Lack of signage, marked parking spaces, pedestrian safety, 24 Green St



⁶ FL Department of Environmental Protection's Contamination Locator Map, <https://prodenv.dep.state.fl.us/DepClnup>

Figure 24. Unsafe area in front of active commercial building, 1100 Martin Luther King



Figure 25. Unsafe Structure / Abandoned, 1007 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd



Figure 26. Unsafe / Abandoned Structure, 1001 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd



Figure 27. Unsafe / Abandoned Structure, 713 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd

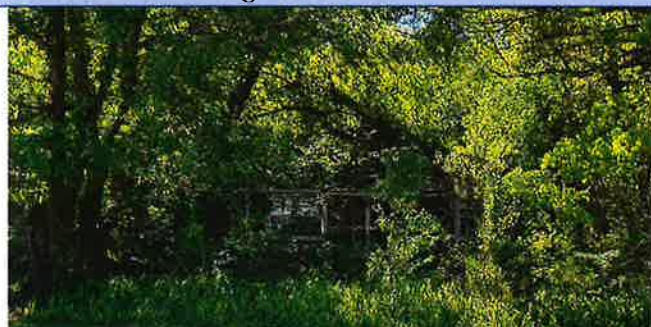


Figure 28. Unsafe / Abandoned Structure, 613 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd



Figure 29. Unsafe Structure, 612 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd



3.6. Deterioration of site or other improvements

In addition to the deterioration of site improvements shown in section 3.5, within the Study Area, there are multiple occurrences of deteriorating improvements, especially access points or paved areas in surrounding buildings. Paving is wearing away or cracking creating hazardous conditions for drivers using the lots to park or maneuver the site and pedestrians crossing the access points. Figures below provide examples of this type of wear and tear in the corridor.

Figure 30. Deteriorating Drive / Sidewalk, 220 Palmer



Figure 31. Deteriorating Drive, 327 N Orange Ave



Figure 32. Parking lot disrepair, between 604 & 500 Walnut St



Figure 33. Sidewalk disrepair, between 604 & 500 Walnut St



3.7. Inadequate and outdated building density patterns

The applicable zoning districts for the Study Area generally include: Central Business District, Gateway Corridor Commercial, Gateway Corridor Neighborhood, and C-1 Neighborhood Commercial. The heart of the Study Area is where the Central Business District is located – also known as the Downtown area. The Gateway districts are located along the “corridor” area, notably US 17 or Orange Ave. The Martin Luther King Blvd corridor is zoned as neighborhood commercial but features primarily low density residential development including active and abandoned residential structures, churches, vacant lots, concrete block commercial buildings lacking transparency and activation.

Figure 36. Outdated building pattern, 208 N Orange Ave, Food Store



Figure 37. Outdated building pattern, 425 N Orange Ave, Wells Fargo



Figure 38. Outdated Building Pattern, 327 N Orange Ave, Rick Baker's RV





Figure 39. Low Density Development, 606 Spring St



Figure 40. Low Density Development, 627 Spring St



Figure 41. Low Density Development, Not Fronting Street, 702 Ferris St / 709 Spring St



Figure 42. Undeveloped, Gustafson Property, Pine St (behind house on Walnut St)



3.8. Vacancy rates

17.1% of properties within the Study Area are classified as vacant by the Clay County Property Appraiser. This level of vacancy within the Study Area is 44.9% higher than that of the rest of the municipality, which has an 11.8% rate of vacancy.

Many of these lots, shown in the figures below, are prime locations that once housed a local business which has since been removed. The lots have yet to have been redeveloped despite their prime locations in the commercial areas of the City.



Figure 43. Vacant Lot, Previously 208 N Orange Ave



Figure 44. Vacant Lot, East of 604 Walnut St



Figure 45. Vacant Lot, BROWNFIELD⁷, south of 535 N Orange Ave



Figure 46. Vacant Lot at the northeast corner of Orange Ave & Walburg St



Figure 47. Vacant Lot at the northwest corner of Orange Ave & Governor St



⁷ FL Department of Environmental Protection's Contamination Locator Map, <https://prodenv.dep.state.fl.us/DepClnup>



Map 6. Vacancy Rates



4. Recommendations

The Study Area meets the criteria established in Section 163.340, Florida Statutes (F.S.). It is staff recommendation that the City of Green Cove Springs adopt this Finding of Necessity by resolution per Section 163.355, F.S., and create a Community Redevelopment Agency for the Study Area as defined herein. This will enable redevelopment of the area which is necessary for the safety and economic welfare of the community.