

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Green Cove Springs, Florida



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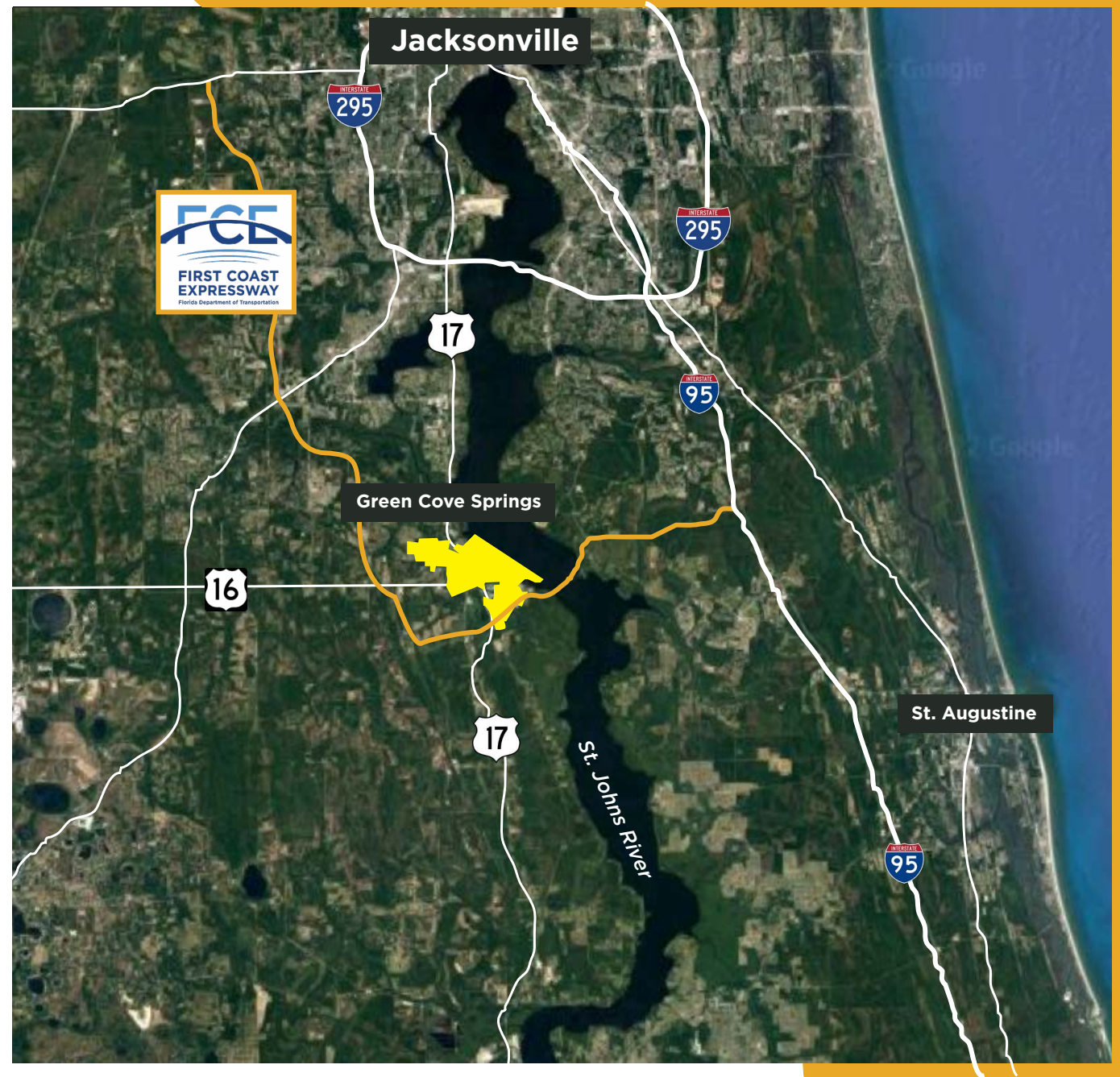
SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS

- A** Public Engagement Summary
- B** Existing Conditions Analysis
- C** Demographics & Market Analysis
- D** Retail Action Plan

PREFACE

Located in Northeast Florida, approximately 25 miles south of Jacksonville and 25 miles west of St. Augustine, the City of Green Cove Springs is the County Seat of Clay County. The City is located on the western bank of the St. Johns River and registered a population of 9,786 residents in the 2020 Census.

A thriving town during the river and railroad heydays of the late 1800s, the City has suffered from a lack of regional connectivity as the interstate highway system expanded in other areas of the region. Downtown Green Cove Springs is more than 19 miles from the nearest I-95 exit and approximately 14 miles from the nearest I-295 exit, either destination is greater than a 20-minute drive.



EVOLUTION OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS

1816



George J.F. Clarke, is granted 22,000 acres of timbered land from the Spanish to develop a sawmill along the St. Johns River in eastern Florida.



In 1854 Clarke develops the land as White Sulfur Springs. It was renamed in 1866 as **Green Cove Springs** and became the county seat in 1871.

1884



A railroad route from Jacksonville to Palatka includes a stop to West Tocoli, south of Green Cove Springs, which helped bring tourists from the North down to the area.

TOURISM GROWTH



1890

The first Federated Women's Club of Florida is founded in Green Cove Springs.

FARMING GROWTH

James Cash Penney establishes "Penney Farms" west of the City and plans to develop a farming community.

Gustafson's Farm is established by Agnes and Frank Gustafson, bringing a large dairy farming industry to the area.

1908

Henry Flagler's Railroad to St. Augustine sparks a steady decline in tourism after the St. Johns Railroad closes.

1895



Green Cove Springs attracts many visitors from the north, as an authentic Florida destination along the St. Johns River. People flock to the natural spring and several hotels capitalize on the visitors like the The Qui-Si-Sana Hotel (left) and St. Clair Hotel.

1930

The City begins to recover from the great depression, receiving funding from the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

1940

MILITARY GROWTH

The Federal Government builds the Naval base **Benjamin Lee Field** in Green Cove Springs and **Camp Blanding** 20 miles west of the City, bringing a large military community to the area.



1940 Green Cove Springs Naval Base

The City earns the nickname "Little Detroit" as a result of many thriving car dealerships that served the Naval families.



1950

Spring Square, what would become known as **Spring Park**, is purchased by the City from Foremost Properties, Inc.

1961

Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson closes the Naval Base and moves the "Mothball Fleet" to Texas.

The City purchases the base in hopes of developing it for industrial use.

City sells the base to the J. Louis Reynolds Corporation for development of a premier Industrial Park.

1970

Clinton designates Historic St. Johns River as an "American Heritage River."

1989

2 National Register Districts are designated containing 70 to 75 contributing historic structures, including the Clay County Courthouse, County Jail, Spring Park and more.

1998

2004

2009

The new City Hall is built, inspired by the Qui-Sa-Sana Hotel that was once on the site.



2013



Gustafson Dairy Farm closes.

2015

2017

2018

First Coast Expressway construction begins which will enhance connection into the City.

2022

The **Augusta Savage Library and Mentoring Center** anticipated opening.

The City acquires the Dunbar High school, built in 1942, and begins converting it to the **Augusta Savage Arts and Community Center** in honor of Augusta Savage—artist, educator, activist, and community leader—who was born in Green Cove Springs in 1892.

Women's Club celebrates 100 years at their dedicated building on Palmetto Ave.

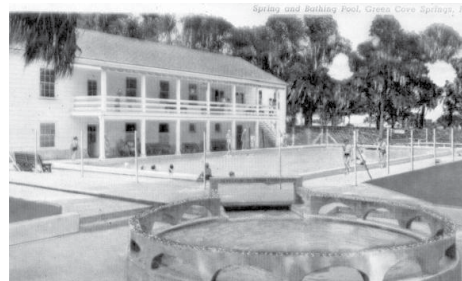


The renovated Spring Park Public Pool opens after multi-million dollar upgrades.

NEW CIVIC SPACES

TODAY

Source: <https://www.greencovesprings.com/history-of-green-cove-springs>



Spring Park Pool



Judge Rivers House

INVESTING IN THE HISTORIC PAST

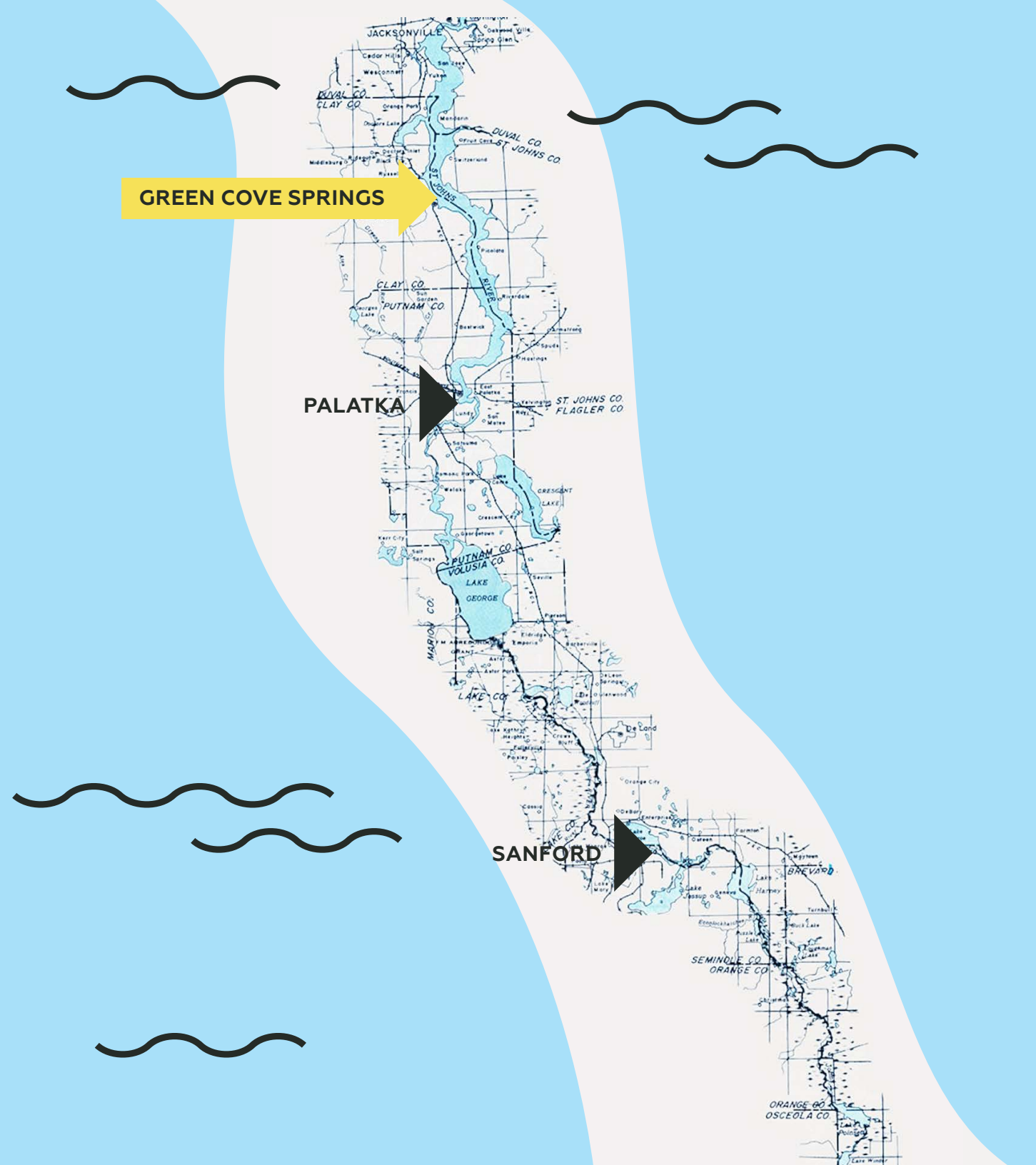
INTRODUCTION

Land use and transportation systems are inextricably linked. Navigable waterways were the primary system of regional transportation for thousands of years, which is why so many of the nation's most historic and prolific cities were located along riverbanks and ocean shores.

The City of Green Cove Springs, the Clay County seat, lies along the St. Johns River similar to other county seats across the region, including Palatka in Putnam County and Sanford in Seminole County. The St. Johns River was an active waterway in the late 1800s and early 1900s and functioned as a crucial artery of commerce and tourism. As a result, river towns began to emerge in quick succession along many of Florida's navigable waterways—several of which also became popular tourism destinations due to the area's warmer climate and wealth of pristine waterbodies. Despite the proliferation of new waterfront cities seeking to capitalize on Florida's emerging tourism industry, Green Cove Springs stood alone as the region's predominant tourism destination because of its rich natural springs, visitor accommodations, and southern hospitality, which helped the City earn its nickname as the "Saratoga of the South."

Yet, cruising along the St. Johns River was not the City's only option available for travel throughout the region, as the late 1800s also ushered in the era of the steam locomotive. The region received its first rail route in 1884 with a stop located south of Green Cove Springs, thus providing another pathway for commerce and tourism to make its way to the City.

Nearly half a century later, the end of World War II brought economic prosperity throughout the United States. The combination of the development of the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s, new financing opportunities for homebuyers and builders, and the proliferation of the personal automobile allowed growth within the region to flourish—particularly along the I-295 beltway, which is located approximately 14 miles north of Green Cove Springs. Over the last 40 years the population of Clay County has increased by more than 150,000 residents.



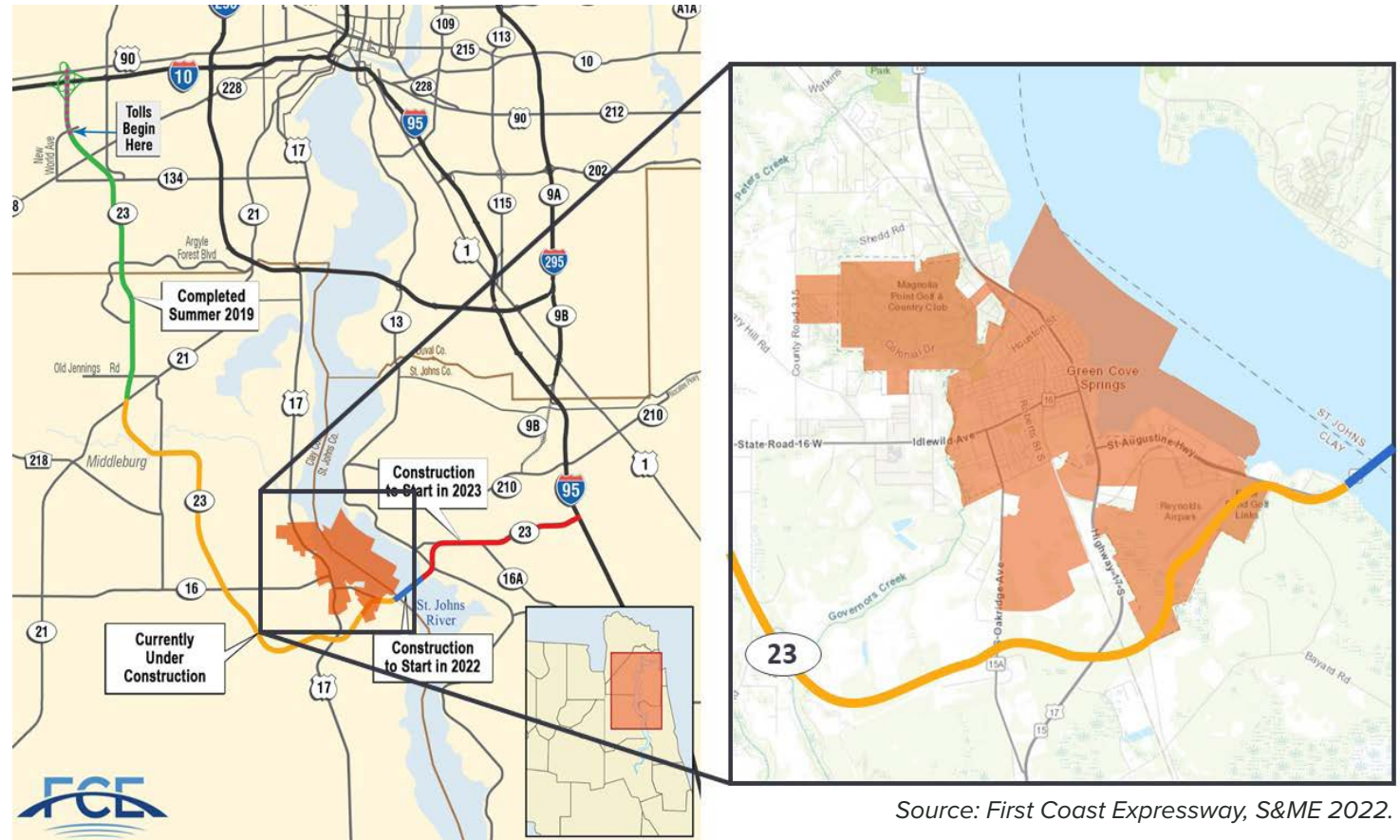
THE TIME IS NOW

The First Coast Expressway, already under construction, will provide a new connection between I-95 and I-10. This 46-mile, multi-lane toll road will serve as a Jacksonville bypass. Like the establishment of the St. Johns River route and the establishment of Florida's rail network in the 1800s, this new regional connection is likely to usher in another era of substantial growth for the City, bringing with it a wealth of new opportunities for Green Cove Springs and its Downtown.

In addition to the City's rich natural amenities, the expansion of the river and rail networks allowed Green Cove Springs to become one of Florida's preeminent destinations for tourism and commerce. With the construction of the First Coast Expressway set to be completed within the next few years, the City will be presented with a wealth of new opportunities for growth.

This community-driven Master Plan provides a roadmap for the City to successfully accommodate and incentivize the growth of its Downtown communities, businesses, and amenities, while continuing to honor the City's rich small-town charm and history. This plan identifies the issues and opportunities facing Downtown and recommends strategic investments and projects to advance toward the community's vision for Downtown Green Cove Springs as

***a thriving convergence
of commerce, history,
and community.***



Source: First Coast Expressway, S&ME 2022.

DRAFT

WHAT DOES
GREEN COVE SPRINGS
MEAN TO ME?

“IT’S HOME”

- COUNCIL MEMBER VAN ROYAL

PROCESS



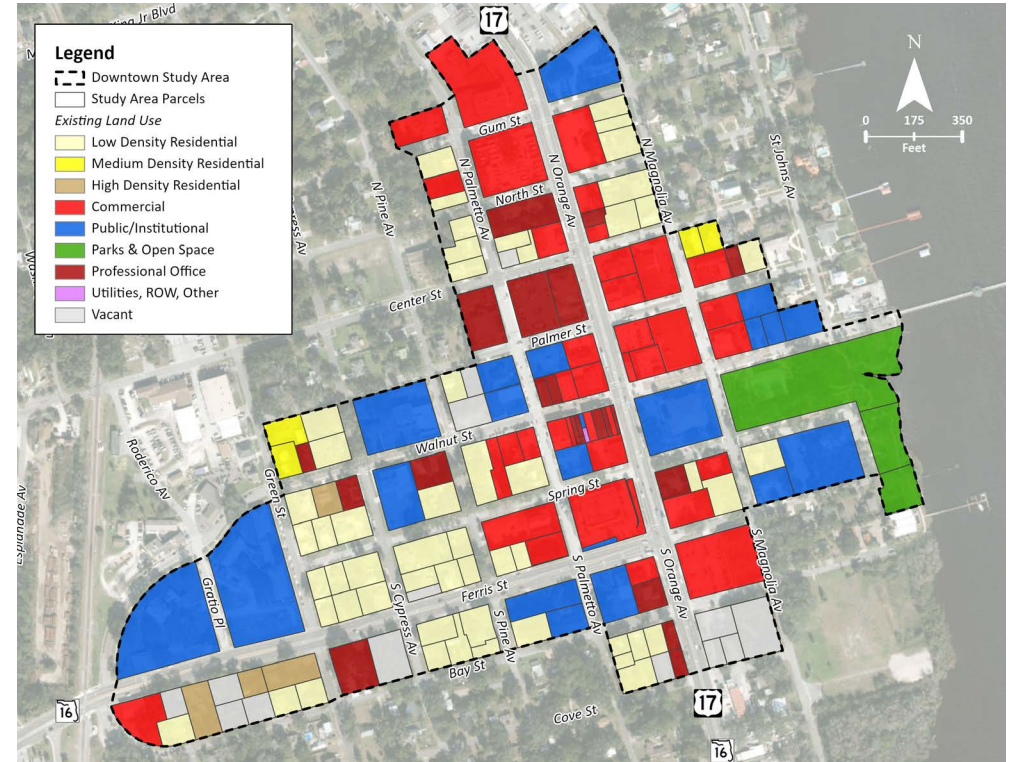
EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

The Project Team analyzed the **land use, zoning, infrastructure, mobility, parking, parks,** and **open space conditions** within the Study Area using data provided by the City, Clay County, regional and state organizations such as the St. Johns River Water Management District and Florida Department of Transportation, and national agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This analysis allowed the Project Team to verify and support the insights provided by the public during the community outreach process while also discovering new details that would help further contextualize and inform this master planning effort. This assessment is detailed in the Existing Conditions Report accompanying the Plan.

The Project Team also sought to understand the socioeconomic and market conditions facing Downtown Green Cove Springs so that the Master Plan can provide clear and context-sensitive recommendations on the programs and projects necessary to energize the local economy. The conditions examined during this analysis included population, age, gender, race and ethnicity, education, employment, income, and industry leakages and surpluses for local retail and dining. This analysis can be found in the Demographic and Market Characteristics Report, which also includes additional recommendations specifically addressing the retail environment within the Study Area.

The four primary themes which surfaced during these analyses are summarized as follows:

- Improve **connectivity and walkability** within the Study Area by addressing the automobile-oriented nature of US 17, the safety issues present at the Walnut Street / US 17 intersection, and the lack of pedestrian accommodations throughout the Study Area.
- Transition site design requirements for **future development** from suburban (e.g., front-loaded parking, significant setbacks) to more urban standards, such as requiring rear-loaded parking lots, minimal setbacks, pedestrian-oriented entranceways, etc.
- Capitalize on the **small-town charm and history** of the community by establishing a gateway and wayfinding signage program throughout the Study Area, promoting a new and unique brand for Downtown, and celebrating the City's wealth of cultural and historical landmarks.
- Encourage **infill and redevelopment opportunities** to address issues of vacancies, underutilized developments, and blighted properties.



RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

A market analysis, a component of the master planning effort of Downtown Green Cove Springs, was conducted to identify the existing supply of and demand for specific retail industry sectors. The methodology of this analysis included an evaluation of the market conditions within three areas; the 5, 10 and 15-minute drive times around Downtown Green Cove Springs, as shown on the map included on this page. The utilization of drive times to define market areas is the industry-standard, with the 15-minute drive time as the primary market area limit. Distances longer than a 15-minute drive are considered to be outside the local market area as consumers are less inclined to make a “special trip” that is longer than 15 minutes.

The 5-minute drive area has one of the region’s lower median household income levels at \$48,182. The median household incomes increase in the 10- and 15-minute drive areas to \$60,018 and \$67,380, respectively. Income levels and the number of households increase significantly from the 5-minute drive area to the 15-minute drive area.

With greater population and disposable income available in the 10 and 15-minute drive areas, improving Downtown Green Cove Springs as a destination could spur redevelopment across a variety of industry sectors. Currently unmet market demands, including a variety of retail shops and services, were identified in each of three areas as detailed in the supplemental report Retail Market Analysis. For Green Cove Springs to capitalize on opportunities that would foster redevelopment in downtown, it will be necessary to facilitate the development of an “anchor-use” that will attract visitors from the 10 and 15-minute drive areas.

5-Minute Drive

Population	7,389
Households	2,572
Median HH Income	\$48,182

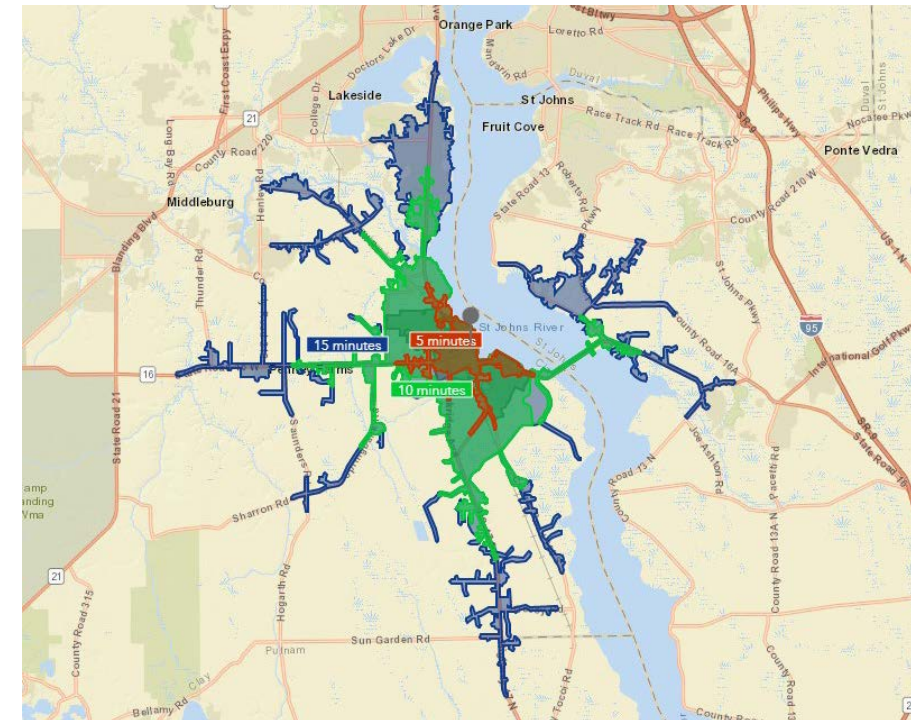
10-Minute Drive

Population	19,315
Households	7,097
Median HH Income	\$60,018

15-Minute Drive

Population	35,973
Households	13,444
Median HH Income	\$67,380

5-10-15 Minute Drive Market Area



Source: ESRI, BAO, 2022. S&ME 2022.

GCS Restaurant Potential

As shown in exhibit to the right, there is a high demand (over \$3,524,353 in unmet annual demand) in the 15-minute drive market area for Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages). There is an unmet demand in the 5 and 10-minute drive area's as well. We recognize that multiple stand-alone bars in Downtown may change the existing small-town character, which the community wants to preserve. Alternatively, this market opportunity could be fulfilled as part of a full-service restaurant. The 10-minute drive area shows a demand for restaurants that exceeds available supply.

Dining out is a timeless experience. People are willing to drive for a great meal and waterfront views enhance the draw. Leveraging the unmet demand for Drinking Places to develop a destination/anchor restaurant would help attract more customers to Downtown and help to spur additional reinvestment. The opportunity for restaurants in downtown can be seen firsthand with the success of the City's Food Truck Friday events.

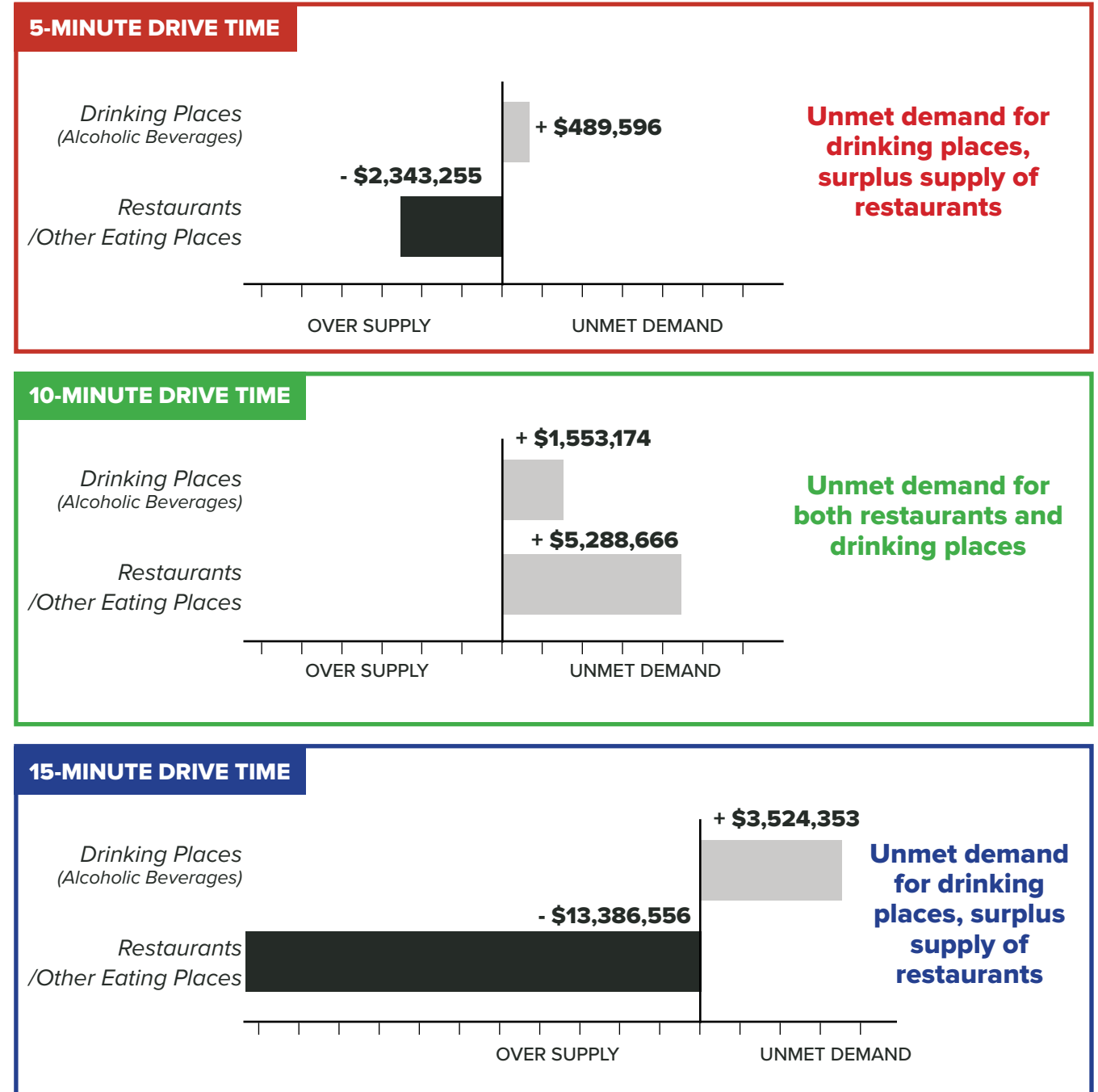
The following tables demonstrate the unmet demand for food and drink services within 10-minute drive time market area and the unmet demand for Drinking Places within the entire (5-10-15-minute) market area.

The unmet demand for Food Drink services within the 10-minute drive time coupled with the annualized sales per square feet for 'full-service' restaurants (\$275 per square foot) yield a retail development potential of over 24,000 square feet to accommodate unmet annual demand for Food and Drink services. The average size for a "Family-Style" restaurant ranges from ~4,000 sq. ft. on the smaller end to ~8,000 sq. ft. on the larger end. The Downtown Green Cove Springs 10-minute drive time market area, may accommodate the development of several (2-3) full-service, family style restaurants.

Restaurant Development Potential within 10-Minute Drive Market Area		
Unmet Annual Sales Demand	Annual Sales (per Sq. Ft.)	Restaurant Development Potential
\$6,841,840	\$275	24,879 Sq. Ft.

Source: National Restaurant Association, Sales per Square Foot, Full Service Restaurant, February 8, 2022.

Retail Market Supply & Demand: Food & Drink



Source: ESRI, BAO, 2022. S&ME 2022.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Before drafting the Master Plan for Downtown Green Cove Springs, the Project Team sought to cultivate a rich and profound understanding of the issues and opportunities facing the Study Area. To realize this goal, two primary research methods were undertaken. The first was an Existing Conditions Analysis. The second was an intensive community outreach process which included both in-person and online engagement options, such as a project website, stakeholder interviews, and a five-day design charrette. The results of these research methods are summarized as follows and are further detailed in Supplemental Documents A (Public Engagement Summary), B (Existing Conditions Analysis), and C (Demographics & Market Analysis) of this Plan.

- Early in the project’s lifespan, the Project Team **established a website** for the Downtown Master Planning effort utilizing the Social Pinpoint platform (smeinc.mysocialpinpoint.com/downtown_gcs_master_plan). In addition to hosting a wealth of project-related information, the project website also hosted an **online survey** and an **interactive comment map** where visitors could provide location-specific thoughts, perspectives, and opinions on how the Downtown should grow in the decades ahead. Over the course of the project website’s lifespan, the site was visited over 1,800 times by nearly 600 unique viewers.
- The second community outreach tool utilized for the project was an intensive **five-day charrette** within City Hall between Monday, January 24th and Friday, January 28th, 2022. Monday’s schedule included interviews with various Downtown stakeholders, a walking audit of the Study Area, and a **Public Kick-Off and Visioning Session** with the community. The following day involved a series of additional stakeholder interviews, a presentation to the Planning & Zoning Board, and beginning to draft the community’s vision for Downtown. This vision was advanced further on Wednesday and presented to the public that evening at the **Community Visioning and Design Workshop**. Using the feedback provided from the public, the Project Team began developing the first master plan concept on Thursday and presented this plan at the **Vision & Design Unveiling Open House** on Friday. After the presentation concluded, meeting attendees overwhelmingly expressed their approval of the proposed master plan and wished to be notified when the document was completed to see the final vision.

Whether participating online or in-person, the public provided a wealth of local

expertise throughout the community outreach process which greatly informed this master planning effort. The three most reoccurring themes which emerged from the public during this time are summarized as follows:

- Identify ways in which to **leverage Spring Park and the waterfront** to cultivate authentic ecotourism opportunities, attract new and expanded events, and spur economic development within the Downtown
- Address the need for **new development** projects which enhance the vibrancy, volume, and diversity of activities Downtown (such as restaurants, shops, and lodging) without sacrificing the **small-town charm and history** that is unique to Green Cove Springs
- Improve the public realm to safely support and accommodate a wide variety of motorized and non-motorized transportation options which will **connect residents and visitors alike to Downtown** restaurants, shops, amenities, and services.



OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

The ideas and perspectives provided by the public during the Community Outreach process and the assessment conducted during the Existing Conditions Analysis helped set the stage for drafting the Downtown Master Plan by clearly inventorying opportunities and constraints within the Study Area. These items are represented graphically in the map presented on this page and are strategically addressed within this Plan through a series of context-sensitive projects. These projects are discussed in the following section of this document and are further detailed in the Implementation Strategy.

KEY

- Study Area (83.3 AC)
- Public Land (15.8 AC)
- Signalized Intersection
- P Existing Public Parking (± 155 Spaces)
- ✦ Gateways
- ↔ "Main Street" Improvement
- ↔ 8' Multi-Use Trail under Construction
- ↔ Potential Multi-Use Trail/Pedestrian Connection
- Focus Area
- Existing Building
- Potential Restaurant/Retail Building
- Potential Pocket Park/Open Space
- Activity Barges
- Intersection Improvement
- Potential Street Closure
- Proposed Underground Utility
- Existing Monthly Food Truck Event Location
- Potential On-Street Parking
- Potential Sidewalk



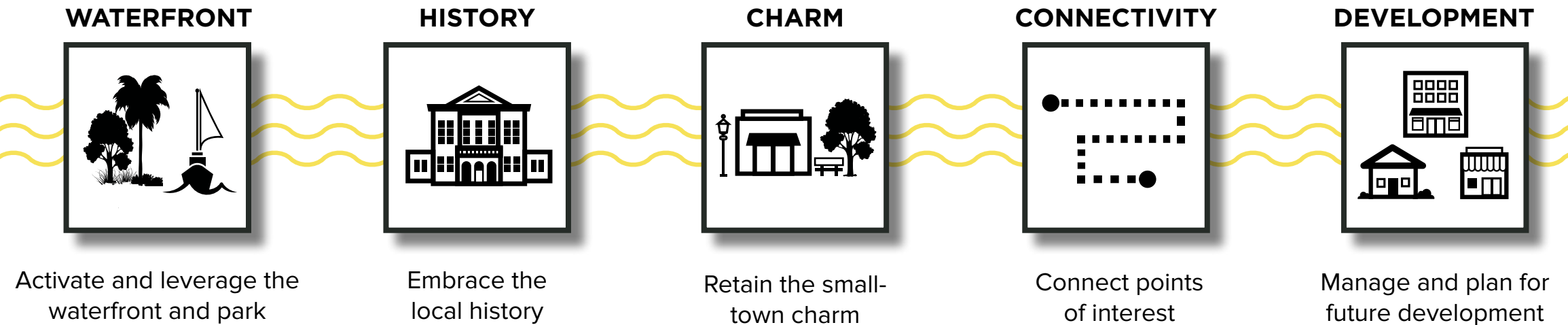
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Guiding Principles outlined below were identified based on extensive community engagement and the clear consensus to balance the preservation of the City’s history and character with compatible economic development.

Over the next twenty years, there will be significant development throughout Clay County to meet the demands of a growing population. The principles of **Waterfront**, **History**, and **Charm** speak to the current attributes of Downtown Green Cove Springs. These are unique attributes that cannot be replicated. The Downtown Master Plan will seek to enhance these existing assets.

The principle of **Connectivity** seeks to further strengthen these assets by linking points of interest to create synergies.

The final principle of **Development** is realized through strengthening and connecting existing assets. It is embodied by desired real estate investment in Downtown that will complement the existing character and foster enhanced commerce and a greater sense of community.



DRAFT

**"YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK
DOWNTOWN NEEDS? MORE PLACES TO
PLAY AND
STAY"**

- TRACY SMITH, OWNER OF SOMETHING SPECIAL ANTIQUES

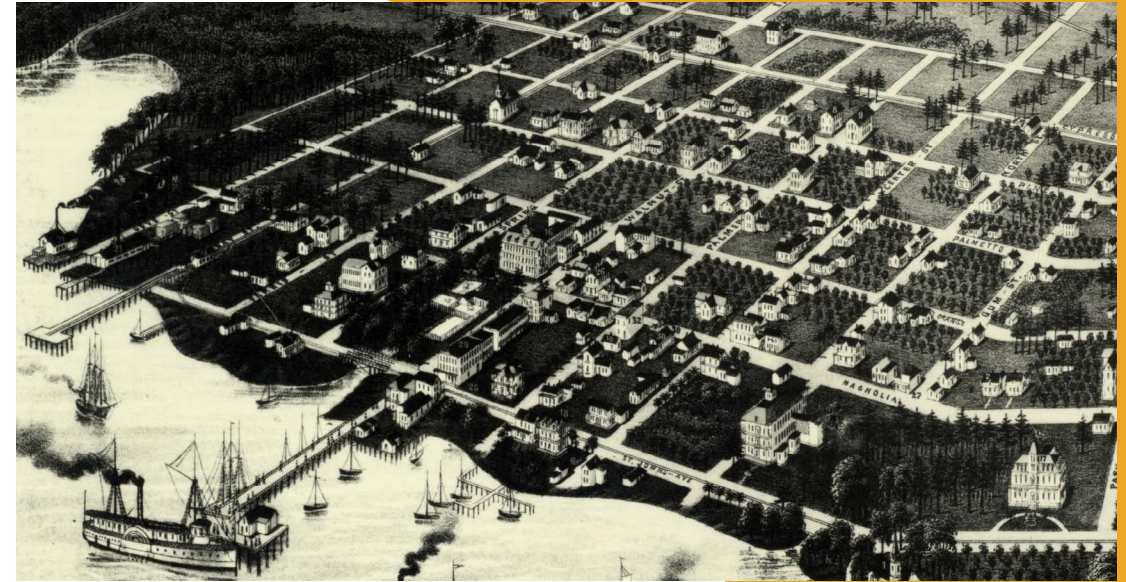
FOCUS AREA



THE CRITICAL START

This master planning process was conducted utilizing the Downtown Study Area boundary provided by the City. The ideas and perspectives provided by the public during the Community Outreach process and supplemented by the Project Team's existing conditions analysis helped identify redevelopment needs throughout Downtown. However, these needs are extensive and cannot be addressed overnight. Many master plans, filled with great ideas and designs, often fail to address the long-term needs of their respective communities because they lack a clear starting point.

Therefore, although this Master Plan provides a long-term, 20-year vision for the Study Area, this Plan places the greatest amount of detail, attention, and guidance to the critical first phase of implementation. Projects proposed in Phase 1 are focused almost entirely within the City's urban core. This 'Focus Area', generally defined within this Plan as the portion of the Study Area found east of Pine Avenue between Palmer and Spring Street, contains many of the City's most prized assets, including the Walnut Street 'main street' corridor, Spring Park, and the St. Johns River. The value of these highly concentrated assets is enduring and, with the right plan, can once again be leveraged to generate increased activity, commerce, and energy to Downtown Green Cove Springs for decades to come. As such, the implementation of this Plan begins within this critical geographical area.



Source: Green Cove Springs, City Hall.



VISUALIZING THE PLAN

By establishing a smaller focus area, the implementation becomes more feasible and clear. To further articulate the reality of the proposed Plan, four illustrative perspectives were developed. The following 3-D visualizations showcase several key project sites proposed in the crucial Phase 1 and help communicate the reality of what is most achievable within the 20-year timeframe outlined in this Plan. These illustrations document some of the details proposed and effectively communicate the spaces and usability.

Perspective 1

Showcases the proposed US 17 streetscape improvements that enhance the sense of arrival into Downtown Green Cove Springs.

Perspective 2

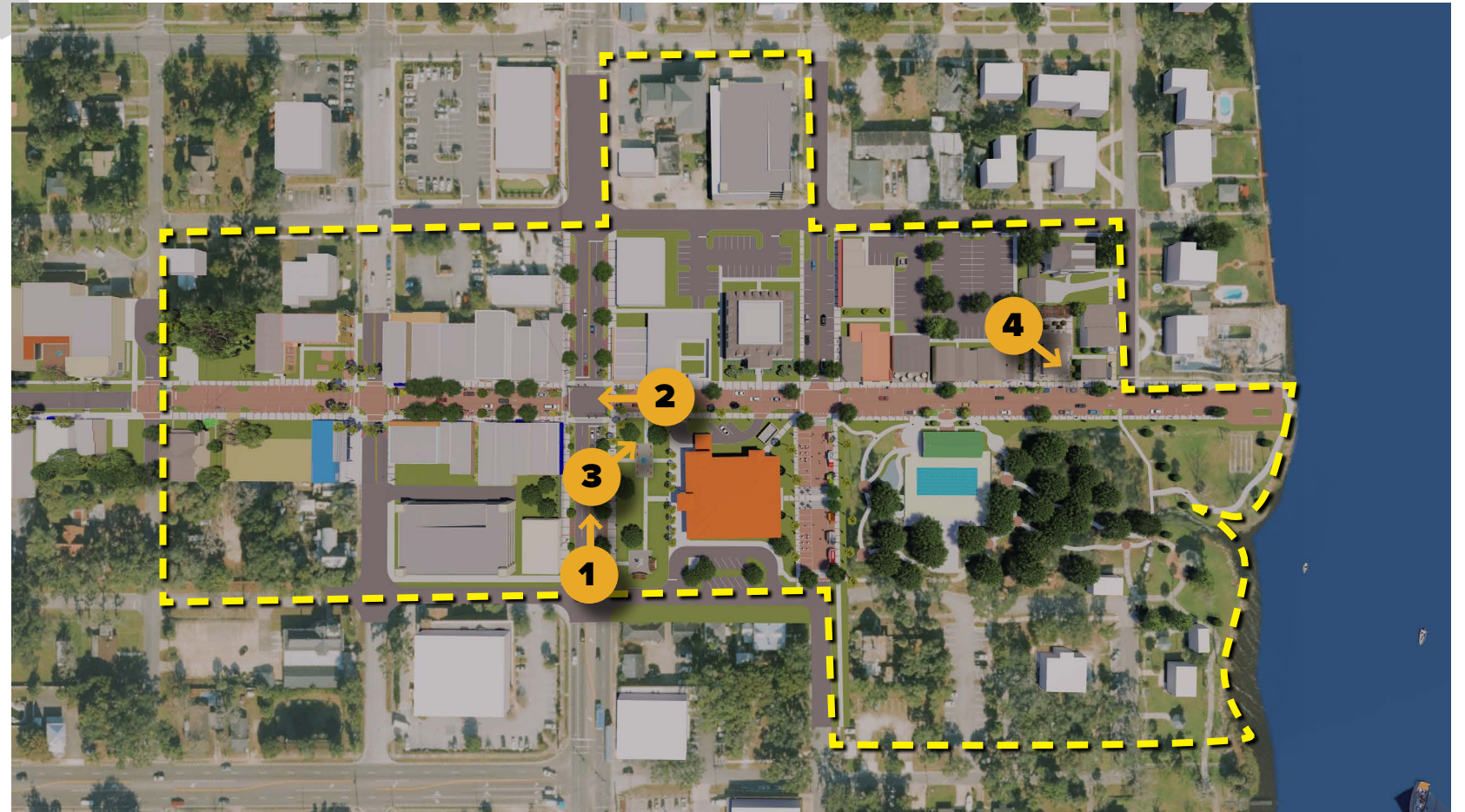
Exhibits 3 key Phase 1 projects: the re-imagined US 17 / Walnut Street intersection, City Hall Park, and the Walnut Street Corridor upgrades.

Perspective 3

Previews a new civic space in front of City Hall which both celebrates and contributes to Downtown's iconic parks and open space system.

Perspective 4

Visualizes a Destination Restaurant that capitalizes on pristine views afforded by the proximity of the site to the waterfront and Spring Park.



1. US 17

Looking north towards
Walnut Street



2. Intersection

Looking west along
Walnut Street



3. City Hall Park

Looking northeast
towards the park space



4. Restaurant

Looking southeast
towards waterfront





**"I SEE GREEN COVE SPRINGS'
DOWNTOWN AS
CHARMING AND
HOPEFUL"**

- ANDREA VALLENCOURT, OWNER OF CLAY THEATRE

IMPLEMENTATION



PHASE 1

DRAFT

WATERFRONT



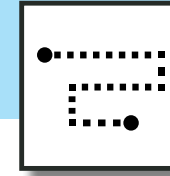
HISTORY



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.



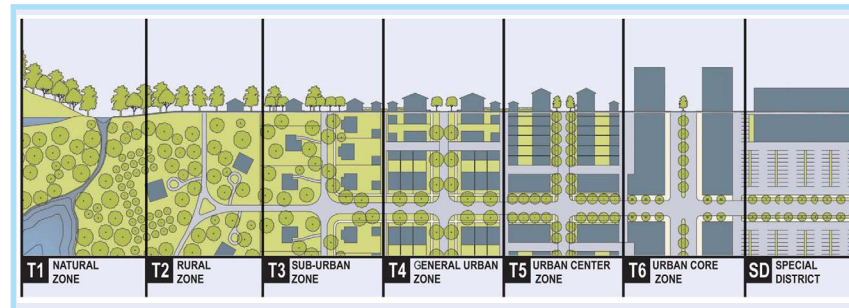
Building Placement / Orientation

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

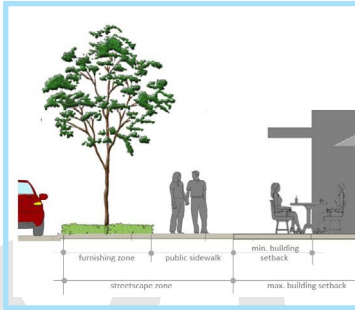
Sidewalks in commercial areas must be wide enough to accommodate pedestrian activity, landscaping and streetscape furniture. Due to the lack of right-of-way along certain corridors, some sites may need to dedicate an easement to the city to accommodate such elements.



Regulating Plan

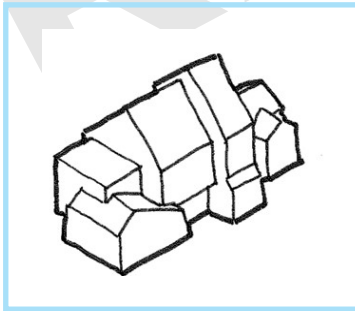
The organizing principle of a FBC is the regulating plan, a two-dimensional graphic that depicts the geographic distribution of the transect zones. Generally, the T-Zones range from T-1 to T-6, depending on the local context but not all FBCs include all 6.

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.



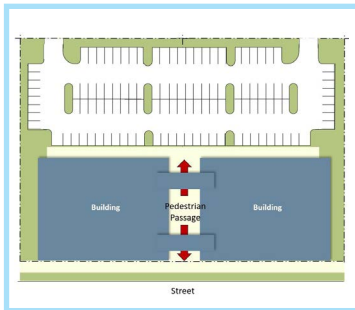
Building Form, Massing and Scale

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.



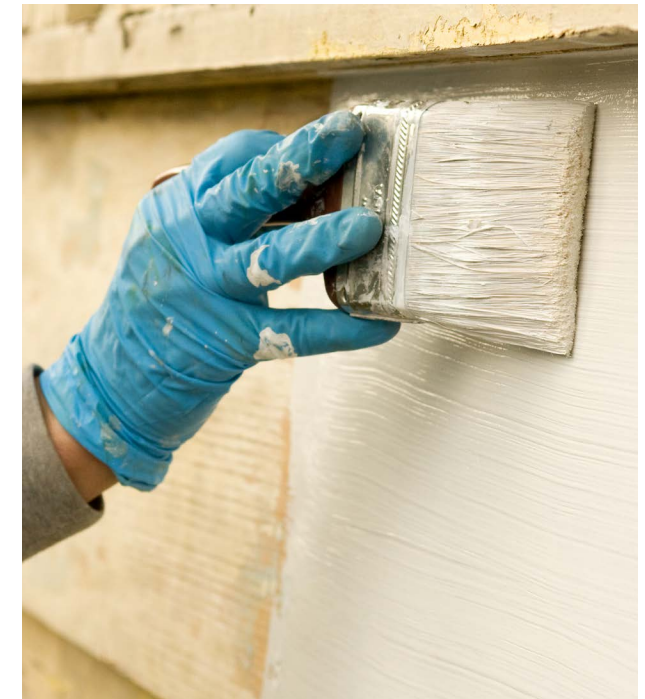
Public Art / Murals

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

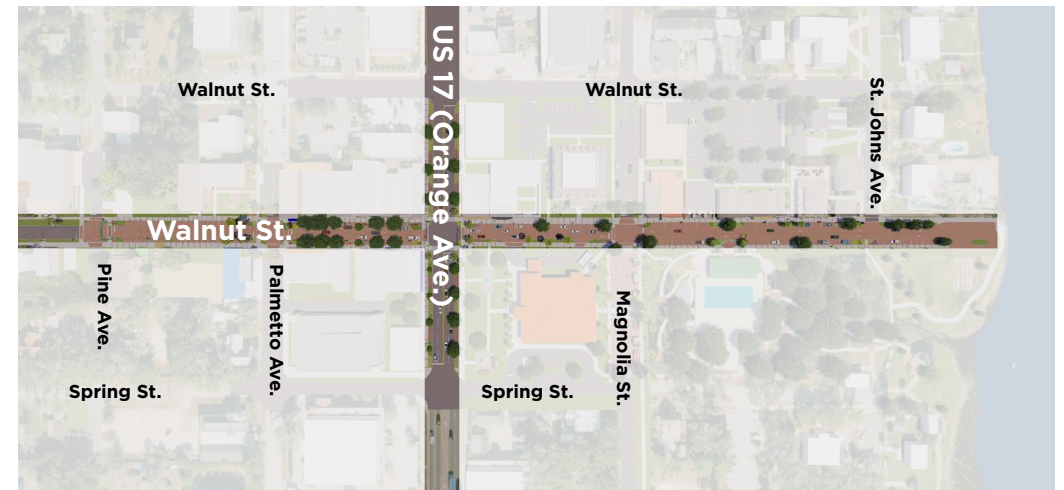


PHASE 1 PARKING

8. US 17 & Walnut Street Intersection Enhancement

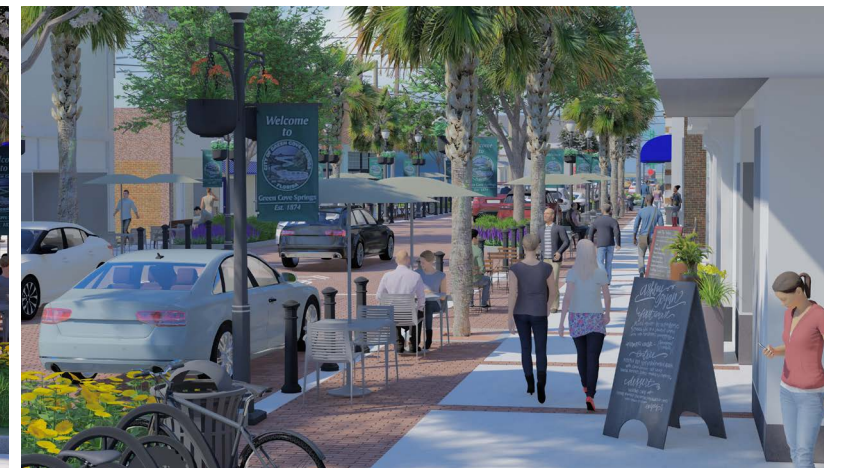
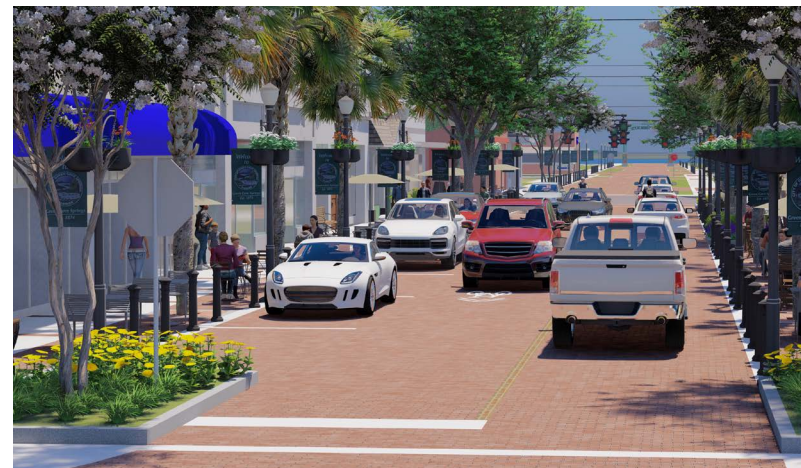
Approximately 25,000 cars per day cross Walnut Street via US 17 and this amount is expected to double by the year 2045 with the completion of the First Coast Expressway. How many people in these vehicles realize they are driving through Historic Green Cove Springs, the Clay County seat? Furthermore, 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 curbside 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.



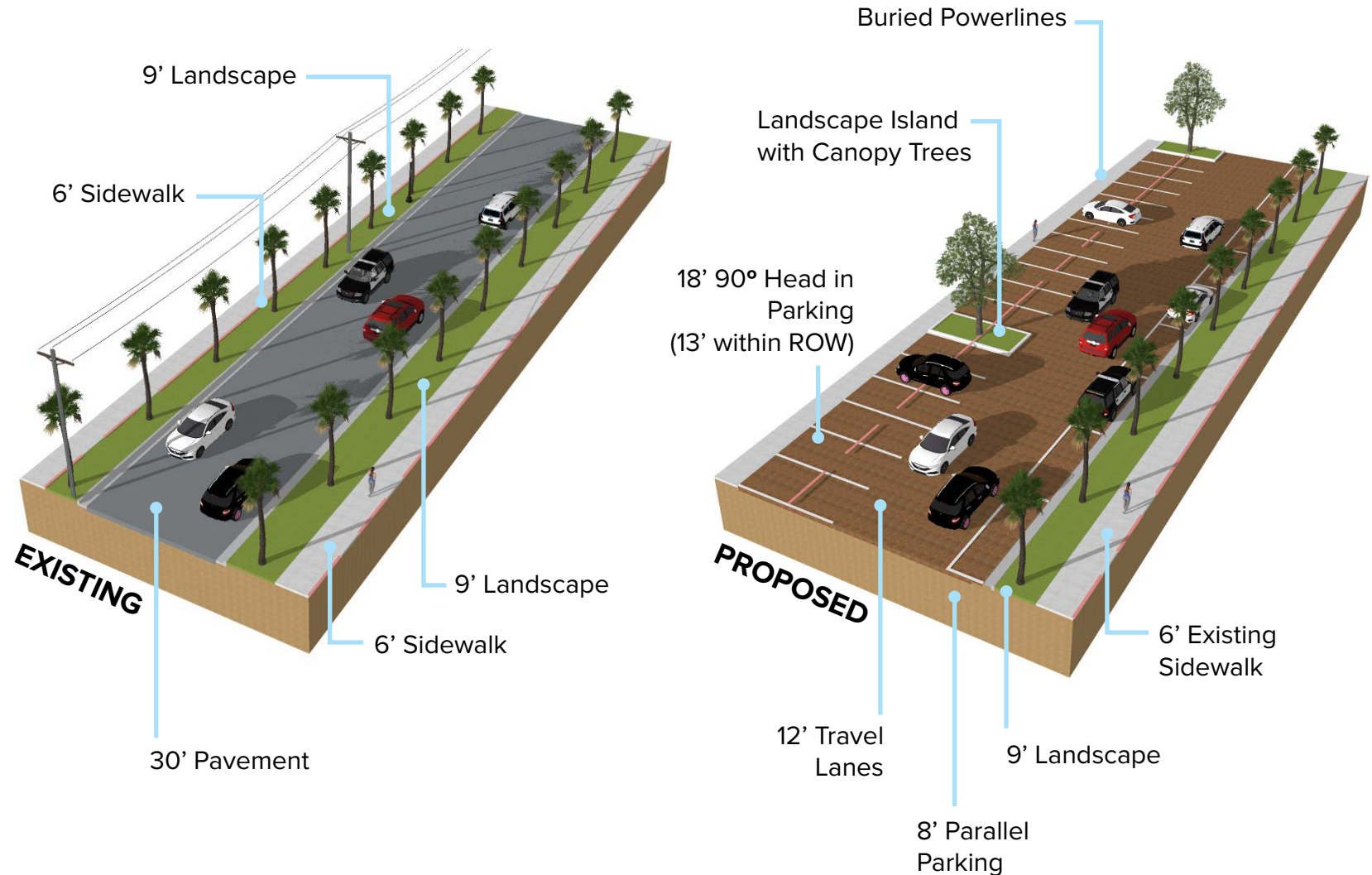
10. Magnolia Avenue - Festival Street

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

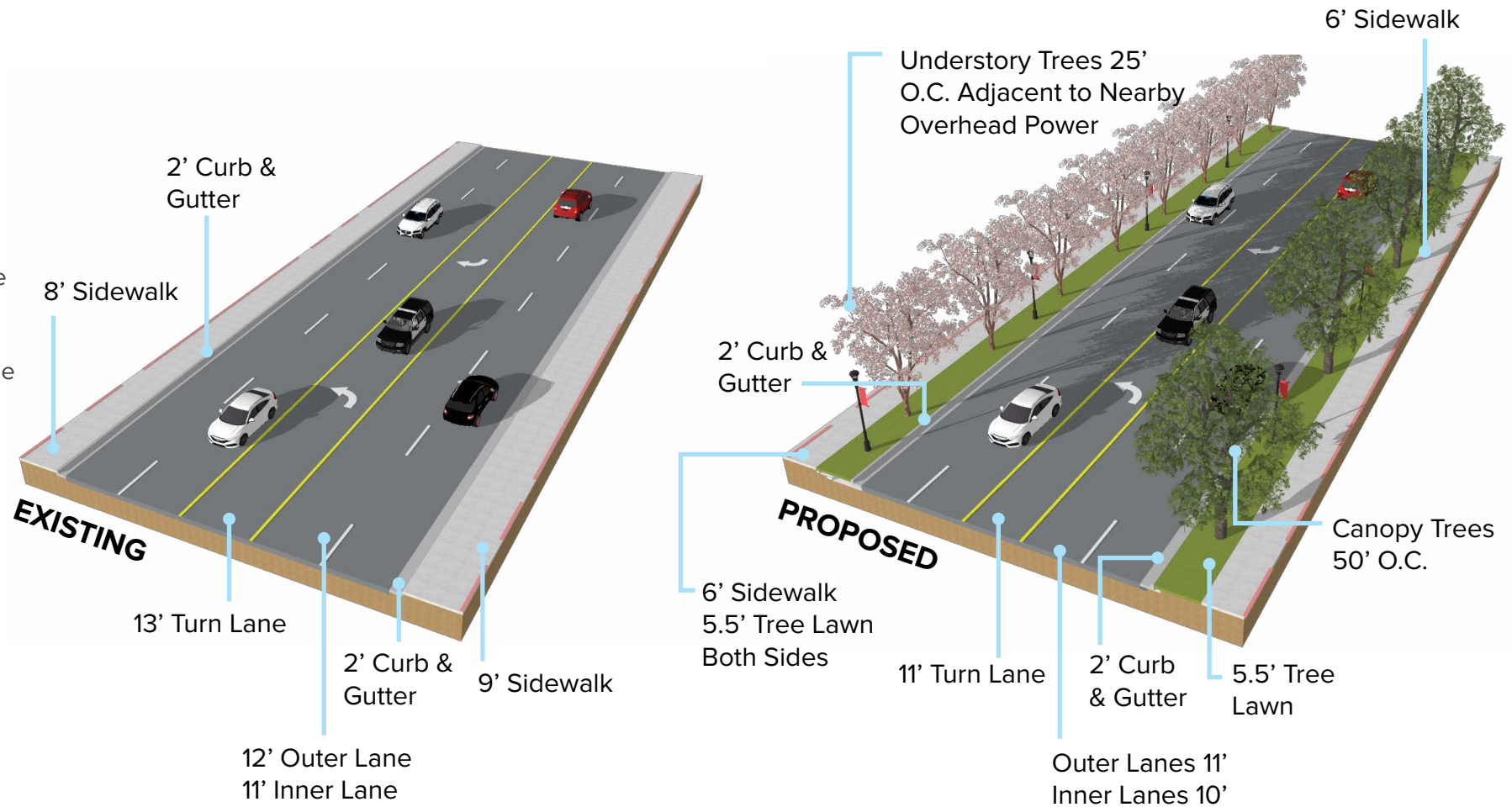
11. FDOT Improvements to US 17 Corridor (Oak Street to Governor's Creek)

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.



PHASE 2

WATERFRONT



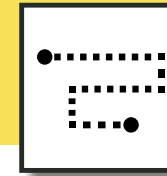
HISTORY



CHARM



CONNECTIVITY



DEVELOPMENT



The projects proposed in Phase 2 are derived from the guiding principles provided by the community and the strategic improvements introduced in Phase 1. The following projects seek to activate the **WATERFRONT** by converting underutilized rights-of-way into neighborhood-serving pocket parks, capitalize on the City's unique **HISTORY** and **CHARM** by expanding Spring Park and establishing authentic gateway signage, provide for non-motorized **CONNECTIVITY** opportunities into the Downtown from neighborhoods to the north via a new trail project along St. Johns Avenue, and 'filling-in' the perceived gaps within the Focus Area by priming a vacant catalyst site for **DEVELOPMENT**.

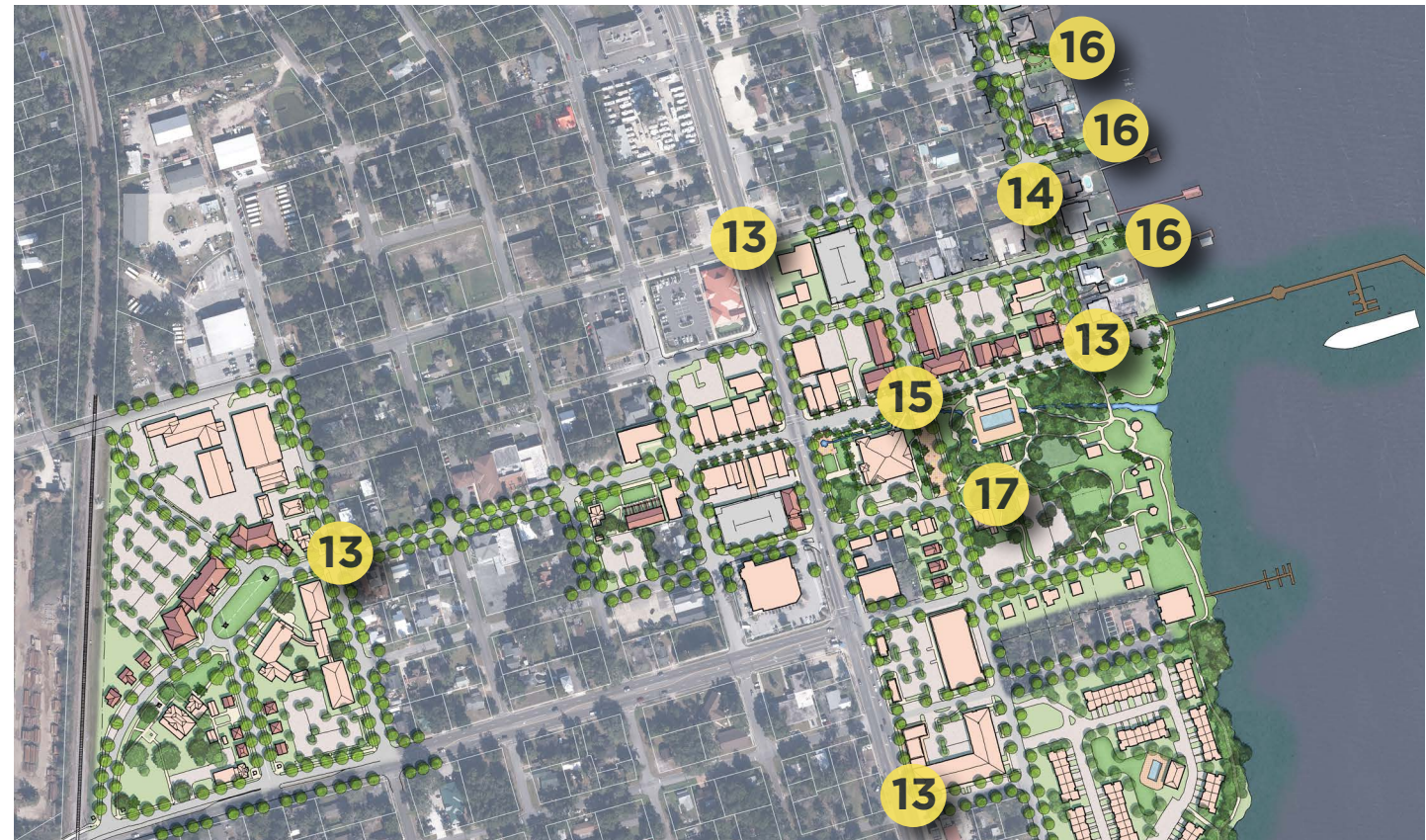
Phase 2 (6-10 Years)		
13	Gateway Features	\$\$
14	St. Johns Avenue Trail (North of Walnut St.)	\$\$
15	Strategic Infill Project (Vacant Lot at Walnut St./Magnolia Ave.)	\$\$\$
16	Waterfront Pocket Parks	\$\$
17	Spring Park Expansion & Improvements (Vacate Spring St.)	\$\$\$
EST. COST: \$ = <\$100,000 \$\$ = \$100,000-\$1 Million \$\$\$ = \$1-5 Million \$\$\$\$ = >\$5 Millon		



#14 ST. JOHNS AVE. TRAIL



#16 POCKET PARKS



13

Gateway features such as signage, monuments, and banners do more than just identify the location of an area or activity center. They are critical for establishing a sense of place, a community’s identity, and conveying powerful messages. This Plan proposes to implement gateway features at strategic and highly visible locations within the Study Area which announce to residents and visitors alike they are entering thriving Downtown community rich with shops, restaurants, history, culture, and amenities.

14

Consistent with the community’s desire for additional nonmotorized connections between neighborhoods, the waterfront, and downtown amenities, this project would convert a portion of the St. Johns Avenue right-of-way into an off-street, multi-use path for pedestrians, cyclists, scooters, and other motorless forms of transportation.

15

This Plan places a significant emphasis on the revitalization and redevelopment of the historic Walnut Street corridor between US 17 and the St. Johns River. A necessary step to realizing this goal will be to address the presence of vacant and underutilized properties. One such site is the northwest quadrant of the Walnut Street and Magnolia Avenue, which is currently privately owned and is being used as an unpaved private parking lot. As such, the property owner should be approached by the City to discuss a more intense use for the site, potential incentive programming to assist in the redevelopment process, and/or whether the site should be purchased by the City to further redevelopment efforts Downtown.

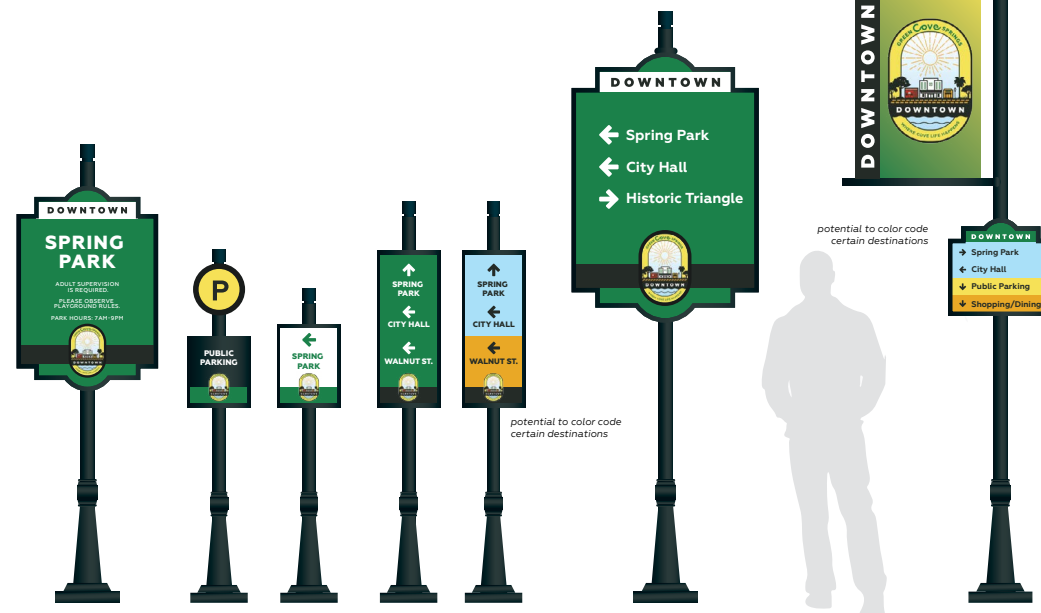
16

Many east-west roadways within the Study Area terminate after connecting with St. Johns Avenue. However, the rights-of-way from these roadways often extend into the River. Thus, ample opportunities exist to convert these underutilized or vacant spaces into waterfront pocket parks which can serve the Downtown neighborhoods and connect the proposed St. Johns Avenue trail. Potential amenities at these locations may include benches, pavilions, tables, water fountains, and kayak/canoe launches.

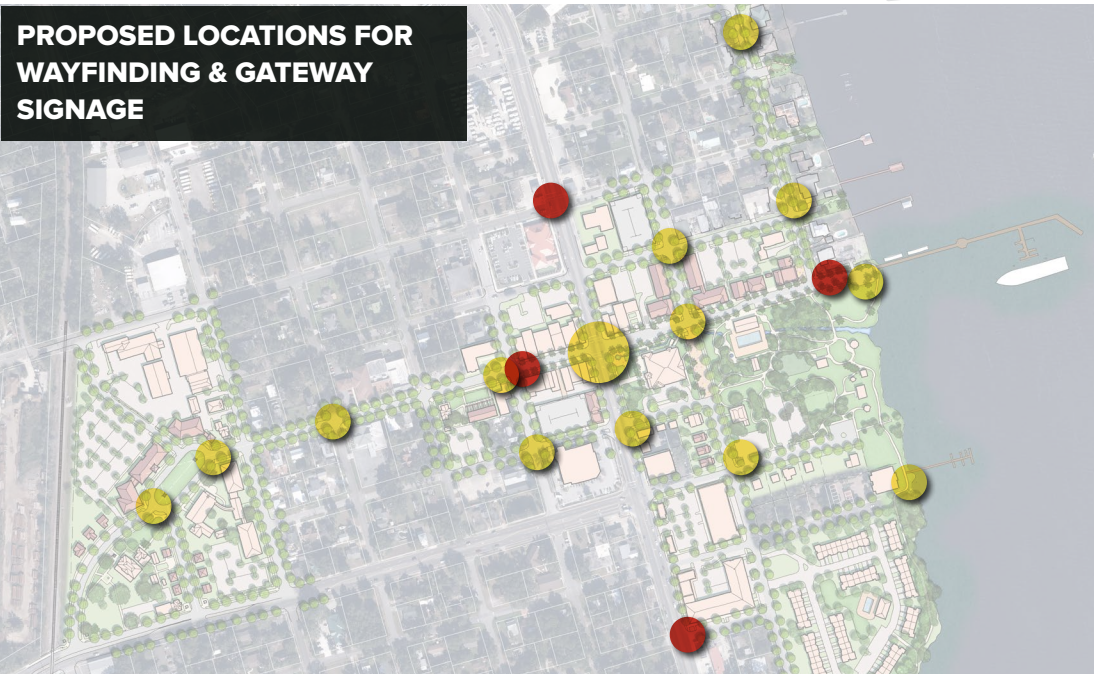
17

From its world-class active and passive recreational facilities to its wildly popular public events, Spring Park stands alone as the region’s premier civic open space. This Plan proposes to vacate the Spring Street right-of-way east of Magnolia Avenue, resulting in a loss of 12 spaces, to further expand the Park’s capacity for future facilities, programming, and events. As part of this effort, the City should also reevaluate the functionality of the space and determine if the Park’s current layout and amenities are complimenting the City’s Downtown revitalization efforts.

#13 GATEWAY/WAYFINDING FEATURES



PROPOSED LOCATIONS FOR WAYFINDING & GATEWAY SIGNAGE



- Gateways
- Wayfinding Signage

PHASE 3

WATERFRONT



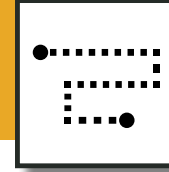
HISTORY



CHARM



CONNECTIVITY



DEVELOPMENT

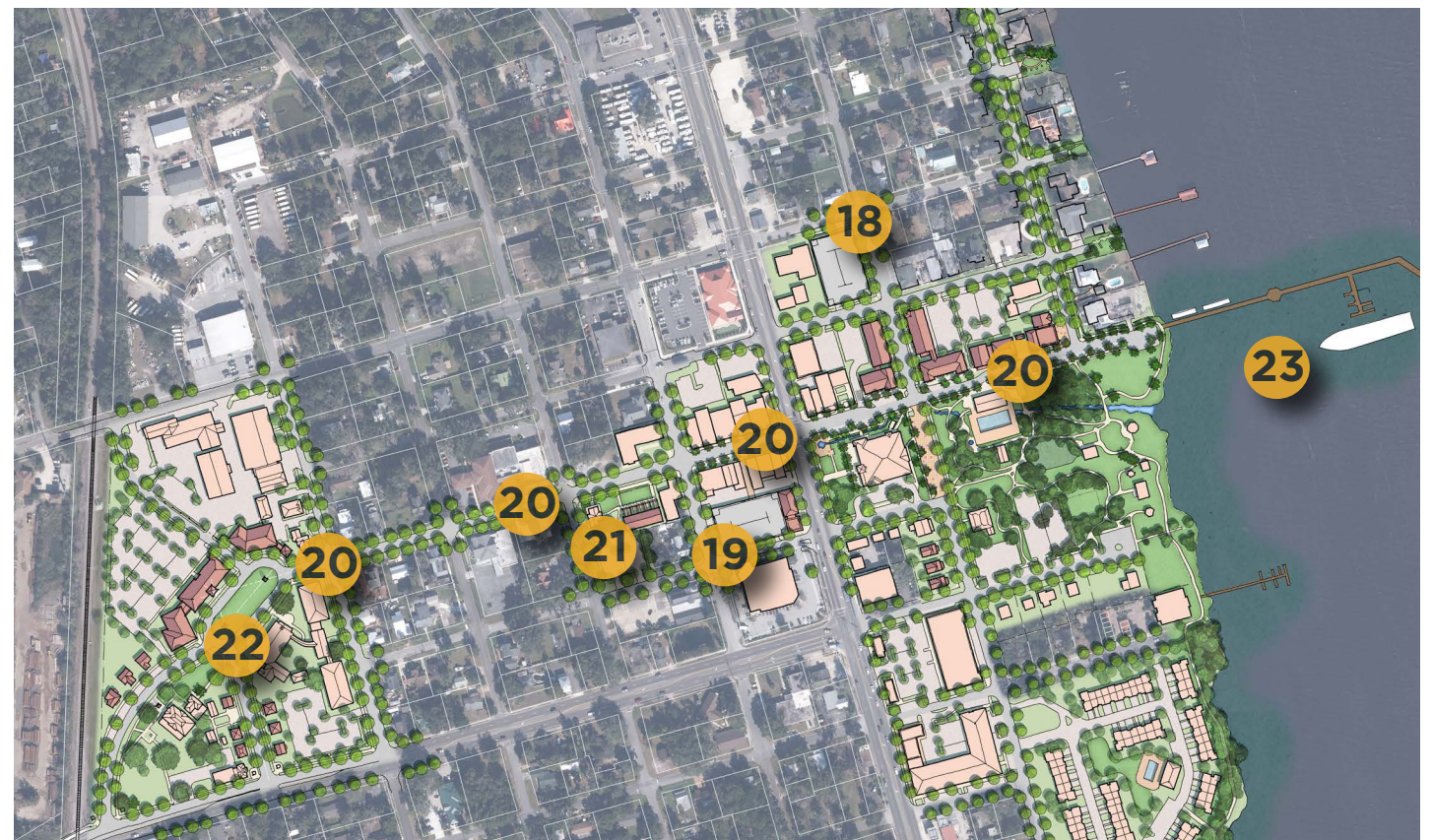


The third and final phase of this Master Plan identifies a series of long-term and community-driven strategic investments intended to set the stage for future economic development within Downtown Green Cove Springs. Most notably, this Plan proposes the construction of high-capacity parking garages to service existing and future **DEVELOPMENT**, embrace the City's **HISTORY** and **CHARM** by revitalizing the Historic Triangle, establish meaningful **CONNECTIVITY** between points of interests throughout Downtown via cultural markers, signage, and paths, and leverage the City's prime **WATERFRONT** location to cultivate a thriving river-based economy and tourism industry.



#18 & #19 PARKING GARAGES

Phase 3 (11-20 Years)		
18	Parking Garage - North (Intersection of Palmer St./Magnolia Ave.)	\$\$\$\$
19	Parking Garage - South (Intersection of Palmetto Ave./Spring St.)	\$\$\$\$
20	Culture Walk Markers	\$\$
21	Strategic Infill Project (Gustafson House - 515 Walnut St.)	\$\$\$
22	Historic Triangle Site Redesign	\$\$\$\$
23	Marine Field Programming	\$
EST. COST: \$ = <\$100,000 \$\$ = \$100,000-\$1 Million \$\$\$ = \$1-5 Million \$\$\$\$ = >\$5 Million		



18

As Downtown’s economy flourishes and the inventory of developable properties nears depletion, the City should consider allowing developers to convert existing off-street parking lots into new redevelopment projects. This policy change will likely result in the exhaustion of Downtown’s parking supply and thus, will trigger the need for one or more intensive, large-scale parking structures within the Study Area. Two potential locations for these facilities are identified in the Phase 3 Map.

19

Downtown Green Cove Springs is rich with history and culture. In efforts to both celebrate the area’s unique cultural heritage while simultaneously enhancing connectivity throughout the Study Area, the City should establish a Downtown cultural trail program complemented by historical markers, imagery, and murals which link important local assets. If implemented effectively, the Culture Walk program would compel residents and visitors alike to stay and explore the Downtown area after reaching their initial destination.

20

Frank and Agnes Gustafson, the founders of the Gustafson Dairy Farm, once resided along the historic Walnut Street corridor within Downtown Green Cove Springs. Today, their home remains under family ownership, but remains largely vacant and untouched since their passing. This Plan proposes to honor *Mama and Papa Gus’* legacy by working with the family to rehabilitate the historic home and repurpose it for a public use. Potential uses may include a history museum, small event space, visitor/community center, or other uses which help serve the community that this iconic couple called home.

21

The Walnut [Main] Street corridor is of critical importance to the success of Downtown and the City as a whole. In the past, significant attention has been paid to the blocks immediately east and west of the US 17 corridor. However, to create a truly vibrant Main Street, the corridor must be densely populated by public and private development that is bookended by important community focal points. Although the eastern end of the corridor meets this standard by featuring the St. Johns River and Spring Park, the western end terminates into the ‘Historic Triangle’, which houses a number of institutional uses in a sprawling and underdeveloped setting which fail to contribute to the Main Street vision of Walnut presented in this Plan. As such, this project includes various improvements to the corridor’s eastern terminus by proposing a new public park facility, expanded parking facilities to accommodate Downtown events, and designating areas for future development which further support the Main Street activities along Walnut Street.

22

23

The City of Green Cove Springs is fortunate to be positioned adjacent to the St. Johns River—a renowned waterway whose natural conditions are favorable for a wide swath of aquatic activities, such as kayaking, fishing, and paddle boating. Additionally, the portion of the St. Johns River where the City resides is also unique in that it is an ideal setting for an established marine field capable of supporting boating lessons and training programs. Once established, this catalyst industry would attract a wide variety of commercial and industrial support businesses to the area, including restaurants, bait and tackle shops, hotels, and boat repair and restoration facilities.





The Historic Triangle development will add new civic spaces and honor the City's historic assets

Several parking projects of varying scales have been identified to meet the Study Area's existing and projected parking needs

Potential redevelopment projects are strategically identified throughout the Walnut St. corridor to 'fill in' any perceived gaps in Downtown's urban fabric

Pocket Parks and the St. Johns Trail will connect neighborhoods to the Downtown while simultaneously increasing the supply of local open spaces

Enhancing Walnut St. will strengthen the corridor, connecting community assets throughout the Downtown

The City Hall Park and 'Festival Street' along Magnolia Ave. provide a seamless open-space system from Orange Ave. to the River

The combination of corridor and intersection improvements provide critical links between places of historic, cultural, and economic significance throughout Downtown Green Cove Springs

The closing of Spring St. and conversion to green space will expand Spring Park

New developments south of Ferris Street will complement the City's Downtown revitalization efforts

VISION 2042

A lot can happen in twenty years. In 2042, the First Coast Expressway will have long been completed and it is anticipated that the long-awaited redevelopment of Reynolds Park will have taken form. According to the mid-range projections from the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research, the population of the greater Clay County region will grow by more than 50,000 residents over the next twenty years.

The effort to revitalize Downtown Green Cove Springs has already begun with the creation of this Master Plan. By embracing the history and character to advance thoughtful and compatible economic development strategies, Green Cove Springs will be a desired destination.

Phase 1 of this Master Plan includes projects such as improvements along Orange Avenue and Walnut Street corridors, US 17/Walnut intersection enhancements, and the design and construction of a small park in front of City Hall. These projects are intended to foster a greater sense of arrival into Downtown Green Cove Springs. The first phase also seeks to leverage these public improvements for private investment. The City-owned parcels along Walnut Street, between Magnolia Avenue and St. Johns Avenue, provide a prime location for redevelopment that could include a destination restaurant that capitalizes on a beautiful and protected waterfront vista across Spring Park.

Phase 2 of this Master Plan seeks to further enhance the public realm within the Focus Area. The Spring Park expansion includes the vacation of a portion of Spring Street to increase green space. The conversion of Magnolia Avenue, from Walnut Street to Spring Street, to a curbsless 'festival street' seeks to connect the Park to City Hall and create continuous park space from the St. Johns River out to US 17. A restored Judge Rivers House will serve as a physical symbol of the City's history and values. These public improvements will advance another private sector redevelopment opportunity on the vacant lot next to the Clay Theatre.

Phase 3 of this Master Plan reflects the anticipated success of the first two phases. Increased property values and the growing popularity of Downtown Green Cove Springs should create the need for one or more parking garages to serve both residents and visitors. Furthermore, the success and revitalization near the St. Johns River should extend and create opportunities for redevelopment on the west side of Walnut Street, including the underutilized publicly-owned parcels west of Green Street.

Over the next twenty years, there will be many new developments to support a growing Clay County region. However, no new development can replicate the authenticity of Downtown Green Cove Springs. Through thoughtful public realm enhancements and targeted private investments, which enhance activity and preserve community character, Downtown Green Cove Springs can regain its past vitality and position the City for new achievements in the 21st century.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Residents of Green Cove Springs

Edward Gaw, Mayor

Matt Johnson, Vice Mayor

Connie Butler, Council Member

Steven Kelley, Council Member

Van Royal, Council Member

Henrietta Francis, Planning & Zoning Board Chair

Gary Luke, Planning & Zoning Board Vice-Chair

Brian Cook, Planning & Zoning Board Member

Justin Hall, Planning & Zoning Board Member

Richard Hobbs, Planning & Zoning Board Member

Steve Kennedy, City Manager

Mike Null, Assistant City Manager / Public Works Director

Michael Daniels, Planning & Zoning Director

Heather Glisson, Planning Technician

Tiffanie Kelly, Public Information Officer

& The Stakeholder Interview Group

LEAD CONSULTANT:



TEAMING PARTNER:



