



DOWNTOWN TAVARES REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN



Submitted to City of Tavares, Florida

by IBI Group

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Chapter I

Introduction



INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this Redevelopment Plan is to develop a vision and strategy for how future growth should occur in the underdeveloped areas of Downtown Tavares in the next twenty years, particularly with the potential opportunity presented by the introduction of rail transit service in the Central Florida region. Since the last redevelopment plan update in early 2006, significant economic and political changes at local and regional levels have occurred, that influenced the City's decision to update its existing redevelopment plan. Some of these factors that provided the key impetus for the preparation of this Master Plan include:

- Over \$8.3 million in planned waterfront improvements including the construction of a Marina and Seaplane basin;
- Intensive community-driven visioning sessions facilitated by the City leadership and the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council;
- Expansion of the Lake County Judicial Center and government complex including the construction of a 7-story parking garage in the heart of Downtown;
- Approval of plans to reconfigure Alfred and Caroline streets as a one-way pair;
- Location of the Florida Hospital Waterman in the City of Tavares as a major employer;
- Regional influences and expansion of the Orlando area growth into the Lake County market;
- Planned transportation improvement projects in Lake County including potential for access to the Central Florida Commuter Rail service in the future; and
- Approval of Tavares Station- a mixed-use waterfront development on the former Lake Region Packing Association site;

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update capitalizes on these synergies to ensure that intense development in Downtown Tavares is complemented by an integrated approach to land use planning, transportation planning, and urban design. Downtown's redevelopment strategy, as outlined in this Plan is based on the following basic tenets:

- The Plan identifies, in general, where primary land uses and activity centers will be located in order to best attract prospective businesses and residents, while at the same time being well integrated into desired future transportation and land use patterns.
- The Plan provides a tool for the Redevelopment Agency and the City to promote economic development by showing prospective investors locations that have been designated for their purpose; thereby reducing the developer's risk and permitting hurdles when coming to the community.
- The Plan provides a holistic means for the Redevelopment Agency and the City to provide the approvals of new developments based upon an agreed-upon strategy.
- The Plan allows the Redevelopment Agency and the City to make capital improvements projections based upon known future, public project needs, demands and proposed locations.
- The Plan establishes a framework for policy decisions that anticipate the need for densification of future development patterns.
- The Plan facilitates the preparation of new land development regulations that provide a higher standard of public and private realm design.
- The Plan supports culture and the arts as integral activities in the Downtown through continued support of special events and festivals, while also setting aside locations for artists live work communities as well as a transportation, heritage and natural resource museum.



Lake Dora waterfront, Downtown Tavares
Source: IBI Group



PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PLANNING PROCESS



Top: Artist's Sketch illustrating Lake County facilities in Downtown Tavares
Bottom: Photo-simulation showing potential reconfiguration of Alfred Street in Downtown Tavares
Source: IBI Group/ Genesis

The City of Tavares is located in the Florida Central Highlands along a conspicuous ridge, approximately 30 miles north of Orlando. Its central location in the County gives it easy access to the area's natural amenities and waterways that have in the past twenty years allowed Lake County to become one of the primary destinations for water recreation, boating, fishing, bird-watching, and sailing in the Central Florida region.

The City encompasses 9.6 square miles in area and is home to approximately 13,000 residents (Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission, 2006 Estimates). The seasonal population for the City and Lake County has remained about sixteen percent (16%) of the total population for the past twenty-five years. The assigned Study Area for this Redevelopment Plan contains the Downtown Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) boundaries, encompassing nearly 400 acres of land area including right-of-way, and is comprised of the Central Business District, the Lake Dora waterfront, single-family neighborhoods, and regional commercial corridors. In 1995, the City's first Community Redevelopment Area was designated by City resolution. In 2003, the Community Redevelopment Agency and the University of Florida's Center for Building Better Communities conducted public workshops that led to an update of the CRA Redevelopment Plan the following year. Only two years thereafter, the City Council elected to expand the area of the CRA to its present-day boundaries.

In the fall of 2007, the City retained the services of IBI Group, Inc. to update the existing Downtown Redevelopment Plan with an emphasis on developing an implementation program that includes recommendations for strategic capital improvements, public-private partnerships, developing urban design guidelines, and translating the community's vision into a workable and implementable guiding document for the City.

The phased planning approach used to develop this Redevelopment Plan was integrated into a well orchestrated public involvement effort at the beginning of the process which then continued throughout the life of the project. The purpose of the community driven planning process was to provide a forum for continued dialogue between the City, area residents and the consultants concerning program development and direction. The first step in preparing the plan was the preparation of an inventory of existing conditions in the Downtown, including, but not limited to: existing land use, zoning, infrastructure, transportation and previous plans and programs. Based on the results of the inventory, an analysis of the Downtown Redevelopment Area was conducted that focused on the area's urban design framework and incorporated the results of the visioning workshops conducted by the City in 2006. The analysis phase guided the organization of the redevelopment area into the following seven character districts, each with unique attributes:

Commercial Corridor District

Residential Neighborhoods- Downtown North Neighborhoods; Downtown Transition Mixed-Use Neighborhoods; and West Main Neighborhoods

Downtown Core- Institutional Core; Traditional Main Street District; and Waterfront Entertainment District

The series of staff meetings, focus group meetings, and public workshops that followed generated discussions about the community's assets, concerns and goals. The community-driven process generated a variety of strategies and solutions that have been compiled into this Redevelopment Plan. The Plan identifies the community's vision for the future of its Downtown and serves as a guide to implement this vision through refocusing of the roles, priorities, and connections of the City government with other organizations to leverage additional funds and resources for identified projects.

The analysis phase and public workshops established the baseline for development of the specific redevelopment objectives, action strategies and proposals contained in the Redevelopment Plan section of this Plan. The Redevelopment Plan is organized by the six overall themes identified during the course of the planning process, which encompass the full spectrum of the planning systems that constitute Downtown's urban structure- Land Use and Development Characteristics; Urban Design and Historic Preservation; Circulation and Mobility; Public Facilities and Amenities; Environment; and Economic Development.

Finally, the Plan identifies a phased capital improvements program that identifies specific action strategies and prioritized projects to help the City move forward with public realm improvements that will support future private sector investment. It should be noted that the Downtown Redevelopment Plan will not be implemented all at once, and it is likely that all elements of the plan will not occur within the time sequence described. The Redevelopment Plan is intended to be a guiding document for actions designed to overcome deterrents to desired future growth and development in order to stimulate private investment. The plan is not intended to be static. Over time, portions of the plan may be updated and revised to reflect changes in the economy, public concerns and opportunities associated with public development proposals.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan intends to serve as a comprehensive resource for community leaders and stakeholders that are engaged in shaping the social, economic, and physical form of the area. Future actions targeted in this area are anticipated to follow the recommendations of the Redevelopment Plan through continued discussions with the residents, community stakeholders, and City agencies. The purpose of this document is to establish measurable benchmarks for the community's future growth and identify strategies that will provide guidance for successful implementation of the overall theme to create seamless neighborhoods throughout the City.

Throughout the document, the terms "the Plan", "Redevelopment Plan", "Master Plan", and "Redevelopment Master Plan" are used interchangeably and refer to this Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan document. The Plan is organized into four parts and ten chapters, as described below.

Part I: Overview

Chapter 1: Introduction

Project Background and Planning Process

Chapter 2: Context

Historic Context

Geographic Context

Relationship to Previous Plans and Programs

Chapter 3: Community Involvement

This chapter of the Downtown Master Plan synthesizes the community's feedback received during the visioning process conducted by the City and the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and focus group meetings, and community workshops conducted by the IBI Group in October, 2007.

Part II: Redevelopment Master Plan

Chapter 4: Land Use and Development Characteristics

This chapter addresses the key attributes of the Downtown's physical character: future land use composition; proposed development projects; development intensities and densities; affordable housing; open space system; overview of Downtown's neighborhoods and districts.

Chapter 5: Urban Design and Historic Preservation

The primary issues addressed in this chapter relate to the public and private realm design guidelines including: streetscape design; gateways; open space and waterfront design; transit oriented development principles; street grid and views; pedestrian connectivity; wayfinding and signage; site planning; building massing and bulk control criteria; architecture and historic preservation guideline.

Chapter 6: Circulation and Mobility

This chapter includes proposed improvements to the street and alley network; bicycle and pedestrian connectivity; trail network; multimodal transportation; and parking management.

Chapter 7: Public Facilities and Amenities

This chapter addresses issues impacting the provision of the primary civic realm infrastructure-utility network, stormwater systems, telecommunications; community facilities related to educational and cultural resources -civic center, library, schools, public safety, parks, restrooms, arts and culture, and other civic amenities.

Chapter 8: Environment

Issues addressed in this chapter include conservation and preservation of wetlands and natural resources; sustainable development including green buildings and site planning, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND), and zero-emission transportation modes.

Chapter 9: Economic Development

The primary focus of this chapter is related to Downtown's economic positioning within a regional context. The chapter addresses essential economic development components such as employment base, tourism and related events, marketing and promotion, strategies related to retaining and attracting employment and visitor oriented land uses, and potential impacts of the transit service provision.

Part III: Implementation

Chapter 10: Program Administration and Financing

This chapter presents the organizational framework and financial strategies that will be required for successful implementation of the Redevelopment Plan program. It defines the roles and responsibilities that should be undertaken by the various agencies and stakeholders that are involved in shaping the future development of Downtown Tavares.

Chapter 11: Implementation Plan

This chapter builds on projects outlined in Part II, to prioritize actions that will need to be pursued in the short-term (5 years) and long-term (6+ years) for successful implementation of the redevelopment program. The chapter also present a 5-year preliminary budget for the proposed improvements, and identifies funding sources to assist the CRA with budgeting and financial planning.

Part IV: Appendices

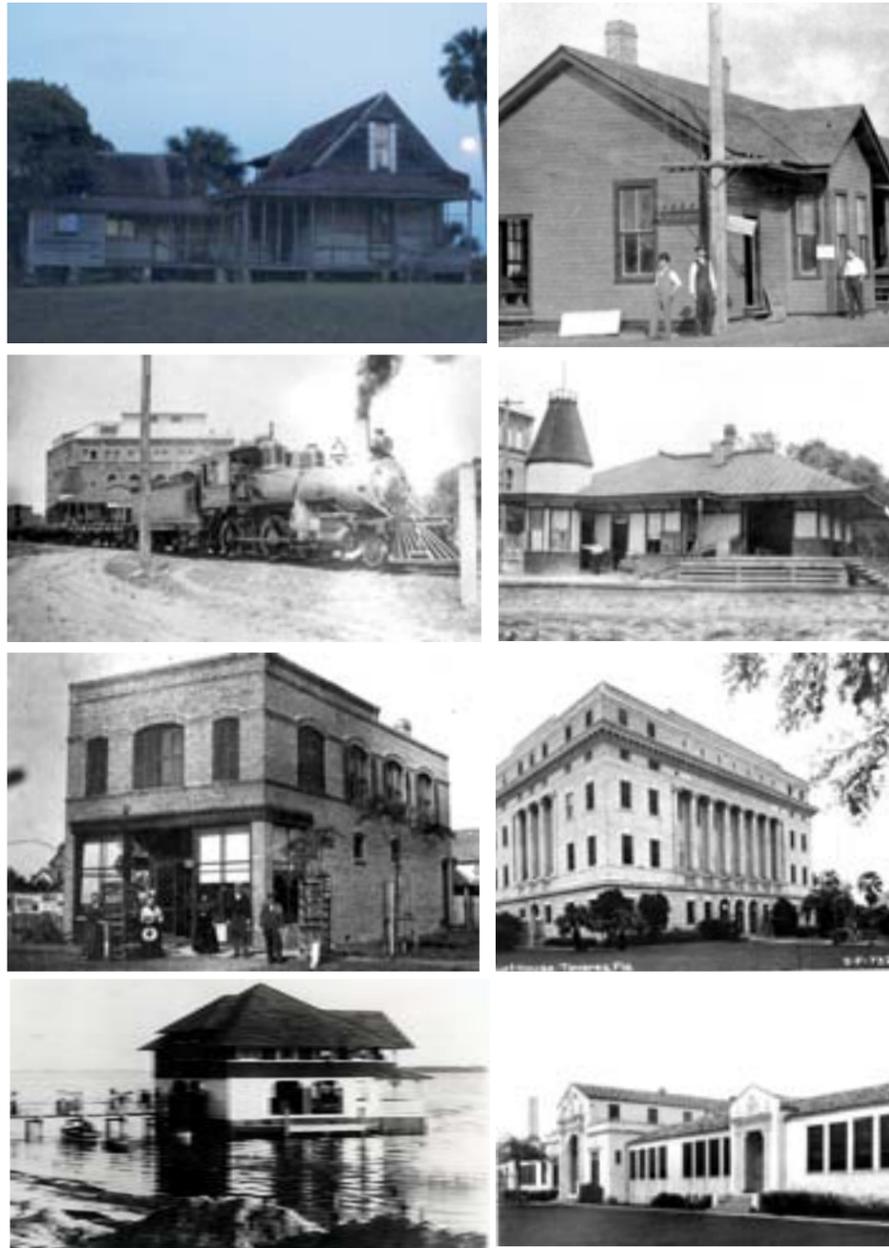
The appendices provide resources that contain information required by Section 163.362 F.S. and supplemental data that was utilized in the preparation of the Redevelopment Plan. Appendix A contains the inventory and analysis report that served as the foundation for the recommendations contained in the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan. Appendix B of the Plan contains a section that addresses the specific requirements of Section 163.362 of the Florida Statutes related to Community Redevelopment Plans. Appendix C lists the funding sources referenced in the document. Appendix D contains the legal description of the boundary as required by the Florida Statute. Appendix E presents additional reference information related to smart growth development and LEED-ND. Finally, Appendix F provides a demographic snapshot of Tavares and Lake County.

Chapter 2

Context



HISTORIC CONTEXT



Historic photos of Tavares
Source: Lake County Historical Society

The City of Tavares, seat of Lake County, Florida, was founded by Major Alexander St.Clair-Abrams, between 1880 and 1890. Tavares, named after a Portuguese ancestor of Abrams, was originally intended to serve as the state capital of Florida. Abrams purchased land for the present-day City, planned the initial town, and arranged the construction of the first major buildings, including municipal offices and a hotel. Abrams then moved to make Tavares the seat of the newly-formed Lake County in 1887. After a controversial election in 1888, Tavares narrowly took the county seat, allowing for the development of a concentration of governmental buildings on the shore of Lake Dora. From then to present day, government operations have played a pivotal role in defining the character and activity of Downtown Tavares.

Although government related activities would immediately form a significant part of the city's economy, other influences have shaped the development of Tavares. Abrams' efforts to develop a government center resulted in the construction of railroads through the city and the expansion of the Dora Canal between Lake Dora and Lake Eustis to allow steamer access. Two of the railroads included the former Atlantic Coast Line Railroad based out of Jacksonville that operated lines to Tampa and the former Tavares & Gulf Railroad that connected various cities in Central Florida.

The construction of these transportation linkages and the growth of Lake County (formerly part of Orange County), helped develop an agricultural economic base in the county through the first half of the twentieth century, particularly in peach and citrus farming. After surviving fires and the Great Depression, Main Street (formerly known as Irma Street), began to show signs of deterioration and competitive pressures from the development of suburban-strip commercial centers along U.S. Highway 441. It was not until 2003 that citrus production facilities such as the Lake Region Packing Association discontinued operations in the Downtown area. As a result of this, government services constitute the primary economic base for Downtown Tavares. These government activities include a historical courthouse, a county administration building, a criminal justice complex, detention and judicial center, and a county museum. The original City plat, developed in the early 1900s, followed the traditional grid street pattern and has been the primary influencing factor in shaping the City's present day development patterns.

The City's historic building stock has persisted well to present day. Over 120 historic structures designated by the Tavares Historical Society populate the CRA district. Many of these buildings continue to be actively used today either in their original function or through adaptive reuses such as professional offices and boutique retail stores. There is one structure within the Downtown CRA that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Lake County Historic Courthouse. The majority of historic structures—those predating World War II—are located in the historic preservation district. The historic district boundaries are defined by Texas Avenue on the west, Ruby Street on the south, Disston Avenue on the east, and Givens Street on the north.

Some of the city's historic buildings have been lost over the years. Two prominent examples are the Tavares Pavilion and the Woodlea House. Tavares Pavilion, built in 1912, stood over Lake Dora at the end of St. Clair Abrams Avenue until it was condemned in 1961 by Tavares City Council and demolished. The Pavilion was a center of social life in city and even briefly served as City Hall before being torn down due to safety concerns. Woodlea House, meanwhile, was treasured in Tavares partly for being the oldest structure in Lake County. Built in 1871 by Melton Haynes, a Civil War veteran who served as a Florida senator, the Woodlea House was destroyed by fire on September 2, 2007.

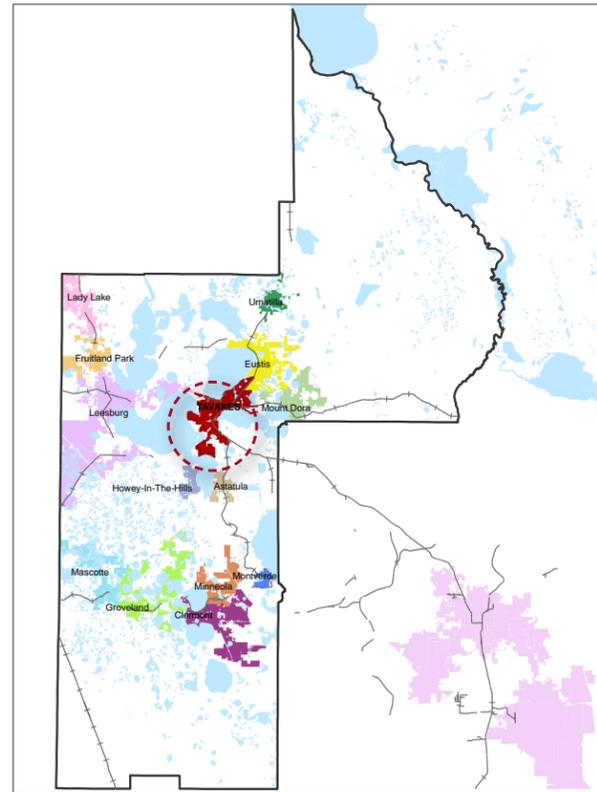


Map representing Atlantic Coast Line Railroad's various lines in Central Florida in 1914.
Source: Special Collections Department, University of South Florida

GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT



Map showing Tavares' location in Florida
 Source: Lake County GIS Database/IBI Group, January 2008
 Prepared By: M. Ye/ B.Kalra, IBI Group



Map showing Tavares' location in Lake County
 Source: Lake County GIS Database/IBI Group, January 2008
 Prepared By: M. Ye/ B.Kalra, IBI Group

Located in the center of Lake County, the City of Tavares sits between four major lakes- Lake Eustis, Lake Dora, Lake Harris, and Little Lake Harris. The navigable Dora Canal connects Lake Dora and Lake Eustis, the two largest fresh water lakes located within the City limits. The City is located 31 miles northwest of Orlando, connected to the Orlando Metropolitan Area through U.S. Highway 441. Tavares forms part of the Lake County "Golden Triangle" area. This area also comprises the cities of Eustis and Mount Dora and has traditionally been the economic engine for the county, although the South Lake area cities composed of Clermont, Minneola, and Groveland have witnessed rapid population growth in the recent years.

Mount Dora is located approximately 5 miles directly to the east of Tavares, while Leesburg is 10 miles to the west and Eustis is 6 miles to the northeast. The major north-south and east-west roadways serving the city are: US 441, connecting Leesburg via Tavares to Orlando, and SR 19, which connects Tavares to Groveland to the south and Eustis to the north. Opportunities for commuter light rail between Tavares and Orlando are being considered as part of long-range multimodal transportation strategy by the Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization. The City recently initiated (January 2008) a water taxi service that connects Downtown Tavares with the neighboring cities of Mount Dora and Eustis. Leesburg Regional Airport is the closest airport six miles to the west of Tavares on US 441. The airport also offers U.S. Customs and Border Protection service that provides aircrafts returning to the continental United States from a foreign country with the ability to fly directly to Leesburg International Airport without having to stop at the first port of entry.

STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION

The original Community Redevelopment Area was designated in 1995 and subsequently expanded in 2006. As part of this update, the City and the consultant are examining the existing conditions to determine the need for further expansion of the CRA boundaries to include properties along the commercial corridors to the north and south of the present CRA boundaries.

The existing Community Redevelopment Area, the study area for this master plan update, encompasses a total area of nearly 270 acres (excluding right-of-ways). The area is bounded roughly by SR 19 on the north and west, Lake Dora on the south, and Disston Avenue on the east. This district encompasses the entire Downtown historic district of the City, all of the adjacent historic neighborhoods to the north and east, and the commercial and industrial corridors on the north and west. Major roads serving the CRA district are US 441, locally known as Burleigh Boulevard, and SR 19, locally known as Duncan Drive. SR 500A, locally known as Alfred Street and Old US 441, routes through the CRA district and connects directly to Mount Dora, serving as a vital link between the two cities.



Downtown Tavares CRA Aerial Photo
 Source: Lake County GIS Database/IBI Group, January 2008
 Prepared By: M. Ye/ B.Kalra, IBI Group

RELATIONSHIP TO PREVIOUS PLANS

The following section provides a summary of the various programs, plans and studies that have been completed by the City of Tavares, and have a significant impact on the Downtown Redevelopment Area. The information contained in this section is critical in establishing the foundation for the recommendations contained in this Plan, and to ensure that the Plan provides continuity in function, future land uses and programmatic strategies.

Prior to this study, the most recent redevelopment plan update was adopted by the City of Tavares in 2006. The 2006 CRA Plan builds upon the recommendations contained in the 2004 Downtown Improvement Strategy, prepared by the UF Center for Building Better Communities in conjunction with the City of Tavares. The original redevelopment plan, prepared in 1995 by the City's planning department, was instrumental in establishing the Community Redevelopment Area district in accordance with Florida Statutes, and has provided the City with appropriate tools and mechanisms to fund redevelopment activities within the designated CRA boundaries. Both the 1995 and 2006 master plans contained many sound principles that have continued to provide guidance to the City's revitalization efforts.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN (1995)

The following narrative summarizes the 1995 CRA Plan's recommendations:

- Identify parking shortages and ways to rectify them, including the possibility of building a new parking garage;
- Develop streetscaping and landscaping improvement plans to make the Downtown Area more pedestrian and bicycle friendly;
- Examine the possibility of creating a trailhead for the Tav-Lee Trail, a proposed inter-county infrastructure project;
- Expedite street infrastructure improvements;
- Improvement of existing parks (particularly Wooton Park);
- Implementation of policies and allowances that would lead to a "24-hour" Downtown area;
- Crime reduction and aesthetic character improvements.

Since the adoption of this plan in 1995, the City has successfully accomplished the following recommendations:

- Streetscape project has been designed that incorporates traffic calming techniques on Main Street;
- Tav-Lee Trailhead Structure has been designed and construction is scheduled for 2008;
- Planting and lighting installed on Main Street;
- Construction of Ingraham Park through CDBG funds;
- Construction of Aesop's park with tennis courts;
- Wooton Park master planning effort completed; City has issued a \$7.4 million bond for design and construction of proposed improvements.

In 2003, during the public consultation process, the residents, City and business leaders synthesized actionable opportunities for the City to pursue. Some of the identified opportunities included:

- Relaxing zoning laws to allow more user-friendly and innovative development patterns;
- Encouraging infill development in the Downtown district;
- Creating a more diverse, active, and viable Downtown economy revolving around dining, entertainment, shopping, civic engagement via festivals and outdoor shows, and integrating the waterfront lands as part of the Main Street corridor;
- Increasing tourism, particularly activities that take advantage of the proximity and appeal of Lake Dora.

The 2004 Update to the Redevelopment Plan, prepared by the UF Center for Building Communities, identified three primary community assets for the CRA district. The first was a high quality of life derived from its favorable geographic location between multiple Central Florida lakes, it's relatively low cost of living, and moderate housing prices. The second was the lake amenities, particularly those on Lake Dora, even though many people believed these amenities were underutilized. The third primary asset was small-town ambience, reinforced by the lack of a hectic pace of life in the Downtown, a relatively safe and secure urban environment, and a family-friendly neighborhood character. Some of the issues identified during this process included: residential development concerns related to lack of design standards; height restrictions; extent of historic preservation; soft growth in Downtown business, attributed to overly complicated start-up procedures; parking congestion acting as a deterrent factor to business growth and Downtown visitation.

Waterfront development, including redefining the character of Ruby Street and public uses in the vicinity of Wooton Park, were ranked high by public respondents as issues for the CRA to address. The key recommendations of this plan included:

- Improving traffic circulation throughout the CRA district, especially along Alfred Street, and providing practical parking solutions to address congestion and shortages;
- Upgrading the pedestrian experience along Main Street by way of increased availability of user amenities, improved quality of paving materials and landscaping, and engaging storefront facades and architecture;
- Promotion of the Downtown as a regional transit hub for light rail, water taxi, and multimodal uses;
- Upgrading urban design standards for all areas of the CRA district that complement the character of the historic architecture across the residential and Main Street areas to provide thematic consistency for each land use type (i.e., sub-area), and open up views to Lake Dora;
- Repositioning Tavares from a government-dominated center to an arts-friendly cultural destination;
- Increasing local resident participation in the evolution of the Tavares CRA by way of active engagement in neighborhood associations;
- Increasing housing opportunities in the Downtown area, including diverse housing products such as live-work lofts and upper-story condos;
- Increasing recreational opportunities, particularly on Lake Dora.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN (2006)

The 2006 CRA Plan presented nine broad design objectives that continue to maintain the desired redevelopment goals of the community in Downtown Tavares:

- Promotion of compact development
- Encouragement of mixed land use
- Improvement of pedestrian access, safety, and comfort
- Enhancement of street connections
- Prevention of crime
- Increase in parking and land use efficiency
- Creation and protection of public space
- Implementation of pedestrian-based building design
- Maintenance of performance standards of all above mentioned design objectives

Specific strategies and policies recommended by the 2006 Plan and its current status (January 2008) are described in the matrix on the following pages.

Table 1.1 Status Table, Downtown CRA Plan 2006
 Source: City of Tavares Economic Development Department/IBI Group, January 2008

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS (JANUARY 2008)
Objective 1: The CRA will identify where parking problems exist and provide solutions.	
Strategy 1.1 Develop a parking plan that identifies the present need of parking spaces and where future parking needs could occur.	On-going as part of this master planning update process
Strategy 1.2 Identify potential sites for parking areas and acquisition.	On-going as part of this master planning update process
Strategy 1.3 Explore incentive programs for private developments to provide parking.	On-going
Strategy 1.4 Work with the Lake County Board of County Commissioners to resolve parking issues.	County Parking Garage plans approved in the construction document phase
Objective 2: Integrate pedestrian and bicycle traffic with vehicular traffic.	
Strategy 2.1: Identify sidewalk segments in need of repair and extend sidewalks into areas of the CRA where pedestrian activity is currently absent.	Completed by the City's Public Works Department
Strategy 2.2: Incorporate the Tav-Lee Trail as an element of Wooton Park and establish connectivity with the Lake County Trail System.	On-going
Strategy 2.3: The CRA will cooperate with Lake County in developing other bicycle-friendly facilities.	On-going
Objective 3: Improve the Downtown road network.	
Strategy 3.1: Implement a traffic-calming program through use of traffic control signs, roundabouts, and bump-outs to prevent speed and volume of traffic from negatively impacting revitalization efforts.	Installed on Main Street; Ongoing for other streets
Strategy 3.2: Identify intersections with poor traffic flow or that are deemed unsafe and mitigate these problems.	On-going
Strategy 3.3: Establish a hierarchy of streets that recognizes their functionality as to best serve Downtown.	On-going as part of this master planning update process
Strategy 3.4: Unpaved segments of roads and alleys will be identified and a paving pattern implemented to promote economic development and to remove blighted conditions.	Pilot project for alley paving initiated
Strategy 3.5: Provide curbing where deficient to provide pedestrian safety and to prevent vehicles from parking on grass right-of-ways.	Not done
Strategy 3.6: Improve street lighting in redevelopment areas in order to reduce crime and improve pedestrian and vehicle safety. Decorative and typical lighting may be considered for this purpose.	Installed on Main Street; not done for other streets
Strategy 3.7: Extend the scope of streetscape improvements to all Downtown portions of Main and Ruby Streets.	On-going
Strategy 3.8: Develop and implement a streetscape and landscape plan that will provide attractive streetscape in areas that are blighted with unattractive street presence. Identify areas for trees and landscaping on public rights-of-way. Re-establish a tree canopy along primary roadways.	Under consideration
Strategy 3.9: Investigate grants and other funding sources for streetscape improvements and provide grant matches as necessary.	On-going
Strategy 3.10 Develop a plan to offset impacts to businesses as a result of streetscape projects	Not done
Strategy 3.11 Lobby and encourage Lake County and the railroad to maintain their road and track infrastructure.	On-going

Table 1.1 (Contd.) Status Table, Downtown CRA Plan 2006
 Source: City of Tavares Economic Development Department/IBI Group, January 2008

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS (JANUARY 2008)
Objective 4: Improve parks and public space in the Downtown area	
Strategy 4.1: Identify potential properties to acquire as park lands as needed.	On-going as part of this master planning update process
Strategy 4.2: Install recreational amenities in Wooton Park such as a pavilion, water playground, and vendor booths.	On-going; City has issued an RFP for selecting firms to complete design and construction
Strategy 4.3: Encourage the procurement of public art, water features, statues, murals, etc., for placement in public spaces.	Under consideration
Strategy 4.4: Promote and support a bench program for any public space to provide public seating areas for festivals and to support streetscape and lakefront park improvements.	
Objective 5: Promote an "alive after 5" Downtown.	
Strategy 5.1: Identify and promote events to encourage people to visit Downtown after business hours and on the weekends, i.e., festivals, concerts, artisan gatherings, and markets.	On-going; City's Economic Development Department has been successful in attracting major events, such as the Classic Boat Festival, African-American Heritage Festival, Crappie Tournament into the Downtown for the 2008-2009 fiscal year
Strategy 5.2: The CRA will advertise Downtown and forge partnerships with the private sector to promote the Downtown.	On-going
Objective 6: Beautify Downtown and keep it clean.	
Strategy 6.1: Identify properties that are in a state of decay such that they present a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the community, and correct those conditions through code enforcement measures or abatement.	On-going
Strategy 6.2: The CRA will adopt property maintenance standards for the Downtown and cite violators through the code enforcement process.	On-going
Strategy 6.3: The CRA will promote an annual event to remove litter from the streets of the Downtown and from the shore of Lake Dora in Wooton Park, and other public areas within the city.	
Strategy 6.4: Signage program: Develop a thematic signage program for streets signs, directory signs, and promotional signs to improve ambiance and visual appeal of the Downtown area.	Under consideration
Strategy 6.5: Facade improvement program: Create incentives for facade improvements for businesses and residences to include such things as awnings, arcades, porches, and the like in order to set an architectural or design standard which encourages a unified appearance and pleasing venue to attract visitors.	City has Facade Grant Program and funding in place
Objective 7: Reduce crime in the Downtown area.	
Strategy 7.1: Identify areas where lighting is deficient and install the necessary light posts.	Ongoing as part of this master planning update process
Strategy 7.2: Identify public areas that are closed to public view and modify them in such a way that criminal mischief will not go unnoticed.	
Objective 8: Encourage and promote business development in the Downtown.	
Strategy 8.1: The CRA will work with the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, and the Lake County Economic Development Council to advertise and promote the business development in Downtown.	On-going
Strategy 8.2: Investigate the feasibility of instituting and funding a Main Street Program to assist in promoting Downtown development.	On-going
Strategy 8.3: Consult with the Florida Redevelopment Association or Department of Historical Resources for technical assistance and support.	On-going
Strategy 8.4: Investigate and implement technological improvements in the redevelopment areas to include but not be limited to wireless internet service and a public address system.	On-going
Strategy 8.5: The CRA will look at ways to "sell" the amenities of the city via various media outlets.	On-going
Strategy 8.6: Develop incentive policies and grant programs to assist in start-up costs for new businesses and to aid the renovation of existing structures.	Under current review
Strategy 8.7: Institute public/private partnerships where feasible and beneficial to the public and private enterprise in order to assist in business development and alleviate development impediments.	On-going
Strategy 8.8: Identify specific impediments to code compliance for office/residential uses.	
Strategy 8.9: Identify specific buildings that lend themselves to the most efficient use of incentive resources.	
Strategy 8.10 Provide for a mixed use of housing with commercial that is compatible with the development in areas of similar intensity.	

Table 1.1 (Contd.) Status Table, Downtown CRA Plan 2006
 Source: City of Tavares Economic Development Department/IBI Group, January 2008

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS (JANUARY 2008)
Objective 9: Encourage, promote, and protect residential development.	
Strategy 9.1: Develop incentive programs to assist in housing maintenance and encourage owner-occupied housing in redevelopment areas.	On-going as part of this master planning update process
Strategy 9.2: Evaluate existing zoning, future land use, existing conditions, and development influences to ensure that the highest and best development strategies are employed within the redevelopment area while protecting the historic nature of the district and the existing housing stock.	On-going as part of this master planning update process
Strategy 9.3: Encourage and promote infill development. Inventory vacant and for-sale properties. Identify impediments to developing these sites. Solicit developers to construct projects in the redevelopment area.	On-going as part of this master planning update process
Strategy 9.4: Encourage planned developments for the adaptive reuse and/or redevelopment of existing structures as well as for infill projects.	
Strategy 9.5: Provide for the implementation of design standards and guidelines to promote development and redevelopment that is sensitive to architectural resources and quality design, preserves visual quality, enhances visual unity, and accommodates pedestrians.	On-going as part of this master planning update process
Objective 10: Operate and manage the Community Redevelopment Area and Redevelopment Fund in an efficient manner.	On-going
Strategy 10.1 Annual update: The CRA will annually evaluate the financial status, projections, and progress of [the] Plan.	
Strategy 10.2 Redevelopment Plan amendments: The CRA recognizes the changing dynamics of redevelopment. The CRA also recognizes that in order to maintain pace with these changing dynamics, the Redevelopment Plan must have some flexibility and may need to be amended and updated from time to time. After holding at least one advertised public hearing, the CRA from time to time may amend by Resolution any portion of the Plan to meet the changing situations of redeveloping the Redevelopment Area.	On-going as part of this master planning update process
Strategy 10.3 Covenants: The CRA will establish or maintain any covenants or restrictions running with the land that is sold or leased for private use.	
Strategy 10.4 Florida Redevelopment Association: The CRA or the local government will retain their membership in the Florida Redevelopment Association.	Done

RELATIONSHIP TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Future Land Use Element

The future land use element is provided to guide future growth and development in Tavares in a responsible manner. Through a series of goals, objectives, and policies, the FLU element places emphasis on environmental protection and land development regulations that encourage mixed uses and control urban sprawl. The following goals, objectives and policies contained in the City of Tavares Comprehensive Plan are most applicable to the Downtown Tavares Redevelopment Area:

Goal 1: Ensure that the character, magnitude, and location of all land uses within the City of Tavares provides a system for orderly growth and development that achieves a balanced natural, physical, and economic environment, and enhances the quality of life of all residents.

Objective 1-1.1: The City shall continue to implement and enforce land development regulations in a unified land development code in a manner to effectively guide and manage future growth. The Code shall implement the minimum standards and criteria as described in the Plan's Objectives and Policies as adopted and will regulate: all land uses shown on the Future Land Use Map, the subdivision of land, the location, size and the height of signage, and areas subject to seasonal or periodic flooding, transportation issues, conservation issues, coordination of land uses with appropriate topography and soils conditions and levels of service criteria. The Land Development Code shall contain directives that utilize innovative land development regulations.

Policy 1-1.1.2: The City of Tavares will establish and maintain Land Development Regulations that will prohibit all development or improvements in areas established as wetlands. The only exceptions to this policy will be for uses/improvements allowed in the Conservation Element of this Comprehensive Plan by Special Exception.

Policy 1-1.1.7: Mixed land uses shall be permitted in the designated areas as shown on the Future Land Use Map in accordance with directives of the Future Land Use Element and zoning district designations specified in the adopted Land Development Code. The mixed-use designation is provided to:

- a) Recognize existing land use conditions
- b) Provide guidelines for those neighborhoods currently in transition or where activities along shared transportation corridors are intensifying affecting traffic patterns
- c) Where undeveloped properties are located on major transportation thoroughfares requiring a greater degree of planning flexibility and review

Objective 1-1.2: The City shall continue to maintain and enforce a City Zoning Map that ensures future development and redevelopment activities are located in appropriate areas of the City as illustrated on the adopted, Future Land Use Map; which shall be consistent with sound planning principals, and provides for control of urban sprawl in conformance with the City's urban service boundary as delineated by the adopted Future Land Use Map. Services shall be provided consistent with the adopted level of service standards of this Plan within the City's urban service area.

Policy 1-1.2.1: The City shall encourage the use of innovative land use development techniques such as planned development projects, zero lot line patio home subdivisions, and cluster housing techniques by incorporating these concepts within the City's unified Land Development Code as permitted uses.

Transportation Element

The Transportation Element is intended to improve the quality and service of Tavares' roadways, public transit, and other transportation features. It also aims to improve the value of transportation by requiring sidewalks on new developments, preserving scenic drives, and encouraging pedestrians and bicyclists through a system of bicycle and pedestrian ways. The GOPs most applicable to the Downtown Tavares district are provided below:

Goal 2-1: To provide a safe, convenient, efficient traffic circulation system for both motorized and non-motorized transportation modes.

Objective 2-1.1: To provide a safe, convenient, and efficient traffic circulation system through the establishment of minimum level of service standards and the joint provision of non-motorized transportation facilities with proposed road improvements.

Policy 2-1.1.4: Sidewalks - The City shall require all new development to construct sidewalks.

Policy 2-1.1.10: Trip Reduction - The City shall encourage the reduction in P.M. peak hour trips generated by new development and shall implement incentives in the concurrency requirements of the Land Development Regulations. Incentives for the reduction of the peak hour trips shall be based on professionally accepted methodology and the implementation of shall be consistent will all other adopted goals, objectives, and policies.

Objective 2-1.2: Coordination with Future Land Use - To support the Future Land Use Map by identifying roadway improvements anticipated to be required as a result of growth and development that is projected to occur in the City by 2010 and to maintain adopted levels of service.

Policy 2-1.2.1: FTCM - The City of Tavares hereby adopts Map 2-3, "Future Traffic Circulation Map", as the City's 2010 future traffic circulation map.

Objective 2-1.5: Pedestrian/Bicycles - The City shall promote a System of Bicycle and Pedestrian Ways in Planning for Transportation Facilities, and budget appropriate monies to expand and maintain the City's bicycle and pedestrian network.

Policy 2-1.5.1: Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan - The City of Tavares shall coordinate with Lake County to prepare a plan for developing bicycle and pedestrian ways which connect residential areas to recreation areas and major activity centers. As part of this joint planning effort, or through an independent study, the City shall by December 2002, develop a bicycle network plan for connecting all major lakes/recreation areas and parks.

Policy 2-1.5.2: Tav-Lee Trail - The City of Tavares shall coordinate with Lake County to analyze the feasibility of acquiring abandoned railroad right-of-ways within the City for use as regional bicycle and pedestrian paths.

Policy 2-1.5.3: PUDs - Land Development Regulations for the City of Tavares shall include provisions within the development review process that requires applicants of PUDs, site plans, subdivisions, and replats to provide for the needs of bicycle and pedestrian facilities as appropriate.

Policy 2-1.5.4: Bike Racks - The City of Tavares shall provide bicycle storage facilities at existing City parks, and shall analyze the need to provide such facilities at other City public buildings within the proposed bicycle and pedestrian plan. Land Development Regulations shall incorporate provisions requiring all new shopping centers, recreation areas, and other public uses provide storage facilities for bicycles as appropriate.

Policy 2-1.5.5: TMAs - The City shall encourage new commercial developments that will generate numerous employee P.M. peak hour trips to establish a means to encourage car/van pooling, flex times, mass transit, or walking/bicycling to work. The City shall encourage existing developments that generate numerous employee P.M. peak hour trips to establish a means to encourage car/van pooling, flex times, mass transit, or walking/bicycling to work.

Housing Element

The City of Tavares emphasizes both housing diversity and affordable housing availability, including mobile homes and housing solutions for the elderly. Preservation of historic homes is considered an additional priority as a means to help conserve the city's historic character and add to its tourism potential.

In an effort to ensure minimum housing standards, code enforcement is intended to be strongly enforced. The following GOPs are considered the most relevant to the Downtown Tavares district:

Goal 3-1: The city shall allocate sufficient land area to accommodate the diverse needs of existing and future populations, create opportunities for the private housing delivery system to meet all housing needs, and protect the character of residential neighborhoods by assuring the availability of supporting infrastructure and by precluding the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

Objective 3-1.1: The City shall assure the availability of affordable housing by promoting development opportunities conducive to an efficient housing delivery system to provide for Projected Needs.

Policy 3-1.1.3: The City's Future Land Use Map shall designate acreage to accommodate a diversity of housing needs.

Objective 3-1.2: The City shall assure adequate sites for very low, low and moderate income households to assure adequate housing opportunity for the anticipated 20% of the total housing stock for low and moderate income households by 2005 and the anticipated 20% of the total housing stock for very low, low and moderate income households by 2010.

Policy 3-1.2.2: The City shall continue to maintain Land Development Regulations provisions for flexible site improvement standards to include reducing parking regulations and greater lot coverage for projects constructing low and moderate income housing.

Policy 3-1.2.3: The City shall continue to maintain Land Development Regulations providing for clustering of residential units on smaller lots on the most developable portions of the development site.

Objective 3-1.3: Within the mobile home land use designation on the adopted Future Land Use Map, the City shall assure adequate housing opportunity for anticipated additional 37% of the total housing stock for new mobile home units through the year 2010.

Objective 3-1.5: The City shall protect historic structures by maintaining a Historic Preservation Ordinance, which at a minimum complies with "the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings", 1983.

Policy 3-1.5.1: The City, in conjunction with the Lake County and Tavares Historical Societies, shall maintain a local register of historical places in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended and in conjunction with the Department of States Division of Historical Resources.

Policy 3-1.5.2: The City shall provide assistance to property owners of historically significant housing by supporting applications, pursuing historical designations on the Florida Department of State Master File and the National Register of Historic Places. The City shall also promote the rehabilitation of historically significant structures through assistance with grantsmanship functions and with coordination with State technical services available for such activities.

Policy 3-1.5.3: The City shall assist the Lake County Historical and the Tavares Historical Society in the effort to inform and educate the public about local, State, and Federal historic preservation programs.

Objective 3-1.6: The City shall maintain principles and guidelines to promote the rehabilitation of housing, regulate demolition, improve housing quality to preserve quality of housing, support neighborhood character, and promote the availability of affordable housing. The City shall use the Standard Unsafe Housing Abatement Code, 1985 Edition, as the basis for evaluating housing quality. Neighborhood character shall be evaluated based on:

- a) Street layout
- b) Lot layout, size, adequacy, accessibility and usefulness
- c) Health safety conditions
- d) Physical conditions effecting natural boundaries
- e) Ownership patterns

Policy 3-1.6.1: To protect the useful life of existing housing, and to preserve the availability of affordable housing, the City shall maintain provisions in the Land Development Regulations which regulate the demolition of housing by establishing a permitting program to review the merits of all proposed demolitions. Principles within the permitting program shall evaluate demolition applications predicated on its contribution to the improvement of public health, safety, and welfare, and to the preservation and stabilization of the surrounding neighborhood. No housing unit shall be demolished without issuance of a demolition permit.

Public Facilities Element

This element of the Tavares Comprehensive Plan addresses infrastructure and facilities for the public good (sewer, stormwater management, etc.) and aims to regulate development to prevent environmental damage from the effects of development on sensitive riverine or flood-zone areas. Providing an adequate level of service for buried utilities was also a significant aspect of this element.

Goal 4-1: Provide sanitary sewer collection and disposal that efficiently maximizes the capacity of existing facilities, promotes managed growth, protects the public health and safety, and maintains environmental quality with consideration to limited financial resources.

Objective 4-1.3: The City shall provide additional sanitary sewer facilities and capacities to meet demands generated by future development based on the City's five year Capital Improvement Program and consistent with the objectives and policies of the Future Land Use Element of this plan.

Policy 4-1.3.1: All development shall continue to be required through provisions adopted within the Land Development Regulations, to have connection to City sanitary sewer systems operating prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

Goal 4-4: Assure adequate drainage capacity to protect public health and safety, and investment in property against flood conditions and to prevent deterioration of ground and surface water quality.

Objective 4-4.1: The City shall implement the improvements identified as deficiencies in the 1992 Water Master Plan Study.

A. Construction of Drainage Facilities

Policy 4-4.1.1A: By December 31, 2001, the City shall update the 1992 Stormwater Management Plan, specifically the Downtown Study Area. The purpose of the revised study is to properly identify existing conditions and design solutions to correct any deficiencies identified. In-Line Treatment facilities shall be specifically studied. The study will be performed to assure that available natural and man-made drainage features provide adequate capacity to receive, retain, detain, and release stormwater in a timely manner. Adequate capacity shall be based upon the priority categories identified in Policy 4.1.1.1 and following standards:

- a) to prevent loss of life and property due to flooding
- b) to protect, maintain, restore and enhance the chemical, physical, and biological quality of ground and surface waters
- c) to prevent individuals, businesses, and governmental entities from degrading water resources
- d) to protect wetlands and other natural systems from maintaining their functions
- e) to minimize the transport of sediment and pollutants to surface waters
- f) to perpetuate natural ground water recharge

Objective 4-4.2: Through the management and treatment of its stormwater runoff, the City of Tavares will make a significant contribution to the preservation and enhancement of water quality conditions in Natural and Man-Made Drainage Features.

Policy 4-4.2.1: The City shall seek additional funds to augment continued collections of stormwater management fees to construct drainage improvements recommended in the Stormwater Master Plan.

Objective 4-4.3: Control Impacts of Future Stormwater Runoff and Associated Impacts to Water Quality through the Adoption of Stormwater Drainage and Flood Prevention Regulations. The protection of natural drainage systems from encroachment or disturbance shall be consistent with the Conservation element and Future Land Use element regarding the retention of natural features and open space. Natural drainage basins have been identified in the Stormwater Management Study of July 1988 (Appendix B).

Policy 4-4.3.1: The City shall continue to implement a stormwater management program through the provisions within the Land Development Regulations which protect natural drainage ways by managing development with the following requirements:

- a) Lakefront Littoral Zone. To protect lakefronts from the encroachment of development, the City shall continue to enforce the Shoreline Protection Ordinance of the Land Development Regulations, designed to provide a littoral protection zone for all lake fronts. Development within the littoral zone shall be restricted to conditions set forth within the Land Development Regulations, and shall be limited to recreation, conservation, or other open space land uses.
- b) Protection of Floodplain. Comply with FEMA and adopted flood plain protection objectives and policies of this plan.
- c) Promote On-Site Retention and Natural Percolation of Surface Water to Groundwater Aquifers. The City shall continue to implement provisions within the Land Development Regulations that allow developments to install on-site retention structures that promote percolation of surface water to the groundwater aquifer.

Objective 4-5.1: The City shall promote the high recharge of stormwater to groundwater aquifers to protect the water quality and natural recharge conditions of the Tavares area. The following performance standards shall be applied to all new developments:

- a) Urban developments shall be designed to preserve present natural drainage patterns and local groundwater recharge conditions.
- b) Stormwater management systems for developed areas shall be designed to protect the quality of surface and groundwater discharges.
- c) Leak-tight designs shall be used in sanitary sewer construction to minimize stormwater and groundwater infiltration.
- d) Septic tank disposal systems shall be prohibited in the outwash soil area.

Policy 4-3.1.1: The Future Land Use Element and the Future Land Use Map shall establish land use types, densities and intensities which are compatible to the preservation of permeable ground surface areas. The City shall continue to implement open space requirements for all development types through provisions set forth within the Land Development Regulations.

Conservation Element GOPs

The conservation element addresses the manner in which environmental and natural resources are properly developed or protected from the negative impacts of development. Water body conservation figures prominently, given the City's proximity to multiple lakes and surface waters. This element also concerns itself with historic conservation, similar to the City's comprehensive plan housing element. The most applicable GOPs to the Downtown area are listed below:

Goal 5-1: Conserve, protect and effectively manage natural resources within the City of Tavares, particularly environmentally sensitive lands that include Lake Dora, Lake Eustis, Lake Harris, Lake Tavares, Lake Francis, The Dora Canal and associated wetlands, groundwater quality, scarce vegetative communities and other wetland areas within and surrounding the city.

Objective 5-1.2: Protect the quality of surface and ground water by controlling and eliminating existing sources of contaminants and prohibiting land uses which are potential sources of contamination and by coordinating with Federal, State and County entities having jurisdictional authority over these water sources.

Policy 5-1.2.1: The Future Land Use Element shall not permit new industrial or commercial land use activities adjacent to lake front areas or within high recharge groundwater aquifer (defined in Section 373.0395(3) and 373.0397 F.S.) areas that generate pollutants that may adversely impact the quality of surface and ground waters. The City shall continue to implement provisions within the Land Development Regulations which stipulate permitted activities within industrial and commercial districts, and which define performance criteria restricting development, including the storage and placement of chemicals and other environmentally hazardous material. Any proposed development that has potential sources of contaminants shall provide an impact assessment which shall include the following information:

- a) Any upstream flows to the site
- b) Amount and rate of rainfall, both percolation on site and in runoff stored in recharge and detention basins.
- c) Surface discharges
- d) Maximum depth and storage capacity of retention basins
- e) Annual evapotranspiration losses from the site.

This assessment will provide the basis for evaluation of potential contamination of surface and groundwater.

Policy 5-1.2.3: The City shall continue to implement the Shoreline Protection Ordinance, enacted as a portion of the Land Development Regulations to restrict shoreline clearing or removal of shoreline vegetation as well as provide setback standards for septic tanks and prohibit all waste disposal including yard waste along or within the shoreline of all water bodies (whether natural or manmade)

Policy 5-1.2.4: The Land Development Regulations shall continue to provide appropriate development setbacks to preclude encroachment into wetlands and adjacent uplands or lake fronts. Development occurring adjacent to lake shoreline or wetland areas shall prepare a design and management plan prior to the construction of the on-site storm water management system as required by the LDRs.

Policy 5-1.3.6: The City shall continue to implement open space requirements in the adopted Land Development Regulations that are applicable to new development within Tavares.

Objective 5-1.10: Conserve historically significant sites through the use of Land Development Regulations and protection of existing historical structures.

Policy 5-1.10.1: The City shall coordinate with the State Division of Historic Resources in continuing to identify, protect, analyze, and explain the City's historical, archaeological, and cultural resources. Such efforts shall include determination of their worth and vulnerability, as well as determination of specific applicable preservation management policies.

Policy 5-1.10.2: The City shall continue to implement provisions within the Land Development Regulations which prohibit activities that depreciate or eliminate the historical value of sites registered on State or Federal historic files. Activities deemed adverse to the preservation of historic sites shall include:

- a) Demolition or alteration of all or part of such site;
- b) Isolation from, or alteration of the associated environment;
- c) Placement of visual, audible, or atmospheric elements that foster discordance with the character of the property;
- d) Transfer or sale of a registered historical site without adequate contractual written agreement to maintain and preserve the historical character of the structure;
- e) Removal or placement of native vegetation shall be subject to restrictions and requirements stated within the Tree and Native Vegetation Protection Ordinance, proposed within the above cited policies and shall continue to be included within the Land Development Regulations.

Policy 5-1.10.3: The City shall promote and support local efforts, including those fostered by the Lake County Historical Society and the Tavares Historical Society, to effectively pursue registration of historically significant sites under Federal and State certified historical master files.

Intergovernmental Coordination Element GOPs

This element outlines the manner in which the City of Tavares cooperates with other governmental entities or authorities in the implementation of planning and development policies. Most of this intergovernmental coordination occurs on a regional level and has no direct implication for Downtown Tavares in particular, but certain aspects of this element do apply:

Objective 6-1.2: Coordinate the Development Plans of the School Board and the Impacts of Existing and Proposed School Facilities on Public Facilities with the Comprehensive Plan. The City shall require all proposed residential developments over 60 units to submit a letter from the School Board, which delineates the amount of school age children and school impact fees generated by the development.

Policy 6-1.2.1: The City shall coordinate and document such coordination, through written correspondence with the Lake County Board of Education biannually or as otherwise necessary, to discuss development plans for expansion of existing or development of new education facilities within the City of Tavares to assure such activities are consistent with growth management and development plans established within the City Comprehensive Plan. Other issues to be coordinated shall also include impacts of such facilities on adopted levels of service established for roads, water, drainage, and solid waste services.

Policy 6-1.3.2: Traffic Circulation Issues. The City shall coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation and Lake County on issues pertaining to levels of service improvements and maintenance of U.S. 441, SR 19 and county maintained roads.

Lake County has qualified for the establishment of a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) which will function to resolve traffic circulation issues transcending intra-Lake County jurisdiction boundaries and, thus, causing regional impacts. The affected urban area may or may not include the City of Tavares. However, when such an MPO is established, the City needs to coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation and with Lake County to ensure representation on the MPO and to determine the City's role in the MPO. As an alternative to an MPO if such an organization is not established, the City shall coordinate with other municipalities in Lake County, Lake County and the State to coordinate solutions to other urban issues including but not limited to the formation of a Council of Governments for formal government action.

Policy 6-1.3.4: Issues concerning coordination with State and Federal agencies involve drainage, solid waste and hazardous waste, potable water, sanitary sewer, and natural groundwater aquifer recharge. The City shall coordinate plans and improvements proposed and scheduled within the Comprehensive Plan with those planned by the respective State and Federal agencies having authority to implement such improvements. Coordination shall also include the availability of State and Federal funds to support implementation of proposed infrastructure needs.

Policy 6-1.3.5: Conservation Issues. Conservation issues that require coordination with State and Federal agencies include the possible acquisition of land adjacent the City's lakes, protection of the natural groundwater aquifer, historical sites, wetlands, sinkhole potential, wildlife and wildlife habitats, and air quality. The City shall coordinate the Comprehensive Plan with plans and programs under the authority of the State and Federal agencies, according to the relationship of the conservation activity with the various agencies.

Capital Improvements Element GOPs

The final element of the Tavares Comprehensive Plan addresses the implementation of capital improvements in the City. Primarily aimed at administrative and logistic level, this element stresses the need to ensure future growth was fiscally responsible and compliant with the comprehensive plan and, most especially, the Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements. The sample of GOPs below are an example of this rigor:

Goal 7-1: To undertake actions necessary to adequately provide needed public facilities within the city and its utility service area in a manner which protects investments and existing facilities, maximizes the use of existing facilities, conserves environmentally sensitive lands and promotes orderly and compact growth.

Objective 7-1.1: To ensure the City's capital improvements will be provided for purposes of correcting existing deficiencies, accommodating desired future growth, and replacing deteriorated or obsolete facilities, as indicated in the Five-Year Schedule of Improvements contained within this element.

Policy 7-1.1.1: Limitations - The City shall include all capital improvements identified in any of the elements of this Comprehensive Plan in the Five-year Schedule of Capital Improvements (Table 7-1). The Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements shall, when reasonably possible, be updated on an annual basis. All capital improvements not qualifying for inclusion in the Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements shall be included in the City's five-year capital improvements program and annual capital budget, but shall not be considered to be capital improvements for the purposes of the comprehensive plan or the issuance of development orders.

Chapter 3

Community Participation

Public involvement has been an important component of the planning process undertaken during the preparation of this Redevelopment Plan. The community and the City's leadership laid the foundation for this Master Plan Update through an elaborate citizen-driven visioning process and a well orchestrated public involvement effort, in collaboration with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC).

The purpose of this citizen-led effort was to obtain insight into the issues and concerns of residents, business owners and property owners, and to determine their vision for the community. Additionally, city staff meetings were scheduled to obtain input from the staff relating to the community's assets, critical issues associated with the project, existing planning efforts and proposed projects that would help define a clear scope for the initiative.

This chapter of the Redevelopment Plan synthesizes the community's feedback solicited during the visioning process conducted by the City and the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and stakeholder meetings and workshops conducted by IBI Group in October, 2007. The information gathered during these community and stakeholder driven meetings form the basis for the analysis contained in Appendix A of this report.



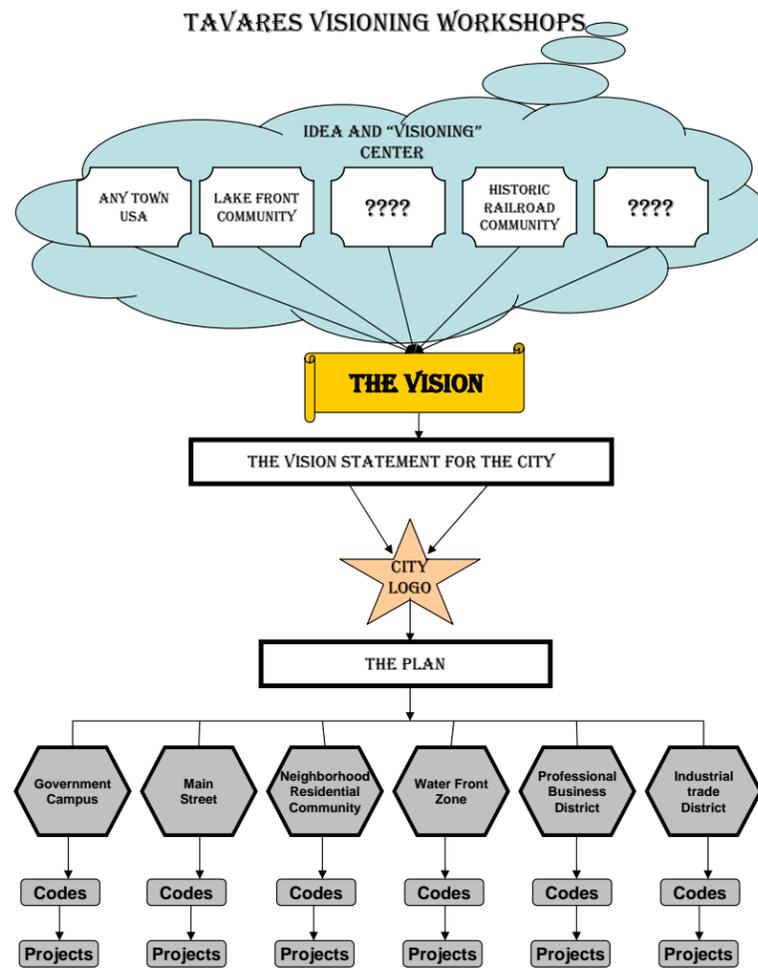
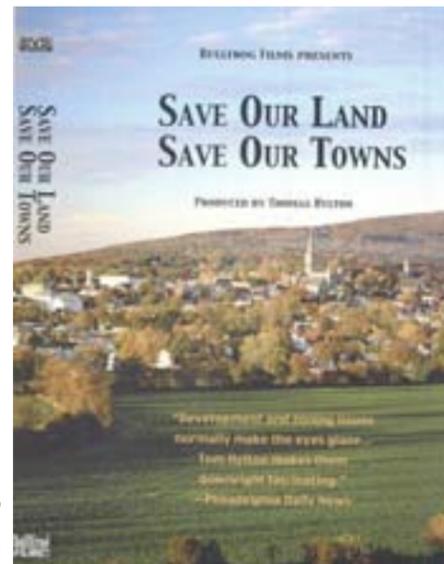


Fig 3.1 Tavares Visioning Process Flowchart
Source: City of Tavares/ East Central Florida Regional Planning Council/ Peggy Fennell (GIS Analyst)



Save our Land, Save Our Towns Video
Source: Phil Laurien, East Central Florida Regional Planning Council

2006-2007 VISIONING WORKSHOPS

The Downtown Tavares Redevelopment Master Plan builds upon the year long community visioning process, facilitated by Mayor Nancy Clutts and Phil Laurien, Executive Director, East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC).

From July 2006 to May 2007, over the course of six sessions, a diverse group of participants including residents, business owners, county officials, elected officials, and government representatives gathered to create a vision that reflected the community's desires related to the future growth of Downtown Tavares. More than one hundred residents and stakeholders participated in the visioning process to explore new concepts and opportunities for the growth of the City and the Downtown. Among the most innovative aspects of this process was the diverse range of community involvement techniques utilized to reach an initial consensus related to the Downtown's future. The following section provides a brief summary of the six sessions, conducted during the visioning process, highlighting the different techniques used.

SESSION 1: COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING JULY 25, 2006

During this session, Phil Laurien showed the video, "Save our Land, Save our Town" to familiarize the participants with the historic evolution of neighborhoods and urban growth throughout the country. This was followed by an interactive session related to the participants' comments on the presentation and the definition of development in Tavares' context. The participants also discussed the impact of Lake County's anticipated growth on Downtown Tavares and as a result identified the following characteristics that need to be reinforced in creating a sense of identity for Downtown:

- Interaction of neighbors;
- Pedestrian-friendly environments;
- Importance of history in defining the future vision;
- Provision for open space;
- Creation of the City's identity by visible boundaries.

SESSION 2: SWOT ANALYSIS AND PHOTO- ANALYSIS AUGUST 14, 2006

In the first session, the participants were encouraged to identify characteristics from the City's rich heritage that need to be either preserved or redefined to create a Downtown environment that fosters neighborhood cohesiveness. Session 2 focused on identifying the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT Analysis). The participants were asked to share their views concerning strategies related to capitalizing on the City's strengths, weaknesses, threats and turning them into opportunities within the context of the following overarching questions:

What kind of town are we?
What kind of town do we want to be?
How do we grow ourselves to achieve that?

Strengths

Grid street system
Downtown Parks
Walkable Downtown Scale
Presence of Community Redevelopment Agency
County Campus and all its employees

Weaknesses

City is reactive, not proactive
Declining interest in the City's history
African American community feels isolated- not a part of Tavares

Opportunities

Potential to be a town center similar to its past
Economics is pushing people back to live/ work neighborhoods
Condos for Downtown lakefront living
Downtown has the basic elements of a traditional neighborhood- needs the return of the butcher, baker, and grocery
Need to identify which laws need to be changed to enhance redevelopment of Downtown
Downtown has assets and infrastructure other places do not possess- can be redeveloped more easily as a transportation hub
Investment comes to small towns with better plans
Need a vision
Wooton Park presents a unique opportunity
Need to communicate ideas and ensure that codes are in place to redevelop
Successful communities had rail, jobs and schools Downtown. Basic core still exists

Threats

Heard talk like visioning before. Saved a 10 year old agenda- none of the elements were implemented.

At the end of the session, disposable cameras were distributed to the participants as an assignment for the next working session. Participants were asked to photograph a variety of elements such as architectural styles, densities, signage, colors, street lighting, furniture, and paving materials.

**SESSION 3: CASE STUDY APPROACH
OCTOBER 9, 2006**

During this session, the facilitators presented display boards containing photographs of different architectural styles, development patterns, and urban design elements. These boards were used as a tool to engage the participants in a discussion about common themes and elements that they considered appropriate to the scale and character of Downtown Tavares. The discussion of the photographs was followed by a Power Point presentation titled "Pizza and Planning" and "The Scale of Great Places", presented by Phil Laurien (ECFRPC) and Mayor Nancy Clutts (City of Tavares). Using Savannah, GA and South Beach, FL, as examples, a collage of visual elements were presented to the participants.

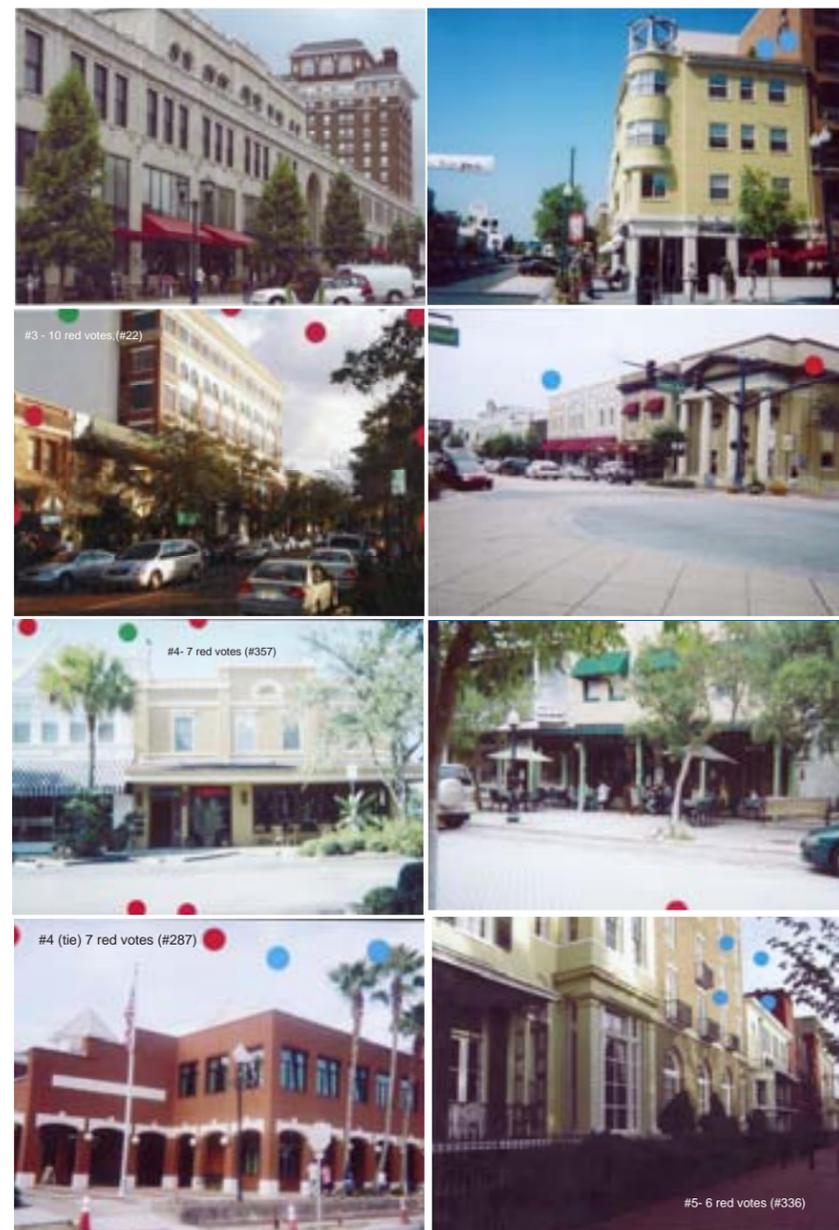
The case studies (Savannah and South Beach) were used to help the community define the term "human scale" in architecture and its impact on urban environments. Other elements that were discussed as a result of this interactive case study approach included street design, height, architectural styles, and the importance of architectural details (steps, doorways, railings, columns, eaves, niches, mouldings, etc.) in designing buildings that are scaled to human proportions.

**SESSION 4: VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY
NOVEMBER 20, 2006**

Session 4 utilized the visual preference survey technique to initiate discussions about the physical character of future development within the Downtown CRA. Participants' homework photographs were randomly clustered and placed on large display boards. Red, blue, green and yellow stickers were distributed to each participant. The participants were then instructed to place dots on an image, that illustrated a visual preference for the types of landscapes, buildings, and intensity, which appropriately represented the community's vision for the Downtown. Red stickers were placed next to the photographs depicting the building type and architectural style of buildings preferred closest to the Downtown, yellow on those preferred next, followed by blue and then green.

Attendees also placed stickers on the redevelopment area map to indicate development patterns based on intensity.

- Red stickers: Highest intensity development
- Blue: Medium- high Intensity development
- Green stickers: Medium-intensity development
- Yellow stickers: Least intense development



red zone preferences

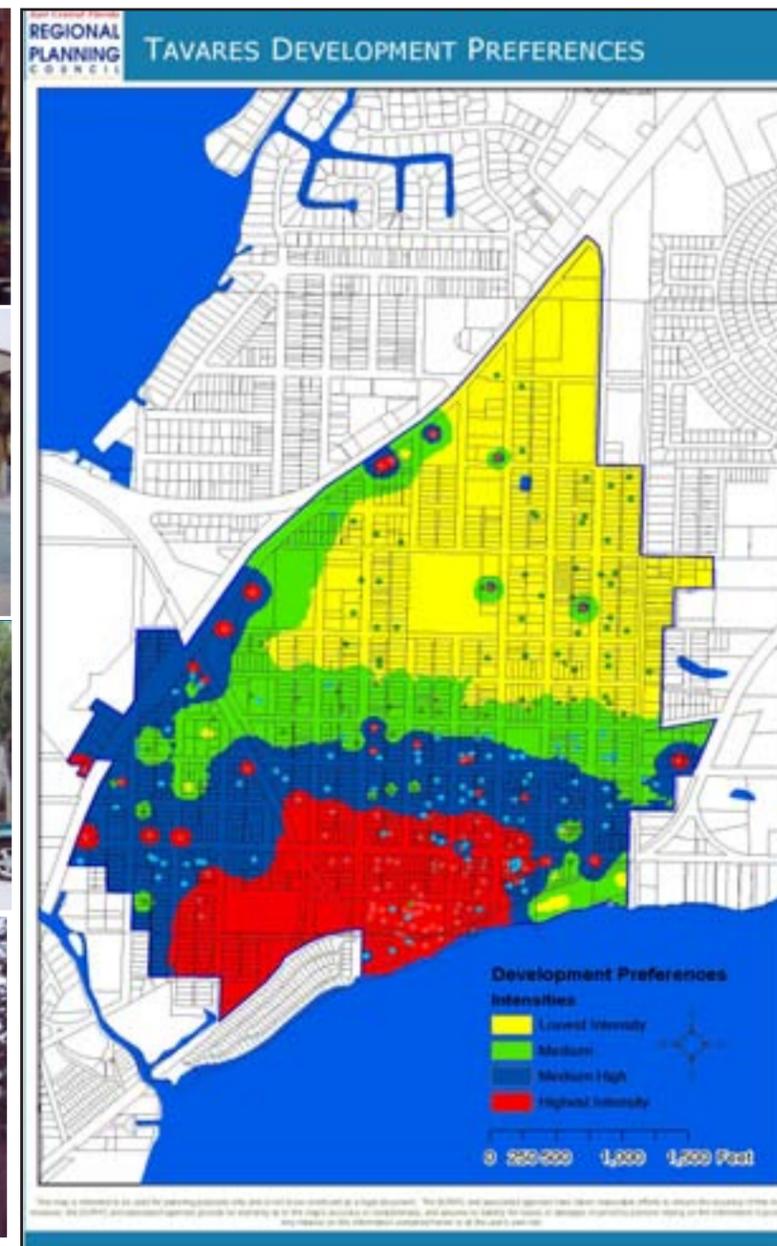


Fig. 3.2 Development Preferences (Intensities) Map
Source: Phil Laurien, East Central Florida Regional Planning Council



blue zone preferences



green zone preferences



yellow zone preferences





Illustration depicting proposed vision statement
Source: Nancy Clutts, Vice-Mayor, City of Tavares

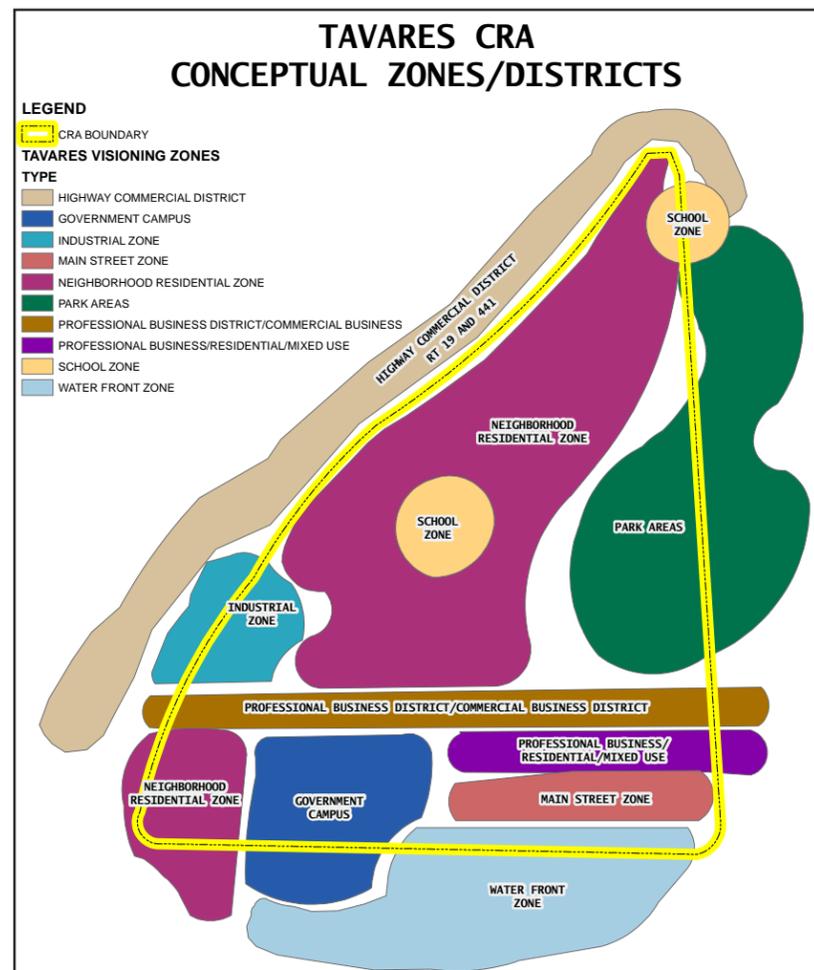


Fig. 3.3 Conceptual Zones Map, Tavares CRA
Source: East Central Florida Regional Planning Council/ Peggy Fennell, GIS Analyst, City of Tavares

SESSION 5: COMMUNITY VALIDATION JANUARY 22, 2007

Results from the November 2006 visual preference survey were compiled and presented by East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC). In this session, those in attendance also received a color coded map that depicted the preferences of community residents for development patterns within the Downtown Redevelopment Area. The participants engaged in an interactive exercise by identifying areas of varying intensities, based upon selected photographs that represented different neighborhoods in the CRA district. The participants determined that the following action steps were critical in the successful realization of the community's vision:

- Establish visual preferences for all four "intensity" districts in the CRA
- Establish vision statement
- Amend comprehensive plan to reflect vision
- Adopt form based codes that assure the "look"

SESSION 6: VISIONING SESSION MAY 15, 2007

Session #6 focussed on involving the community to develop a vision statement that builds upon the consensus achieved in the previous community meetings. Participants recommended three common themes to be included in the City's final vision statement:

- History/ Authenticity*
- Utilization of the waterfront*
- Provision of diverse uses*

The participants presented the following draft visioning statements that reflected the community's core beliefs and desired vision for the future of Downtown Tavares:

- Group #1
- Historic walkable, lakeside community in the scenic heart of Lake County with an eye on the past and vision for the future.
 - Emphasize Florida vernacular architecture.
 - Attract commerce, including shoreline restaurants and cultural attractions.
 - Desirable commerce would include spas, coffee shops, entertainment and concerts.

- Group #2
- Tavares, a community of diverse passions, anchoring on our heritage and environment, bringing synergy to our culture, residential, business, government and visiting public, capturing an atmosphere of Old Florida or southern hospitality.
 - Would like to see citrus trees planted in various parks—northern visitors and children would like to see citrus trees—blossoms—full of fruit, etc.
 - Downtown—authentic—old Downtowns had drugstores, grocers, barbershops, ice cream, soda shops, etc.

- Group #3
- Tavares, the historic hub City with fantastic roads, rail, trails, and water that lead our City in the past and will lead us into the future. Our southern heritage and incredible waterfront are the centerpiece of government, recreation, business, and cultural activities.

- Key concerns:
- Public access to waterfront;
 - Protection of waterfront;
 - Celebration of heritage;
 - Active Downtown with shops, businesses, restaurants, and activities;
 - Multiple modes of transportation—walking, biking, boating, etc. throughout the area;
 - Southern charm retained.

- Group #4
- Tavares possesses an authentic Downtown community enriched by centers of activity where folks can walk, bike, take the train or utilize the water; our architectural standards reflect waterfront community with a focus on its history; our community works in partnership with the business community, focuses on quality-of-life, and emphasizes parks and public places.

- Group #5
- A traditional, vibrant, waterfront City that promotes strong business, creates a sense of community and preserves its heritage

"Tavares – a community that cherishes and protects its historical roots and Southern heritage; constructively uses, enhances and protects its waterfront and lake assets for the benefit of all its citizens; and actively serves as the focal centerpiece to foster the mutual prosperity for a diversity of activities including business, government, recreational and cultural interests."

"Tavares – a community that cherishes its past; relishes and builds on its present foundation to encourage the future prosperity of a waterfront oriented community where a diversity of business, government, cultural and recreational interests interact to find common ground and mutually prosper for the benefit of all."

"Tavares - is a community that possesses a distinct and authentic Downtown enriched by centers of activity where residents and guests can walk, bike, take the train, gather for events, and utilize the water; a community which attracts desirable commerce such as spas, coffee shops, specialty boutiques, shoreline restaurants, cultural attractions, entertainment and concerts; a community which places a priority on redeveloping the Downtown with a mix of live and work uses; a lake-side community in the scenic heart of Lake County whose architectural standards reflect a waterfront and Florida vernacular with a focus on history and an eye on the future."

In June 2007, the CRAAC drafted the following vision statement that was unanimously endorsed by Tavares City Council:

"TAVARES—the capital waterfront city of Lake County; building on a historic foundation; creating an authentic, accessible community of neighborhoods, businesses, and citizen services; distinguishing itself as the defining vision of where you want to be."

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS



In October 2007, the community involvement process was continued further through a series of focus group meetings intended to obtain input from those who will be responsible in the implementation of the Downtown Tavares Redevelopment Master Plan. City staff meetings were scheduled to obtain input relating to the community's assets, critical issues that needed to be addressed during the redevelopment planning process, existing planning efforts and proposed projects that would help define a clear scope for the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan. The groups invited to participate in these meetings included governmental representatives, City staff, key property owners and business groups, civic groups.

October 03, 2007

10:00am- 12:00pm

Government Representatives

List of Participants: Nancy Clutts, Phil Laurien, Derieth Sutton,

Dotty A. Keedy, Anna M. Lawver, Sandy Minkoff, Cindy Hall, Bob Williams, Bill Neron, Alisha Sullivan, Kurt Easton, Bankim Kalra.



Input from staff members and stakeholders was pivotal in formulation of the recommendations presented in this Plan.

Planning and Development

- Destination based development
- Attract people from the region (at least 25 miles)
- Niche markets: Seaplane basin/ Historic Downtown
- Capitalize on the County Campus Downtown (over 1,000 employees work Downtown)
- Employees drive to US Highway 441 during lunch hours- need to cater to this market Downtown
- Need the residential critical mass to support the restaurants
- Consolidation of County offices presents an opportunity for infill development
- Examine opportunities to redevelop and better utilize vacant/ underutilized church owned property Downtown and nurturing the relationships with the faith-based organizations
- Employee base (County/ Hospital) exists but no residential to support this workforce
- Promote multimodal "Downtown"

- Create a "let's make a deal" scenario with developers- offer incentives in exchange for adherence to design guidelines
- Create more angled parking spaces on Main Street, instead of parallel parking
- Visual Appeal
- Implementation and financing
- Liberal alcoholic beverages rules
- Consider providing Fiber Optics/ area- wide stormwater permitting as a public service
- Maintain balance between regulations and incentives
- CRA should retain landscape architects and architects that understand the City's priorities to provide on-going services to interested property developers while at the same time maintaining high standards for quality development
- Vision is not typical of existing Tavares landowners
- Need to establish relationship between UF and UCF students and City

Urban Design

- How can we integrate form-based codes as part of the master planning process?
- Use Tavares Station as a signature project showcasing implementation of form-based codes
- Allow vertical development
- Opportunity to create entertainment district along Ruby Street
- Codes should facilitate density while at the same time keep the architectural character intact
- Downtown enclaves should be created based on architecture; create mixed-use village type development
- The community, through the visioning process and visual preference survey, has already defined the Downtown core with densities and character districts marked

Circulation

- Connect Ruby and Main Street
- Alfred Street Corridor (one-way pair)
 - Predominantly institutional/ commercial uses
 - North-south streets need to become commercial corridors complementing Alfred Street
 - Alternative seems the best out of all other options available
 - Need more research into one-way alternative, especially at the intersections
 - Traffic circles should also be explored as an option
 - Crossing Alfred Street is a problem

General Observations

Precedents: Delaware, Ohio; Cocoa Village

October 03, 2007

2:00pm- 4:00pm

Department Heads

List of Participants: Lori Houghton, Nancy Barnett, Don Griffin, Tamera Rogers, Jacques Skutt, Heath Frederick, Stoney M. Lubins, Richard Keith, Bill Neron, Alisha Sullivan, Kurt Easton, Bankim Kalra.

Planning and Development

- County campus as an employment base is an asset
- Events are seasonal- need permanent population Downtown to support development
- Shortage of affordable housing/ workforce housing in Downtown
- Hospital is also a pivotal employment base and should be capitalized for pursuing enhanced partnership opportunities
- Research into innovative financing mechanisms
- Redevelopment of church owned properties and vacant lots

Urban Design

- Need gateway/ directional signage
- Community Policing
- No designated officer in the Downtown area
- 15,000 sq.ft. minimum space needed for a station-shortage of land Downtown
- Consider having an assigned presence Downtown
- Replicate Woodley House at Wooton Park (maybe use it as the ship store, marina and museum)
- Establish connection to Aesop's Park

Circulation

- Intersections
- Parking
- Alfred Street Corridor
- Proposed circulation behind Judicial Center
- Traffic Signal (at Joanna and Sinclair)
- Change Ruby Street back to two-way; currently used as one-way parking for Sheriff's Department
- Parking meters is a disincentive for tourists

Infrastructure

- **Stormwater**
 Flooding Location: Maud Street/ Alfred Street/ St. Clair Abrams
 Find a place for a regional/ area-wide stormwater retention pond
 Need to clean runoff into lake
 11 outfalls in the area
 Work with St. Johns Water Management District to create innovative strategies to address stormwater issues
- **Water**
 Old sewer pipes Downtown
 Downtown is not designated for reclaimed water treatment
 Lake could be a good irrigation source
- **Streetscape**
 Alley Improvements: get rid of dirt roads/ stormwater/ aesthetic improvements
 Pilot project with pervious surfaces is underway

October 04, 2007

9:00pm- 11:00pm

Civic Groups

List of Participants: Bob Grenier, Brenda Smith, T.J. Fish, Robert Johnson, Bill Neron, Alisha Sullivan, Kurt Easton, Bankim Kalra.

Planning and Development

- Vision has not changed in 15 years; grounded in reality- market/ demographic/ location factors
- Need for policy to guide development
- Tavares Station should not be the identifying image of the community. Instead, the community should build on efforts such as Tavares Station to maintain and rejuvenate its historic identity.
- Women's Club at Wooton Park was an important community meeting space historically
- Traffic counts are high but does not stop/ retain population
- Street grid network is an asset
- Where does Tavares fit in the new regional market?
- CRA District should be expanded
- Need to create feasible programs
- Development potential hindered due to substandard lot sizes
- Need a survey of Lake County employees and their commuting patterns
- Consider acquisition of properties around SR 19
- Rezone properties along St. Clair Abrams to commercial
- Get design and performance standards in place before development
- Mixed-Use District- define appropriate density (12 units per acre?); Workforce Affordable Housing
- Westside of judicial center: African American neighborhood/ need for a community center

October 4, 2007

Business Groups and Property Owners

3:00-5:00 pm

List of Participants: Ann White, Chris White, Gene Smith, Lloyd Atkins Jr., Joanna Scott, Ralph Smith, Rick Golab, Ken Mattison, Jim Ellrodt, Rodger Kooser, Rick Gonzales, Bob Ern, Freddie Belton, Andrew O'Keefe, Bill Neron, Alisha Sullivan, Kurt Easton, Bankim Kalra.

Planning and Development

- Right of way width on Sinclair is much wider than needed
- Caroline Street should accommodate more commercial uses
- Sinclair should be invigorated near Downtown
- Visit zoning changes along Caroline Street
- National food chains concerned about how friendly is the City government (user-friendly cities)
- City's development review process has improved
- Duplexes and rentals need to be avoided along St. Clair Abrams
- Code enforcement issues need to be addressed
- Sensitivity towards existing businesses
- Coordinate economic development and business retention strategies with the hospital's future growth plans
- Pursue infill development strategies
- Historic preservation
- Public improvements
- Vacant parcels
- Walk-in clinic Downtown in conjunction with government complex

Urban Design

- View on Sinclair from 441 needs to be improved
- Need landscaping and on-street parking
- Gateways- US 19 and Main Street/ Old 441 from Mt. Dora/ St. Clair Abrams and Sinclair
- Improvement investment image along commercial corridors
- Sinclair (Linear Park) with bike trail to beautify
- Improvements should be of high quality

Infrastructure

- Consider establishing an area-wide stormwater permit

Circulation

- lanthe Street could be a mess with Caroline one-way
- No left turn on Sinclair
- Architectural character standards are both an incentive and a deterrent
- Ingress and egress problems on both sides of SR 19

HANDS-ON PLANNING WORKSHOP

On April 17, 2008 the Tavares community gathered to review the draft composite plan and establish consensus on the general objectives and preliminary strategies identified by IBI Group for the future of Downtown Tavares. Following a summary of the CRA's redevelopment efforts by Mayor Clutts, the consultant presented an overview of the planning process, the issues and concerns identified during the initial workshops, and the final recommendations of the Redevelopment Plan.

The participants were then divided into groups and asked to review and provide feedback on the Plan elements displayed on boards. The purpose of the workshop was two-fold: 1) to develop consensus on the Plan's recommendations; 2) to obtain community feedback on the Plan's recommendations and missing information that needed attention. Information obtained in the workshop was used to make final adjustments to the plan prior to completion and presentation to the City Council.

