

Part II

Redevelopment Master Plan



PLAN CONTENT AND DESCRIPTION

The descriptive narrative of the Plan summarizes the general intent of the redevelopment program. It has been produced as a guideline for promoting the sound development and redevelopment of the properties in the redevelopment area. Opportunities for public improvements, redevelopment activities and proposed future land use composition are identified and graphically included in the Plan. It has been prepared to reflect the future land use and development patterns desired by the community as expressed during the visioning process conducted by the Mayor and the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council.

While the Downtown Redevelopment Plan is comprehensive in its assessment of the issues impacting the future of the Downtown district, the program, will not be responsible for implementation of plans, projects and programs that are being proposed by other agencies and organizations. The Community Redevelopment Agency cannot possibly assume the roles of other organizations responsible for projects within the area. Rather, the Agency's role is to maintain close relationships with other organizations and support their efforts through supplemental funding and other program initiatives. The redevelopment program will be pursued at multiple levels by numerous jurisdictions at the same time. The CRA may take the lead in certain efforts, while other departments and organizations will lead their efforts where appropriate.

It must also be understood that the plan will not happen all at once, and it is likely that the elements of the Plan will not necessarily occur within the time sequence described herein. The Downtown Redevelopment Plan is intended to be a guiding document for local government 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, the objectives and strategies of the plan should be updated and revised based upon changes in the economy, relevant public concerns and opportunities associated with private development proposals.

This section of the document is organized into the following six chapters (Chapter 4- Chapter 9) that represent the overriding themes identified through the planning process. These overriding themes are intended to serve as the foundation for pursuing an integrated approach towards promoting the development of compact and complete communities. "Complete Communities" are neighborhoods or districts that support the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism- increased densities complemented by a diversity of housing types, services, and amenities.

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; and the seven character districts.

Chapter 5: Urban Design and Historic Preservation

The primary issues addressed in the 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

The Circulation and Mobility 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 sustainable transportation modes.

Chapter 9: Economic Development

The primary focus of the Economic Development chapter is related to Downtown's regional context, employment base, tourism related events, marketing and promotion, strategies related to retaining and attracting businesses, and potential economic benefits of transit service on Downtown.

Each chapter contains an overview section at the beginning that describes the existing conditions and its relationship to the Plan. The overview section is followed by an objective statement and action strategies to be taken, in order to realize the intended development character. Maps, tables, and illustrative renderings support the text in each chapter.

The Plan contains descriptions of several types of projects and programs, including capital projects, public/private projects, and government programs. Capital projects are those that are funded solely by the public sector to address specific infrastructure needs such as roads, drainage, streetscapes, parks and other municipal facilities. The Plan also contains projects that provide opportunities for the public and private sector to work together toward mutually beneficial development activities. The public and private sectors can bring different resources and capabilities to bear on projects that fulfill the objectives of the redevelopment plan but otherwise might be unsuccessful.

The most important aspects of the Plan are the following:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. The Plan establishes a framework for policy decisions that anticipate the need for densification of future development patterns.
6. The Plan facilitates the preparation of new land development regulations that provide a higher standard of urban and residential design.
7. 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.
8. The Plan supports desired social, physical and economic development strategies, as expressed by community representatives, including:

- Development patterns with higher densities of mixed-use located in the core areas of the Downtown with lower heights, building masses and residential uses in surrounding neighborhoods.
- The expansion of activities in the Downtown to establish Tavares as a regional destination with the introduction of new mixed-use, retail, entertainment and residential uses
- Support of infill, renovation and enhancement of residential areas and the prevention of commercial encroachment into neighborhoods
- The improvement of aesthetic conditions on the SR 19 and U.S. 441 Corridors
- Strengthening and expansion of the arts, culture and entertainment
- The revitalization of the waterfront and Wooton Park providing a venue for festivals and other activities
- Improvements to the Tav-lee regional trail system introducing opportunities for heritage and eco-tourism including the expansion of trails, greenways and blueways.
- Reinforcement of future public transportation and mobility options through development of multimodal transit and expansion of pedestrian areas
- Support for historic preservation efforts

COMPOSITE PLAN

1 TRADITIONAL MAIN STREET DISTRICT

Recommendations

- 1A Destination Uses**
 - Destination Retail Uses**
 - Introduce storefront related retail
 - Restaurants/ Street cafes/ Grocery Store/ Bakery
 - Antique stores/ art galleries
 - Extend retail core fronting north-south streets between Alfred St. and Ruby St.
 - Encourage retail uses at ground level; office and residential uses on upper floors
 - Destination Tourism Uses**
 - Introduce Ancillary Tourism Uses (Museum/Outfitters)
 - Evaluate opportunities to relocate public facilities including public library/civic center/performance venue
- 1B Tavares Square (Town Plaza)**
 - Urban plaza with pedestrian amenities connecting to the waterfront
 - Examine opportunities to introduce a Farmers Market/Arts and Crafts Market
- 1C Parking Opportunities**
 - Explore potential for structured parking facilities as demand increases in the future
 - Evaluate additional on-street parking along downtown's north-south pedestrian connections
 - Shared parking
- Urban Design Elements**
 - Retain small town character through establishment of appropriate design guidelines and historic preservation efforts
 - 2 to 6 storied mixed-use: Vertical mixed-use (residential/office above retail)
 - Redistribute the massing of buildings from Main Street to mid-block
 - Maximize retail frontage
 - Utilize alleyways as extensions of sidewalks system/ access to shared parking lots/ service areas
 - Improvements to pedestrian environment- plant shade trees/ minimize curb cuts/ encourage rear or side parking for businesses
 - Identify need and appropriate locations for constructing public restrooms
 - Activate sidewalk environment (street cafes/ patios/ canopies/ glazed storefronts)

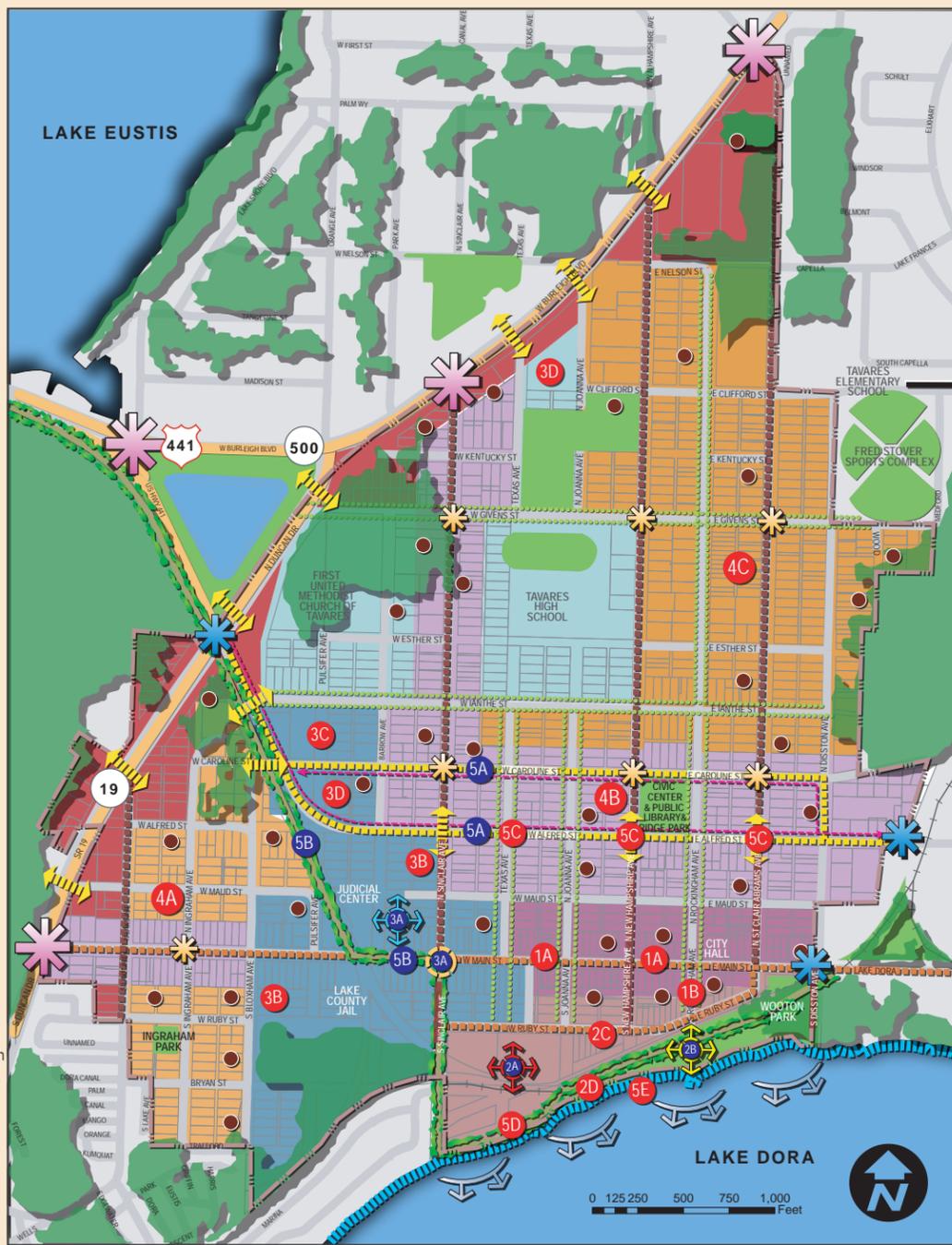
2 WATERFRONT ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

Planned

- 2A Tavares Station**
 - 3 storied town homes (25 units)
 - 98 boat slips
 - 14 story mixed-use complex: 175 condo units
 - 22,000 SF retail space/ 70,000 SF office
 - 9,000 SF restaurant space (Dragon Boat Café)
 - Extension of Tav-Lee Trail Connection
 - Parking: 1,206 spaces
 - Incorporate city's history and architectural styles
- 2B Wooton Park Improvements**
 - Seaplane Basin and Marina
 - 36 boat slips/ 4 seaplane moorings marina and aviation fuel station
 - Tavares to Mt. Dora Water Taxi service
 - Tav-Lee Trailhead (replica of historic Woodlea House/ Tavares Pavilion)
 - 12 Special Events
 - Performance areas
 - Proposed sandy beach
 - Lighting on pier in the park
 - Canoe/kayak rentals
 - Parking for boat trailers
- 2C Ruby Street Reconfiguration**
 - Mixed-Use(3-6 stories): restaurants/entertainment/ residential
 - Redefine Ruby Street as a waterfront promenade
 - Introduce restaurant/ food service establishments overlooking Lake Dora
 - Consider reuse of underutilized parcels fronting Ruby Street to accommodate marina related boutique stores
 - Work with existing property owners to assemble and develop a master planned public/private development transit oriented pilot project on the waterfront
- 2D Waterfront Development Recommendations**
 - Maximize waterfront views
 - Introduce hotel/tourist accommodation
 - Tiered 2-4 stories of buildings located to the south
 - Devise strategies to address economic feasibility of new development

Recommendations

- 3 COUNTY CAMPUS Planned**
- 3A Judicial Center Expansion**
 - 6-story Lake County Courthouse Expansion (Max. height: 120')
 - Central Energy Plant Expansion (Max. height: 35')
 - Governmental Office Building (Max. height: 38')
 - Parking Garage- 1,560 spaces (Max. height: 78')
 - Total parking spaces- 2,101
 - Restripe Main Street from Sinclair west to Pulsifer
 - Roundabout concept Main Street and Sinclair
 - two 12' travel lanes
 - two 6' bike lanes
 - two 18" gutters
 - Roundabout concept Main Street and Sinclair
 - Construct bikeway connecting existing bikeway
 - Traffic light at Sinclair Avenue parking garage entrance
- 3B** Pursue future development opportunities with the County for university extension facilities (legal/ nursing)
- 3C** Work with School Board to identify opportunities for potential relocation & reuse of vacant and underutilized school owned properties
- 3D** Consider developing a consolidated public facility complex- Fire/ EMS/ Police as a long-term strategy
- Design Standards**
 - Explore opportunities to introduce retail/ office uses in future county facility expansion and development projects
 - Ensure design standards and buffering requirements are established for institutional uses
 - Establish a coherent directional signage system for all public facilities and parking areas



DISTRICTS			
CRA Boundary	Downtown North Residential Neighborhoods	Highway Commercial District	Waterfront Entertainment District
West Main Neighborhoods	Downtown Transition Mixed-use District	Traditional Main Street District	Institutional Core / Civic Center
Institutional Uses	Parks and Open Space		
EXISTING	PROPOSED	RECOMMENDED	
Railroad	Planned Improvements	Recommendations	Primary Commercial Corridors
Local Streets	Tav-Lee Trail / Bikeway	Primary Gateways	Retail Streets
Views to Waterfront	Lake County Blueways	Secondary Gateways	Cottage Commercial Corridors
Tree Canopies	Judicial Center Expansion	Neighborhood Gateways	Neighborhood Connectors
Retention Pond	Tavares Station Mixed Use	Neighborhood Pedestrian Connectors	Downtown Pedestrian Connectors
	Wooton Park Improvement	Redevelopment / Opportunities	Pedestrian Cross Access

NEIGHBORHOODS

4A WEST MAIN NEIGHBORHOODS

Recommendations

- Ensure adequate buffering between incompatible uses
- Designate areas appropriate for moderate density, mixed-income, multi-family residential development
- Enhance and upgrade existing quality of housing
- Create incentives to facilitate new infill construction of affordable workforce housing
- Encourage adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized properties to accommodate community facilities and activities (parks/ vocational technology training center/ business resource center/ job training center)
- Develop design strategies to minimize the visual impact of the County jail and detention facility center
- Upgrade facilities at Ingraham Park
- Work with area faith-based institutions to generate community support and participation in maintaining the neighborhood's aesthetic environment
- Work with commercial property owners to institute a sidewalk maintenance and beautification program
- Encourage neighborhood oriented retail uses in new commercial development fronting Main Street (grocery store, restaurants, deli, pharmacy, etc.)
- Seek opportunities to develop pocket parks on vacant and/or underutilized residential properties
- Construct neighborhood gateways at identified locations

4B DOWNTOWN TRANSITION MIXED-USE DISTRICT

Recommendations

- Encourage adaptive reuse of existing residential uses to accommodate low-impact non-residential uses (professional offices, neighborhood retail, restaurants - horizontal mixed use)
- Establish appropriate architectural and urban design standards
- Accentuate significant intersections with appropriate gateway treatment and install directional signage to major activity centers
- Improve visual and physical access to the Public Library and Civic Center on Caroline Street
- Promote high intensity mixed-use development on identified vacant and underutilized properties in the neighborhood
- Strive to expand moderate to high intensity mixed-uses on primary north-south streets in the district (retail at grade/ office/residential upper floors)
- Encourage property owners to introduce a mix of housing types- townhomes, live/work studios, garage apartments, lofts to provide for affordable workforce housing
- Ensure design standards and architectural guidelines are in place prior to the approval of any new development in the area
- Reduce or eliminate buffer requirements between similar zoning districts
- Examine the need to expand school facilities as demand increases
- Seek potential opportunities for developing neighborhood parks

4C DOWNTOWN NORTH RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Recommendations

- Preserve the existing single-family residential character in the neighborhoods
- Introduce a mix of residential housing types
- Provide design criteria for new infill development and existing building renovations
- Establish performance standards and incentives
- Complete the missing sidewalk network and ensure placement of neighborhood amenities (lighting, tree planting, signage) to ensure a safe and walkable pedestrian environment.
- Increase code enforcement visits and work with property owners to create property maintenance/ residential façade improvement programs
- Provide well-defined pedestrian linkages connecting the Tavares High School to the residential areas, the ball park fields and the Civic Center/ Library by developing a cross-pedestrian connectivity plan
- Seek potential opportunities for developing neighborhood parks

5 CIRCULATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Planned

- 5A Alfred Street and Caroline Street Realignment**
 - One-way pair
 - 12' travel lane with on-street parking
 - 6' sidewalk with planting strip
 - 2 new signals proposed
- 5B Tav-Lee Trail**
 - Completion of the proposed Tav-Lee Trail
 - Tav-Lee Trail Trailhead Facility: Wooton Park
- 5C Alfred Street and Caroline Street Realignment**
 - Traffic calming measures at key intersection to improve cross-access
 - Work with property owners to identify and modify impacted driveway access
- 5D Tav-Lee Trail**
 - Extend trail from Main Street to Waterfront
 - Establish connectivity with Lake County Trail system and Blueways System
- 5E Multimodal Transportation**
 - Continue to explore opportunities to expand the water-taxi service on Lake Dora to the Golden Triangle Area
 - Explore long-term opportunities with MPO to construct light rail transit service connecting Tavares to regional communities
 - Opportunity to create a transit oriented development pilot project
 - Explore opportunities for potential reuse of Tavares Fire Station as a multimodal facility
 - Ensure accessibility and parking for other transportation modes including bicycles, motorcycles, golf carts, and neighborhood electric vehicles

Recommendations

- Street Hierarchy**
- Primary Commercial Corridors:** SR 19/ US 441
- Cottage Commercial Corridor:** Alfred and Caroline Streets
- Retail Streets:** Main Street and Ruby Street
- Neighborhood Connectors:** St. Clair Abrams Avenue, Sinclair Avenue, and New Hampshire
- Downtown Pedestrian Connectors:** Rockingham, Joanna, Texas, and Lake Avenues; Ianthe and Givens Streets

CITY OF TAVARES DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN



Chapter 4

Land Use and Development Characteristics



LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS



Fig. 4.1 Existing Building Footprint, Downtown Tavares
Source: IBI Group, January 2008



Fig. 4.2 Proposed Urban Design Plan at build-out, Downtown Tavares
Source: IBI Group, July 2008

A primary objective of the redevelopment program is to enable an expanded mix of retail, entertainment and residential uses in the Downtown district. New restaurants, retail and other opportunities for entertainment would extend downtown hours of business into the evening and create a more attractive environment for full time residents. Tavares is the seat of the Lake County government services; therefore a premium has been established on office uses in the Downtown to support government related activities. Unfortunately, in this case, over time, this has displaced commercial uses from the Downtown core. This phenomenon has combined with the trend towards commercial and residential suburbanization and the encroachment of office use in surrounding neighborhoods. The result has been an oversupply of institutional and office activities in Downtown, and the creation of a 9 to 5 commuter town that essentially shuts down after daytime business hours. As the redevelopment program evolves and the real estate market strengthens, the City and the CRA will be in a position to work with property owners and investors to assemble, master plan and redevelop key sites. The intent is to address individual site deficiencies, such as, inadequate lot sizes, or the lack of parking and access, and introduce new development in highly visible locations entering the Downtown core. The CRA and the City must evaluate, and when possible, upgrade infrastructure in support of site development. When possible, the City and the Agency should also upgrade conveyance and transmission infrastructure on a systematic basis as well.

The Master Plan envisions Downtown Tavares as a vibrant, mixed-use regional center with interconnected neighborhoods and the most intense development focused in the Downtown Core. The future vision builds upon the public improvements and planned private developments currently underway: expansion of the County facilities, public parking garage, major Wootton Park improvements, and the Tavares Station waterfront mixed-use project. A key component required for successful redevelopment of the downtown is to increase the amount of residents within the core area by providing the base market for related hospitality, entertainment and retail activities. Therefore, the Plan recommends the CRA pursue activities that support significant development intensities and multi-family housing in the Downtown core and, where appropriate, in the vicinity of adjoining neighborhoods. It is also important that there be diversity in the residential development in the Downtown Redevelopment Area such that it includes both market rate and affordable housing. The presence of a significant number of Lake County and Florida Hospital Waterman employees represent an untapped residential population that may choose to live in the Downtown, if there were residential opportunities available. A number of these workers would qualify for affordable housing and the CRA should work to include an appropriate mix of affordable housing units in its overall residential development strategy.

One of the major goals of the redevelopment program is to preserve and enhance the historic neighborhoods in the vicinity of the Downtown. This is a formidable task when considering recent private investment in property renovations for the purpose of converting residences into commercial and office use. Compounding this problem is the fact that the older neighborhoods must compete with new housing developments in a housing market that offers a diverse range of housing products that are competitively priced. This Plan proposes specific growth patterns that increase the Downtown's development capacity while simultaneously introducing transition mixed-use areas that clearly define and preserve the residential character in the neighborhoods.

Downtown's existing regional corridors- U.S Highway 441 and SR 19- are envisioned to continue developing as commercial corridors driven by favorable market conditions associated with high traffic volume and regional growth. New developments along these corridors are expected to support uses catering to local serving auto-oriented uses such as auto repair shops, gas stations, hotels, chain restaurants, and Class- A offices. Properties that extend from US 441 and SR 19 to neighborhood streets should be redeveloped as multi-family residential uses with commercial frontage along the corridors.

Planned Wooton Park improvements, and related events hosted by the City on the lakefront is anticipated to necessitate a demand for hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues, and enhancements to the infrastructure and parking network in the future. As new development and redevelopment occur, the conditions in the Downtown will invariably change and possibly transform the physical, economic, and social fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods. The sustainable growth of Downtown Tavares relies on the manner in which the residential areas, activity centers, transportation network, buildings, and natural resources are coordinated and designed.

These changes are expected to play a pivotal role in providing Downtown with a diverse residential base that will need to be supported by complementary public amenities- neighborhood parks, expanded school facilities, cultural facilities, neighborhood retail, and upgraded infrastructure facilities.

Development Characteristics: Intensities and Densities

This section describes the relationship between new development and redevelopment and the public realm improvements in Downtown Tavares. Based on the results of development preference maps prepared during the community visioning process by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, the Plan defines four development intensities within the CRA boundaries. The Plan establishes guidelines for intensity of use, building heights, building types, and street frontage types within the Downtown's existing fabric in *Chapter 5: Urban Design and Historic Preservation*. The redevelopment plan recommends four different development intensities- Transit-Oriented Mixed-Use High (MU-H), Transition Mixed-Use Commercial, Neighborhood Residential Low, and Commercial Corridor Mixed Use Low.

ZONING	PROPOSED STANDARDS
MU-H – MIXED USE HIGH	Maximum 84 foot Height or 6 stories Maximum 40 du/ac FAR 2.0
MU-L2 – MIXED USE LOW 2	Maximum 70 foot Height or 5 stories Maximum 20 du/ac FAR 1.5
C-2- COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR MODERATE	Maximum 60 foot Height Maximum 15 du/ac FAR 1.0
RMF-3 NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL LOW	Maximum 45 foot Height Maximum 15 du/ac FAR 1.0

In general, the Plan concentrates the most intense development (MU-H) in the Downtown Core (Civic/ Institutional Core, Traditional Main Street, and the Waterfront Entertainment District). This district is characterized by high density six-eight story mixed-use development patterns and civic facilities and amenities that are anticipated to serve a regional population. The Transition Mixed-Use Commercial is characterized by medium-density, mixed-use development characterized by townhouses, apartment buildings, professional office, and retail located in four to six-story buildings. The Plan also ensures adequate transition to the low-density neighborhoods by recommending that buildings transition from in height down to the neighborhood mixed-use low district.

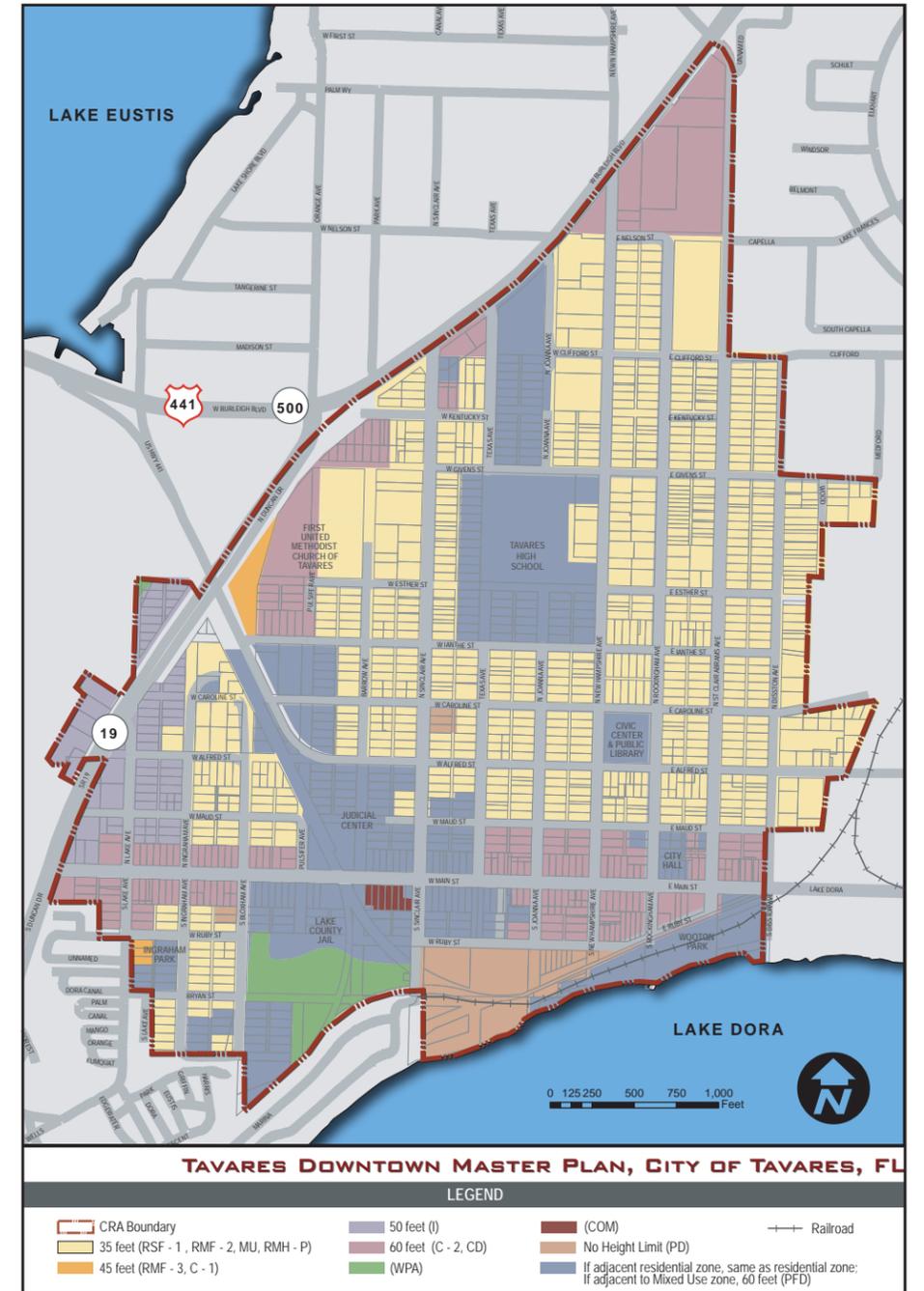
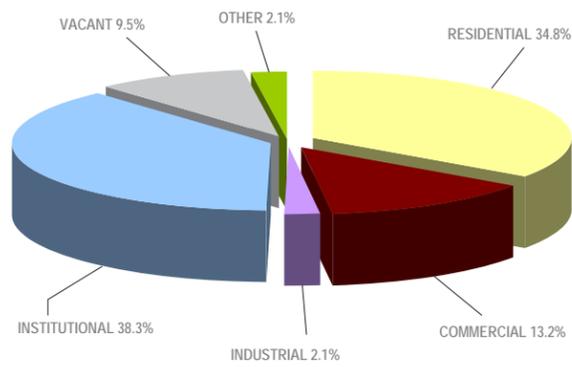


Fig. 4.3 Map showing permitted heights according to current Land Development Regulations, Downtown Tavares CRA
Source: Lake County GIS Database/ IBI Group, January 2008

Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use (by acreage)



Existing Land Use (by parcel count)

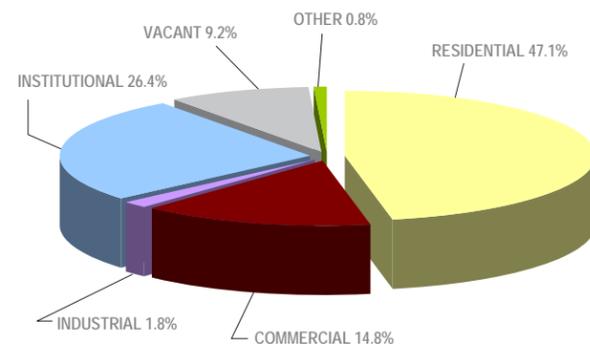


Fig. 4.4 Existing Land Use Distribution Chart, Downtown Tavares CRA
Source: Lake County GIS Database/IBI Group, January 2008

Downtown Tavares contains 1,440 properties, encompassing nearly 400 acres of land area, including right-of-ways. Based on the land use codes provided by Lake County Property Appraiser's Office, there are over thirty (30) land use types found within the redevelopment area. For analysis purposes, this report classifies these types into six major existing land use categories:

1. Institutional
2. Residential
3. Commercial
4. Vacant Lands
5. Industrial
6. Other uses

Fig. 4.5 illustrates the distribution of existing land uses in the Downtown redevelopment area. As shown in Fig. 4.4, public and institutional uses are the predominant land use type, in terms of land coverage, accounting for nearly 40% of the total land area, followed by residential uses (35%) and commercial uses (15%). In terms of parcel count, residential uses contain the largest number of properties with 677 parcels, representing nearly half of the Downtown's total properties (49.7%). Institutional properties at twenty-four percent (24%) and commercial properties at fifteen percent (15%) account for most of the remaining properties. The remainder of the land use composition is distributed between vacant lands (9.5%); industrial uses (2.1%) and other uses such as utilities (2.1%).

Planned Development Projects

County government operations continue to remain a significant and vital economic driver in Tavares. Consequently, the County is pursuing multiple facility expansion projects, that are currently in different stages of development. Foremost among these projects is the expansion of the Lake County Judicial Center and the construction of a multi-story parking garage. The first is intended to increase office space for court and clerical activities, while the second is aimed to resolve a growing parking congestion problem on West Main Street. Other projects include the construction of a new Central Energy Plant and a Governmental Office Building,

Tavares Station, the proposed condominium and townhouse community on 3.6 acres of presently-vacant land once owned by Lake Region Packing will accommodate a range of amenities, from private boat docks to a yacht club and putting greens. Boutique retail and dining uses will augment this development. Developed as a Planned Development District, the Tavares Station development is expected to provide the residential density needed to revitalize Downtown Tavares. The following is a summary of the development program approved for the project:

- Waterfront town homes (25 units) with 98 boat slips/ 3 stories 14 story mixed-use complex: 175 condo units/ 22,000 SF retail space
- 70,000 SF office
- 9,000 SF restaurant space (Dragon Boat Café)
- Extension of Tav-Lee Trail Connection
- Total parking: 1,206 spaces



Two of the major development projects currently underway in Downtown Tavares- Expansion of County Facilities and Public Parking Garage (left) and Tavares Station (right)
Source: R&S Realty Group: City of Tavares

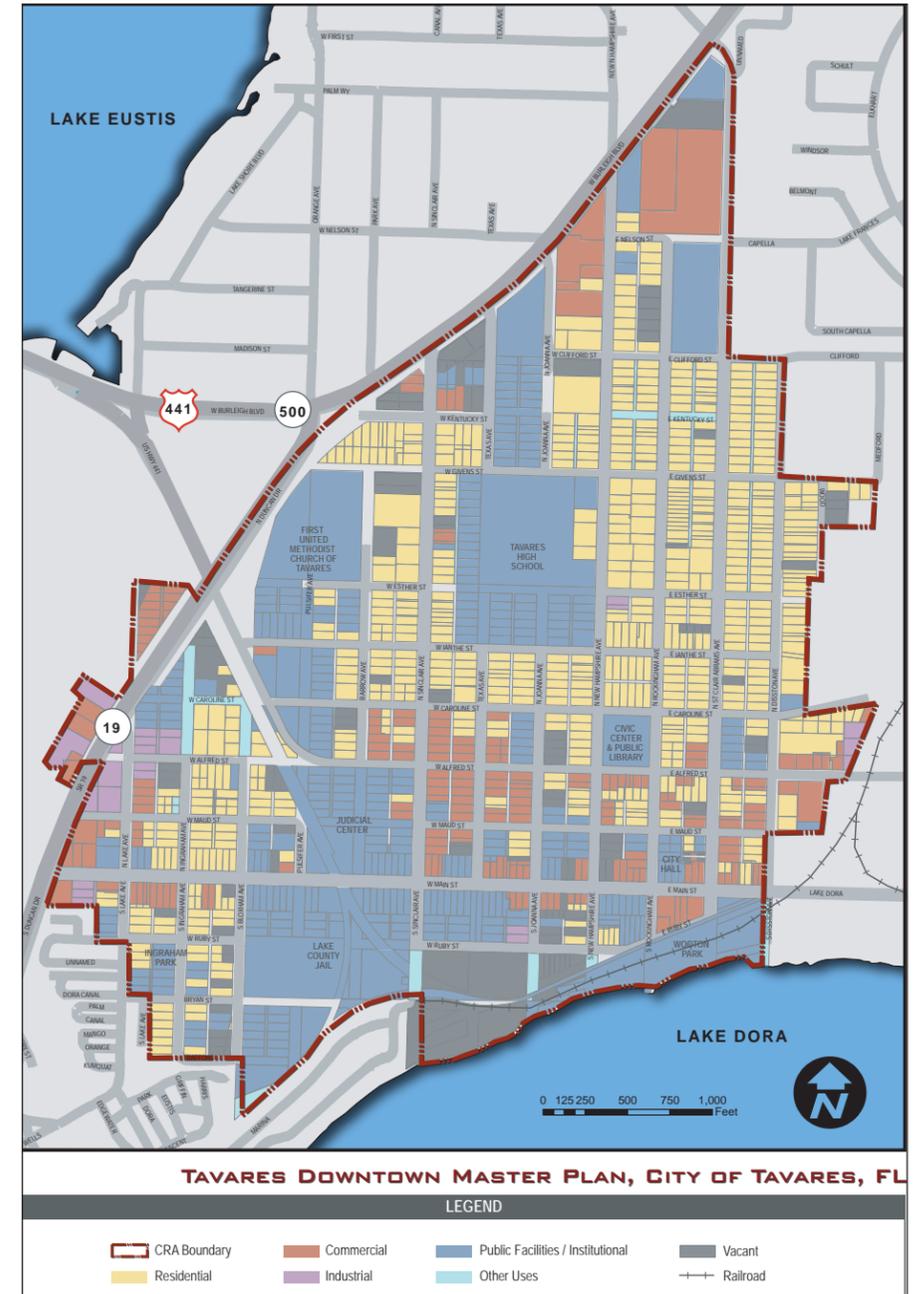


Fig. 4.5 Map showing Existing Land Use Distribution, Downtown Tavares CRA
Source: Lake County GIS Database/IBI Group, January 2008

Objectives: Land Use and Development Characteristics

- Provide the community with an overall balance of uses and activities enabling an expanded mix of commercial, civic, entertainment, recreational, and residential uses;
- Achieve development patterns that ensure efficient use of available land.



Artist's Illustration showing aerial view of Downtown Tavares
Source: IBI Group/ Genesis Studios, Inc.

Action Strategies:

- Promote increased densities (20-40 dwelling units per acre/ 6-8 stories) in locations within one-quarter mile of the waterfront, civic center and potential transit station to capitalize on the benefits of consolidated nodal development.
- Encourage new infill moderate-density residential development (20 dwelling units per acre/ 2-4 stories) on sites within the Downtown Transition District.
- Require combined mixed-use developments throughout the Downtown Core through revisions to the land development regulations as required to remove any obstacles that discourage combined mixed-use development.
- Encourage at-grade retail centers which are connected to the sidewalk network along the north-south streets between Alfred and Ruby Streets.
- Permit development of a diverse range of service and support commercial uses in the Downtown Core- small pharmacy store, neighborhood grocery stores, banks- to ensure access to essential services.
- Identify and market areas where private interests can develop housing and necessary support facilities in the Downtown core area and adjacent neighborhoods including Main Street, Ruby Street, and Alfred Street.
- Strategically target appropriate locations within the redevelopment area to facilitate new privately developed multi-family housing developments.
- Support the development of retail uses that accommodate extended hours of operation- cafes, restaurants, book stores- to stimulate activity into non-work hours.
- Discourage location of surface parking lots in the front of buildings in areas within the Downtown Core and Downtown Transition districts.
- Consider financial incentives to promote owner-occupied housing in the redevelopment area.
- Redevelop properties that extend from US 441 and SR 19 to neighborhood streets as multi-family residential uses with commercial frontage along the corridors.
- Develop strategies to encourage the development of affordable housing, with an emphasis in developing strategies in which affordable housing can be integrated within market rate housing development projects.
- Continue to direct future industrial development and expansion of existing industrial uses to appropriate areas outside the Downtown CRA, and evaluate feasibility of pursuing an administrative rezoning for industrially zoned properties to highway commercial.
- Provide a range of housing options introducing owner occupied multi-family and mixed-use development, primarily in areas abutting the commercial and industrial uses, to provide for a transition from more intense non-residential to less intense residential neighborhoods.
- Encourage the development of appropriate transitional office and low-impact retail uses along Alfred and Caroline Streets while minimizing impacts on adjoining neighborhoods.
- Work with industrial businesses abutting the SR 19 corridor to improve the physical conditions of the buildings and landscaping along the corridors.
- Continue efforts to rehabilitate quality older housing stock and encourage infill development of vacant residential and commercial properties in the redevelopment area.
- Provide linkages between neighborhoods utilizing the existing and proposed system of trails, sidewalks, alleyways and bicycle routes.
- Provide incentives such as intensity bonuses on development projects that provide public amenities and infrastructure improvements.
- Utilize the design review process and code enforcement to ensure adherence and attention to design guidelines and ordinance requirements.

Character Districts

The Redevelopment Plan envisions Downtown Tavares as a synthesis of distinct neighborhoods and districts, each containing their unique features and characteristics. These areas were determined on the basis of having similar land use composition, physical characteristics, and function. Some of Downtown's districts- such as Waterfront Entertainment District and Civic/ Institutional Core- have major planned projects underway that will likely have a significant impact on future investment activity in Downtown Tavares. However, the urban structure and form in several large sections of the residential neighborhoods and the Main Street district is characterized by underutilized development patterns, lack of a coherent identity to reinforce the City's historic character, and excessive ownership of lands by the County and churches. As the redevelopment program envisioned in this Plan matures, it is anticipated that these distinct character areas will evolve into a seamless urban fabric with complementary mixes of residential, employment, recreational, retail, cultural, entertainment, and tourist serving elements that are interwoven through the open space and street network. While each district contains unique features that should be preserved and enhanced, this Plan envisions integrating some fundamental principles that will serve as essential building blocks connecting each of these districts and neighborhoods:

- Compact Development
- Increased Densities
- Neighborhood Activity Centers
- Connectivity
- Character and Identity

For the purposes of this plan, the Downtown CRA is organized into the following three districts and six sub-districts, illustrated on Fig. 4.6:

Commercial Corridor District

Residential Neighborhoods:

Downtown Transition Mixed-Use Neighborhood

Downtown North Neighborhood

West Main Neighborhood

Downtown Core:

Civic/ Institutional Core

Traditional Main Street District

Waterfront Entertainment District



Fig. 4.6 Map illustrating character districts, Downtown Tavares CRA
Source: IBI Group, January 2008

Commercial Corridor District



Residential Neighborhoods

Downtown Core



Fig. 4.7 Commercial Corridor District
Source: IBI Group, July 2008



Recommendations

- A** Primary Gateway Opportunity
- B** Opportunity to create a pedestrian bridge
- C** Infill Development Opportunity: Create street frontage; Rear Parking; Joint access; Landscape Buffers; Sign Regulations
- D** Linear Park and Streetscape Improvements
- E** Primary Gateway Opportunity
- F** Infill Development and Streetscape Improvements: Burial of utilities; Tree Planting; Median Landscaping; Wider Sidewalks; Landscape Buffers
- G** Redevelopment Opportunity: Multi-Family Housing and Commercial
- H** Street Extension: Rockingham Avenue

Commercial Corridor District

Located on the northern extent of the Downtown Redevelopment Area boundaries, the commercial corridor district is presently characterized by older suburban-style strip commercial development and light industrial uses. The district contains US 441 and SR 19 as the peripheral corridors that serve as the northern and western gateways to Downtown Tavares respectively. These corridors exhibit similar characteristics including high volumes of traffic serving the region, and have a significant impact on the investment image of the redevelopment area. As the primary gateways to Downtown Tavares, this district plays an important role in the economic health of the redevelopment area.

Existing land uses in the area include strip commercial uses, automotive uses, general retail, office uses, industrial uses and older motels. Recent roadway improvement projects along US 441 have resulted in high traffic volumes, however, poor circulation patterns caused by multiple driveway access points, narrow driveways creating difficult turning movements and traffic conflicts have severely impacted pedestrian connectivity between residential neighborhoods. In order to ensure that the development of properties along these peripheral corridors is consistent with the overall vision for Downtown's urban fabric, this Plan recommends administratively rezoning the industrial zoned properties along SR 19 to general commercial uses that include provisions for developing medium density housing on properties that extend to neighborhood streets.

As new development and redevelopment occurs, opportunities to improve traffic circulation, parking, aesthetic character, and the pedestrian environment should be pursued. Streetscape improvements can be used to soften the physical appearance while incorporating joint access and cross parking improvements into the infrastructure upgrades. Based on the community feedback received during the public workshops, the Plan recommends that enhancing connectivity to residential and commercial areas located north of the redevelopment area be accomplished by introducing traffic calming mechanisms such as designated crosswalks or a pedestrian bridge across US 441 – either as a public realm investment or as a component of new private development- that helps foster visible connections for pedestrians to cross the six-lane roadway.

The redevelopment plan anticipates that the district will continue to develop as a commercial corridor driven by favourable market conditions associated with high traffic volumes and regional growth. The district will be characterized by new development patterns that support more urban buildings with shared access, reduced curb cuts, rear parking lots and buildings located closer to the street. The Plan anticipates that over time suburban type properties along these corridors will be replaced by urban buildings that are closer to the street and have parking behind. New developments will support uses catering to local serving auto-oriented uses such as auto repair shops, gas stations, hotels, chain restaurants, and Class- A offices. The intent of the redevelopment program is to sustain the long-term viability of the businesses while buffering views of the harsh physical conditions of the properties. This can be accomplished through CRA sponsored clean-up of properties, landscaping improvements, code enforcement and appropriate development regulations for future commercial uses.

Objective:

Integrate existing commercial and industrial properties into the functional and aesthetic framework of the Downtown, retaining the economic benefits of these uses, while at the same time mitigating their visual impact.

Action Strategies:

- Consider pursuing an administrative rezoning of properties to highway commercial (C-2) for all properties currently designated as industrial uses within this district.
- Encourage joint access and parking between commercial properties to minimize access points and reduce side friction from travel lanes.
- Encourage rear access and parking where land use conflicts do not exist.
- Require landscaped buffering between incompatible uses.
- Sign Regulations
- Establish standards for desired architectural styles.
- Develop adequate design standards to buffer new commercial industrial uses from residential uses, specifically along US Highway 441 and SR 19.
- Utilize the design review process and code enforcement to ensure adherence and attention to design guidelines and architectural standards.
- Continue to direct future industrial development within the Downtown CRA to appropriate areas in other industrial areas in the City.
- Screen outdoor storage from rights of way and adjoining properties.
- Use TIF Funds to provide buffering along SR 19 to screen residential areas from heavy industry to the east, and other areas where land use conflicts exist.
- Pursue active code enforcement.



Recommended Building Types, Commercial Corridor District
Source: IBI Group, July 2008

SR 19 Corridor Improvements

View of SR 19 south of Main Street. The illustration (right) shows the following recommendations related to public realm and private realm improvements.

- A** Burial of Utilities
- B** Median Landscaping
- C** Joint access and shared parking
- D** Private Investment: change from industrial to commercial
- E** Shade Trees
- F** Wide Sidewalks
- G** Landscape Buffer



View of SR 19 north of Main Street. The illustration (right) depicts the recommended streetscape improvements to the roadway looking north to the intersection of SR 19 and US 441.

- A** Landscaped Median; Signature Trees
- B** Wide sidewalks
- C** Tav-Lee Trail Connection
- D** Street Lighting
- E** Directional Signage
- F** Mast Arms at Intersection
- G** Linear Park



US 441 Corridor Improvements



Commercial Corridor District: Precedents



Existing conditions at the intersection of US 441 and St. Clair Abrams (above). The illustrations (right) show general recommendations to the public realm and private realm in two phases. Phase I: Public Realm Improvements (top right); Phase II: Private Investment (bottom right)

- A** Burial of Utilities
- B** Median Landscaping
- C** Bicycle Lane
- D** Pedestrian Bridge
- E** Shade Trees
- F** Wide Sidewalks
- G** Private Investment: New Development

Residential Neighborhoods

Residential uses constitute the largest component of the existing land use categories in terms of the total number of properties, accounting for nearly fifty percent (50%) of the total parcel count (677 out of 1,440 properties). There are 577 single-family housing units located within the Downtown CRA, accounting for eighty-five percent (85%) of the total parcels currently classified as residential uses. The remainder of the residential uses consists of eighteen (18) properties under multi-family uses with more than 10 units, and eighty-four (84) parcels classified multi-family with less than 10 units. Colony West Apartments, a federally subsidized multi-family development, is located in the CRA district along the northern edge of Main Street's western extent.

The Plan identifies three distinct neighborhoods within the Downtown redevelopment area based on their existing character, function, and development potential- Downtown North Neighborhoods, Downtown Transition Neighborhoods, and West Main Neighborhoods. There is a high degree of diversity in the existing housing stock and property conditions, discussed in detail on the following pages. While each neighborhood has unique assets and issues, there are some general issues observed in the residential areas as a whole. These include low-density development, lack of housing diversity, increasing commercial encroachment, lack of identity, high renter-occupancy, high vacancy rate and lack of pedestrian connectivity between the different neighborhoods. Deteriorating single-family, multi-family and apartment structures, as well as infrastructure conditions such as broken and missing sidewalks, drainage problems, and poor road surfaces, were identified during the site inventory. These conditions deter private investment and become more costly to correct over time.

The efforts to develop the waterfront and improving the quality of life in the Downtown Core should be supported by a harmonizing effort to revitalize and preserve existing neighborhoods. Some areas within these neighborhoods have significant assets such as mature tree canopies, historic buildings and well-maintained sidewalks. It is important to ensure that the benefits of the waterfront are extended and shared by existing neighborhoods and residents. By promoting improvements to the waterfront and the existing neighborhoods, the area's overall investment image is expected to improve and serve as a foundation for new investment and development of single-family owner occupied housing. The neighborhoods should be well connected to the waterfront parks and trail system through well-defined access points and pedestrian linkages.

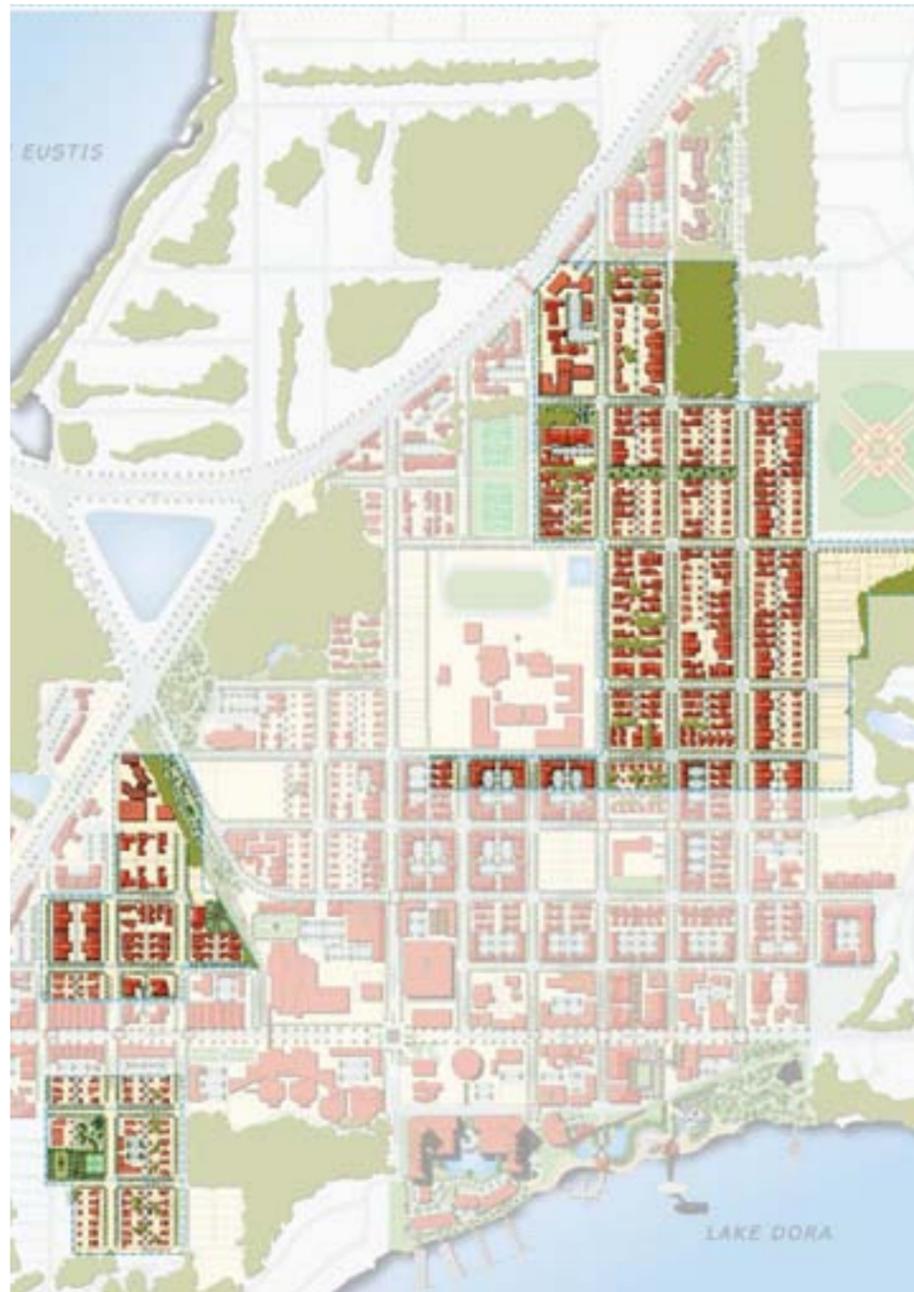


Fig. 4.8 Residential Neighborhoods
Source: IBI Group, July 2008



Fig. 4.9 Downtown North Residential Neighborhood
Source: IBI Group, July 2008



Recommendations

- | | |
|--|---|
| A Neighborhood Gateway Opportunity | E Future Expansion of Tavares High |
| B Develop as Passive Park | F Linear Park/ Pedestrian Linkage |
| C Infill Development Opportunity: Medium-Density Multi-Family Housing and Townhomes | G Joint Use Opportunity for recreation |
| D Pocket Park | H Streetscape Improvements: Sidewalks; Street lighting; Shade trees. |

Downtown North Residential Neighborhoods

Concentrated on the northern side of the Downtown Redevelopment Area, the Downtown North neighborhoods is generally defined by US 441 on the north, Disston Avenue on the east, Texas Avenue on the west, and Lanthe Street on the south. The neighborhood is predominantly residential - characterized primarily by single-family residential units, and includes the Tavares High School. Set amidst a beautiful tree canopy along some streets, this section of the Downtown is expected to have a significant bearing on the redevelopment of Downtown. In addition to providing needed Downtown housing, the neighborhoods will also function as part of the market base for commercial and retail development being proposed in the Downtown core. Some areas in the district are being impacted by a combination of vacant properties, deteriorating housing conditions, and lack of public facilities and amenities such as missing sidewalks, unpaved roads, and neighborhood parks. The basic street grid currently defining the neighborhood's structure should remain intact, and proposed improvements to the circulation network, such as extension of Rockingham Avenue and Kentucky Street, will further promote walkability and help forge connections between existing and proposed recreation facilities.

The Plan anticipates that the Downtown North Neighborhood will undergo little change as it relates to land use composition in the short-term. Over time, new development in the neighborhood should be primarily residential with an emphasis on medium-density housing and multi-family dwellings to infill underutilized and vacant properties. New development in areas closer to US 441 should be encouraged to introduce community-oriented retail that serves the daily needs of the neighborhood. The Plan recommends that the neighborhood be redeveloped with mid-rise buildings between two and four stories in height; with emphasis on creating a diverse stock of housing units such as town homes, garden apartments, duplexes, and bungalows fitting with the appropriate architectural character, scale and density of the existing residential areas.

As the redevelopment plan matures and the neighborhood witnesses an increase in population and investment, the Plan anticipates that the Tavares High School facilities will be expanded to provide additional educational facilities and resources to future residents. The community also identified a lack of public open space within walking distance of the neighborhood, with the exception of the Fred Stover Sports Complex located just outside the CRA boundaries. This Plan identifies a combination of strategies to create public open space and provide enhanced access to existing recreational facilities such as developing vacant lands for small passive neighborhood parks to complete the system, where possible. Another alternative to ensure the provision of adequate neighborhood parks in proximity to residential neighborhoods, is to initiate discussions with the Lake County School Board to provide joint use sites and programs that address the needs of the area's youth and children.

As it relates to other public realm improvements, the Plan recommends that the CRA and the City work together to secure the preservation and enhancement of these neighborhoods through neighborhood planning efforts, and other strategies including: code revisions and infrastructure improvements including gateway treatments, sidewalk improvements, road paving, lighting, improved bus transit service and facilities, and installing directional signage to the Downtown. In conjunction with these improvements power lines should be placed under ground, stormwater systems upgraded, pedestrian scale street lighting and sidewalks installed, and a neighborhood tree planting program initiated.

Objective:

Designate areas appropriate for moderate density residential development that support a mix of housing products, maintain affordable housing stock where appropriate, provide for in-fill development opportunities at a scale that is compatible with the neighborhood, and continue streetscape improvements as incentives for private investment in housing opportunities.

Action Strategies:

- Areas should be maintained at a density of 5- 15 dwelling units per acre.
- Consider the provision of flexible development standards in future zoning code revisions for minimum lot sizes to enable development of smaller owner-occupied single family residential lots.
- Consider the inclusion of floor area ratio and maximum lot coverage ratios together to ensure that the scale of rebuilt residential properties harmonizes with surrounding residences.
- Establish residential design standards for building renovations, in-fill development and tear-downs.
- Provide for neighborhood pocket parks or urban gardens where the opportunity arises.
- Preserve the areas from encroachment by incompatible uses.
- Develop strategies to encourage the development of affordable housing, with an emphasis in developing ways in which affordable housing can be integrated within market rate housing development projects.
- Strategically target appropriate locations within the redevelopment area to facilitate new privately developed multi-family housing developments.
- Develop policies that hold absentee landowners accountable for the maintenance and upkeep of the property conditions.
- Provide pedestrian connections between the neighborhoods and the Downtown through an improved network of sidewalks, alleyways, and access roads. Improvements to the pedestrian environment should be encouraged through landscape buffering from vehicular areas with widened sidewalks, streetlights, and other design elements.
- Construct neighborhood gateways with appropriate landscaping and identity signage announcing the entrance to each of the four neighborhoods at identified primary entry points.