

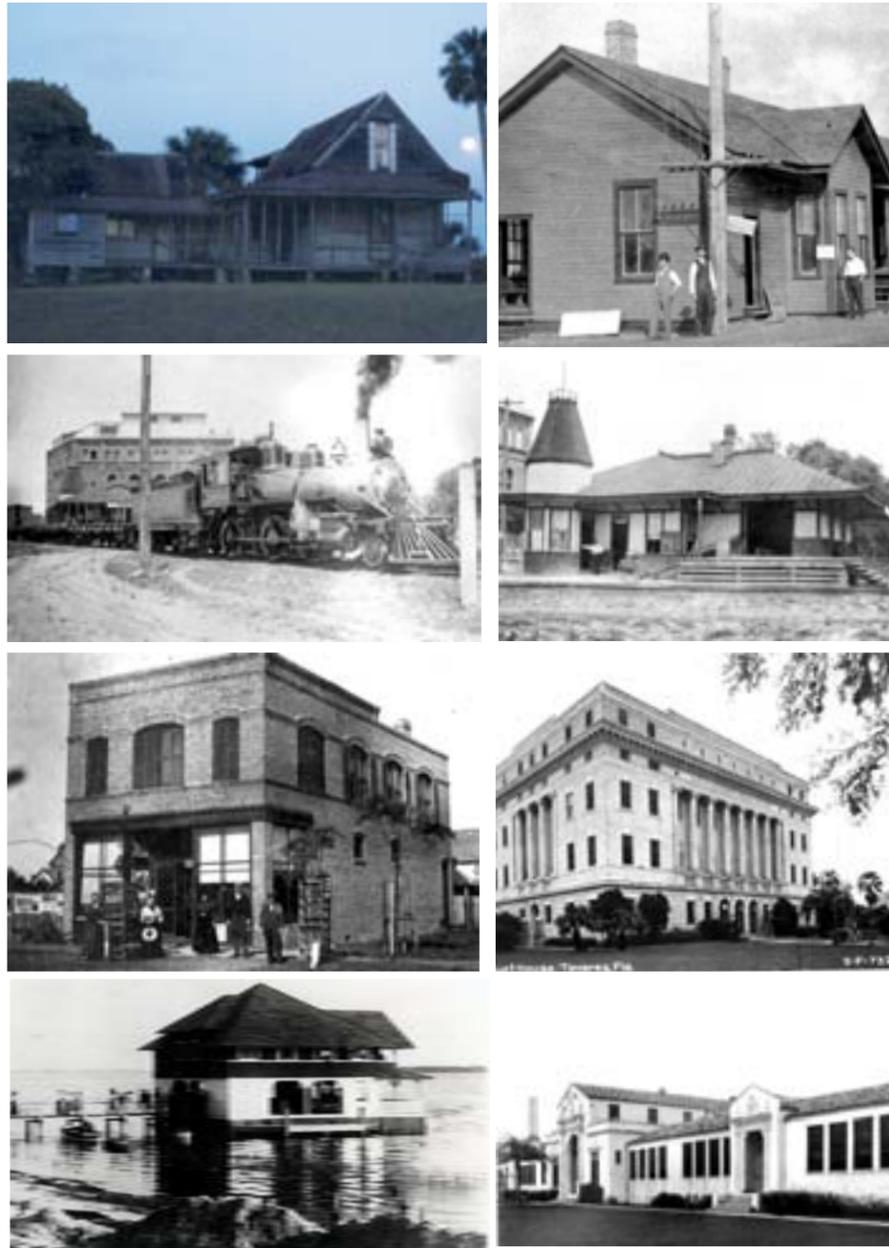
Chapter 2

# Context

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# 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.

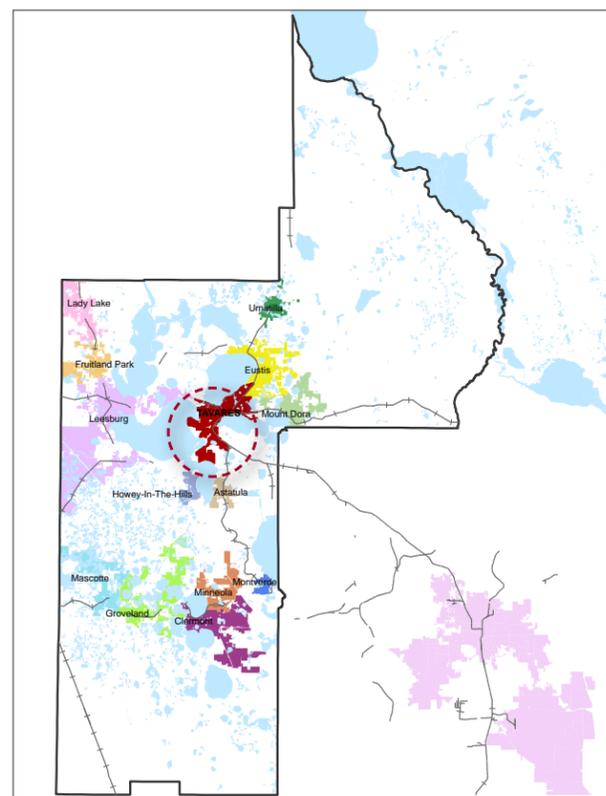


Map representing Atlantic Coast Line Railroad's various lines in Central Florida in 1914.  
Source: Special Collections Department, University of South Florida

# 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)
<b>Objective 1: The CRA will identify where parking problems exist and provide solutions.</b>	
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
<b>Objective 2: Integrate pedestrian and bicycle traffic with vehicular traffic.</b>	
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
<b>Objective 3: Improve the Downtown road network.</b>	
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)
<b>Objective 4: Improve parks and public space in the Downtown area</b>	
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.	
<b>Objective 5: Promote an "alive after 5" Downtown.</b>	
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
<b>Objective 6: Beautify Downtown and keep it clean.</b>	
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
<b>Objective 7: Reduce crime in the Downtown area.</b>	
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.	
<b>Objective 8: Encourage and promote business development in the Downtown.</b>	
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)
<b>Objective 9: Encourage, promote, and protect residential development.</b>	
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
<b>Objective 10: Operate and manage the Community Redevelopment Area and Redevelopment Fund in an efficient manner.</b>	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.