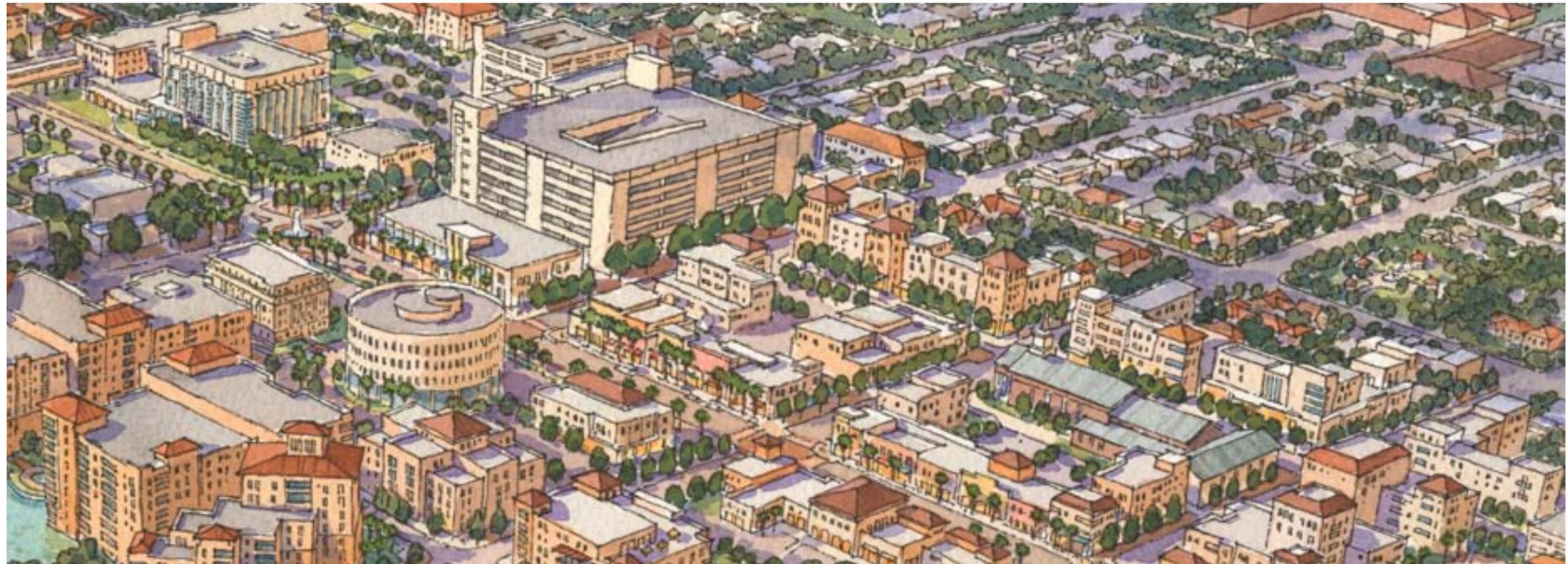


Chapter 5

Urban Design and Historic Preservation



URBAN DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Fig. 5.1 Proposed Urban Design Plan at complete build-out

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a basis for evaluating development and redevelopment proposals and act as a guide for making decisions about public and private improvements within the boundaries of the CRA district. The guidelines presented in this chapter build upon the results of the visual preference survey conducted during the visioning workshops hosted by the City and East Central Florida Regional Planning Council in 2007. It is anticipated that through the use of the guidelines, both private and public projects will endeavor to preserve and enhance the form, scale, and visual character of the Downtown. The design guidelines provide the framework for redevelopment to gradually take place based on the community's vision for creating a compact urban core complemented by stabilized residential neighborhoods; and to ensure that new buildings or public space will ultimately create a unique identity for the Downtown. While the guidelines are designed to support the overall development character envisioned in this Plan, they are also intended to offer City staff and developers a flexible tool for promoting high quality and innovative developments. The design guidelines are based on the following eight principles that will not only improve the physical pattern of development found in Downtown Tavares but also increase the quality of life for the City's residents while improving the economic capacity of the City.

1. Create a compact mixed-use urban form that encourages active street life.
2. Provide improved visual and physical connectivity between the different land uses.
3. Develop a distinctive and attractive visual character that is unique to Downtown Tavares.
4. Establish an attractive, safe and efficient traffic circulation system that encourages pedestrian mobility between Downtown's activity centers.
5. Preservation, protection and conservation of natural resources.
6. Provide direction for developing more detailed design standards and capital projects while allowing design flexibility in the development and redevelopment of properties.
7. Maximize the advantage of Tavares' waterfront setting by pursuing strategic improvements to the public realm- street network, public open space, heritage, culture and the arts.
8. Promote economic opportunity for area residents, property owners, and businesses by promoting intense development, where appropriate within the Downtown core.

The intent of the recommended urban design guidelines is to cause future development to occur in a manner that creates a pedestrian setting while simultaneously strengthening connections between the Downtown, the waterfront area and surrounding residential neighborhoods within an aesthetically pleasing and upgraded built environment. This Plan suggests that a set of more comprehensive Urban Design standards and design specifications be established, to ensure a more predictable and effective future development character in the Downtown. The plan also recommends that the City's Planning Department, Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee, Planning and Zoning Board and City Council, as applicable, should update to the existing Land Development Regulations in order to ensure that all requests for site plan approval are in compliance with the recommended design guidelines.

These guidelines are intended to illustrate general principles that will assist the City/ CRA to preserve and enhance the desired character for Downtown. The proposed design guidelines should not be construed as prescriptive standards and it is through the City's land development regulations that appropriate standards be established. The guidelines may evolve into different forms. They may act as the foundation for initiating discussions with potential developers, or be included in the Land Development Regulations through the development of form-based codes.

Downtown Tavares still retains some characteristics reminiscent of its early settlement- the grid street configuration; its natural resources; historically significant buildings; the railroad, and the presence of governmental operations. The image desired for Downtown Tavares is one that supports a compact and high density urban core while at the same time defines the edges of new growth in a manner that preserves the residential qualities of existing neighborhoods. To accomplish this, the Downtown must develop in such a fashion that retains its historic appeal, enhances a pedestrian friendly atmosphere, and also provides visual and physical connectivity to the lakefront. Intensifying the Downtown with appropriate land uses and entertainment activities will be the driving force in attracting more people to Downtown. This section focuses on Downtown's urban design character within the public and private realm contexts. The basic components of the pedestrian system are the users, the destinations and the travel ways. The public realm analysis is directly related to transportation improvements discussed in *Chapter 6: Circulation and Connectivity*. Four design elements will be used to develop the public realm character over time:

- Street Grid and Views
- Streetscape Design and Pedestrian Environment
- Gateways
- Signage Guidelines

In addition to the public realm guidelines, this chapter also presents general guidelines for development in the private realm and its relationship to Downtown's overall pedestrian orientation. The intent of the private realm guidelines is to develop a system of planning criteria to guide the future development in Downtown Tavares. The guidelines provide broad principles that will reinforce and enhance the relationship of each new building to the public street as well as the relationship of the new buildings to each other and to existing buildings.

- The basic component of the private realm- the built environment- includes guidelines for the following three character districts described in detail in *Chapter 4: Land Use and Development Characteristics*:
- Downtown Core
 - Residential Neighborhood
 - Commercial Corridor

Public Realm Guidelines

Public capital investment in improvement projects throughout the Downtown redevelopment area, namely streetscape improvements, the creation of gateways, the continued extension of the pedestrian environment, along with the expansion of the park and open space network will help to achieve the community's desired vision for Downtown's overall growth. It is through such projects that the City/ CRA will enhance the functional and aesthetic quality of the Downtown and provide the basis for leveraging private investment within the redevelopment area. The public improvements that are proposed in this chapter will need to be constructed by the various public agencies and departments responsible for them. These agencies and departments need to incorporate and expand upon these guidelines in their internal design manuals. Proposed guidelines are supported by graphic examples and images of how these standards could be developed once the City begins the design process for the various elements. These are graphic examples only and are not meant to be specific designs to be directly implemented. The emphasis of this section of the plan is to show the importance of having a consistent design theme that is utilized throughout the Downtown area.

Street Grid and Views

Downtown's urban form is defined by a grid street pattern for most areas within the Central Business District. The street grid creates small blocks (typically 300' x 200'), with alleys in the north-south direction presenting another opportunity to facilitate pedestrian connectivity. Throughout the area, the street grid is interrupted by large-scale institutional developments such as the county facilities, churches, and the high school. The most severe of these interruptions occur along the western extent of Main Street, near the County jail, physically and visually disconnecting the residential neighborhoods located west of Sinclair from the Downtown and the Lake Dora waterfront. The closure of Maud Street to accommodate the County parking garage will also impact the pedestrian environment to some extent. Large developments over time such as the county facilities, particularly the jail and the circular administrative building have contributed in obstructing the existing vistas to the waterfront from the neighborhoods. As Downtown Tavares evolves into a hub of recreation and tourism activity in Lake County, with increasing residential population, it

should be emphasized that new developments avoid street grid interruptions. Potential extensions to the street grid are identified on Fig. 5.2. These include:

- Rockingham Avenue between Nelson Avenue and US 441
- Nelson Avenue between Rockingham Avenue and St. Clair Abrams Avenue
- Kentucky Street between Joanna Avenue and St. Clair Abrams
- Ingraham Avenue between Alfred Street and SR 19
- Ruby Street between Bloxham Avenue and Sinclair Avenue

Views to the Lake Dora waterfront from the neighborhoods were identified by the community visioning participants as valuable Downtown assets. Maintaining existing and creating new viewing corridors will be essential in shaping the desired human scale and Downtown character.

Existing view corridors can be divided into two major categories:

- 1) view corridors providing distant views from U.S. Highway 441 to the waterfront;
- 2) neighborhood viewsheds that provide uninterrupted views from the residential areas.

The streets identified in the Plan that need to be preserved and appropriately designed to reinforce existing views include:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Distant views to waterfront | Neighborhood Vistas |
| Disston Avenue | Rockingham Avenue |
| St. Clair Abrams Avenue | Joanna Avenue |
| New Hampshire Avenue | |
| Sinclair Avenue | |

Guidelines:

- Ensure that street grids are re-established in future redevelopment of larger sites within Downtown, such as Wooton Park, Tavares Station and county jail.
- Protect lakefront views by establishing development standards that enhance existing vistas and create new vistas as part of the site design.
- Identify key destinations and make them obviously visible to pedestrians via architectural design, building placement, establishment of view corridors or axis, careful selection and placement of street trees so as not to obscure important views, and appropriate design and placement of directional signage.



Existing viewsheds to Lake Dora



Planned Construction Projects: Downtown Tavares



Waterfront Vistas: (Top left) Rockingham Avenue; (Top right) St. Clair Abrams Avenue; (Bottom left) Joanna Avenue; (Bottom right) New Hampshire Avenue



Fig. 5.2 Map illustrating existing street grid, views and potential street extensions.

Streetscape Design

Sidewalk condition is the dominant factor affecting the streetscape design in a pedestrian oriented and walkable environment. The sidewalk must be well maintained, have adequate width, and be connected. Considerations such as posted speeds, buffer from the travel lane, presence of shade, safety, topography, sidewalk width, sidewalk condition, pedestrian scaled buildings, presence of arcade or awnings, access to public restrooms are some of the factors used to measure the level of comfort. In general, the central business district along south of Caroline Street and north of Wooton Park has a fair pedestrian environment: adequate sidewalk width; pedestrian scaled buildings; street amenities; some shade trees; traffic calming devices.

Shade is an important factor for the pedestrian to feel comfortable to walk in Tavares, as the weather here is hot and humid in the long summer time. Street trees and storefront awnings and arcades can provide the necessary shade for the pedestrians. The City has invested significant resources to upgrade the pedestrian environment along Main Street.

The public investment now needs private investment that will complement the desired pedestrian environment with implementation of appropriate design features. Preliminary analysis revealed that Downtown Tavares has an overall below average level of pedestrian comfort. Poor level of comfort is found mostly in the outer area of the Downtown core, where there is no shade or the sidewalk system is incomplete.

Adequate provision of public restroom facilities are a critical, but often overlooked element of the overall pedestrian environment. Currently, Wooton Park provides Downtown visitors with restroom facilities. However, the special events planned in the City would require the City to evaluate its current standards for restroom demand levels. Several cities across the country are witnessing a revival in providing urban restrooms as essential pedestrian amenities. The Plan recommends that provision of public restrooms be considered in the design of all new civic facilities including the proposed Tavares Square urban plaza.

People are most likely to walk where there is a balanced mixture of land uses: residential, education, recreation, retail, and offices. As the redevelopment program evolves and there is more investment in the private sector, the Downtown is expected to accommodate a more balanced and diverse mix of uses.

Pedestrian destinations

Planned development efforts in Downtown Tavares, particularly Tavares Station and Wooton Park improvements, are expected to transform the existing pedestrian orientation of the area. Currently, most of the pedestrian traffic generated in the Downtown is related to the county facilities and the Wooton Park. The Downtown area is rich in heritage and recreation resources, which are currently underutilized and need better connectivity through appropriate physical improvements and marketing strategies.

Existing destinations

- County administrative facilities
- Lake County Museum
- Wooton Park
- Gracie's Cafe/ Starbucks on Main Street and O'Keefe's on Ruby
- Tavares High School
- Tavares Public Library and Civic Center

In the future, a new demand pattern is expected to evolve as a result of the recent projects approved by the City. These include:

New destinations

- Tavares Station
- Wooton Park Marina and Seaplane Basin
- Special Events
- Ingraham Center
- Tavares Plaza
- Ruby Street Entertainment District and Transit Station

Pedestrian profiles

The pedestrian users in Downtown Tavares can be classified into seven basic categories:

- Government Employees
- Downtown Business Owners and customers
- Professional Offices and clients
- Downtown and City residents
- Government Business Visitors
- Special Events Visitors
- Church parishioners

Demand routes

In order to prioritize the improvements to the system, it is necessary to identify the major pedestrian demand routes. The demand routes can be determined by the users and their respective destinations. In addition, the plan must address the future land uses and future pedestrian demand routes. The following is a summary of the major user groups and their respective demand routes:

Weekday Commuters

The weekday commuters are those individuals who work in the Downtown everyday. These individuals are either employed at one of the many government buildings or in the private sector office buildings. These individuals commute into the city on the major roadways. At lunch hour, many of the commuters walk to the parking lot and drive to the many restaurants along US 441. Due to a lack of restaurants Downtown, with the exception of Gracie's Cafe and O'Keefe's along Main Street, there is minimal pedestrian activity in the Downtown.

As a result of these existing demand patterns, the dominant pedestrian demand routes are limited to the sidewalk areas from public parking garages to the main employment centers.

Weekday and Weekend Visitors

During the weekends, pedestrian traffic is primarily generated by the following user groups:

- Visitors for church
- Visits to the waterfront and Wooton Park
- Visits to the Tavares Library/ Civic Center
- Special events visitors



Fig. 5.3 Map illustrating existing and proposed pedestrian movement and destinations, Downtown Tavares



Streetscape design elements such as wider sidewalks, shade trees, on-street parking, signage, and generous storefronts are pivotal in creating a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.

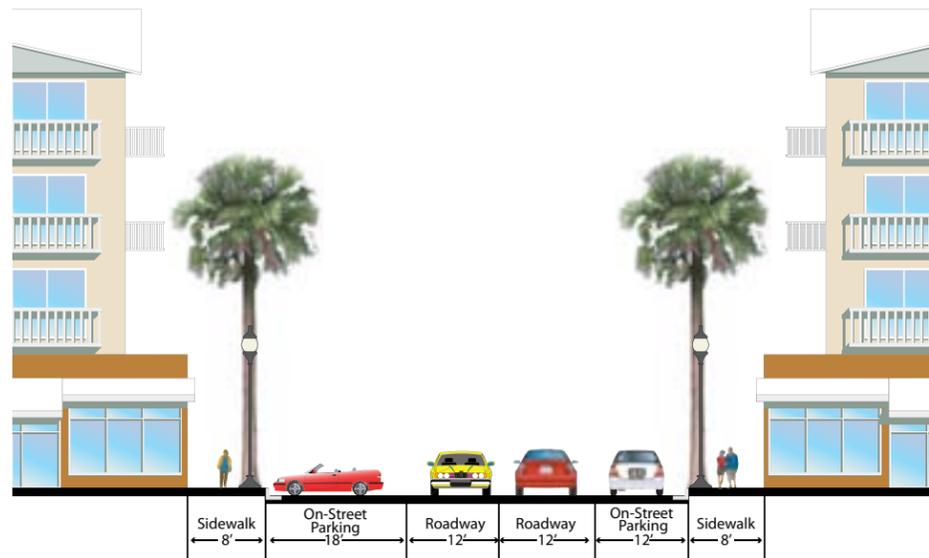
The intent of this section is to provide direction for improvements to the public rights-of-way that will help to create a pedestrian friendly environment and enhance the identity of the area, complementing the overall goals of this Plan. The principal objective of the streetscape guidelines discussed below is to promote a long-term, coordinated strategy that includes improvements to both the public and private realm, and to create a unified urban design theme attracting quality investment into the area. Given the significant impact transportation corridors have on the aesthetics, efficiency, and health of the local economy, streetscape improvements are envisioned along the major streets in the redevelopment area. The streetscape improvements will enhance the appearance of older physically declining areas and provide visual continuity and improved pedestrian connections between the various activity centers described in the Plan, most notably the waterfront, civic uses, and the neighborhoods. Whenever possible, the available pedestrian space including sidewalks, public plazas, and open spaces should be expanded to increase pedestrian connectivity. The proposed improvements will not adversely impact the capacity of the roadways. Rather, they will improve bicycle and pedestrian access increasing the level of activity along the street, which in turn, will promote a healthy environment for local businesses. The streetscape design elements that should be considered for each of the projects include: medians, street lighting, street furniture, plantings and landscape, paving materials and textures, intersection design, and signage.

The expansion of sidewalks and public spaces will not only improve pedestrian connectivity, but will also provide public places for congregation. As the physical environment is improved an increasing number of cafes and restaurants may use a portion of this space for exterior seating.

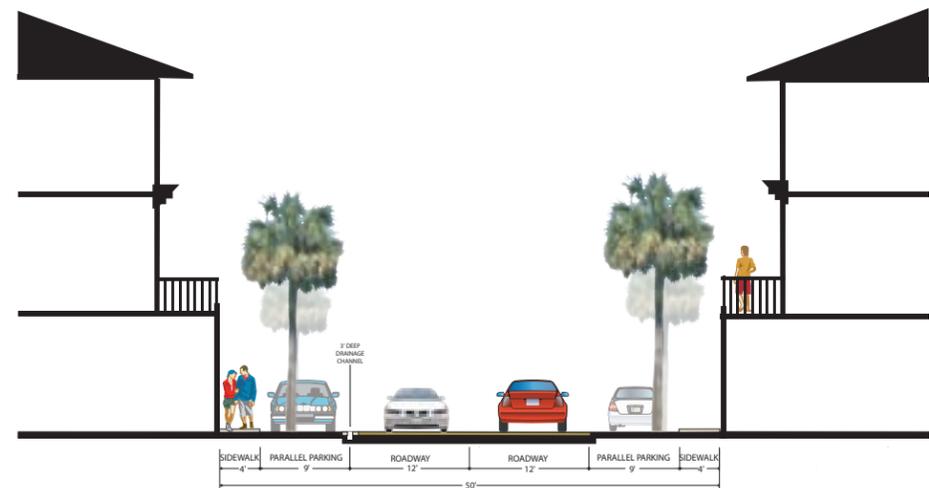
Improvements such as lighting, street furniture, plantings, paving materials, and signage will help to provide continuity along the roadway. Street trees, along the edges of the corridor as well as the center median, provide shade, create visual continuity, and also help separate the pedestrian environment from the automobile environment. The public realm improvements will ultimately result in the creation of an upgraded aesthetic environment that will set the stage for new investment to occur over time. (Refer Chapter 4: Land Use and Development Characteristics for illustrations depicting proposed streetscape improvements within each character district).

Guidelines:

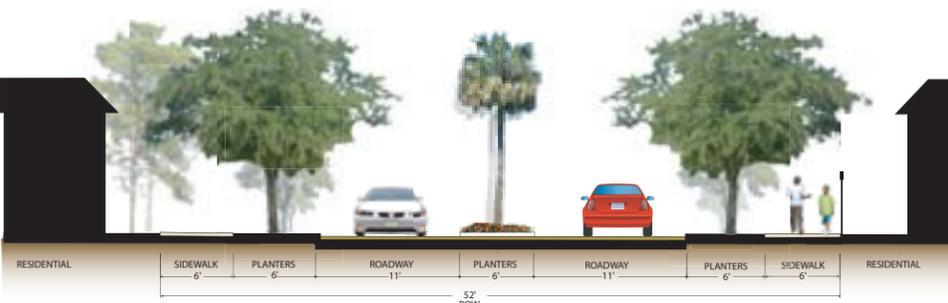
- Replace worn or faded pavement markings at crosswalks.
- Install quality, contrasting paving materials at key pedestrian crossings that signal to drivers that they are entering a pedestrian zone.
- Improve pedestrian crosswalk signal mechanisms; possibly by adding audio cues for visually impaired pedestrians. Strive to adjust timings so as to reduce pedestrian wait time.
- Decrease the distance pedestrians must walk using curb extensions or "bulb-outs".
- Create mid-crossing "safe zones" by installing wider landscaped medians.
- Sidewalks should be designed to be handicapped accessible as set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Use tree grates in retail streets to provide ample space for pedestrian circulation on the sidewalks.
- Properly install and orient sidewalk curb ramps so that pairs face each other directly across the street. This means constructing two curb ramps per corner or one wide ramp encompassing the entire arc of the corner.
- Remove obstacles from crossings such as utility poles, light posts, fire hydrants, stormwater catch basins, curb inlets, planters and similar features.
- Street trees should be consistent with existing trees in the area and selected to provide shade. The mature tree canopies should be maintained where they exist along the streets.
- Maintain existing landscaping, especially indigenous species and consider removal of invasive vegetation along the lakefront.
- Planter design and plant species should be consistent for each street to provide for uniformity.
- Planters should not obstruct the pedestrian right-of-way and meet necessary traffic safety standards.
- Landscaping should be incorporated to lead people from parking areas to activity centers.
- Center medians should be landscaped with ground cover, trees and accent flowering shrubs.
- Medians should be designed to act as pedestrian crossing islands and have few breaks in them.
- Placement of pedestrian lighting should be determined to increase pedestrian safety and enhancing the businesses in the area.
- Street furniture including benches and trash receptacles should be compatible with surrounding streetscape elements.
- Ensure that street paving and sidewalks are consistent throughout the Study Area.
- Place utilities underground, if possible, especially along the primary streetscape systems.
- Traffic calming features should be utilized where traffic data and neighborhood consensus warrants.
- Consider raised brick crosswalks at strategic locations, particularly along Alfred Street, with conflicting pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns to reduce speeds of vehicles.



Typical Streetscape Section: Main Street



Typical Streetscape Section: Caroline Street



Typical Streetscape Section: Neighborhood Connectors

The design guidelines for streetscape improvements establish a combination of Primary and Secondary Streetscape systems, based on a hierarchy of streets and design treatment.

Primary Streetscape Improvements

The roadway sections that are designated in the primary streetscape system are the roads with sidewalks that are most frequently used by pedestrians, and provide more amenities to the pedestrians. These roads should be a high priority for reconstruction. It is also advised to amend the relevant regulations in the City of Tavares Land Development Regulations to address the use of private signage and architectural design of the retail properties that frame the streetscape.

Based on the roadway functions, right-of-way conditions, and access potential, the following street hierarchy has been established for Downtown's primary roadways:

- Downtown Transition Corridor: Alfred Street and Caroline Street
- Primary Retail Streets: Main Street and Ruby Street
- Neighborhood Connectors: St. Clair Abrams Avenue and Sinclair Avenue



Primary Streetscape Improvements: Precedent

Proposed improvements to the typical sidewalk sections in the primary streetscape system are as follows:

- Minimum 8 feet in width
- High quality paving
- High quality stone curbing
- Shade trees with 50-foot spacing
- Seating area at mid-block and intersection locations
- Protective bollards at crosswalks
- Pedestrian scale lighting with common theme
- Signal master arms at intersections
- Themed street signage
- Themed informational and directional signage
- Themed and shaded bus shelters
- Uniform news racks
- Themed information kiosks at proper locations
- On-street parking where feasible
- Pedestrian 'bulb-outs' and 'neck-downs' at intersection and mid-block pedestrian crossing locations
- Corner crossing design for handicapped accessibility
- Unit paver crosswalks
- Median safe zones where possible
- Family of themed site furnishings: benches, trash cans, planters, etc.
- Themed gateway pylons to mark the beginning of the core pedestrian zone
- Redesign of the area should minimize steep slope conditions, pedestrian obstacles, trip hazards, and accessibility barriers.



Secondary Streetscape Improvements: Precedent

Secondary Streetscape Improvements

The roadway sections that are designated in the secondary streetscape system are the roads with sidewalks that are less frequently used by pedestrians than those in the primary streetscape system, but are still of considerable importance to the pedestrians. For the secondary streetscape system, improvements should be undertaken systematically as funding becomes available. It is also advised to amend the relevant regulations in the City of Tavares Land Development Regulations to address the use of private signage and architectural design of the retail properties that frame the streetscape. The roadway sections that are included in the secondary streetscape system are the following:

- Primary Commercial Corridor: SR 19/ US 441
- Downtown Pedestrian Connectors: New Hampshire, Joanna, Texas, and Lake Avenues; Ianthe and Givens Streets

Proposed improvements to the typical sidewalk sections in the secondary streetscape system are as follows:

- A minimum 6 feet in width
- Shade trees of different species from primary streetscape system with 50-foot spacing
- Seating area at mid-block and intersection locations if pedestrian volume justifies
- Pedestrian scale lighting with common theme
- Signal master arms at intersections
- Themed street signage
- Themed informational and directional signage
- Themed and shaded bus shelters
- Uniform news racks
- Themed information kiosks at proper locations
- On-street parking where feasible
- Corner crossing design for handicapped accessibility
- Family of themed site furnishings: benches, trash cans, planters, etc.
- Themed gateway pylons to mark the beginning of the core pedestrian zone
- Redesign of the area should minimize steep slope conditions, pedestrian obstacles, trip hazards, and accessibility barriers.

The following streetscape elements may be used to improve the aesthetic character of Downtown Tavares.

lighting

Pedestrian and street lighting play an important role in enhancing the pedestrian experience and greatly improves the quality and safety of streets and public spaces. Pedestrian scaled lighting design is pivotal in improving the visual character of retail oriented areas in Downtown. Pedestrian lighting consists of fixtures less than 14 feet high and should be based on the uses on a street. Parking and Street lighting is equally important in creating a safe environment. The first two images are examples of existing light fixtures currently installed on Main Street.



street furniture

Street furniture is an important functional component of streetscape design. Street furnishings could include a combination of seating, trash receptacles, tree grates, bike racks, and newspaper stands. Maintenance, safety, cost, and comfort are primary considerations in the design and placement of street furniture. Street furniture may be provided when the public right-of-way allows for a clear pedestrian walking zone and separate seating areas. Furniture should also be incorporated in parking lots, public parks and plazas as part of mixed use developments. The first two images are examples of existing furniture types found on Main Street.

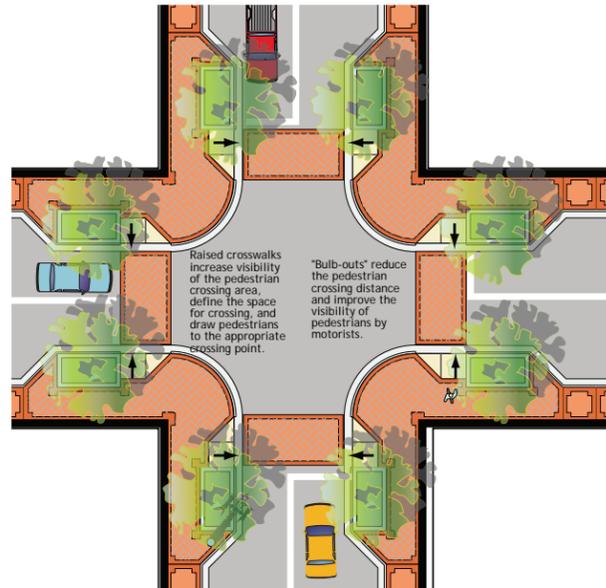


traffic calming

Based on expressed public concern for pedestrian safety and high speed traffic on Alfred Street, the City should incorporate elevated crosswalks constructed by brick pavers at all intersections along Alfred Street within the Downtown redevelopment area. At a minimum, the City should consider better signage and reduced speeds in heavily congested blocks in the Downtown. Signalized intersections and pedestrian crosswalks are currently paved along Main Street in the Downtown core. Crosswalk materials and patterns could be a critical unifying element of the pedestrian environment in a Downtown. Crosswalk pavement should contrast with the adjacent street pavement at identified locations to reduce the speed of automobile traffic and guide the pedestrians to areas where they can cross the street safely.

Guidelines:

- Clear space to handle pedestrian capacities.
- Visibility to safely negotiate crossing.
- Legibility of all directional information.
- Accessibility and freedom from obstructions.
- Separation from traffic.
- Code based ramps and landings.



gateways

In addition to streetscapes, the Downtown Redevelopment Area contains several opportunities for the creation of gateways. These opportunities include the areas of transition into the Downtown core, as well as the entrances into specific neighborhoods. Gateways at these particular locations can be utilized to create a sense of arrival into Downtown. Gateways serve not only to mark an event, the arrival or departure from an area, but may also be used to create a node around which a neighborhood or commercial district may be organized. They may be comprised of a grand formal structure or consist of a series of smaller elements that may include artwork or sculpture, lighting and landscaping, and signage. Whether used to distinguish differences between districts or serve as a focus within a district, gateways are an important element in establishing a successful streetscape system. There are three types of gateways that the Plan recommends introducing at key intersections to improve visibility as new development occurs in Downtown Tavares:

Primary Gateways

- US 441 and St. Clair Abrams Avenue
- US 441 and Sinclair Avenue
- SR 19 and Main Street

Secondary Gateways

- Intersection of Alfred Street with SR 19 and Disston Avenue
- Main Street and Sinclair Avenue

Neighborhood Gateways

- Main Street and Ingraham Avenue
- Intersection of Caroline Street with St. Clair Abrams Avenue, New Hampshire Avenue, and Sinclair Avenue
- Intersection of Givens Street with New Hampshire Avenue and St. Clair Abrams



signage

The aesthetic quality of any streetscape design is often affected by the visual harmony of the signs and their relationship to the overall architecture and functional character of the Downtown. Signage types generally found in downtowns include private business or storefront signage, public wayfinding and regulatory signage. The guidelines presented in this section are intended to supplement the City's existing codes relating to the design and placement of signs.

Wayfinding strategies will provide a means for visitors and tourists in Tavares to easily find their way around the Downtown, and conveniently locate key destinations. There are two major aspects to the wayfinding system; the automobile orientation system and the pedestrian orientation system. Pedestrian directional signage is a crucial element, not only to ensure a well-navigated pedestrian experience, but also to create 'a sense of place'. Automobile orientation system typically includes a system of directional signage for visitors entering a city, introduced to ensure easy navigation. This directional signage is proposed at major road intersections on the edges of the Downtown. The signage should also help the visitors to find their way to the major public parking facilities in the core area.



Guidelines:

- Signs should be visually interesting and informative. Lettering should be simple, legible and well proportioned.
- The number of signs should be limited to avoid visual clutter.
- The illumination from signs should not overpower other signs on the street, pedestrians, and the architectural character of adjacent buildings.
- Signs should complement the architectural character of the buildings and provide a unifying element along the streetscape.
- Signs should be located so that they do not interfere with pedestrian movement or block the visibility of drivers at street corners and/ or intersections.
- Consider using symbols as signs that correlates to products or services rendered.
- Integrate signs with architectural elements.
- Design lighting and mounting hardware as an integral part of the sign.
- Sign materials should be durable and long lasting.
- Coordinate style, size and color on multiple occupancy buildings.
- Avoid pole mounted signs.
- Wayfinding signage, directional signage to parking lots, and signage identifying the Downtown should be located near intersection entry points and should be designed in a consistent and easily identifiable manner.
- Develop a unified signage system that emphasizes a coherent theme for the entire Downtown.

public open space

The public open space design guidelines are intended to demonstrate how civic spaces in the Downtown area can be designed to address the various pedestrian needs, provide enjoyable outdoor activity centers, be incorporated into the Downtown pedestrian network, and enrich the pedestrian experience. The public open space network includes the sidewalks, alleyways, plazas, parks and often contains public art as an integral component of the overall design. The Plan recommends that, when possible, alleys should be utilized to provide access to parking and service areas in commercial areas. Alleys in appropriate locations can be redesigned as pedestrian linkages supported by retail uses. In residential areas, alleys should be used to provide vehicular access to garages and service areas, as well as frontage access to residential areas where appropriate.



Guidelines:

- Provide additional pedestrian area to the major public streetscape adjacent to the property. Sidewalks should be provided, abutting the property frontage extending the length of the property whether or not on-street parking is required.
- Sidewalks should be constructed per City approval and should be a minimum of eight (8) feet in width in new developments within the Downtown Core.
- Provide public restrooms as an integral part of new civic facilities, such as the proposed Tavares Square urban plaza.
- When properties front on primary streets, they shall be designed to provide a continuity of streetscape elements. The frontage yard between the building and the property line shall be designed to accommodate pedestrian traffic, seating or other use deemed suitable by approval of the Planning and Zoning Board.
- Plaza should include key design elements including seating, shade trees, landscaping and planters, fountains and public art that attract people.
- Plaza design should emphasize street edges through use of elements such as paving material, landscaping, trees, lights, public art, directional signage, and pedestrian signage.

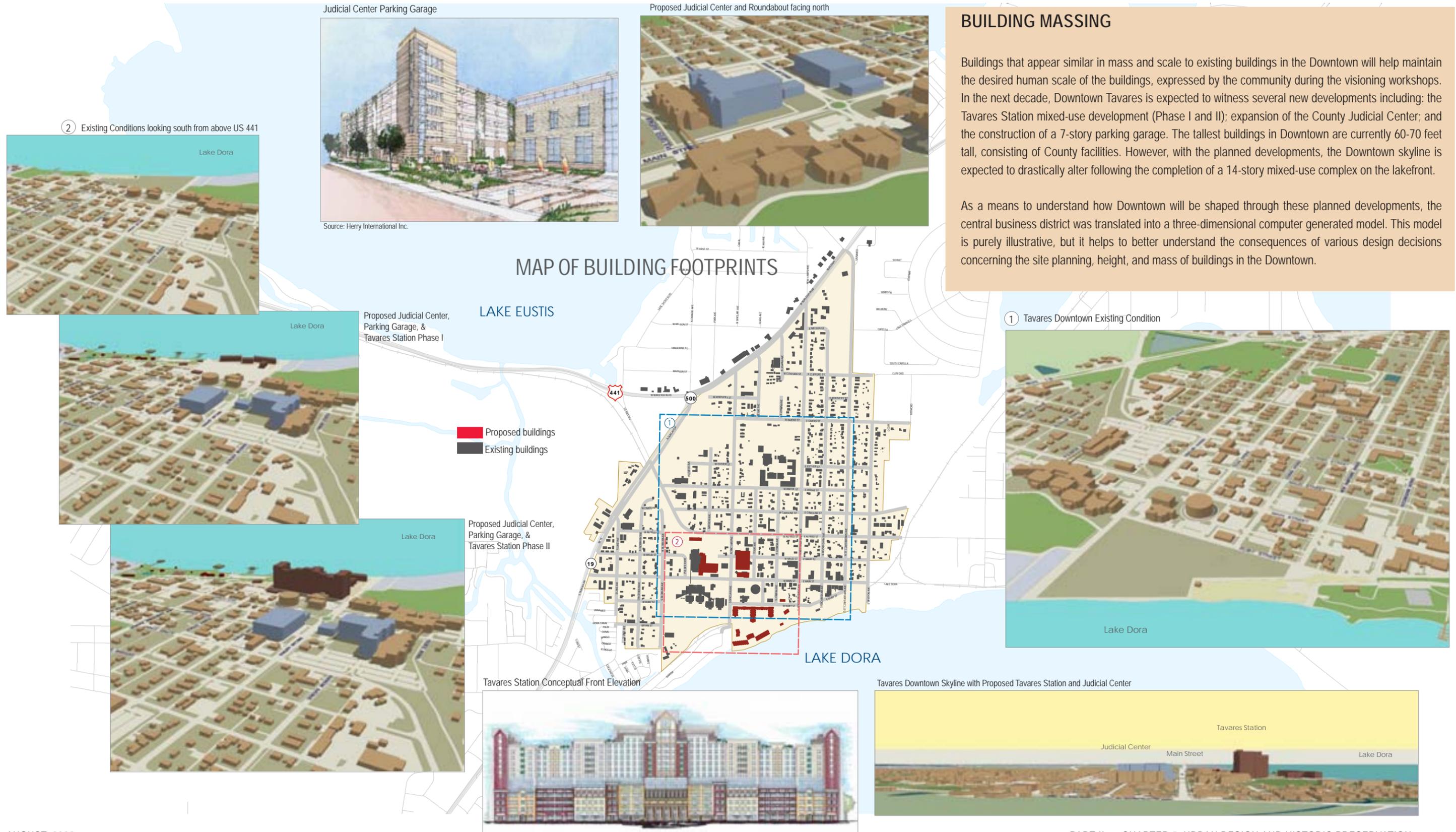
PRIVATE REALM: MASSING ANALYSIS *(based on existing conditions and anticipated development)*

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

BUILDING MASSING

Buildings that appear similar in mass and scale to existing buildings in the Downtown will help maintain the desired human scale of the buildings, expressed by the community during the visioning workshops. In the next decade, Downtown Tavares is expected to witness several new developments including: the Tavares Station mixed-use development (Phase I and II); expansion of the County Judicial Center; and the construction of a 7-story parking garage. The tallest buildings in Downtown are currently 60-70 feet tall, consisting of County facilities. However, with the planned developments, the Downtown skyline is expected to drastically alter following the completion of a 14-story mixed-use complex on the lakefront.

As a means to understand how Downtown will be shaped through these planned developments, the central business district was translated into a three-dimensional computer generated model. This model is purely illustrative, but it helps to better understand the consequences of various design decisions concerning the site planning, height, and mass of buildings in the Downtown.



URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

PRIVATE REALM: BUILD-OUT SCENARIOS

For zoning (traditional or form-based) to be an effective implementation tool for redevelopment and infill development, it is important to analyze the existing land use characteristics and its relationship to the City's land development regulations. A build-out analysis allows a community to test out its existing regulations and possible future development when land is developed to the maximum extent allowed under law. This analysis utilizes four build-out scenarios to show different growth alternatives, primarily to evaluate the development impact upon the Downtown's physical character, based on existing regulations.

For analysis purposes, developable land is defined as properties with a high redevelopment potential based on two factors-delineating undeveloped land (vacant properties) and identifying contiguous parcels under the same ownership and have a higher probability of assemblage (Fig. 3.36). Based on these factors, the following three conditions were analyzed:

Conservative Development Assumptions (Build-out Scenario #1): This scenario illustrates the Downtown's build-out potential of properties that are currently undeveloped and developments that are in the pipeline. Existing zoning regulations are applied to these properties, including: minimum lot sizes, setback requirements, landscaping requirements, parking requirements, and allowable heights.

Moderate Development Assumptions (Build-out Scenario #2): This scenario illustrates the Downtown's build-out potential of those properties that are currently undeveloped, developments in the pipeline, and are contiguous parcels under the same ownership. Existing zoning regulations are applied to these properties, including: minimum lot sizes, setback requirements, landscaping requirements, parking requirements, and allowable heights.

Visioning Process Development Assumptions (Build-out Scenario #3): This scenario illustrates the Downtown's build-out potential based on the community's development preferences, identified during the visioning process (prepared by East Central Florida Regional Planning Council).

The purpose of this analysis is solely to gain a better understanding of the consequences of development on the existing urban character, based on existing land development regulations.



Fig. 5.4 Map illustrating potential redevelopment opportunities, Downtown Tavares CRA. Yellow boxes represent parcels with high redevelopment potential.

TAVARES DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN, CITY OF TAVARES, FL



PRIVATE REALM: BUILD-OUT SCENARIO #1 (CONSERVATIVE DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS)

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

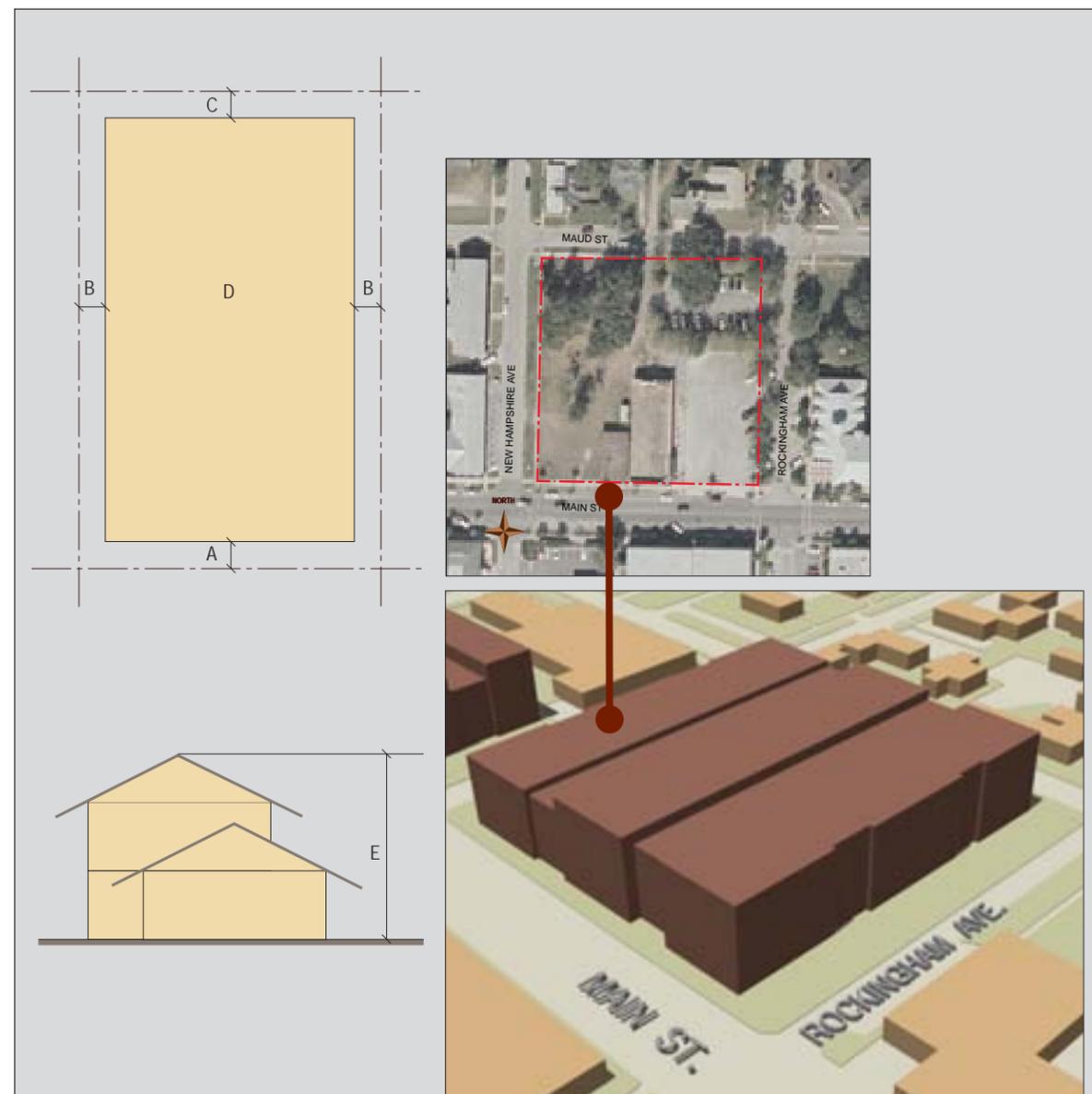


Fig. 3.37 Build-out under existing zoning regulations: Vacant parcel located at the northwest intersection of Main Street and Rockingham Avenue (Bottom)
 (Top) Aerial view of vacant parcel: northwest intersection of Main St. and Rockingham
 Prepared By: M.Ye/ B.Kalra, IBI Group, January 2008

ZONING	DENSITY	A (FRONT SETBACKS)	B (SIDE SETBACKS)	C (REAR SETBACKS)	D (LOT COVERAGE)	E (HEIGHT LIMITS)
Commercial Downtown District (CD)	Multi-Family 12 – 25 units per acre	Adjacent to federal, state highway or county secondary highway right-of-ways - 25 ft.. Setback from right-of-way on property located adjacent to all other roads - 10 ft.. Setback from Main Street - None	None	10 feet	90%	60 feet

Downtown Tavares consists of the central business district, zoned as Commercial Downtown (CD) District. Within the CD zoned area, 15 parcels were identified as vacant lots that are suitable for potential redevelopment. The Commercial Downtown District allows 12-25 dwelling units per acre in addition to the regulations illustrated in the table shown below. Based on the existing conditions and LDRs, the build out scenario was constructed using a conservative development approach that assumes development of vacant parcels and does not take into consideration development of underutilized properties, such as surface parking lots and properties with high redevelopment potential.



Build-out under existing zoning regulations: Vacant parcel located at the northwest intersection of Maud Street and St. Clair Abrams (Top)
 (Left) Aerial view of vacant parcel: northwest intersection of Maud St. and St. Clair Abrams
 Prepared By: M.Ye/ B.Kalra, IBI Group, January 2008



Build-out alternatives under existing zoning regulations: Vacant parcel located at the northwest intersection of Main Street and New Hampshire (Far left)
 (Left) Aerial view of vacant parcel: northwest intersection of Main Street and New Hampshire Avenue

PRIVATE REALM: BUILD-OUT SCENARIO #2 (MODERATE DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS)

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

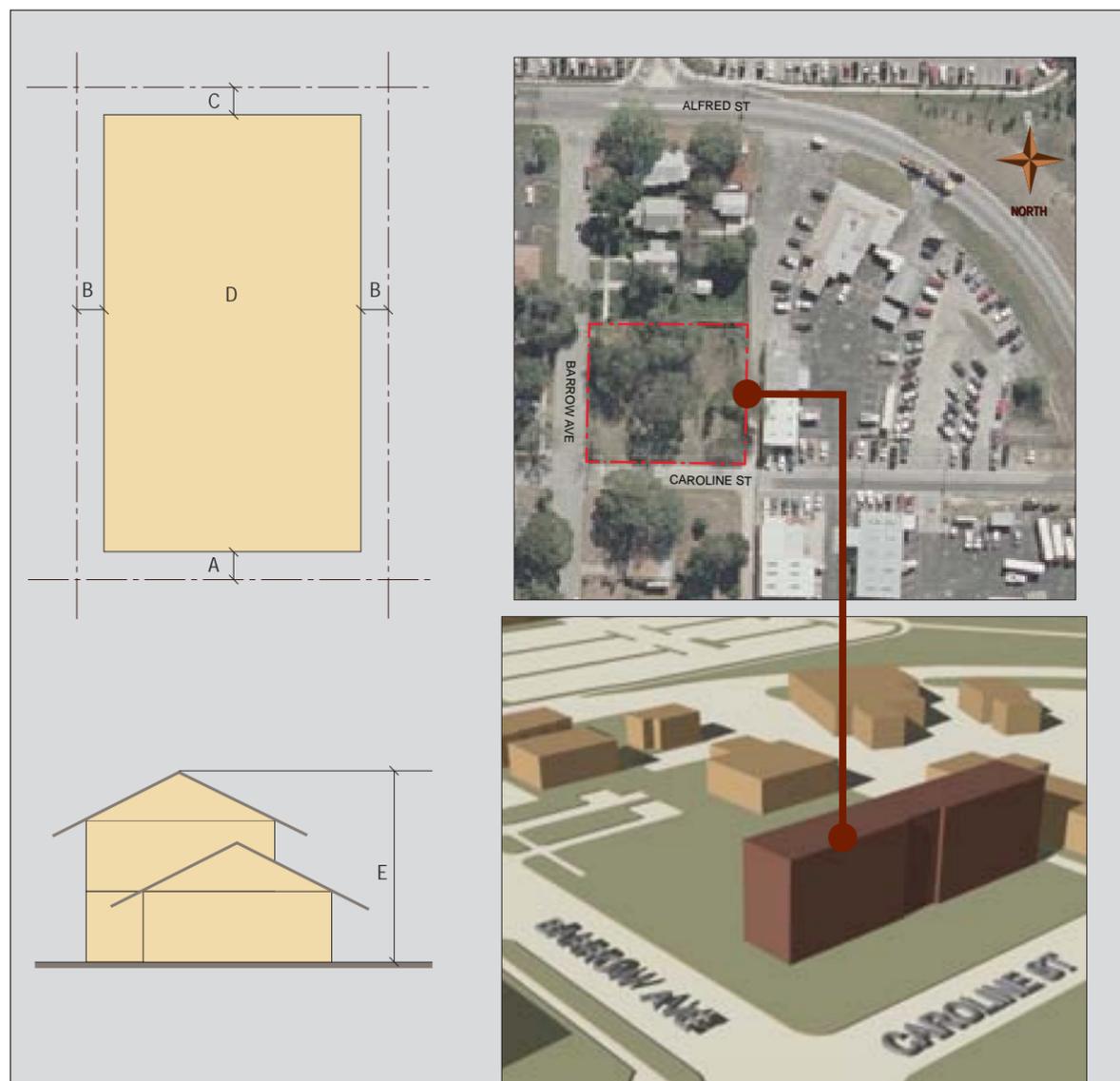


Fig. 3.38 Build-out under existing zoning regulations: Vacant parcel located at the northwest intersection of Barrow Avenue and Caroline Street (Bottom). (Top) Aerial view of vacant parcel: northwest intersection of Barrow Avenue and Caroline Street.
Prepared By: M.Ye/ B.Kalra, IBI Group, January 2008

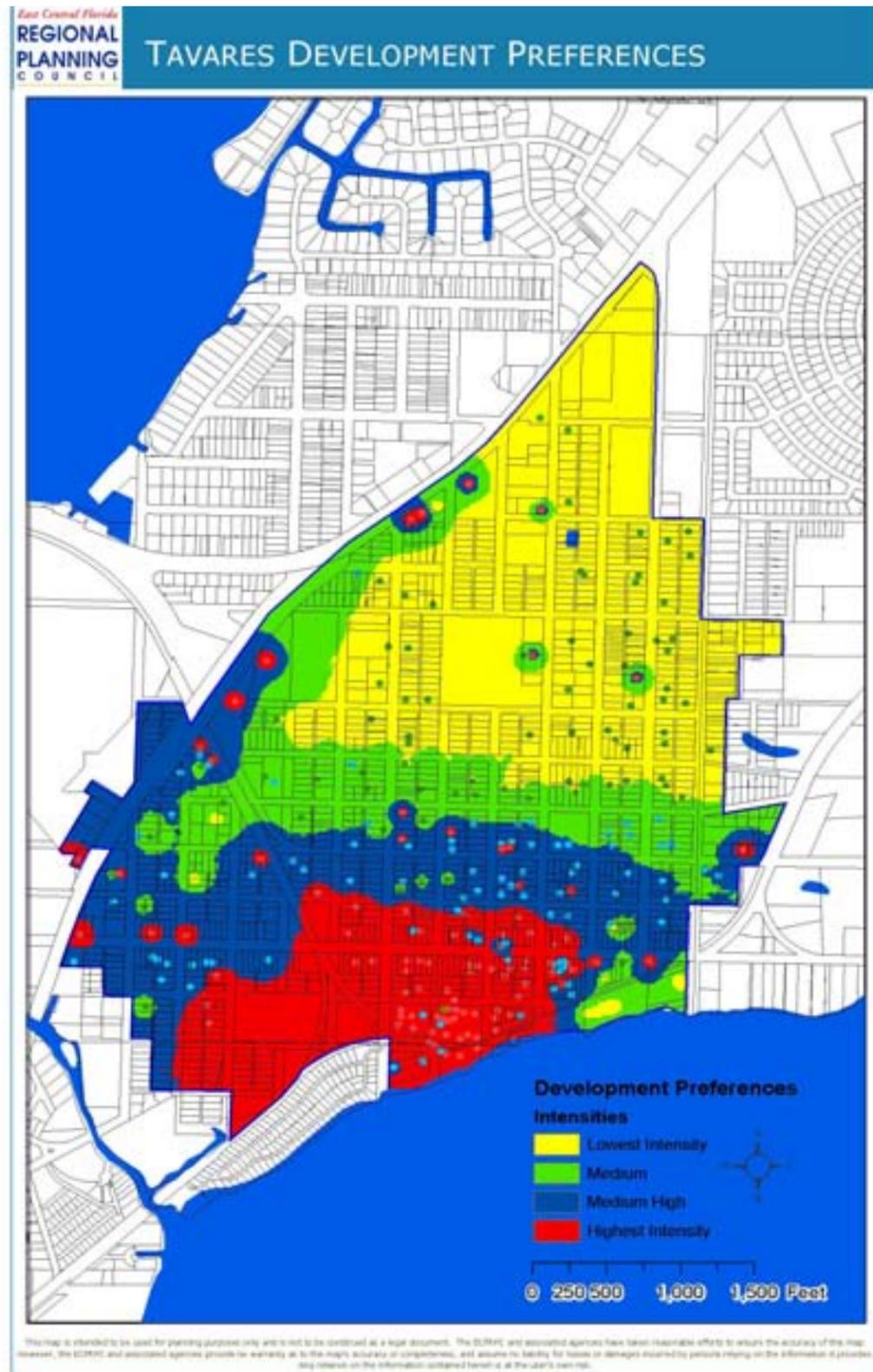
ZONING	DENSITY	A (FRONT SETBACKS)	B (SIDE SETBACKS)	C (REAR SETBACKS)	D (LOT COVERAGE)	E (HEIGHT LIMITS)
Mixed-Use District (MU)	12 units per acre	Residential: 25 feet Commercial/Office: 25 feet Adjacent to federal, state highway or county secondary highway right-of-ways - 25 feet.	Residential: 7.5 feet Commercial/Office: Sides 10 feet	Residential: Rear 20 feet Commercial/Office: Rear 10 feet	Single and two-family dwellings 60% Multiple-family dwellings 70% Townhouses 70% Commercial/Office 70%	35 feet



Build-out alternatives under existing zoning regulations: Vacant parcel located at the northeast intersection of Alfred Street and Joanna Avenue (Left) (Top) Aerial view of vacant parcel: northwest intersection of Alfred St. and Joanna Avenue

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

PRIVATE REALM: BUILD-OUT SCENARIO #3 (VISIONING PROCESS DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS)



Private Realm Guidelines

The built environment is vital in maintaining an area's visual integrity and unique character. The guidelines discussed in this section include site design and bulk control principles, as it relates to the three character districts identified in the previous chapter (Chapter 4: Land Use and Development Characteristics)

Site Planning and Building Design

A conceptual relationship for the street system, buildings and parking areas for Downtown Tavares is discussed through broad guidelines and illustrations in the following section. The concept, as discussed in the following narrative, is to develop as much centralized parking, to the rear of buildings as possible. All parking should be carefully designed to be safe, convenient and properly identified by adequate signage for the public. This allows more building frontage adjacent to primary streets, thus encouraging pedestrian activity. As part of this concept, pedestrian improvements must link the parking areas to buildings and the street network. As new buildings are added or existing buildings are remodeled within the Downtown core, there should be small variations in the relationship of building facia to vehicular roadways to permit gathering areas for pedestrians. Buildings that appear similar in mass and scale to other buildings in the Downtown will help to maintain the human scale in the Downtown Core district. In order to achieve this scale, the guidelines encourage new development to maintain a variety of heights to create visual interest.

Downtown Core

As discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 4: Land Use and Development Characteristics), the Plan recommends focusing the most intense development in the core of the Downtown. The core is comprised of three sub-districts: Traditional Main Street, Institutional Core, and Waterfront Entertainment District. The following section illustrates the site planning and design principles that will ensure that future development will support the community's goal of establishing a safe and attractive pedestrian environment while at the same time attracting quality development in the Downtown Core.

Future Development:

Mixed-Use High Density

Maximum Density- 40 du/ acre

Building Height- 2-6 stories with potential for increased height (upto 8 stories) at appropriate locations as incentives.

Proposed Urban Design Plan:
Institutional Core



3-dimensional view of institutional core: Existing Character

3-dimensional view of institutional core: Planned Development Projects

Proposed Urban Design Plan:
Traditional Main Street District



3-dimensional view of waterfront district: Existing Character



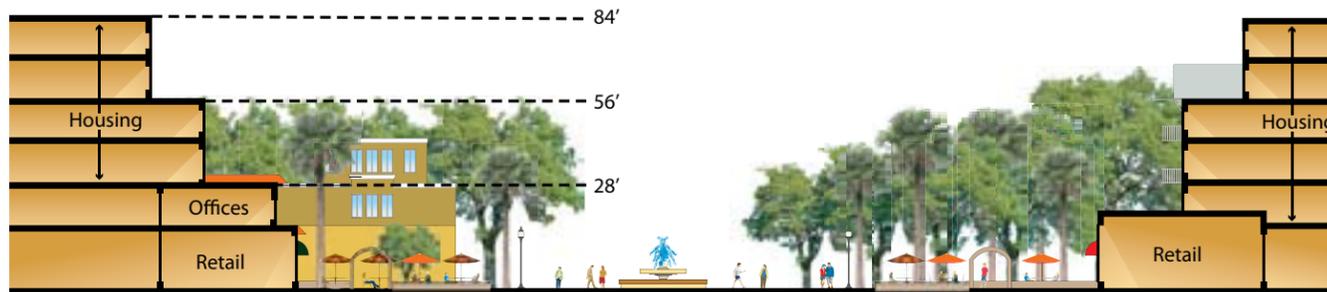
3-dimensional view of waterfront district: Planned Developments



Proposed Urban Design Plan:
Waterfront Entertainment District

Guidelines: Downtown Core

- Place buildings along Main Street with additional setbacks if the property is located on a street corner.
- Discourage curb cut access to property from front property line, where feasible.
- Locate parking to the rear of buildings.
- Access along side streets and alleyways, where possible.
- Maximize the street frontage of buildings.
- Encourage all new development in this district to contain storefronts in the Traditional Main Street district.
- Encourage liner building infill development on larger institutionally owned parcels located in the district.
- All new development, additions and/or renovations should reflect the traditional development patterns and strive to encourage an efficient pedestrian oriented environment.
- In order to break up the perceived mass of structure, divide it into modules that are similar in size to buildings seen traditionally.
- New buildings should incorporate a clear division between street level and upper floors through a change of architectural elements, materials, and/or color.
- Where sidewalks are less than 8 feet wide, require new development to setback buildings 5 feet or 10 feet to create wider sidewalks that can be used for outdoor seating and provide additional pedestrian amenities.
- Create transitions in building height between Main Street and Alfred Street by creating stepbacks on upper floors.
- Encourage buildings on Main Street to create a two-story street wall.
- Encourage new developments on the west edge of Main Street to step down to meet the neighborhood scale.
- Service, refuse, and delivery areas should be located to the rear of the buildings and accessed through the alleyways, where possible.
- Provide appropriate locations for permitted street vendors to sell their products, such as the proposed Tavares Square urban plaza and Wooton Park.
- Create internal pedestrian walkways in new developments. Walkways should direct pedestrians to prominent pedestrian destinations.
- Encourage buildings to articulate appropriate architectural detailing including canopies, arcades, storefront design, and awnings on the first two floors.
- Ensure that blank building facades are not allowed in future civic and cultural buildings.
- Encourage future parking structures be located in the center of the lot and wrapped with retail, office or other active uses to serve as the primary facade.
- Ensure that development along Ruby Street is moderate in scale and intensity along the streets edge with an increase in heights towards the mid-block.
- Support outdoor cafes and balconies in the Waterfront Entertainment District.
- Define proposed Tavares Plaza by using building edges and formal landscape elements.
- Consider access and circulation in all new developments as it relates to the future commuter rail transit station.



Bulk Control and Stepback Recommendations: Conceptual Section showing proposed plaza with building setbacks and stepbacks.



Bulk Control and Stepback Recommendations: Conceptual Elevation of Main Street between Rockingham Avenue and St. Clair Abrams Avenue



Bulk Control and Stepback Recommendations: Conceptual Elevation of Main Street between New Hampshire Avenue and Rockingham Avenue



Redevelopment Opportunity at the northwest intersection of Main Street and New Hampshire (Left) Aerial view of vacant parcel: northwest intersection of Main Street and New Hampshire (Center) Build-out alternative under existing zoning regulations:

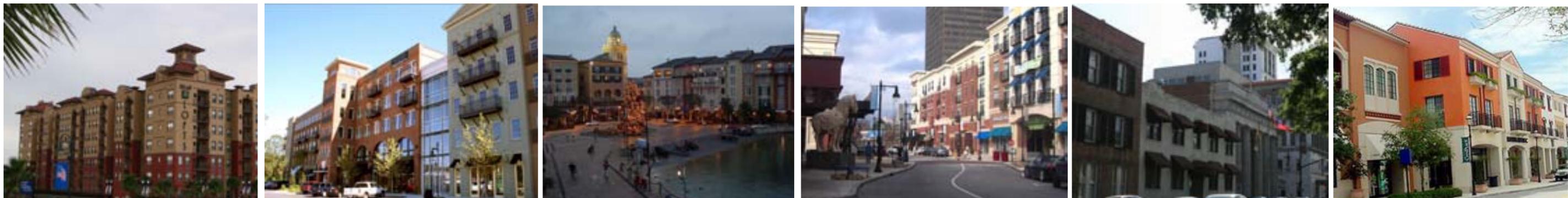
existing building types



planned building types



recommended building types



Residential Neighborhoods

The residential areas in Downtown Tavares will continue to increase in value as the redevelopment program matures. Presently, many of the residential areas in the CRA are either distressed or going through a transition. The Residential Neighborhoods District is comprised of three sub-districts: Transitional Mixed-Use District, Downtown North Residential Neighborhood, and West Main Neighborhood. With new housing being built and locations ready for in-fill, there will be a need to ensure that residential design guidelines are in place. The guidelines should be utilized to prevent new residential developments that are out of proportion to existing homes, to prevent large portions of their front facades being taken up by garage doors, and to prevent the lack of any architectural detail. The accompanied images illustrate recommended building types for Downtown Tavares, taking into consideration the overall goal of the redevelopment plan to increase densities and housing diversity in the CRA.

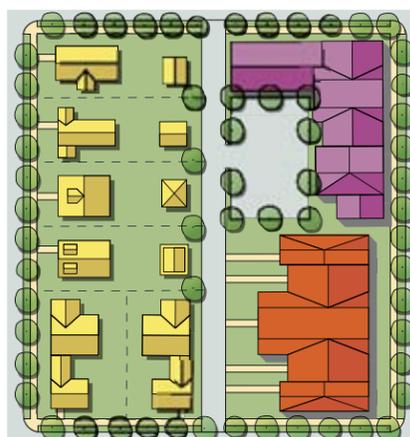
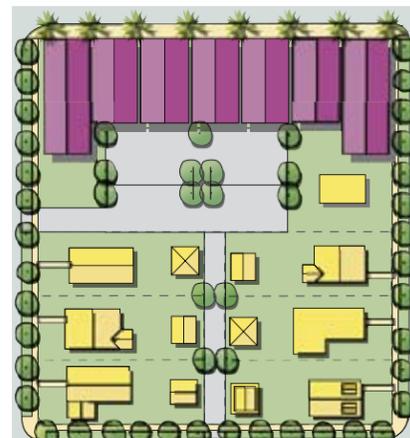
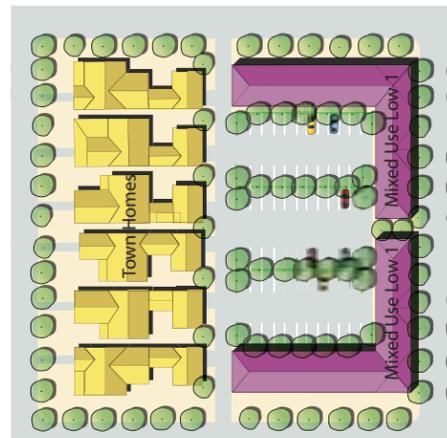
Future Development:

Mixed-Use Moderate Density

Residential Low-Density Neighborhoods

Maximum Density- 15- 20 du/ acre

Buildina Height- 2-5 stories

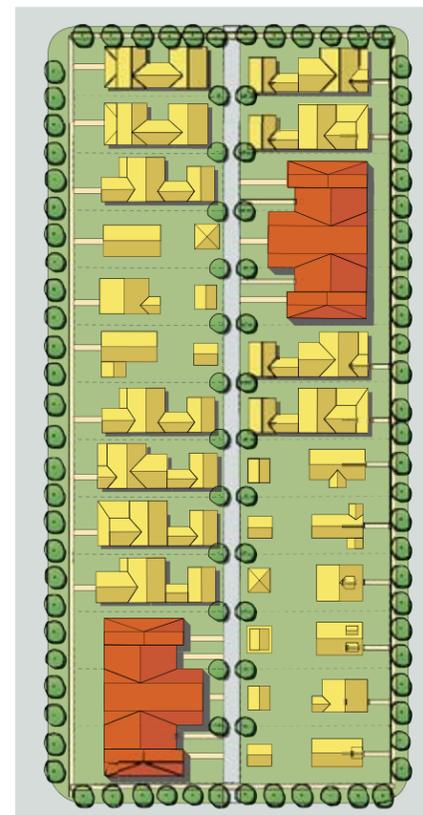
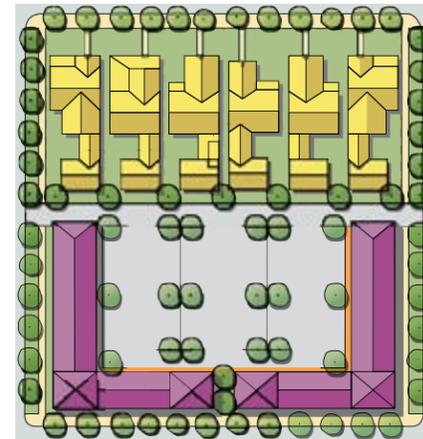


(Top left and right) Typical block diagram illustrating recommended building placement and site design principles. (Bottom-left) Example of recommended mixed-use building type along Alfred Street. (Bottom-right) Typical block diagram illustrating recommended building placement and site design principles.

- Mixed-Use (Residential/ Office/ Neighborhood Retail)
- Single-Family Residential
- Townhome

Guidelines:

- Site the mass of the structure to the rear of the lot.
- Orient the entry of a primary building to the street.
- Garage entrance along frontage street needs to be recessed from front facade and blend in with the rest of the house.
- New homes or homes going through a large renovation or alteration should include architectural details, dormers, roof pitches, front porches, roof overhangs, front entries visible and oriented towards the street and vertically oriented windows.
- Consider increasing the maximum building height to 58 feet or 4 stories for the Downtown Transition Neighborhood District designated as the Mixed-Use (MU) district per the existing Land Development Regulations.
- Encourage buildings north of Alfred Street to step down to meet the neighborhood scale.
- Retain the maximum building height of 35 feet for the Downtown North and West Main Neighborhood district as per the existing Land Development Regulations.
- New development in the Downtown Core should step down to the neighborhoods and up to mid-block between Main Street and Caroline Street.
- Preserve a sense of open space in front, side and rear yards.
- Clearly define the primary entrance by using a raised front porch as a functional space oriented to the street.
- Align the front and sides of new buildings with other structures in the neighborhood.
- For a lot on an alley, locate parking in a garage or detached carport near the alley edge and accessed from the alley.
- For a lot not accessible from an alley, locate parking to the rear of the lot with a driveway accessed from the street.
- Required parking spaces should be located in the rear half of the building.
- Minimize the visual impact of a driveway.
- Place parking areas and driveways in a manner that minimizes the number of curb cuts on the block.
- Preserve existing trees in the design of new development or addition.
- Maintain the traditional scale and width of alleys where existing.
- Locate secondary structures to the rear of the lot, and along an alleyway, when feasible.



recommended building types



Commercial Corridor District

U.S. 441 and SR 19 are the primary commercial corridors serving the Downtown CRA district. The current zoning along the corridors allows for typical suburban development patterns to occur. Parking is placed along the front with the buildings placed to the rear of the lot. The district is oriented towards automobile traffic with land uses featuring a diversity of retail, strip malls, automotive uses, stand alone fast food restaurants with drive through services, financial institutions, gas stations, and other similar uses. It is the intent of the Plan to improve the functional and aesthetic appearance of the built environment along these corridors, through application of design guidelines and architectural standards within the private realm.

The Redevelopment Plan recognizes that the district will continue to develop as a commercial corridor driven by favourable market conditions associated with high traffic volumes and regional growth. However, the Plan anticipates that future development patterns in the district will be characterized by new development that support more urban buildings with shared access, reduced curb cuts, rear parking lots and buildings located closer to the street. The intent of this section is to provide general guidelines that minimize the harsh conditions along the roadways, buffer incompatible uses, and encourage an improved pedestrian oriented environment. The integration of design guidelines for the public realm improvements and private development will assure a more cohesive approach towards creating an urban environment, while providing the community with tools to improve the area's overall aesthetic character.

Future Development:

Commercial Corridor Moderate Density (Highway Commercial)

Maximum Density- 20 du/ acre

Building Height- 2-4 stories



Guidelines:

- Require landscaping buffering between incompatible uses. This buffer will create a visually appealing transition space, and provide a safer pedestrian environment.
- Use architectural elements such as awnings, canopies, balconies, porches to create shade and add architectural design interest.
- Incorporate streetscape elements such as street furniture and lighting to provide a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Establish sign regulations to minimize the visual clutter of existing signs. Use of monument signs, traditional storefront design techniques (display windows, entrance treatments) are some tools to promote business identification.
- Integrate signs with architectural elements and coordinate style, size and color on multiple occupancy buildings.
- Service, refuse and delivery areas should be located to the rear of the buildings with convenient vehicular access.
- Encourage joint access and shared parking between commercial properties to minimize access points and reduce side friction from travel lanes.
- Clearly identify pedestrian circulation areas and access points from vehicular circulation to reduce potential safety hazards caused by conflicts between pedestrian and automobile traffic.
- Provide rear access and parking where land uses do not conflict, where possible, based on lot sizes and configuration.
- Reduce setback for properties fronting US 441 and SR 19.

existing building types



recommended building types



Historic Preservation

Tavares' rich history and importance as the county seat provides a substantial foundation when developing recommendations for future development character in the Downtown. The City of Tavares has established the Downtown Historic Overlay District to protect and preserve many of these historic resources. As illustrated in Fig. 5.4, the district is roughly bounded by Givens Street to the north, Pulsifer Avenue to the west, Disston Avenue to the east, and Ruby Street and Wooton Park to the south. The overlay district identifies designation standards and procedures, special provisions for administration and enforcement, and design standards for properties in the historic district.

A key element of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan is to maintain a connection to the past and provide historic continuity for future development. While social connection to the past can be accommodated through museums and other learning activities, physical connectivity is accomplished through the preservation of historic resources and the continuance of established architectural form. The Plan intends to promote Tavares' heritage by preserving its historic landmarks and architecturally significant structures while ensuring future development maintains historic connection with the established urban form. While the local register identifies over hundred 100 contributing structures in the City's Historic Preservation Survey, the Plan recommends that the strategy for conserving Downtown historic structures should rely on an established designated process by either the Florida Division of Historical Resources or the National Register. There are several buildings that are considered historic but have gone through significant modifications that may render them ineligible for historic designation purposes.

Guidelines:

- Conduct a detailed assessment and develop appropriate criteria to create a list of contributing structures that meet minimum eligibility requirements as determined by the Florida Division of Historical Resources or the National Register of Historic Places.
- Work with the Tavares Heritage Society and Lake County to further the organization's goals as they pertain to historic structures in the Downtown.
- Provide incentives to encourage future development in the Downtown redevelopment area to be consistent with the existing architectural character for development taking place in the designated Historic Preservation District.
- Establish a facade improvement program providing design assistance and financial incentives to encourage building renovation that will provide continuity of historical design and strengthen existing architectural features.
- Make property owners and investors aware of the tax inducements available as an incentive for restoring historic buildings for practical use.
- Where feasible incorporate elements of buildings in new projects to reflect the City's heritage.



TAVARES DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN, CITY OF TAVARES, FL

LEGEND			
	CRA Boundary		Residential Historic Buildings
	Historic District Boundary		Institutional Historic Buildings
	Commercial Historic Buildings		Park
	Railroad		

Fig. 5.4 Map illustrating historic preservation district and historic buildings, Downtown Tavares CRA
Source: Lake County GIS Database/IBI Group, January 2008

