



# EUSTIS DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

THE BEST FAMILY FRIENDLY WATERFRONT



JUNE 2024



“

*I would like to see a focus on getting more unique/diverse businesses, both in terms of shops and dining, and appreciate the emphasis on being a pedestrian-friendly environment as well as more walking/park areas and walking trails.*

*-Eustis Resident*

”

## **CONTENTS**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5**

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 8**

**INTRODUCTION 10**

**EXISTING CONDITIONS 20**

**ENGAGEMENT 54**

**VISION AND FRAMEWORK 64**

**RECOMMENDATIONS 74**

*EXTEND WATERFRONT*

*CONNECT DOWNTOWN*

*EXPAND DOWNTOWN*

**SUPPORTING STRATEGIES 142**

*PUBLIC SPACE AND AMENITIES*

*HISTORIC LEGACY AND SIGNAGE*

*GATEWAYS*

*BRANDING AND MARKETING*

*IMPROVED CONNECTIVITY*

*DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT*

*GROUND FLOOR ACTIVATION*

**IMPLEMENTATION 210**

*ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY*





## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Eustis Downtown Master Plan provides a road map and vision for a dynamic future for the downtown district. Initiated by the Eustis City Commission, and developed with citizen input, this Downtown Master Plan is a comprehensive update to the 2008 Downtown Plan. It is a collective vision for a vibrant and interconnected City Center that reflects the dreams and aspirations of its residents.

In addition to updating the 2008 Downtown Plan, this effort included conceptualizing the future of the former Waterman Hospital Site, a 4.8 acre redevelopment opportunity in the heart of Eustis.

The task of developing the Downtown Master Plan was carried out in five distinct phases, beginning with a Community Listening Session kick-off meeting that included City residents, Commissioners, public officials, educators, and members of the business community and nonprofit sectors. Through this event and other comprehensive stakeholder engagement input mechanisms, the Master Plan Project Management Team of MIG, W-Architecture and Landscape Architecture, and Johnson Consulting collected diverse perspectives, thoughts, ideas, and other invaluable feedback.

Subsequent phases involved the generation of design options, a strategic analysis of the site's significance within the City, and exploration of relevant examples and comparable projects. The iterative process continued with refinement of designs based on collected feedback, leading to the preparation of a final Master Plan implementation document. The final phase delineated priority projects for near-term execution, supported by a systematic approach to execution of the plan.

Stakeholder engagement remained central throughout all phases of the development of this Master Plan because it fosters a sense of ownership in the final product. This buy-in should lead to strong collaboration and the eventual achievement of the Master Plan's goals. The Project Management Team met with focus groups, held round table discussions, and conducted one-on-one interviews. The updated Downtown Master Plan encompasses land use and development guidance, urban and landscape design concepts, mobility enhancements, and programming recommendations. Emphasis was placed on addressing activation, vacancies, diversity, access, and connectivity.

This Downtown Master Plan is informed by a demand forecast model and an assessment of existing conditions, ensuring a concrete road map for the future development of Downtown Eustis.









“

*Ferran Park should be prioritized and protected, and not encroached on by the addition of a true waterfront downtown. Public spaces, especially green public spaces, provide citizens with a sense of comfort and pride as well as offer[ing] an expanded sense of living space.*

*-Eustis Resident during Community Engagement Event*

”



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## CITY OF EUSTIS PROJECT TEAM

Tom Carrino, City Manager

Albert Latimer, Economic Development Director

## CITY OF EUSTIS CITY COMMISSION

Michael Holland, Mayor

Emily Lee, Vice Mayor

Gary Ashcraft, Commissioner

Willie Hawkins, Commissioner

Nan Cobb, Commissioner

## FOCUS GROUP/INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Jerry Gunther - G3 Development

Austin Gunther - G3 Development

Derrick Wallace - C2 Construction

Christine Cruz – CRA Review Committee

Jack Pickett - Waterman Site Foundation

Frank Gaylord - Waterman Site Foundation

Jerry Brown - Waterman Site Foundation

Tom Hofmeister - (Chairman) Waterman Site Foundation

Daniel Divenanzo - Hometown Properties, LLC

Jerry Cobb - Cobb's Tractor

Marie Aliberti - President Lake Eustis Area Chamber of Commerce

George Asbate - Mega Properties

Pam Rivas - Mega Properties

Ann Huffstetler Rau - Lake Community Foundation

Tom Popieski - United Southern Bank

Hersina Green - Lake County Tax Collector

Horace Jones - Eustis Housing Authority

Bill Gay - Security Consultant (Retired)

Deryl Benton - HMS Host

Nicie Parks - Lake County Government (Retired)

Tanya Wilder - LifeStream Behavioral Center, Inc.

\*All the student athletes at Eustis High School. GO PANTHERS!

## CITY OF EUSTIS DEPARTMENT HEADS INCLUDING:

Kay Yaccarino - Public Relations Manager

Ann Ivey - Director Eustis Memorial Library

Miranda Muir - Events & Tourism Manager

Carl Saenger and Christine Guiffre - Events Assistants

Mike Swanson - Fire Chief

Craig Capri - Police Chief

Rick Gierok - Director Public Works

Michael Brundage - Wastewater Superintendent

Greg Dobbins - Deputy Director of Public Works for Utilities

Mike Lane - Director Development Services

Jeff Richardson - Deputy Director

## CONSULTANT TEAM

Jay Renkens, MIG

Ryan Mottau, MIG

Sal Crivello, MIG

Aaron Ishaiek, MIG

Nathaniel Riedy, MIG

Barbara Wilks, W Architecture and Landscape  
Architecture

Ian Dillon, W Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Riane Federman, Johnson Consulting

Sarah Emmerton, Johnson Consulting

Charlie Johnson, Johnson Consulting

Blair Guppy



**W** Architecture and Landscape Architecture, LLC





1

# INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Master Plan embodies a collective vision—a blueprint designed to cultivate a vibrant, inclusive, and dynamic downtown that reflects the aspirations and needs of our residents, businesses, and visitors alike. It aims to synthesize diverse perspectives, innovative ideas, and expert insights to chart a course that enhances livability, fosters economic vitality, promotes sustainability, and celebrates our cultural heritage.

Through collaborative efforts, community engagement, and meticulous planning, this initiative endeavors to strike a delicate balance between preservation and progress, forging a downtown that retains its historical significance while embracing contemporary trends and future opportunities.

# PROJECT TIMELINE



## SUMMER 2023

### PROJECT LAUNCH AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Stakeholder Interviews / Community Engagement

## FALL 2023

### MASTER PLAN VISIONING / FRAMEWORK PLAN

Stakeholder Interviews / Community Engagement

Online Survey





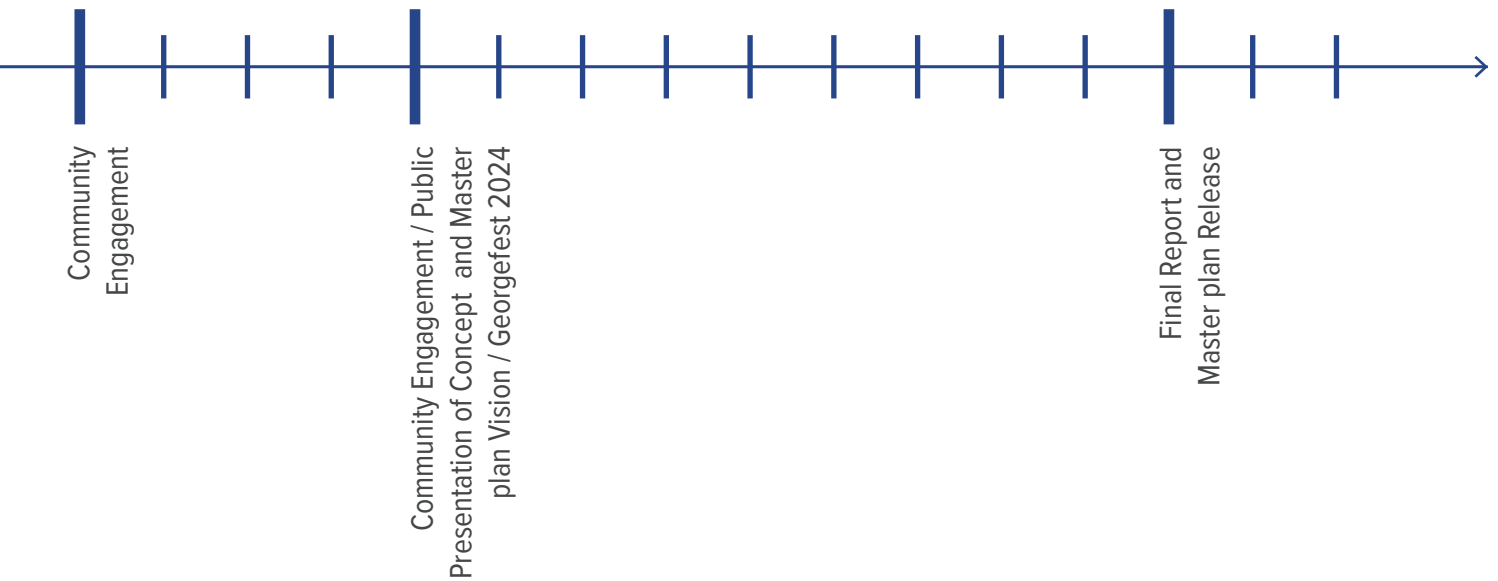
**FALL 2023 / WINTER 2024**

**EVALUATION PROCESS / MASTER PLAN UPDATE / CONCEPTUAL DESIGN**



**SPRING 2024**

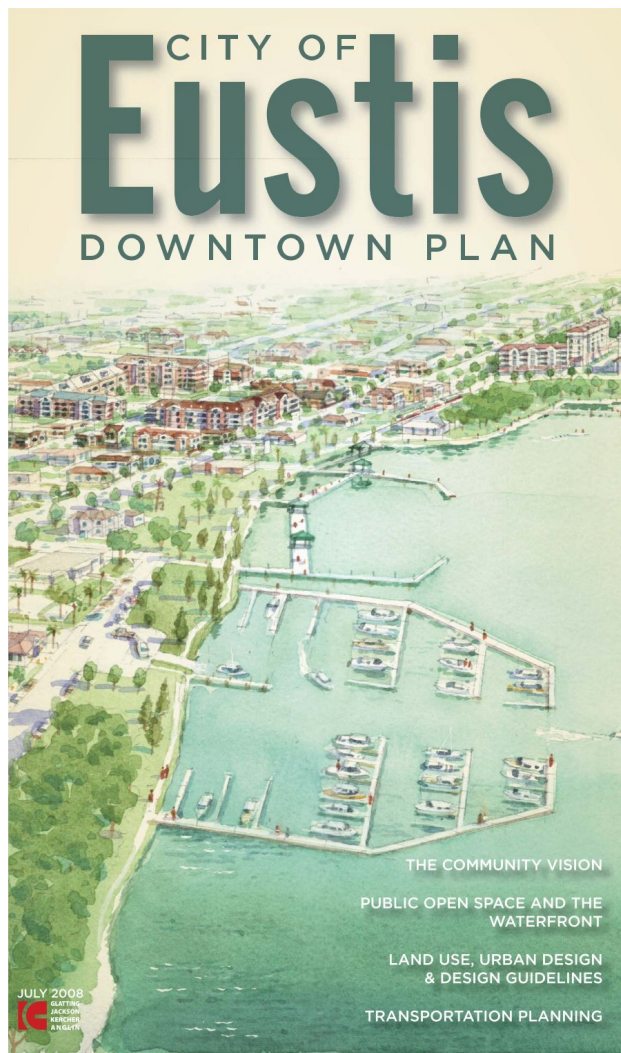
**FEEDBACK / CONFIRMATION OF PREFERRED PLAN AND DESIGN**



## PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

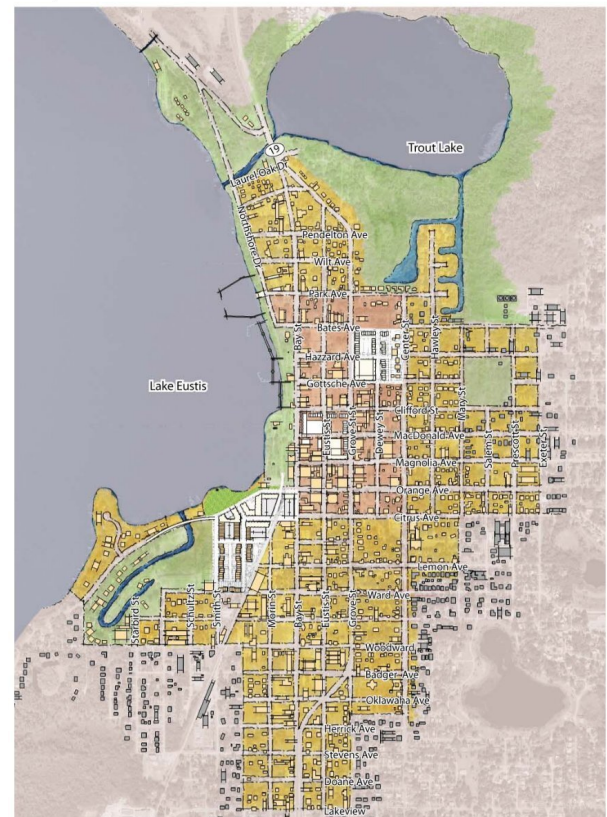
### THE CITY OF EUSTIS DOWNTOWN PLAN (2008)

The 2008 Downtown Plan was a citizen-driven study intended to provide strategic actions for building upon Eustis’ strengths and its, then, emergent redevelopment opportunities. Ensuring a diverse future as an urban center that served its residents and its visitors, this plan was derived from a community forum guided by City Staff and key stakeholders. Guiding principles and action items were laid out. Many initiatives included in the Downtown Plan remain valid today.



### the master plan — “three phases”

The Downtown Eustis Master Plan is broken into three phases to reflect an implementable strategic action plan.



10 CITY OF EUSTIS | DOWNTOWN PLAN



# OTHER RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

## CITY OF EUSTIS FDOT MULTI-MODAL MOBILITY AND SAFETY ASSESSMENT (MMSA) (2018)

The purpose of this project is to repave State Road (S.R.) 19 in Eustis from north of Stevens Avenue to County Road (C.R.) 452. This section of S.R. 19 is split, with northbound S.R. 19 known as Grove Street and southbound S.R. 19 known as Bay Street. In addition to resurfacing the travel lanes, the project proposes to implement safety improvements and lower the posted speed limit on S.R. 19 to 35 mph.

This project is expected to be constructed with a safety project (FPID No. 445686-1), which will make improvements to several intersections throughout the corridor including:

- Constructing raised crosswalks on northbound and southbound S.R. 19 at the intersections of Magnolia, McDonald and Clifford Avenues;
- Installing new pedestrian crossings equipped with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) on northbound S.R. 19 at the intersections of Norton, Clifford and McDonald Avenues, and Lemon and Eustis Streets;
- Upgrading existing midblock crossings;
- Reconstructing traffic signals on northbound and southbound S.R. 19 at Orange Avenue, and on southbound S.R. 19 at Clifford Street;
- Upgrading pedestrian signals;
- Reconstructing and extending curbs at intersections and installing ADA-compliant curb ramps at crossings.

**Project Description**

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) proposes to enhance safety and improve operations on State Road (S.R.) 19 from north of Stevens Avenue to County Road (C.R.) 452 in Eustis. A portion of this corridor is split, with northbound S.R. 19 known as Grove Street and southbound S.R. 19 known as Bay Street.

To help improve safety and encourage safer driving speeds, the project recommends intersection and pedestrian crossing improvements at several locations.

One safety feature under consideration is the construction of raised crosswalks at the northbound and southbound S.R. 19 intersections with Magnolia, MacDonald and Clifford avenues, which will help to slow driving speeds.

Another pedestrian safety measure is to add pedestrian activated lights known as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at crossings on northbound S.R. 19 at Norton, Clifford, MacDonald and Lemon avenues, and Eustis Street. These locations would also have in-road lighting to help increase visibility of the crossing, and audible pedestrian signals (APS).

*continued on back*

Project Status and Estimated Costs*		
Design (FPID 445686-1)	Ongoing - completion early 2023	\$ 986,000
Design (FPID 445297-1)	Ongoing - completion early 2023	\$ 1.1 million
Right of way	Went pending	—
Construction (FPID 445686-1)	Funded - late 2023	\$ 1.3 million
Construction (FPID 445297-1)	Funded - late 2023	\$ 3.2 million

\*subject to change

**Contact:**  
 Ty Garner  
 FDOT Project Manager  
 352-343-5290  
 Ty.Garner@fdot.state.fl.us

The new crossings will also have new overhead lighting. Existing midblock crossings along the corridor will be upgraded with the same features.

Other planned improvements include reconstructing the traffic signals and upgrading pedestrian signals and lighting on northbound S.R. 19 at Orange Avenue and on southbound S.R. 19 at Clifford and Orange avenues. Pedestrian signal and lighting improvements are also planned at the existing signalized intersections along southbound S.R. 19 at Citrus Avenue and Lakeshore Drive.

Extended curbs and upgraded crosswalks are planned on southbound S.R. 19 at Hazzard and Cottiche avenues. Repaving, some driveway modifications, and minor drainage adjustments are also planned.

**HOW TO USE AN RRFB (Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon)**

**Pedestrians and Bicyclists**

1. Press the button to activate the RRFB. (The lights will begin to flash.)
2. Walk or bicycle across the crosswalk.
3. When you reach the other side, press the button to deactivate the RRFB.

**Pedestrians**

1. Make eye contact with motorists to be sure they've seen you.
2. Walk defensively, scanning both directions to be sure motorists see you.
3. Always use the crosswalk when crossing.

**Bicyclists**

1. Use all traffic signs and signals.
2. When using the crosswalk, follow the pedestrian rules.
3. When using the travel lane, ride in the direction of traffic and always yield to pedestrians.

**Motorists**

1. Always stop for pedestrians crossing when they activate an RRFB.
2. Never pass another vehicle that has stopped or is slowing down at a crosswalk.
3. Always stop before the stop bar (line) pavement marking.
4. Never stop in or block a crosswalk.
5. Always stop for pedestrians entering or in a crosswalk.
6. Remain stopped for pedestrians regardless of activated RRFB.
7. Yield to pedestrians to completely clear the crosswalk on your side of the road, and for anyone crossing into and leave from the other direction.

RRFBs use an irregular flash pattern that is similar to emergency flashers on police vehicles.

**CFLRoads.com**

### ABOUT DOWNTOWN EUSTIS

The Eustis Downtown Master Plan will primarily focus on an area termed the Downtown, identified within the boundary of the adjacent map. This specific zone is demarcated by the waterfront to the west, St. Mary Street to the east, Bates Avenue to the north, and Citrus Avenue to the south. The immediate vicinity near the City Hall showcases charming commercial and mixed-use structures adorned with more active storefronts and facades reflecting historical, artistic, and creative elements. Further from the civic and commercial core, the historical ambiance meets industrial, commercial, and mixed-use buildings, interspersed with undeveloped lots and services tailored to the local community. The Master Plan addresses transitions, surrounding contexts, and connections between the waterfront and the Downtown Area.

The “Greater Downtown Area” encompasses spaces in immediate proximity to Downtown. To the east of Downtown are historic low-density residential neighborhoods. From here, the terrain descends westward to the waterfront of Lake Eustis, a significant recreational, natural, and historical resource for residents and visitors alike.

The city now known as Eustis underwent several name changes during its early history. Although originally established in the 1870s by a developer, upon its incorporation in 1883, the city adopted the name “Lake Eustis” to reflect its proximity to the nearby lake. The arrival of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in the late 19th century played a crucial role in propelling Eustis into a vital hub for agriculture, particularly in Florida’s burgeoning citrus industry.

Eustis played a pivotal role in the citrus industry, setting the stage for its growth. The city evolved over the years, reflecting its journey through economic and cultural shifts. The downtown core has historically been an economic driver for Eustis, having previously housed the Fountain Inn and later the Waterman Hospital. Since 2004, when the Waterman Hospital moved out of downtown, the Waterman Site, has remained vacant.

The 1960s ushered in a transformative phase for downtown Eustis, driven by suburbanization and the construction of major road arteries like US Highway 441. This shift altered the commercial landscape, steering attention away from the central courthouse square and reshaping the precinct into larger retail entities. Despite these changes, Eustis remained steadfast in its commitment to preserving its historical heritage. The City received formal recognition as a Main Street City in 1986, solidifying its status as one of the state’s oldest Main Street programs. In 1999, Eustis earned the distinction of being a National Main Street City, an honor shared by only a select few cities in Florida. The locally designated Downtown Historic District was established the same year, underscoring the City’s dedication to preserving its unique character.







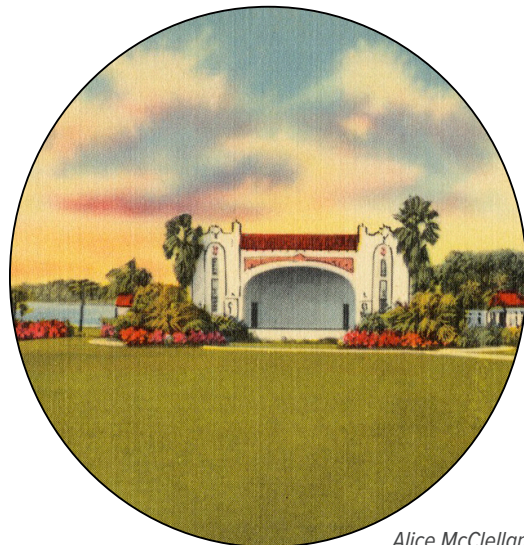
## INTRODUCTION

Looking to the future, Eustis faces the challenges and opportunities associated with substantial growth in the Central Florida region. The Vision Eustis 2050 Comprehensive Plan outlines a cohesive community vision for the future, addressing the anticipated influx of new residents and housing units. The Downtown Master Plan, focusing on the Downtown Core and encompassing 84 acres, stands as a critical component in aligning Eustis with its evolving community vision.

As we reflect on Eustis' history, the City's commitment to preserving its heritage remains evident. The Waterman Site, with its own unique timeline, serves as a microcosm of Eustis' evolution—a testament to the city's resilience, adaptability, and enduring connection to its past.



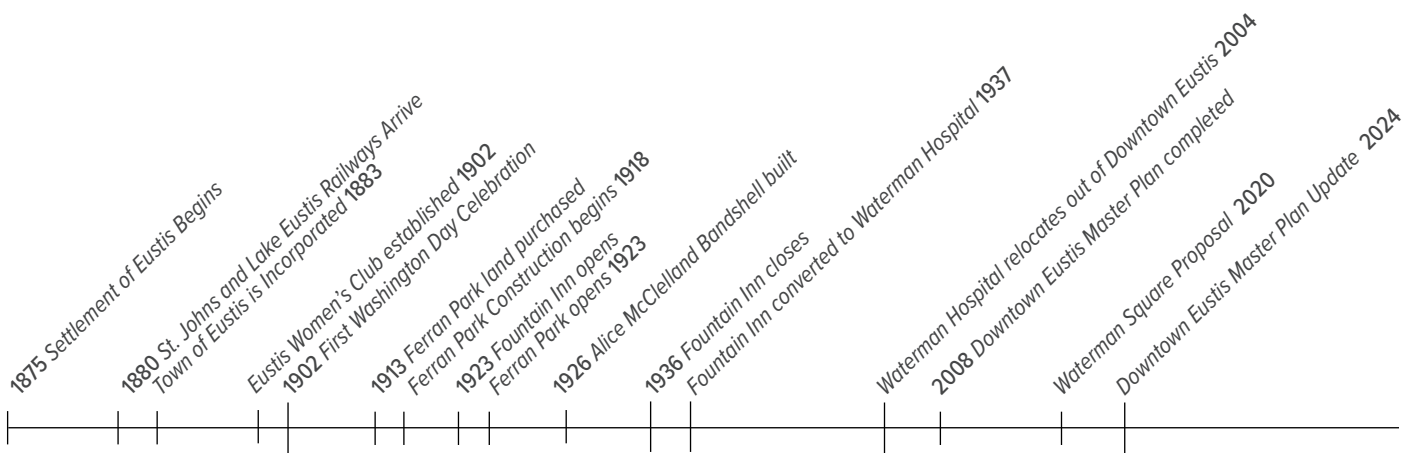
*Fountain Inn 1923*



*Alice McClelland Bandshell 1926*



Historic aerial of City of Eustis and lake looking West, City of Eustis. (Waterman site outlined).



# 2

**EXISTING  
CONDITIONS**

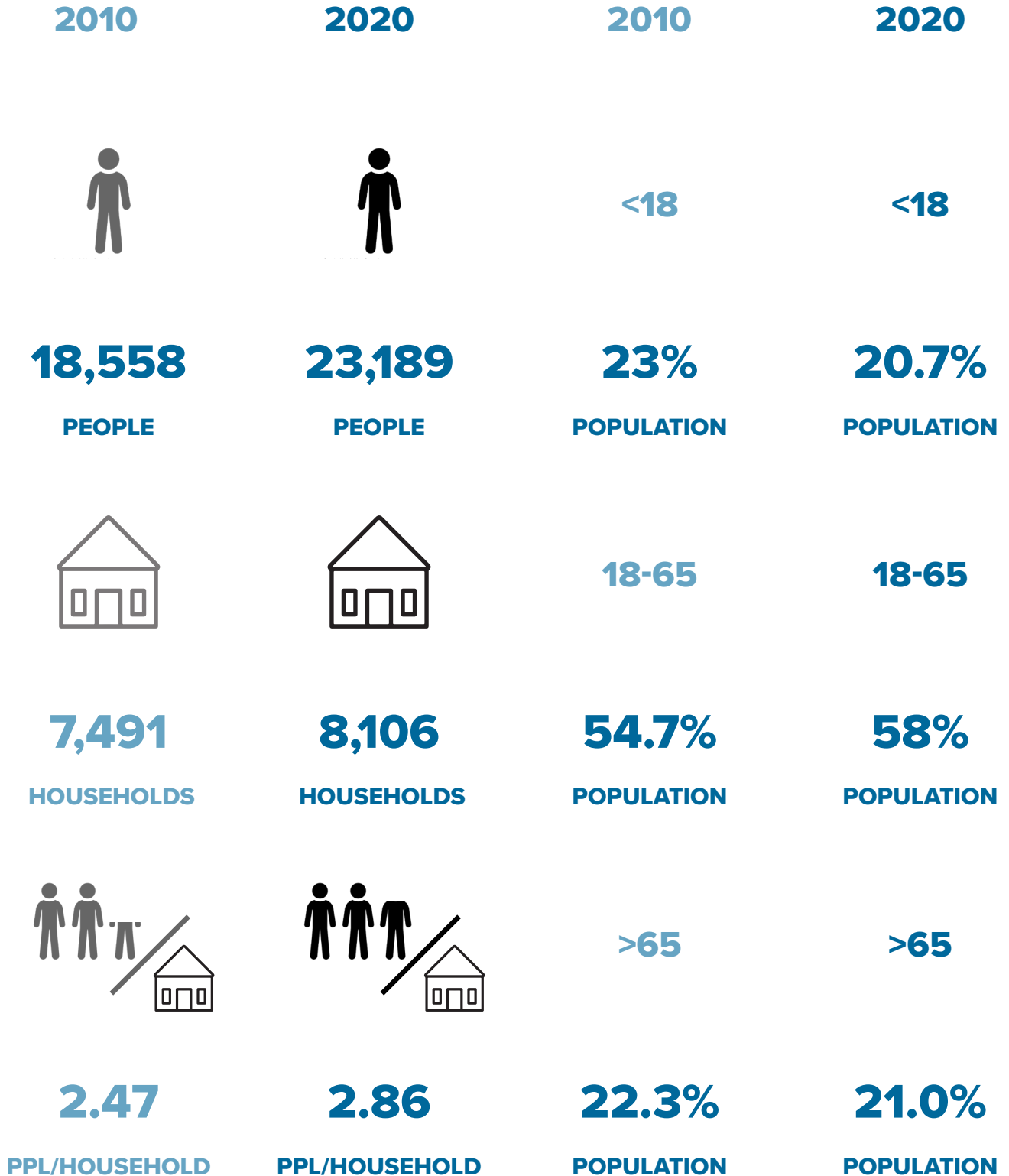
Embarking on the Master Planning journey for the City of Eustis, Florida, the planning and design team conducted thorough research and document analysis. This comprehensive study delved into Eustis' history, demographics, environmental nuances, and the intricate interplay between environmental factors, cultural heritage, and social dynamics.

In addressing contemporary challenges, the Master Plan not only responds to the unique character of Eustis but also serves as a dynamic road map for climate-conscious design and planning. It weaves together environmental, social, cultural, policy, and infrastructural considerations, ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for the city while honoring its rich past.



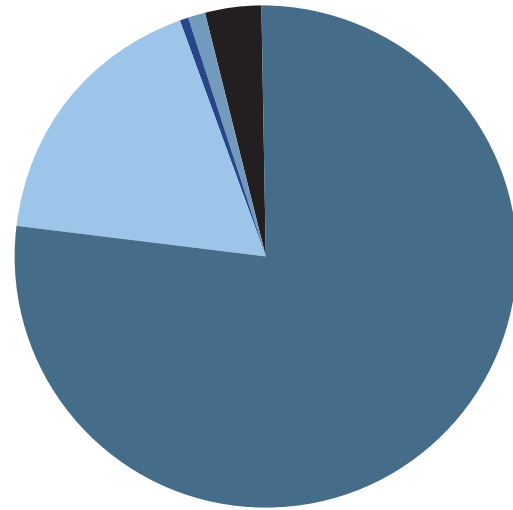
## CITY-WIDE DEMOGRAPHICS

(Source: 2020 U.S. Census)



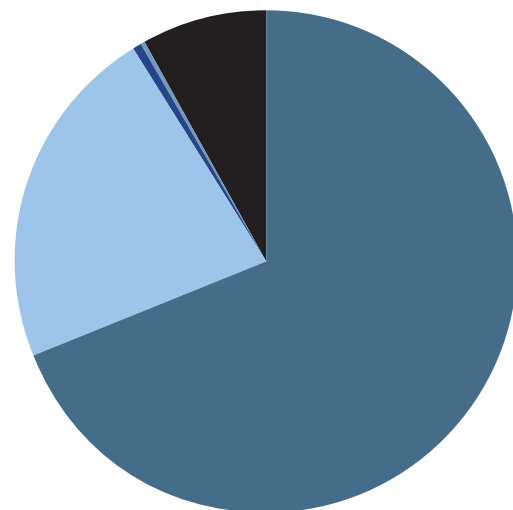
(Source: 2020 U.S. Census)

2010



- 3.8% Other
- 1.1% Asian
- 0.4% Indigenous
- 75.9% White
- 17.4% Black

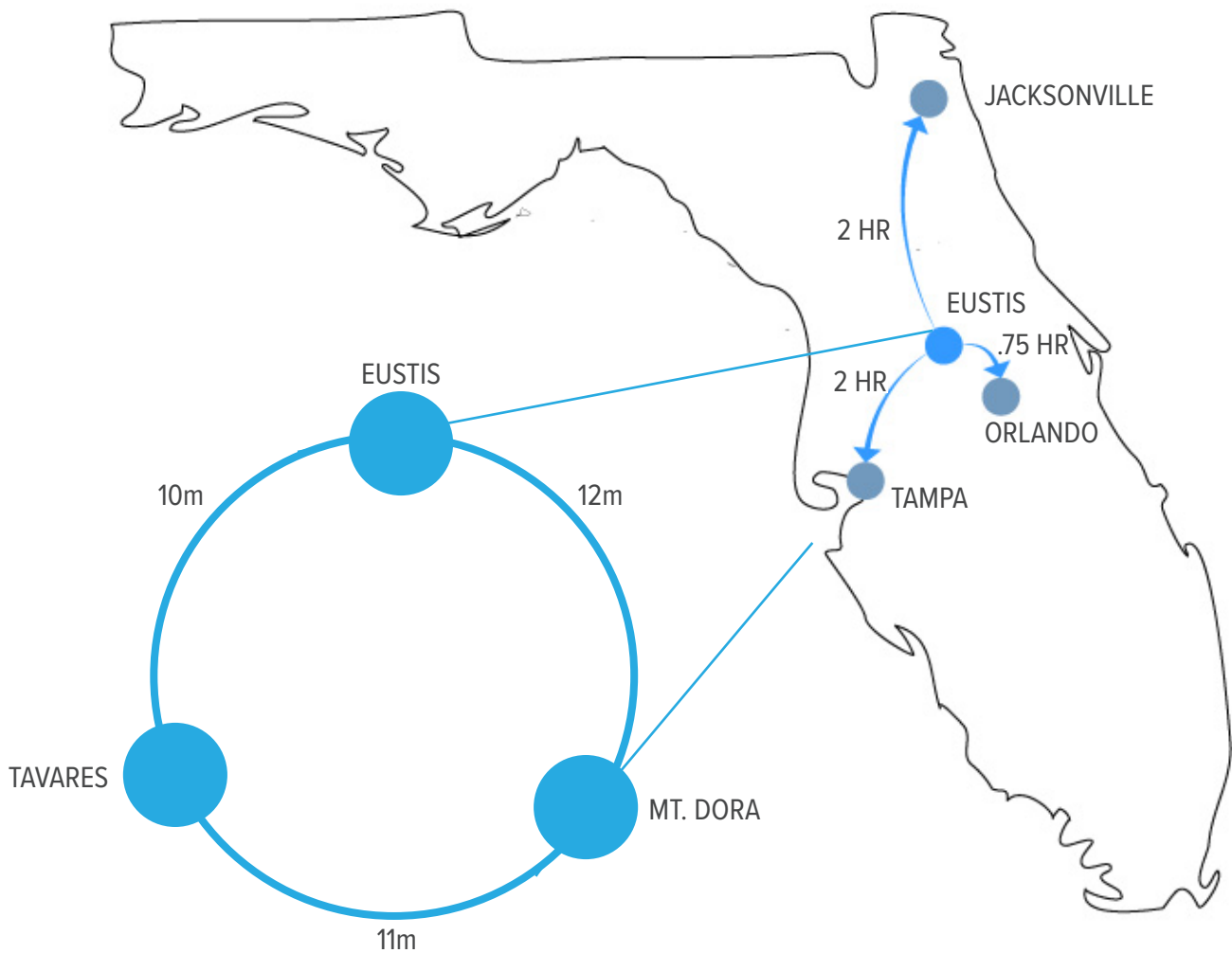
2020



- 7.8% Other
- 0.5% Asian
- 0.3% Indigenous
- 68.1% White
- 21.6% Black

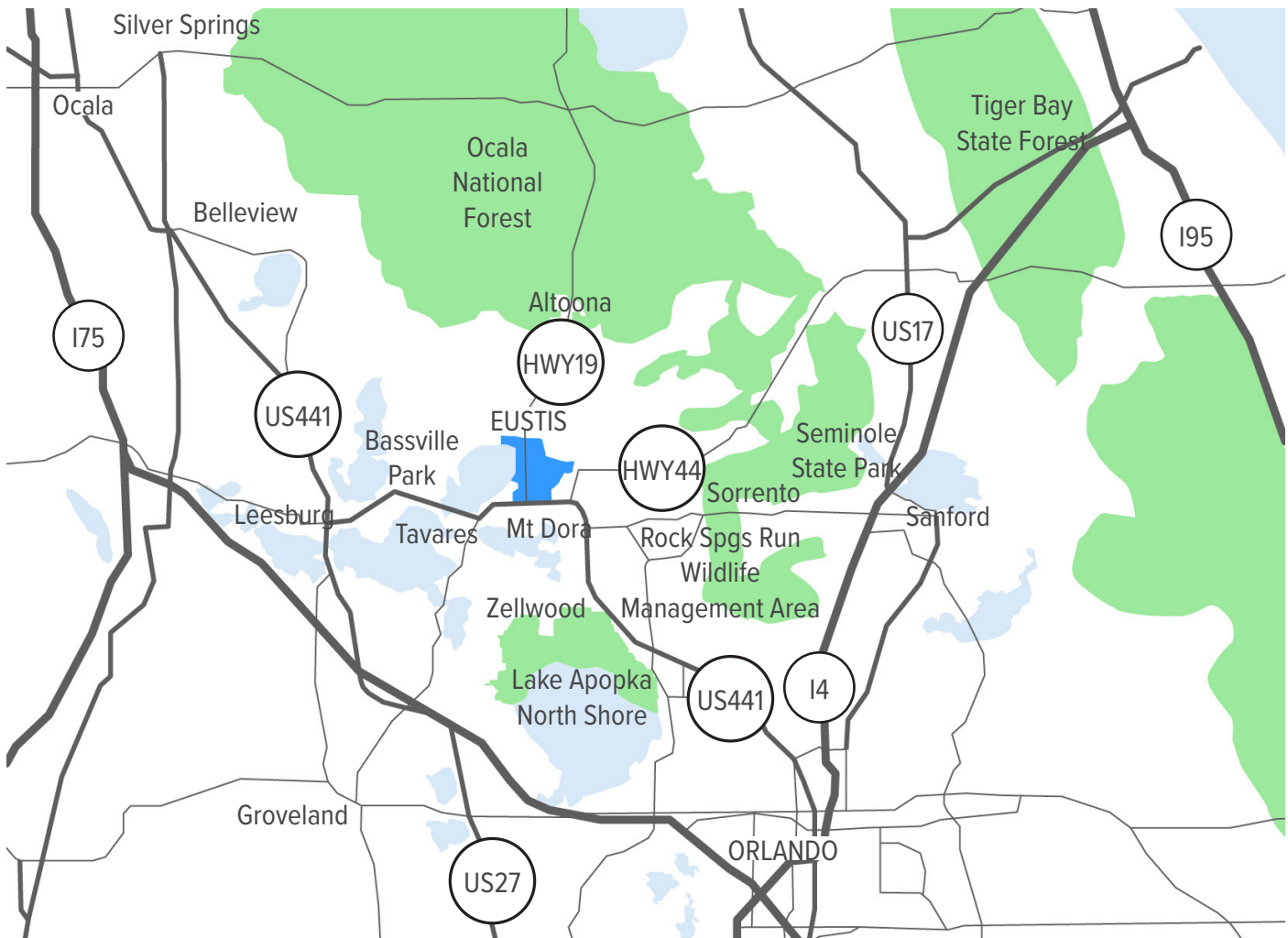
## DISTANCE TO MAJOR CITY CENTERS

Eustis benefits from Lake County's central location triangulated between three major destinations. Automobile travel is the predominant form of transportation throughout the region.



## REGIONAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Integrating Downtown Eustis’ parks with regional state forests, parks, and cultural trails presents an opportunity for expanded community connectivity and enhanced recreational experiences. However, the current lack of designated pathways between local and regional spaces limits accessibility. To address this, strategic planning and collaboration between jurisdictions and stakeholders are vital. Establishing designated trails or connectors can create a seamless network, amplifying recreational options and promoting eco-tourism. Partnerships between city authorities, regional organizations, and conservation groups are crucial to develop comprehensive trail systems, signage, and secure funding for this interconnected vision.

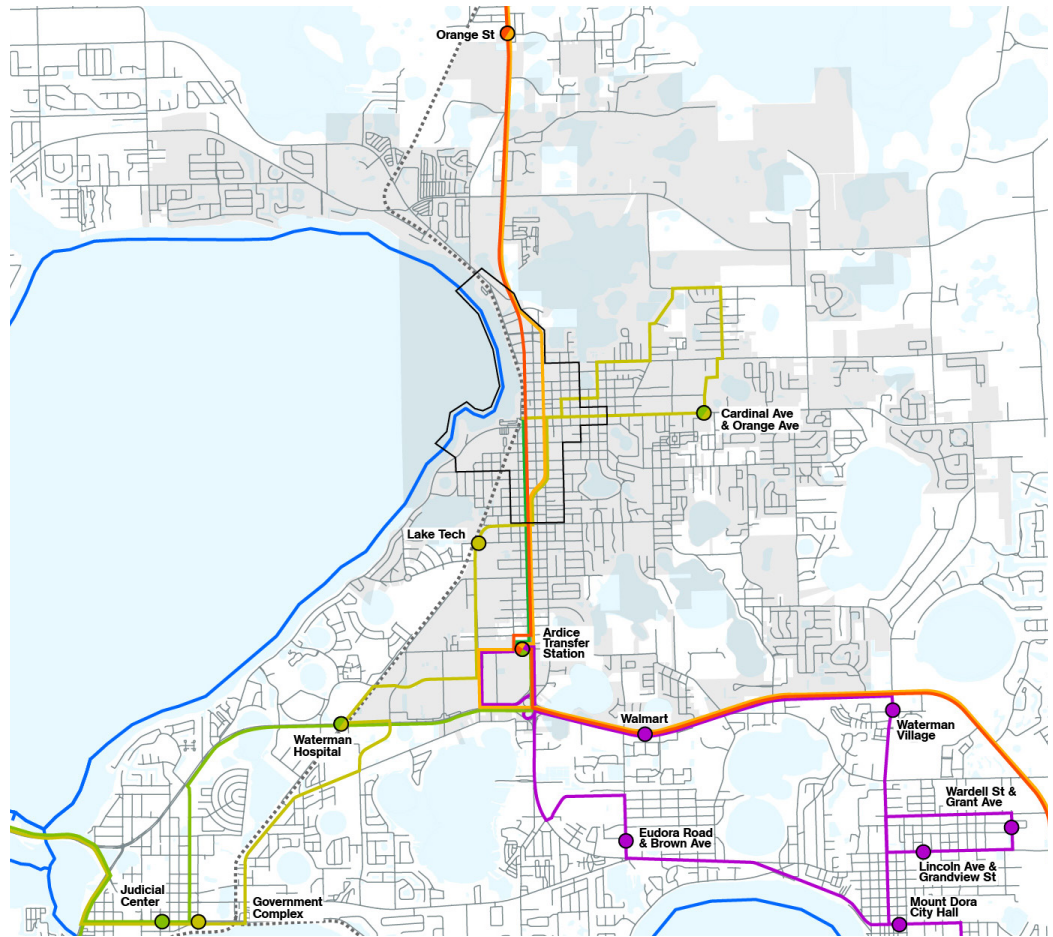


**TRANSIT**

Regional Connectivity depends largely on private vehicular travel. A county run bus service, LakeXPress, operates several lines that pass through the City of Eustis. However, these regional bus stops are located outside the study area, limiting the regional connectivity to Downtown Eustis and the waterfront.

Blueways, a system of “water trails”, link together major lakes and bodies of water within Lake county.

The railroad between downtown and the waterfront is owned by Regional Rail, LCC, which operates the 68 mile Florida Central Railroad. Freight is delivered directly to industries between Orlando to the south and Umatilla to the North. Freight trains do not publish or run a consistent schedule.



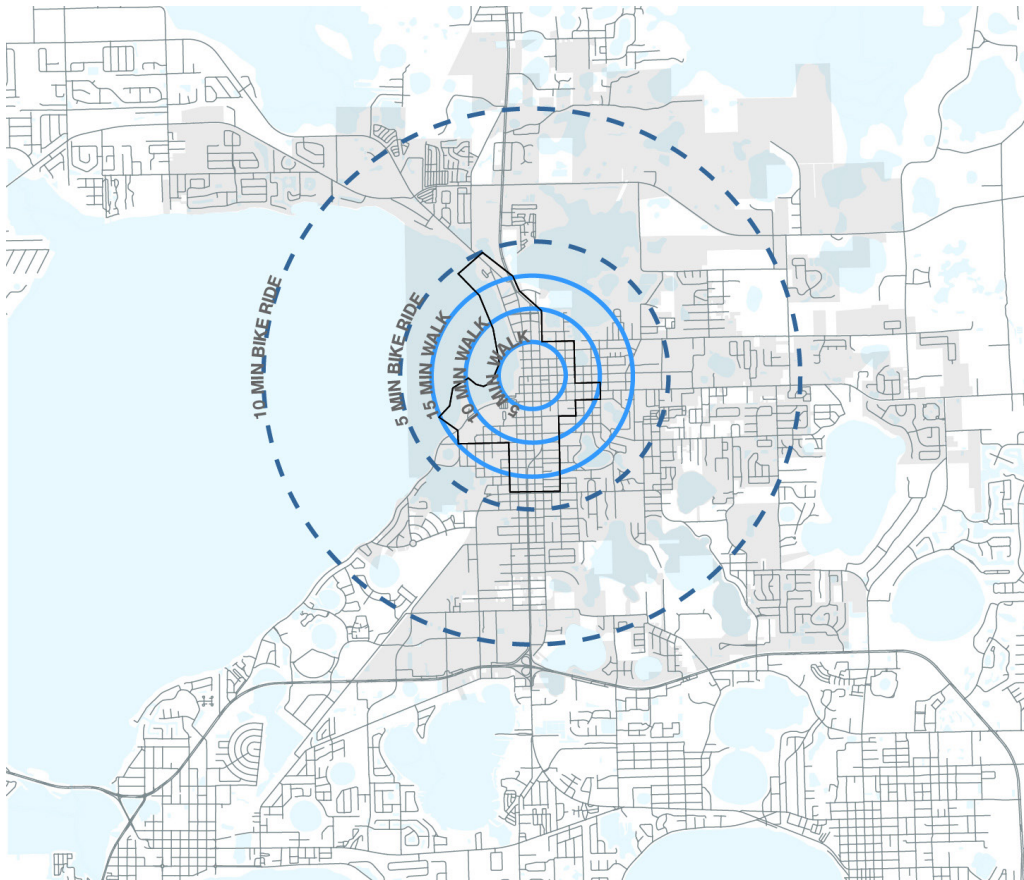
- LakeXPress Bus
- Route 1 E-Bound
- LakeXPress Bus Route 1 W-Bound
- LakeXPress Bus Route 3
- LakeXPress Bus Route 4 N-Bound
- LakeXPress Bus Route 4 S-Bound
- Blueways
- Railroads
- Study Area

### MICROMOBILITY DISTANCES DOWNTOWN AND BEYOND

Downtown Eustis itself is quite compact and walkable, with most places being within a 15-minute walking distance. There are few, if any, dedicated cycling paths within the downtown area. Two parks are within a 15-minute cycle of downtown Eustis:

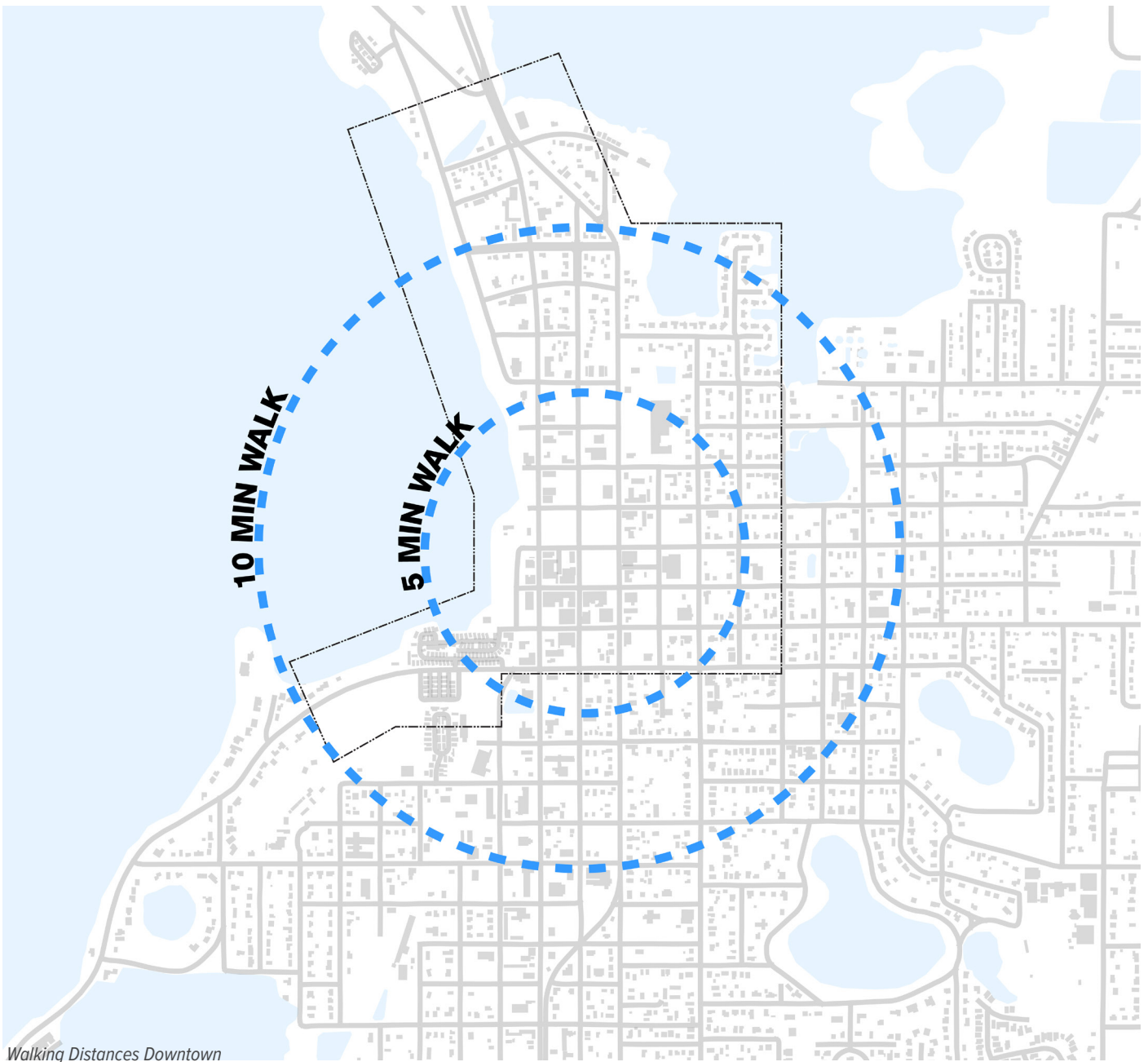
- Marsh Memorial Park: 2.7 miles away and should take about 6 minutes to complete by bike.
- Trout Lake Nature Center: 2.3 miles away and should take about 6 minutes to complete by bike.

Two other destinations, Hidden Water Preserve and Pine Meadows Conservation Area, are further but still can be reached by bike within 30-40 minutes. These destinations could be considered in future bike master planning and micro-mobility studies.



Walking and Cycling Distances







## CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

### PEDESTRIANS

Downtown Eustis has continuous sidewalks that provide a basic framework for pedestrian movement. However, significant inconsistencies and shortcomings exist:

- Uneven quality: Sidewalks range from wide, buffered, landscaped, and comfortable to narrow, lacking buffers from vehicle traffic and featuring steep slopes and cross slopes. This creates a fragmented experience for pedestrians.
- Unsafe crossings: Despite frequent corner bulb-outs designed to improve safety and visibility, pedestrian crossings often feel unsafe due to a lack of clear pedestrian priority and limited visibility.
- Accessibility challenges: While efforts are underway to improve ADA accessibility through additional curb ramps, the topography of Downtown presents ongoing difficulties for people with disabilities.
- Overall, Downtown Eustis’ pedestrian infrastructure requires further improvements to create a safe, comfortable, and accessible environment for all.



*Bay Street at Magnolia Avenue (Looking North)*



*McDonald Avenue at Eustis Street (Looking South)*

## BICYCLISTS AND MICROMOBILITY

### Downtown Eustis: Existing Bike Infrastructure

A review of the City of Eustis website and relevant planning documents reveals the current state of the downtown bike infrastructure:

- Limited network: The downtown area currently offers limited bike facilities and/or networked connections within or to/from downtown.
- Lack of continuity: These lanes are often short and disconnected, making it difficult for cyclists to navigate seamlessly between different parts of downtown.
- Safety concerns: The absence of physical separation between cyclists and traffic on many streets raises safety concerns for many potential users.
- Micromobility options: Scooter and bike rentals are located in nearby Mount Dora.

The community of Eustis acknowledges the current shortcomings of its bike infrastructure and has voiced a consistent desire for future improvements, including:

- Creating a network of dedicated bike lanes: This includes plans to connect existing lanes throughout downtown, as well as providing a more comprehensive and connected network to nearby destinations.
- Implementing physical separation: Plans to incorporate physical separation between cyclists and traffic on key streets has been identified to enhance safety.
- Encouraging micromobility: The city is actively exploring partnerships and initiatives to increase the availability and accessibility of scooter and bike rental options within downtown.
- While progress is underway, continued community engagement and advocacy are crucial to ensuring the timely and comprehensive implementation of future micromobility and greenway plans.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### MAJOR ROAD NETWORKS DOWNTOWN

Eustis is situated along two major roadways: Bay Street, which runs North and South, and Orange Ave, which runs East and West.

Grove Street is the dividing line for East and West street prefixes and Orange Ave is the dividing line for North and South Street prefixes.

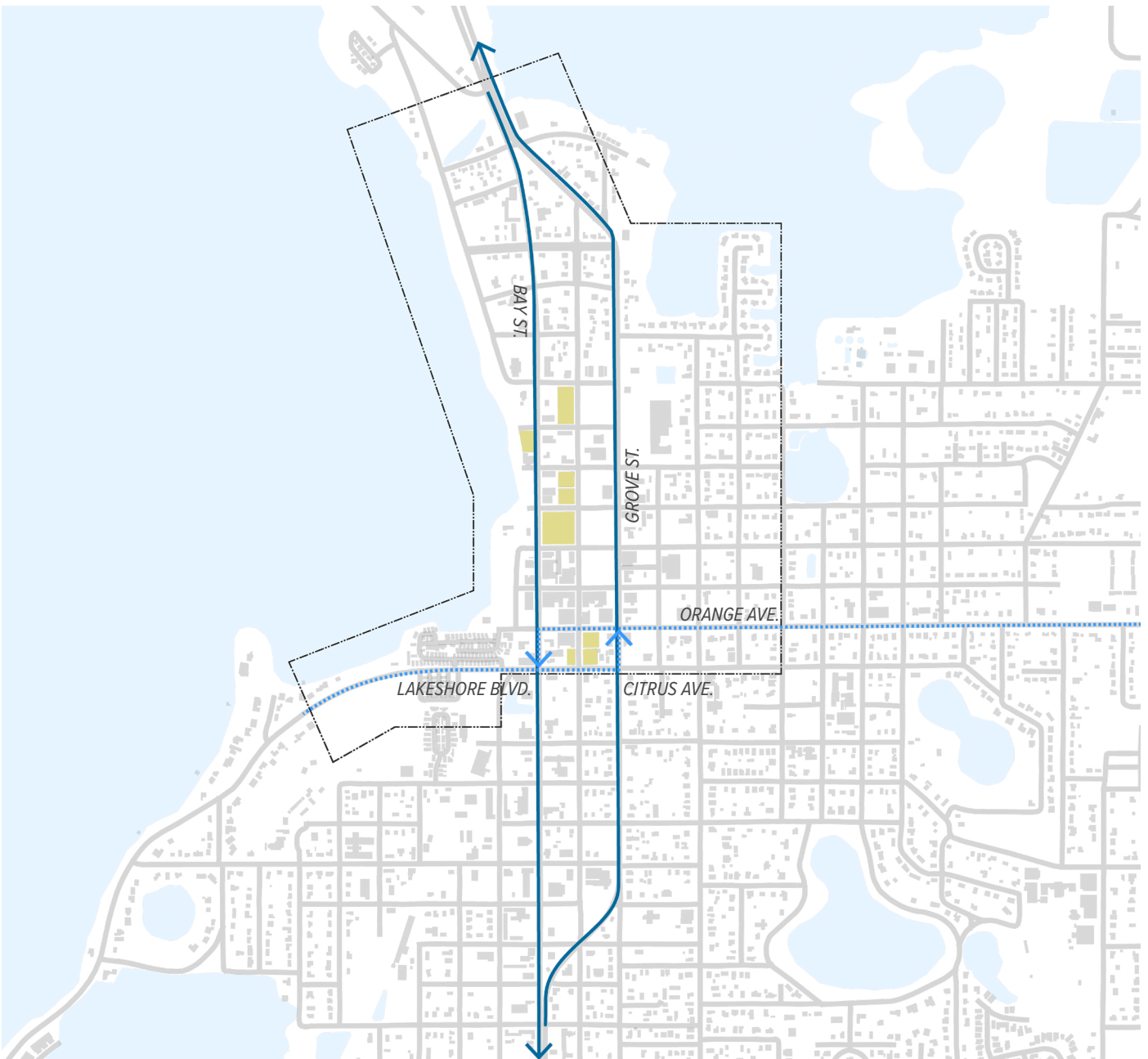
Bay Street, also known as Highway 19, splits into two roadways before entering downtown. The Northbound traffic drives along Grove Street, and borders the Eastern edge of downtown. Southbound traffic drives through downtown, with the waterfront on the western edge.



*Bay Street at Magnolia Avenue (Looking North)*



*Grove Street at City Hall (Looking North)*



Major Road Networks

## CITY PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES

### PARKS & PUBLIC SPACES

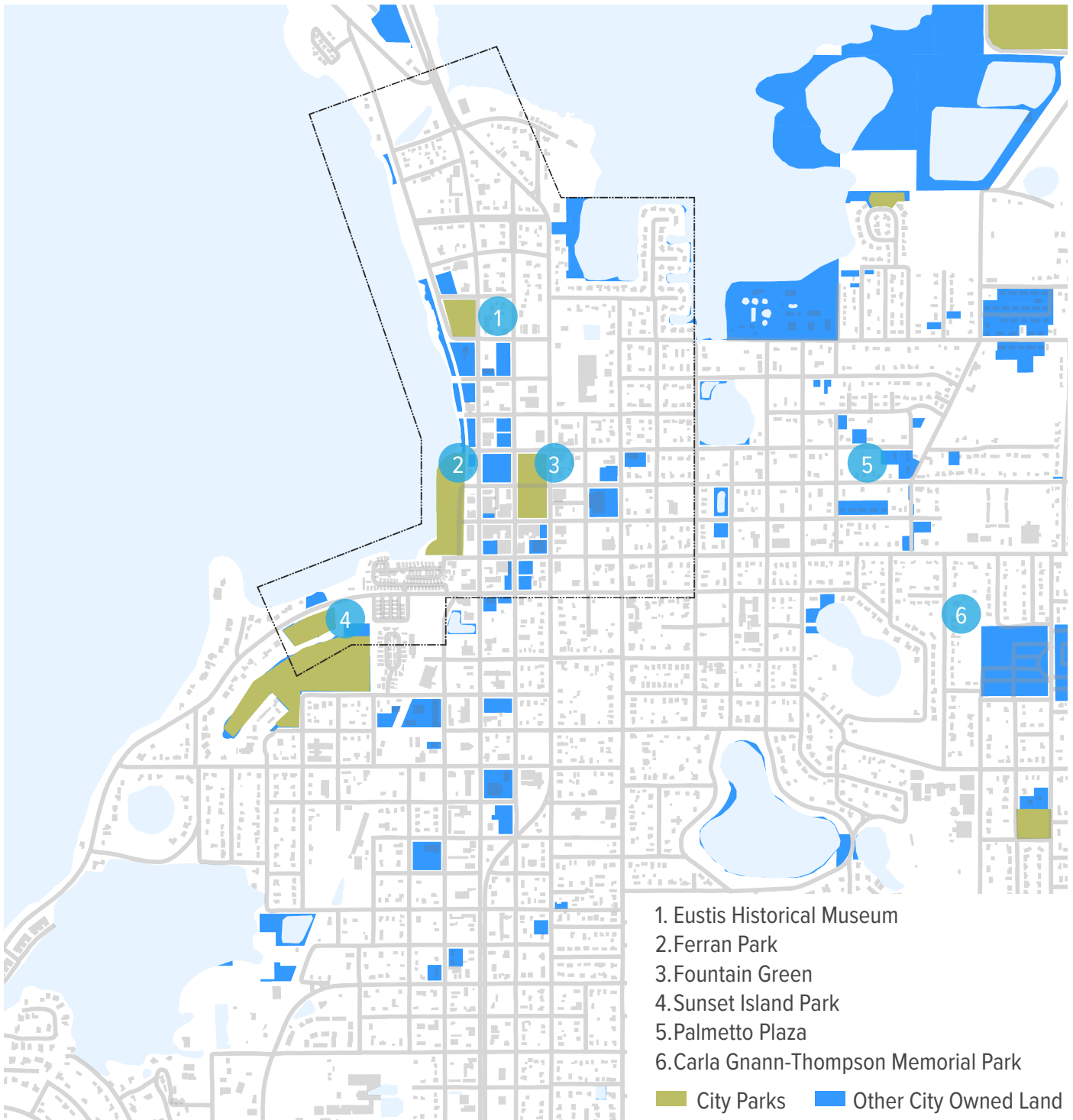
Downtown Eustis hosts diverse parks and public areas. While these spaces offer historical significance and recreational amenities, challenges like limited connectivity between parks and uneven accessibility hinder a seamless experience. There is a need to improve pathways, enhance sustainability, and diversify events and programming for residents.

## GOVERNMENT-OWNED LAND

The City of Eustis boasts significant land holdings, with a majority concentrated within the downtown study area. This strategic land portfolio presents an array of opportunities for future growth, urban planning, and land use optimization. The following key points outline the potential advantages:

- **Mixed-Use Development:** The expansive land holdings provide an opportunity for mixed-use development, fostering a dynamic blend of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces within the downtown core.
- **Revitalization Initiatives:** With a substantial portion of land situated in the heart of Eustis, there is a chance to spearhead revitalization efforts, breathing new life into the downtown area through carefully curated urban planning strategies.
- **Community-Centric Spaces:** The abundance of land offers the prospect of creating community-centric spaces, such as parks, cultural hubs, and gathering areas, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.
- **Infrastructure Enhancements:** Strategic use of land holdings allows for thoughtful infrastructure enhancements, including transportation networks and public utilities, facilitating smoother connectivity and accessibility within the city.
- **Economic Catalyst:** Leveraging the downtown land holdings as an economic catalyst can attract investments, stimulate local businesses, and contribute to the city's economic vibrancy, creating a thriving urban environment for both residents and visitors.





City Parks and Additional City-Owned Land

## EUSTIS CRA: REDEVELOPMENT IN ACTION

Established in 1990, the Eustis Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) serves as a Florida state-authorized entity tasked with revitalizing the city's core. The CRA leverages various tools, including:

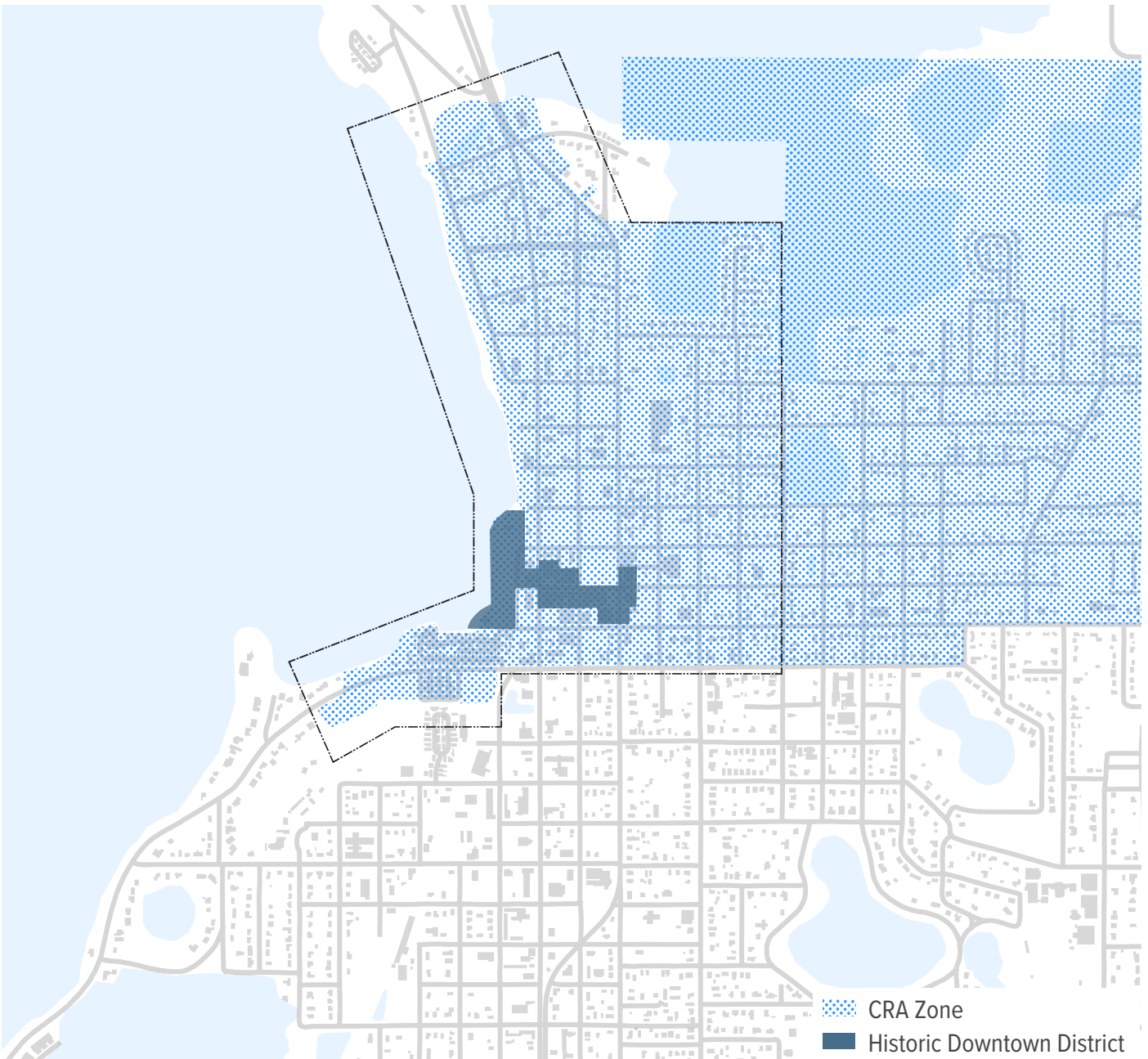
- Property acquisition: Strategically purchasing blighted or underutilized property for demolition, repurposing, or redevelopment.
- Infrastructure improvements: Upgrading utilities, streetscapes, and other public infrastructure within designated redevelopment areas.
- Business incentives: Offering financial assistance and tax breaks to attract and retain businesses, fostering economic growth.

The CRA's activities have resulted in several tangible outcomes:

- Revitalized areas: Transformation of blighted districts through new development, park creation, and public space enhancements.
- Historic preservation: Restoration and repurposing of notable buildings within the city's historic core.
- Economic diversification: Increased business activity and job creation through attracted and retained enterprises.
- The agency's impact on Eustis remains an ongoing topic of discussion and analysis, with assessments focusing on factors such as:
- Effectiveness of redevelopment efforts in addressing blight and promoting economic growth.
- Financial sustainability of the CRA's activities and long-term funding sources.
- Balance between historic preservation and modern development goals.

## EUSTIS HISTORIC DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

The Eustis Commercial Historic District was designated a National Historic Place in 2005. The district spans portions of six city blocks, including Ferran Park to the West and North Grove Street to the East. It consists of twenty commercial buildings, City Hall, Ferran Park and the Alice McClelland Band Shell (both already registered Historic Places). The historical period of significance is 1881-1955.



*CRA Boundary of Eustis and Historic Downtown District*



## UNDERUTILIZED LAND

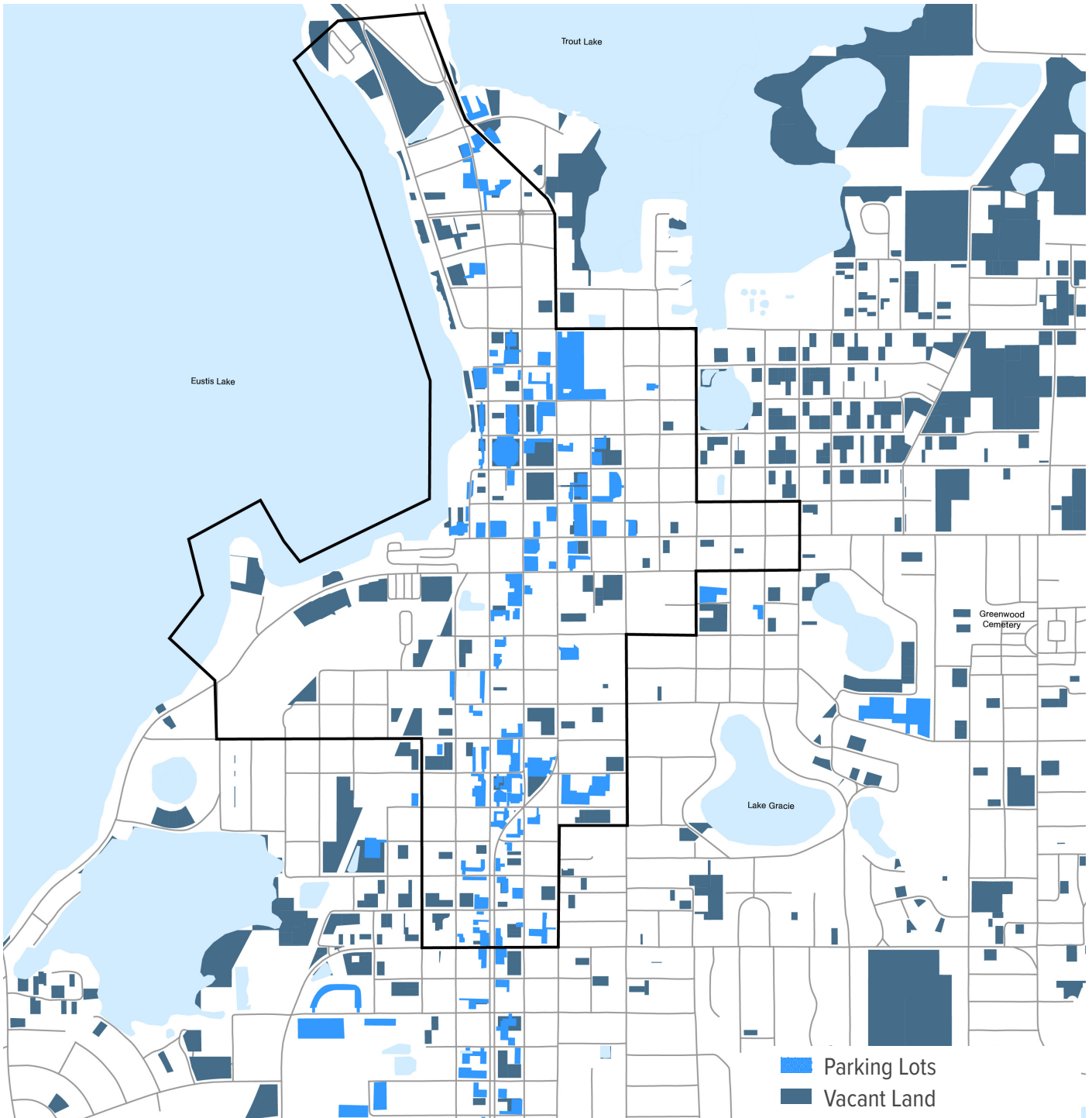
The study area holds significant vacant land, primarily surface parking, notably concentrated downtown. Leveraging this presents opportunities and challenges:

### Opportunities:

- **Mixed-Use Transformation:** Redeveloping parking areas for mixed-use purposes enhances vibrancy.
- **Green Infrastructure:** Convert vacant land to green spaces, improving water quality and stormwater management.
- **Economic Growth:** Stimulate economic development by repurposing vacant areas for commercial and residential use.
- **Community Engagement:** Involve the community in planning to ensure developments meet resident needs.
- **Climate Resilience:** Transforming parking spaces into green features enhances the city's resilience to climate impacts.

### Challenges:

- **Parking Loss:** Repurposing may temporarily reduce parking, necessitating alternative solutions.
- **Financial Considerations:** Redevelopment requires investment, necessitating funding strategies.
- **Traffic Adjustments:** Changes may impact traffic; careful planning mitigates disruptions.
- **Community Response:** Some may resist changes, emphasizing the need for effective communication.
- **Environmental Assessment:** Prioritize green infrastructure while ensuring an environmentally sound approach to redevelopment.



Parking and Vacant Lots

## PARKING

A significant portion of the land use, shown here, is currently designated as for parking. 5 acres of the 10 acre waterfront is dedicated to parking. The City owns most of these parcels. Paid parking appears non-existent. Designated time limits are few and enforcement is not obvious. Parking signs observed seem to prohibit “truck” and “semi-truck” parking but offer no restrictions for passenger vehicles.

Street parking appears available throughout downtown. In most cases it is not designated by signage. The plots shown on the adjacent map do not highlight these totals but should be considered when reviewing total parking throughout downtown. Grove Square and the two noted city-owned lots below total approximately 6 acres of parking.



*Grove Square Parking Lot - 4 Acres*



*Bates Avenue City Lot*



*McDonald Avenue and Eustis Library - Street and Lot Parking, Typical*



*Clifford Avenue City Lot*





Parking Lots in the Study Area

## LAND USE, ZONING, AND BUILDING FORM

### EXISTING LAND USE

The land use mapping of Eustis depicts a comprehensive urban fabric, delineating distinct zones within the city’s landscape. As of the latest documented update in January 2022, Eustis exhibits a balanced combination of residential, commercial, and recreational areas.

Specifically, the downtown area of Eustis stands as a focal point, showcasing a blend of historical significance and contemporary functionality. This central district is characterized by a collection of well-preserved buildings that reflect the city’s heritage, offering a glimpse into its past while accommodating modern businesses, cultural establishments, and civic functions. The downtown core serves as an economic hub housing a diverse array of local enterprises, dining venues, cultural attractions, and administrative offices.

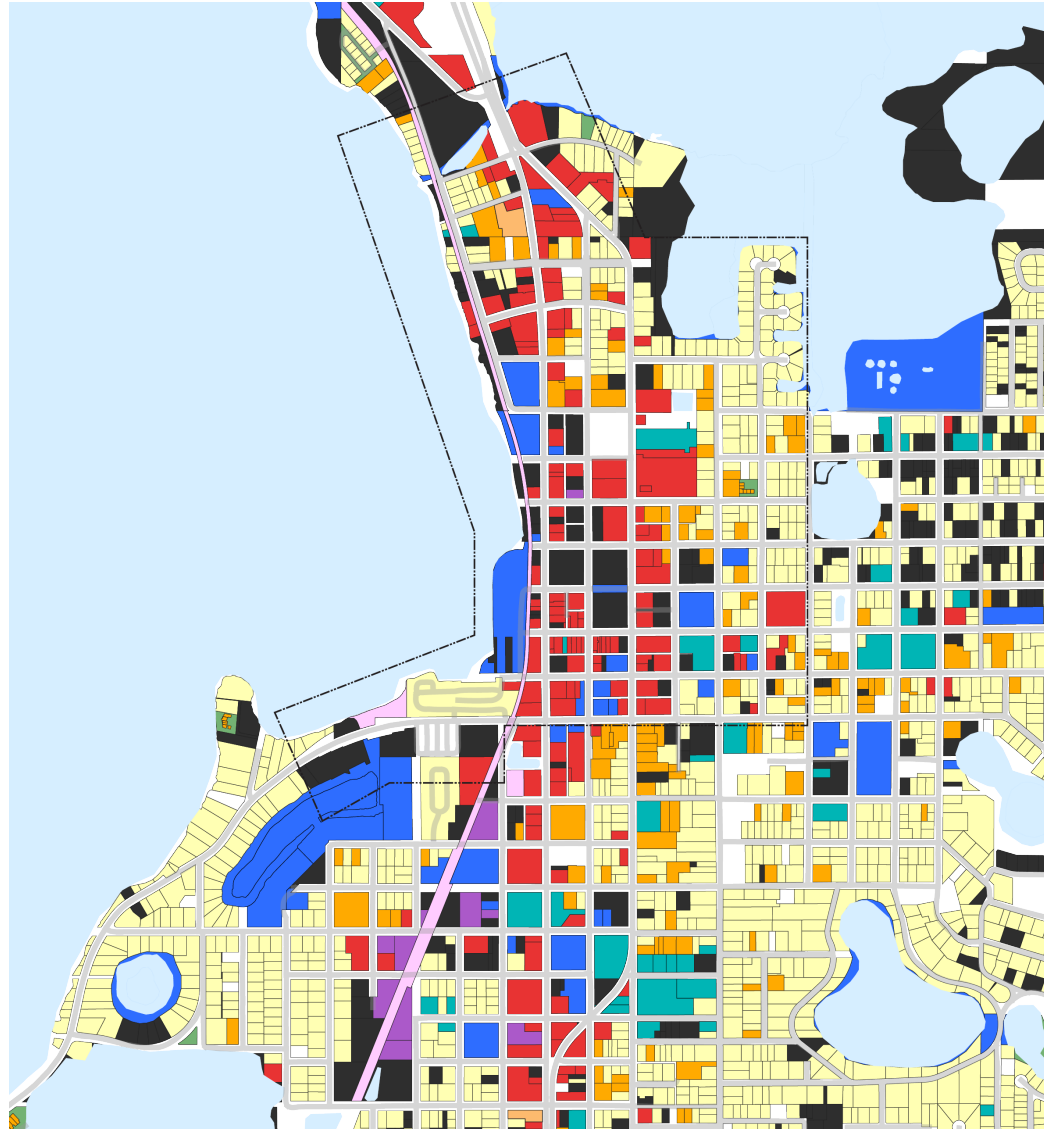
Beyond its historical relevance, the downtown area is a catalyst for community engagement and social activities. It hosts various events, festivals, and gatherings, fostering a sense of unity and civic pride among residents and visitors alike.

Surrounding the downtown nucleus, Eustis encompasses residential neighborhoods featuring a mix of housing options, including single-family homes, townhouses, and apartment complexes, catering to the diverse needs of its inhabitants.

Commercial spaces are strategically integrated throughout the city, contributing to its economic vitality. These areas encompass retail centers, professional services, dining establishments, and other businesses that serve the daily requirements of the local populace.

Furthermore, the land use map highlights the presence of recreational spaces such as parks, greenways, and recreational facilities distributed across the city. These areas provide opportunities for outdoor activities, sports, and leisure pursuits, promoting a healthy and active lifestyle for Eustis residents.

- Single Family Residence
- Multi-Family Residence
- Commercial
- Industrial/Manufacturing
- Public Facilities and Institutions
- Religious Institutions
- Open Space
- Transportation/Utility
- Vacant
- No Data
- Study Area





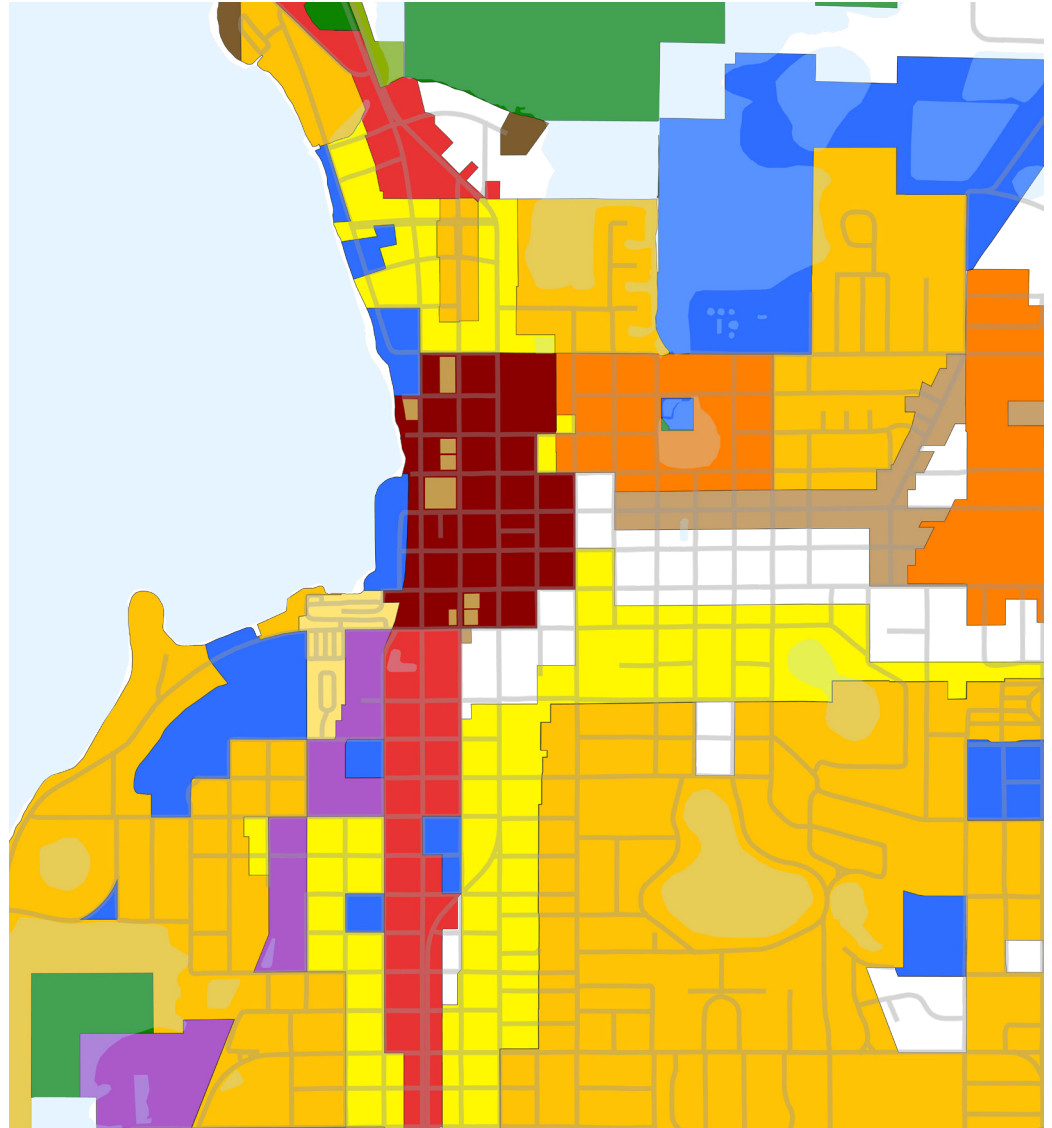
## **FUTURE LAND USE**

Eustis utilizes a unique zoning system based on the Future Land Use Map and Land Development Regulations (LDR) instead of traditional zoning districts. This approach aims to achieve coordinated and integrated development while fostering a distinct character in different areas.

Here's a summary of key development standards:

- **Setbacks:** Minimum setbacks vary based on land use and structure type, generally ranging from 5 to 25 feet. Front yard setbacks typically exceed side/rear setbacks.
- **Density:** Maximum density limits are set for each land use district, measured by dwelling units per acre, floor area ratio (FAR), or other methods. Cluster development may be allowed in some cases.
- **Building Height:** Maximum heights range from one to three stories, depending on the district. Exceptions may be granted for specific projects.
- **Parking:** Minimum parking requirements are based on use and building size. Alternative solutions like shared parking may be permitted.
- **Landscaping:** A percentage of the lot must be dedicated to landscaping, with specific requirements for tree planting, groundcover, and irrigation. Native landscaping is encouraged.

- Rural Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Urban Residential
- Manufactured Home Community
- General Commercial
- General Industrial
- Central Business District
- Residential/Office Transitional
- Mixed Commercial/Residential
- Agricultural
- Conservation
- Lake
- Public/Institution
- No Data
- Study Area



## **EUSTIS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Eustis' Commercial Historic District encompasses a vibrant area with diverse architectural styles and significant historical value. Building Design Standards - Section 115-6 within the Land Development Regulations (LDR) aims to preserve the historic character while promoting mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development.

Benefits of the Historic District:

- Preservation of historic character: The regulations help ensure the long-term preservation of the historic buildings and structures that define Eustis' downtown.
- Economic development: The district attracts businesses and residents, contributing to the economic vitality of Eustis.

Enhanced quality of life: The regulations promote a pedestrian-friendly, vibrant environment with a unique sense of place.

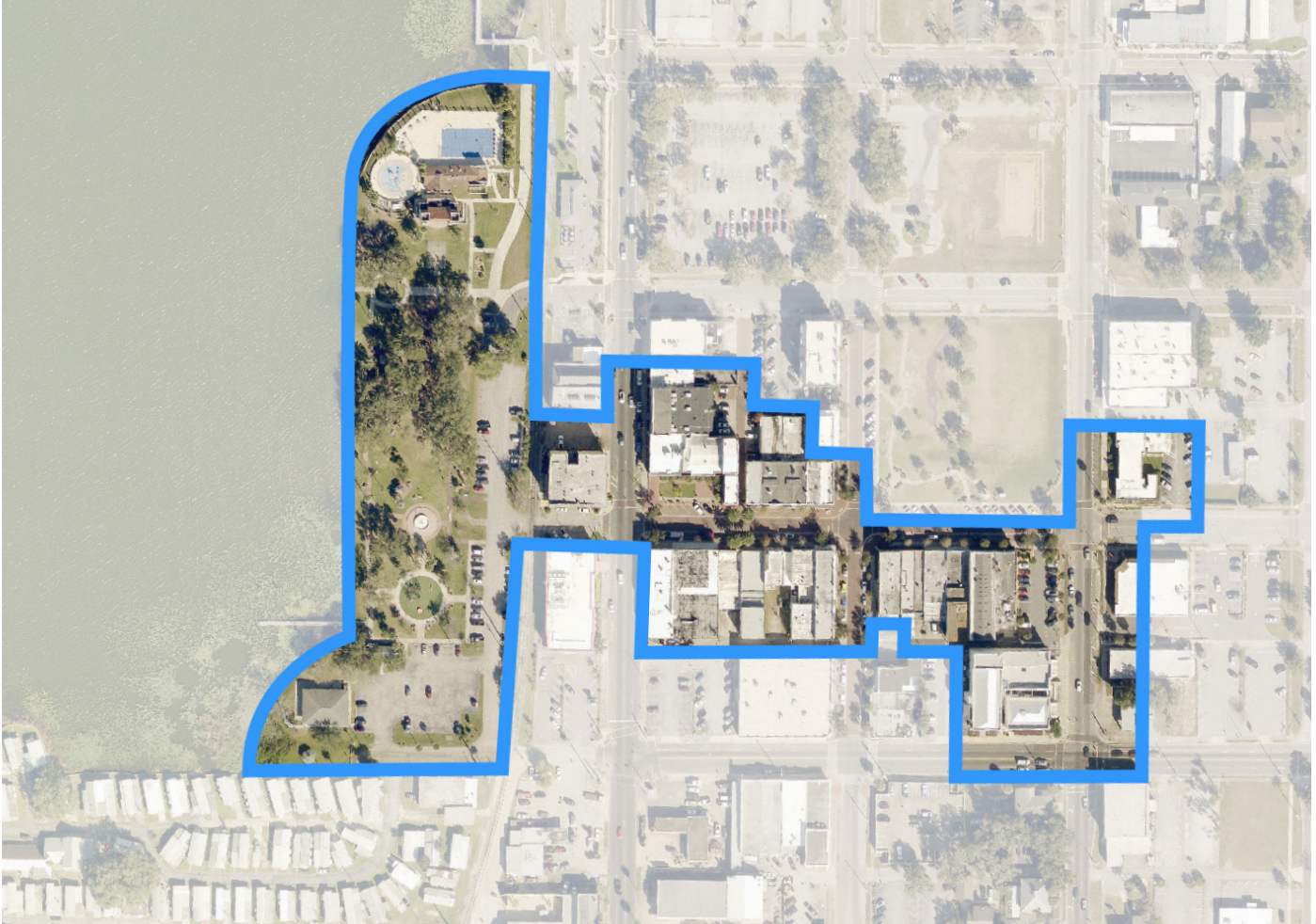
Permitted Uses:

- Apartments
- Live/Work Units
- Mixed-Use
- Civic Buildings
- Restaurants
- Professional Offices
- Entertainment Venues

Additional Considerations:

- The Eustis Building Design Standards provides guidelines for development within the district.
- The Eustis Historic Preservation Board does not play a crucial role in reviewing and approving development proposals. Administrative staff approves proposals.
- Developers are encouraged to consult with the Planning Department and the City's Administration early in the planning process.





*Eustis Commercial Historic District (as listed on the National Register of Historic Places)*



## DOWNTOWN ENTRANCES TO THE WATERFRONT

Road extensions to the waterfront are diverse:

- Clifford Ave has no vehicular entrance. Views to the water are not obscured.
- McDonald and Magnolia Ave provide vehicular access to brick-lined, park-adjacent parking lots. Magnolia Ave, as the central axis of downtown is the primary entrance to Ferran Park. Both views are obscured by Ferran Park.
- Orange Ave is a major inbound road to Downtown Eustis. Its access to the waterfront is at the southern edge of Ferran Park. Water view is obscured by parking and outbuildings.



*Clifford Avenue at Bay Street*



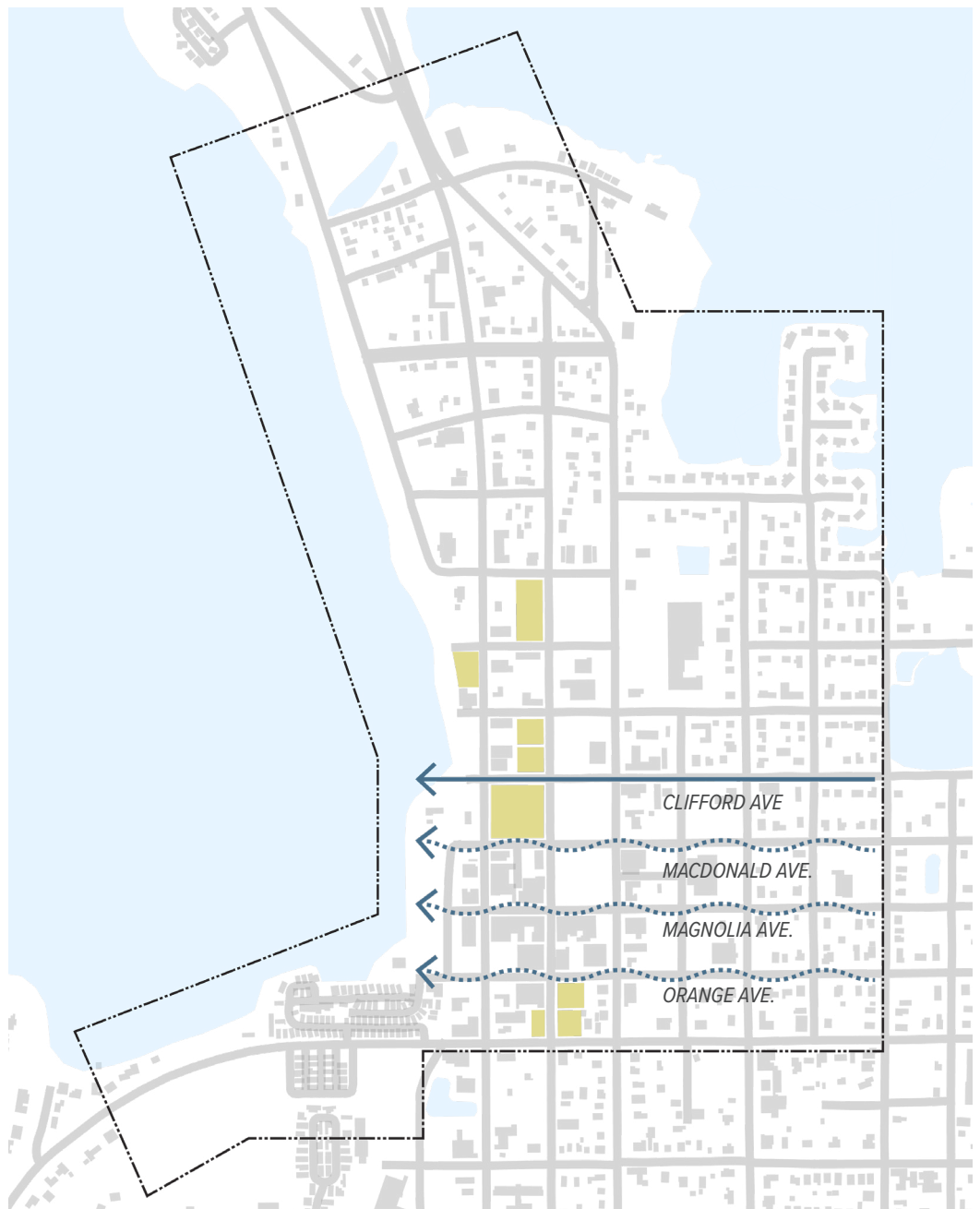
*McDonald Avenue at Bay Street*



*Magnolia Avenue at Bay Street*



*Orange Avenue at Bay Street*



Street-end views



## MARKET ANALYSIS

To analyze the market opportunity for various land uses in Downtown Eustis (“Downtown Study Area”), Johnson Consulting conducted an analysis of demographic and economic conditions in the defined Downtown Study Area, relative to the City of Eustis and the broader region. The key objectives of the analysis were to identify structural factors, strengths, and weaknesses that may affect the market’s ongoing competitive position and to gauge the level of support that exists for various new developments and activities in the Downtown Study Area.

A summary of these findings are found here with an expanded narrative and document provided in the accompanying appendix.

### SUMMARY OF MARKET SUPPORTABLE USES

Based upon the preceding analysis, it is our assessment that there is sufficient market-driven demand to support a moderate amount of new development within the Downtown Study Area, as summarized on the following page.

The size and role of the Downtown Study Area does not lend itself to large-scale development as an effective means of driving new demand to the market. Initially, development initiatives should focus on activating and leveraging the market’s key attribute – the waterfront – supplemented by targeted small- to mid-scale developments. This will set the foundation for attracting visitors, workers and residents to the Downtown Study Area and support supplemental development in subsequent phases.

The predominant opportunities within the Downtown Study Area include:

- **Hotel/ Event Space:** A new boutique hotel, offering 60-80 guest rooms and incorporating approximately 15,000 SF of event space, along with a rooftop to capitalize on views. A hotel of this size will fill a gap in the marketplace for both lodging and event space and create a destination for both visitors and residents alike. The Waterman site could be an ideal location for a new hotel/ event space.
- **Retail/ Restaurants:** Downtown Eustis can absorb upwards of 18,000 SF of retail at current residential levels. As the number of downtown residents grow, demand will retail will continue to increase. A small format/ neighborhood grocery store of 10,000-12,000 SF should be considered to serve residents, workers and visitors within the Downtown Study Area and address current issues of low access to a supermarket. Additional retail space should focus on restaurants/ dining opportunities particularly along the waterfront. This, in conjunction with other improvements along the waterfront, will create a unique destination that will attract visitors, residents and workers to the Downtown Study Area.

Subsequent opportunities may include:

- Residential: A moderate number of residential apartments and/ or condos (approximately, 14-93 units) would increase the critical mass of residents in the Downtown Study Area. However, it is anticipated that additional amenities, particularly recreation and retail/ dining opportunities as described above, will be necessary to support demand. In turn, new residents will drive demand for additional amenities, which will serve to attract more new residents to the Downtown Study Area.
- Office: There may be unmet demand for a small amount of office space (approximately 10,000 SF) in the Downtown Study Area, although speculative office development is not recommended. Office space that is either pre-leased or will serve as a supportive function for the balance of improvements to the Study Area could be contemplated and at a later stage.
- Education: Building upon the presence of Lake County Technical College and the newly opened UCF Business Incubator-Eustis, attracting additional education uses, such as a satellite campus of a local or regional higher education institution, could be a major demand generator for the Downtown Study Area. This would need to be concurrent to a strategy designed to create workforce opportunities that would encourage students to stay in Eustis following graduation.

Capitalizing on the Downtown Study Area's waterfront, in conjunction with a catalytic development on the Waterman site, will set a foundation, and create necessary critical mass, for attracting new demand. In turn, this will provide momentum for additional development throughout the downtown core, thereby serving to enhance the role of Eustis as a destination for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

## EXISTING INVENTORY



### HOTEL

23 Rooms



### PROFESSIONAL OFFICE

167,706 SF

3.3% Vacancy Rate

3,543 SF 5-yr Ave. Annual Absorption



### RETAIL/RESTAURANTS

413,647 SF

0% Vacancy Rate

6,057 SF 5-yr Ave. Annual Absorption



### EVENT/RECREATIONAL/CULTURAL

Alice McClelland Band Shell, Aquatic Center,  
Bay Street Theater



### MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

135 Units

8.7% Vacancy Rate

3 units 5-yr Ave. Annual Absorption

## MARKET-SUPPORTED NEW DEVELOPMENT



### HOTEL

60-80 Rooms / 50,000 SF



### PROFESSIONAL OFFICE

10,000 SF



### RETAIL/RESTAURANTS

18,000 SF



### EVENT/RECREATIONAL/CULTURAL

15,000 SF



### MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

14-93 Units



3

**COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**

To ensure the Downtown Eustis Master Plan accurately encapsulate the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders in the downtown area, multiple avenues for input were facilitated. These avenues encompassed two public open houses held locally, an online survey, a sequence of meetings involving local stakeholders and discussions with the Downtown Master Plan Project Management Team, pop-up intercept events, individual one-on-one conversations, and other engagement initiatives. Our plan is a culmination of insights gathered from a diverse cross-section of the Downtown Eustis community, truly representing their perspectives and those of the wider City population.

## **DOWNTOWN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Master Plan for Downtown Eustis takes a central role in the city’s comprehensive redevelopment and investment strategy. It focuses on a vision that can be reached by embracing plan goals, setting metrics for success, working with public and private partners, and continuing inclusive engagement activities.

Specifically tailored to the full range of downtown constituents, including residents, small business owners and operators, property owners, the Chamber of Commerce, the Realtors Association, and other identified stakeholders, such as Eustis High School students, faculty and administrators, this Plan prioritized strategic and targeted engagement. Special efforts were undertaken to ensure a diverse array of individuals and groups were represented and heard during the planning process.

Steering the endeavor, the Project Management Team played a pivotal role in guiding the process and amplifying community awareness about the Downtown Master Plan.

In the spirit of transparent communication and accessibility, various innovative engagement tools were employed. These ranged from digital online tools like Zoom, Miro, Typeform, and Konveio for hybrid or web-based gatherings, to tailored creative exercises such as sticky notes, comment cards, and mapping activities at in-person engagement sessions. These engagement tools were used to clearly communicate preliminary concepts and solicit meaningful input and feedback at each step of the planning and design process.



What's missing in downtown Eustis?  
your vision and help shape the future.



**W Architecture and Landscape Architecture**  
**374 Fulton Street**  
**3rd Floor**  
**Brooklyn, NY 11201**

*Eustis Downtown Masterplan Development*  
MIG + W Architecture and Landscape Architecture  
2023 Public Engagement





## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Throughout the planning process, the Project Management Team held individual and virtual meetings with stakeholders to hear their concerns and test their ideas. These sessions were attended by downtown small business owners, property owners, downtown-related board/commission chairs or members, and non-profit leaders.

### ONLINE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Two online surveys were conducted for those who could not attend the in-person community engagement sessions (see below). The responses were recorded and synthesized, and factored into subsequent recommendations, presentations, work sessions, and public engagements.

### COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

The first Community Workshop was held on Thursday, August 17, 2023 at the Community Center to solicit input on the direction for the Downtown Eustis Master Plan and the development potential of the former Waterman Hospital site.

The Project Management Team made a presentation that included the purpose of the Master Plan, project scope and timeline, roles and responsibilities of the team members, and next steps in the planning process and community engagement. Feedback was gathered through a Q&A and facilitated discussion with the public interacting with printed boards.

### COMMISSIONER'S TOWNHALL

The second Community Workshop was advertised as a Town Hall where early thoughts on project goals and vision, along with guiding master plan principles were presented to City Commissioners. The meeting was recorded live. An interactive breakout session was held for members of the public who attended. Poster boards with initial plan direction were placed throughout in City Hall and participants provided feedback via sticker dots and post-it notes.



Word Cloud - Stakeholder and Online Engagement Summary



Word Cloud - Community Engagement Feedback Summary

### EUSTIS HIGH SCHOOL FOCUS GROUP

The design team joined Mayor Michael Holland, Al Latimer, the City’s Economic Development Director, and Communications staff in a focused conversation with the seniors of Eustis High School. Postcards and instructions to an Online survey were distributed at this event to solicit the voices of youth to ensure diversity of input into the Master Plan development. Input from student participants included an interest in more activities along the waterfront, more or no cost opportunities in the downtown core, and more recreational opportunities for youth and residents of all ages.

### GEORGEFEST

MIG and W were present February 22-23, 2024 for an intercept event at Eustis’ annual Georgefest celebration. The longest running celebration of George Washington’s Birthday in the State of Florida, and now the longest, continuously running celebration in the entire United States, the design team set up a tent at the entrance to the waterfront to gather input on the draft Plan recommendations. Project boards conveyed the major recommendations for downtown and for the Waterman site. QR codes were provided for public feedback online through March 15, 2024.



*Eustis High School Focus-Group*



*Commissioner’s Town Hall / Public Engagement Session*







*New development should fit in with the existing [downtown] character*

“

*Along with the safety of pedestrians, it would be nice if the city could address safety for cyclists. Riding a bicycle around Eustis can be somewhat unsafe at times.*

”

*Make [crossing the street] safer for pedestrians to get from Ferran Park to the library.*

”

“

*Mixed-use development with retail and housing that includes parking would help Downtown Eustis*

”

“

*[I would love to see the] Old CSX-railroad eyesore turned into a Rails-to-Trails trail connecting downtown Eustis to Tavares and Mt Dora.*

”

“

*Interconnect the lake walk, Ferran Park and create a lakeshore passive park [in Downtown Eustis]*

”

“

*Differentiate [Downtown] Eustis from Tavares, Mt. Dora, and Orlando*

”

“

*Make Downtown Eustis a Live, Work, Play Community*

”

***Eustis Residents through Community Engagement Events***



**VISION/  
FRAMEWORK**

## DOWNTOWN EUSTIS MASTERPLAN VISION

# ***EUSTIS HAS THE BEST FAMILY-FRIENDLY WATERFRONT DOWNTOWN***

We're dedicated to preserving our character, rooted in multi-generational heritage and brimming with family-friendly charm and American spirit.

Welcome to a green downtown with million-dollar sunsets that honors its history by bridging generations, embraces all by celebrating community, and propels us into a future that is vibrant and uniquely Eustis.

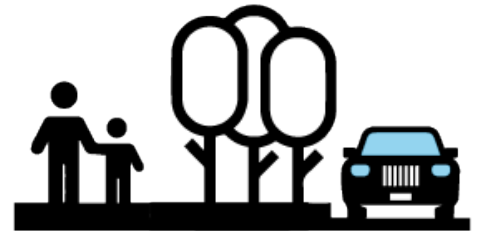


## GOALS

The goals listed below were developed in collaboration with the City of Eustis and its residents to guide development and organization of the Downtown Master Plan and Waterman Site development.



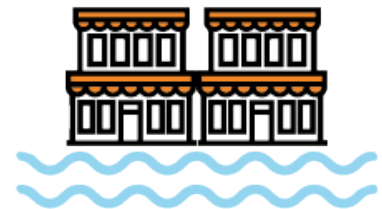
1. Tell the story of Eustis' multigenerational and rich agricultural history.



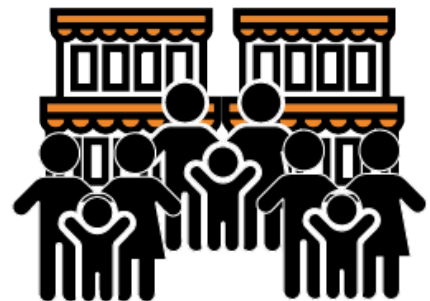
2. Prioritize a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.



3. Leverage tourism to support growth and improvement.



4. Create a true waterfront downtown and downtown waterfront.



5. Make a family-friendly downtown that is welcoming to all Eustis residents.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Early in the process, the following categorical opportunities were established in collaboration with the Project Management Team. Additional opportunities were identified and included throughout the planning process. Each category has corresponding strategies identified within the Framework. Recommendations and Catalyst Projects related to these opportunities and strategies appear in the following chapters.

- Mobility and Parking
- Land Use
- Streetscapes
- Parks and Plazas
- Waterfront
- Identity/Placemaking

## EUSTIS' OWN "GOLDEN TRIANGLE"

The Framework Plan established the vision for Eustis' downtown to become a livable, connected, and safe neighborhood; a thriving center of industriousness, entrepreneurship, and innovation; and a hub of retail, dining, and entertainment options distinct in Lake County. The catalytic opportunity sites to follow are the executable action items that provide a first step in achieving that vision. Paired with a Land Use and Development Strategy, and Supporting Strategies, the Catalytic Opportunity Sites were selected for their ability to achieve that overall vision.

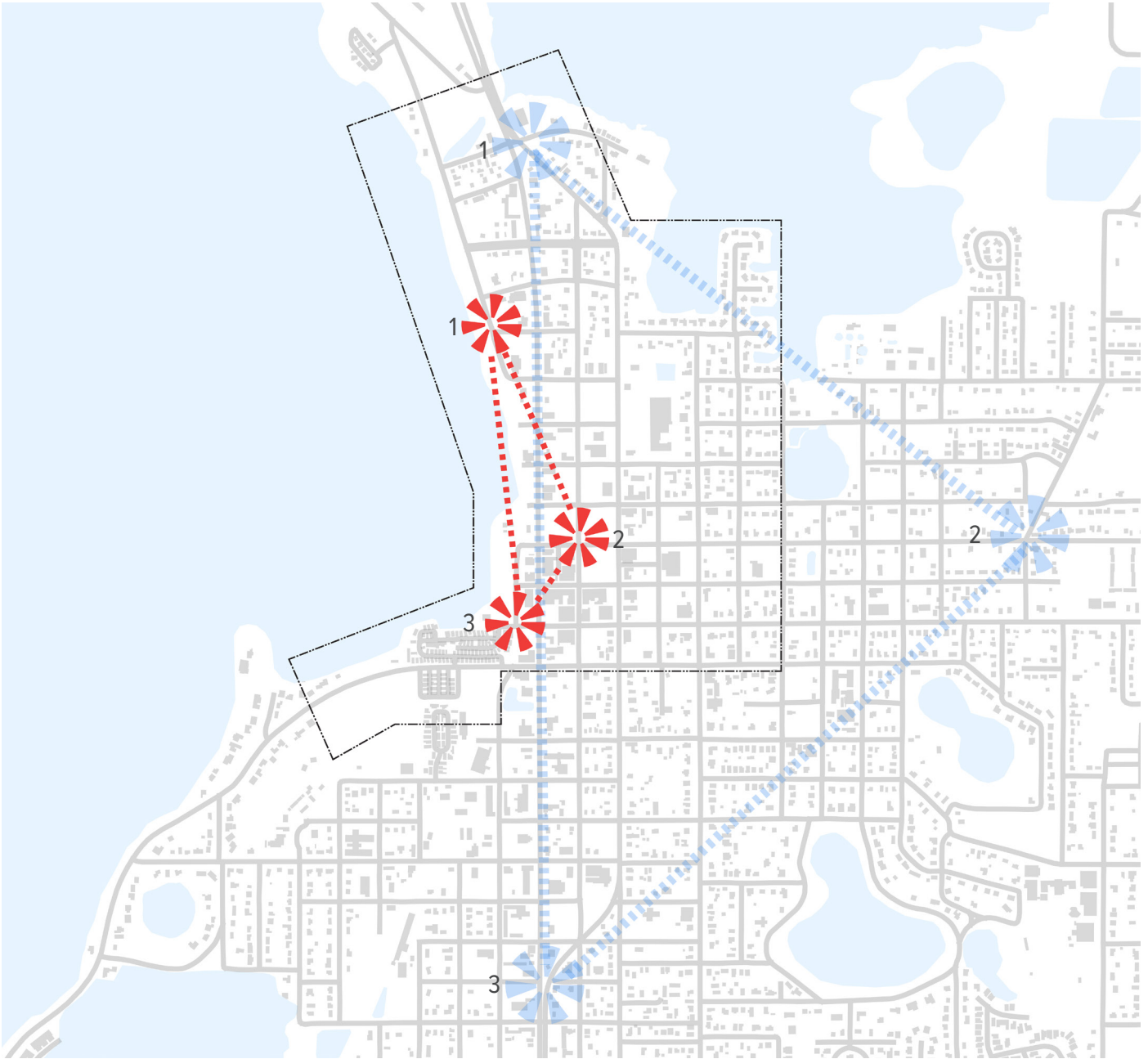
Throughout the course of the planning process, the consulting team and City staff met with a wide variety of stakeholders, local businesses, and local developers. Based on these meetings and a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the current land supply and market demand downtown, catalytic sites were identified as highest priority.

The primary catalytic sites include the following:

1. Community Center
2. Ferran Park Extension
3. Waterman Site

The primary gateway sites include the following:

1. S Bound Bay St
2. Palmetto Plaza
3. N Bound Grove St



Eustis' Own "Golden Triangle" - Catalyst Sites

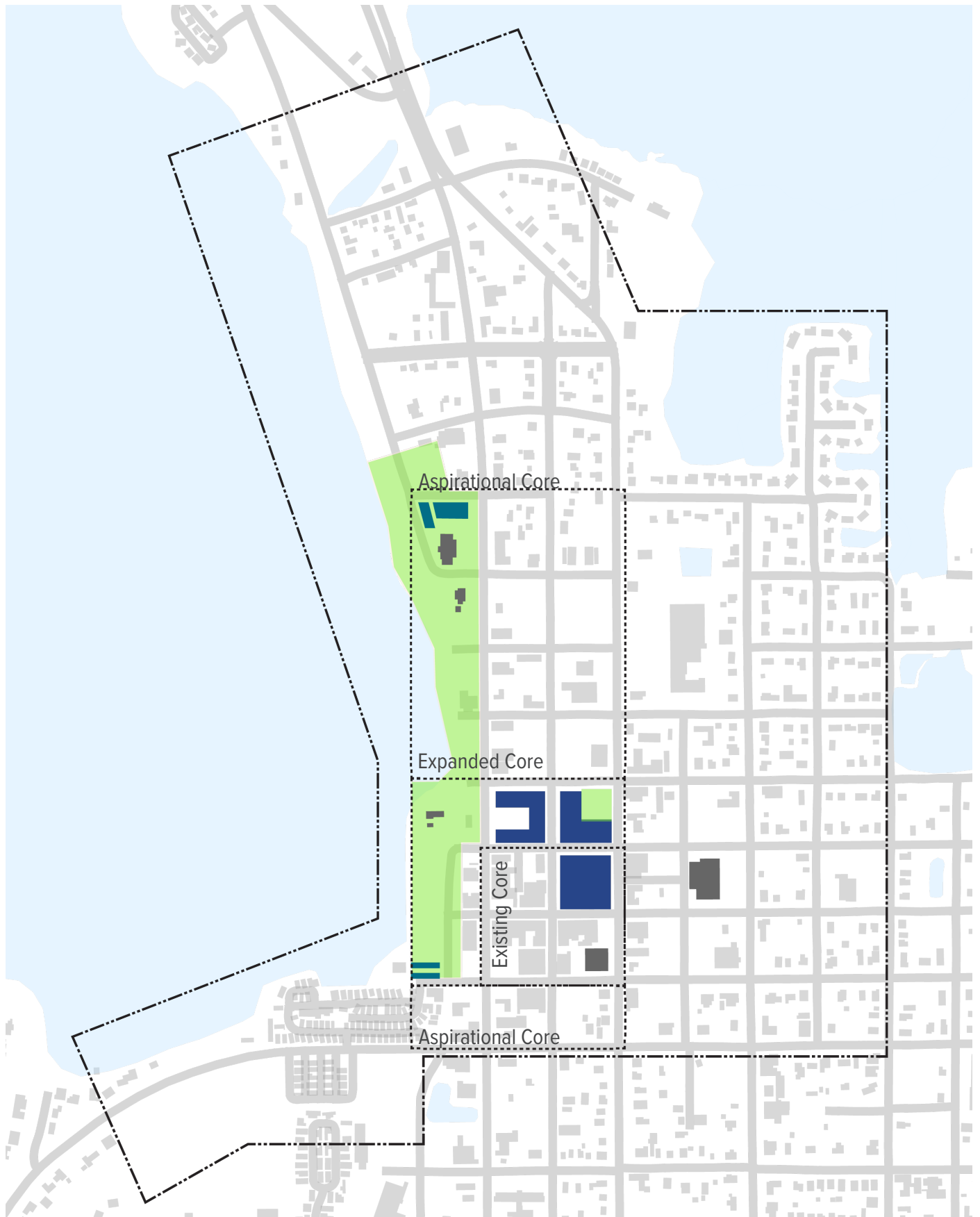


Downtown Eustis Catalyst Sites



Downtown Eustis Gateways





## DEFINING DOWNTOWN

### EXISTING CORE

The existing core is defined by the four blocks surrounding Eustis and Magnolia Streets. It is perceived as such by both residents and visitors due to investment in the City's public realm and streetscapes that have brought vibrancy and investment to the commercial and retail activity that fronts them.

### EXPANDED DOWNTOWN CORE

An expanded core builds on the success of these four blocks. It integrates the Waterman Site and Ferran Park activations and infrastructure improvements - public and private - into a feasible consolidation of increased mixed-use development and placemaking.

### ASPIRATIONAL DOWNTOWN CORE

The full extents of Downtown's transformation will be executed through continued public realm investment in the framework of waterfront park and street improvements proposed in this plans recommendations. By this time, marketing and promotion of downtown Eustis as a waterfront destination will be fully underway and increased resident population and visitorship will have brought new life downtown.

## A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

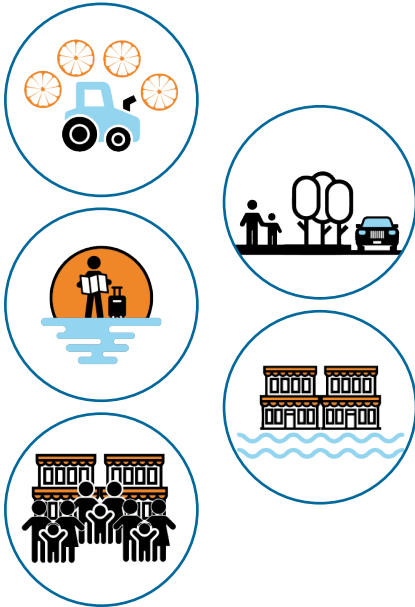
The Downtown Eustis Framework Plan was born from extensive community engagement and outreach, research, and frequent collaboration with the City and community stakeholders.

The focus of the planning study was to identify opportunities and priorities for investment downtown, and to create an environment in which a partnership between private and public interest were aligned. While these opportunities will need to be negotiated and considered with other ongoing planned and ongoing improvements, the proposed improvements will have a clear path to ensure mutual benefit to both residents and visitors alike. All of the projects within this planning study are community supported and feasible with a select subset to be prioritized for immediate funding and implementation.

VISION

# EUSTIS HAS THE BEST FAMILY-FRIENDLY WATERFRONT DOWNTOWN

GOALS

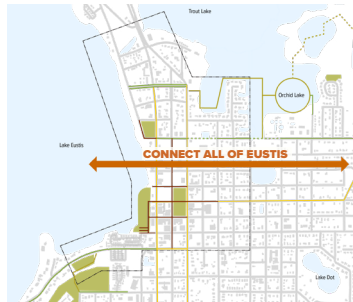


1. TELL THE STORY OF EUSTIS' MULTIGENERATIONAL AND RICH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY
2. PRIORITIZE A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT
3. LEVERAGE TOURISM AND SUPPORT GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT
4. CREATE A TRUE WATERFRONT DOWNTOWN AND DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT
5. MAKE A FAMILY-FRIENDLY DOWNTOWN THAT IS WELCOMING TO ALL EUSTIS RESIDENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS



**EXTEND THE WATERFRONT**



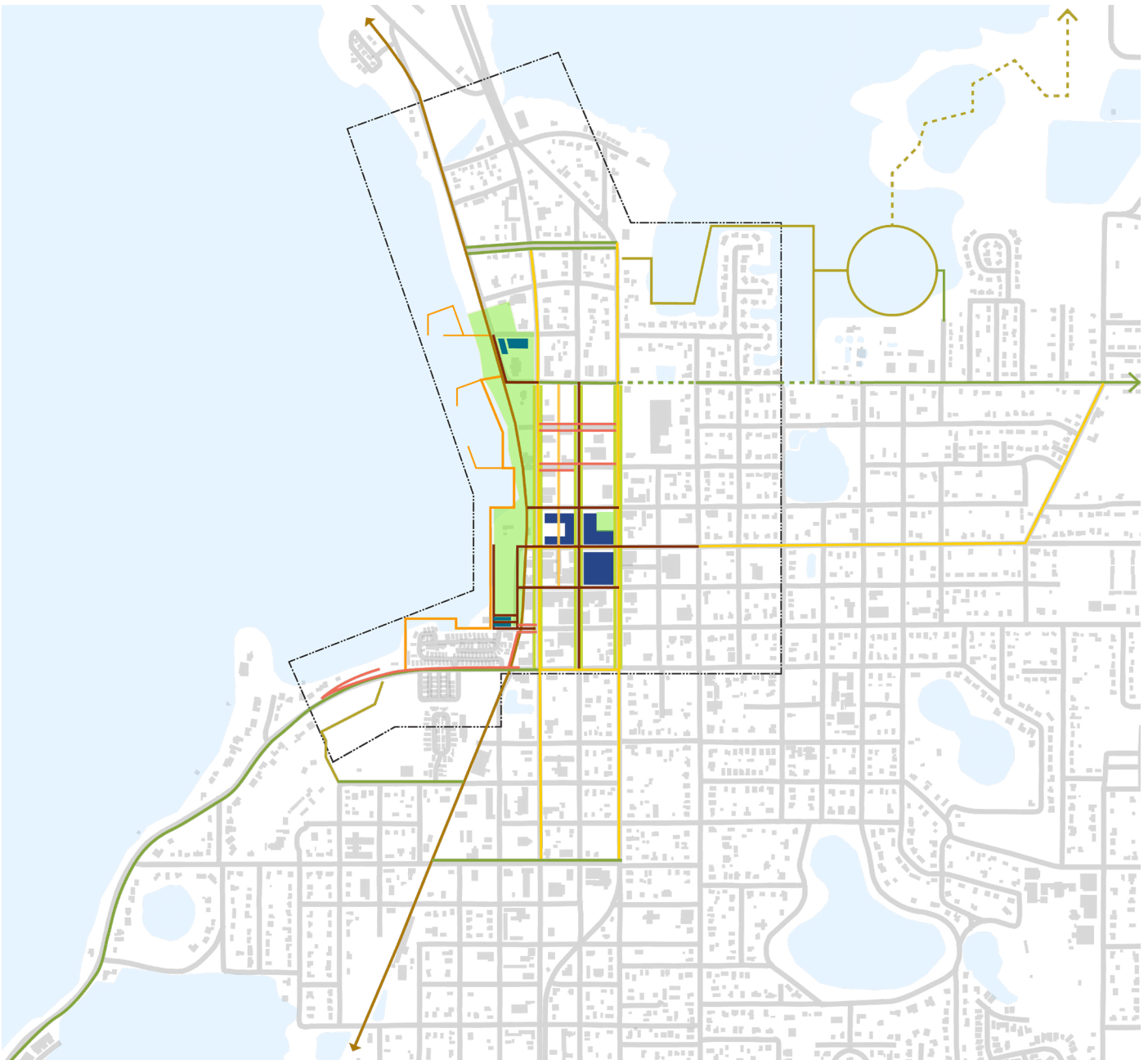
**CONNECT DOWNTOWN**













**EXPAND DOWNTOWN**

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. PUBLIC SPACE AND AMENITIES  | 5. IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY  |
| 2. HISTORIC LEGACY AND SIGNAGE | 6. DOWNTOWN HOUSING        |
| 3. GATEWAYS                    | 7. GROUND FLOOR ACTIVATION |
| 4. BRANDING AND MARKETING      |                            |



Framework Plan 2024

- |  |                                |   |                           |
|--|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|  | Expanded Waterfront Greenspace |  | Midblock Alleyways        |
|  | Waterfront Walkway/Wharf       |  | Bike Network              |
|  | Rail Trail                     |  | Nature Trails             |
|  | Proposed Waterfront Anchors    |  | Sidewalk gaps             |
|  | Street Improvements Boulevards |  | Proposed Downtown Anchors |



5

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **CHARTING A PATH FORWARD**

This chapter outlines recommendations associated with the framework and are applicable to all of Downtown Eustis. Catalyst projects related to these recommendations are supported by ideas that reflect the projects vision and goals, and leverage opportunities the City of Eustis has to enhance Downtown. To fully realize the vision, an organized and actionable approach will be essential.





America's  
**Hometown**

**EUSTIS**



**EUSTIS**



**STOP**

**NO LEFT TURN**

Bay St



The Downtown Eustis Master Plan renews a vision for Eustis to become a livable, connected, and safe waterfront community; a thriving center of arts, culture, and innovation; and a hub of retail, dining, and entertainment options distinct in Lake County.

Catalytic Projects are the executable action items that provide a first step in achieving that vision. Paired with a Land Use and Development Strategy, and Supporting Strategies, Catalytic Projects were selected for their ability to achieve that overall vision.

Throughout the course of the planning process, the consulting team and City staff met with a wide variety of stakeholders, local businesses, and local developers. Based on these meetings, input from the public, and a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the current land supply and market demand Downtown, the following catalytic projects were identified as highest priority.

## 5.1 EXTEND THE WATERFRONT

*CREATE A CONTINUOUS WATERFRONT PROMENADE*

*REIMAGINE AN ACTIVE RAIL PROMENADE*

*CREATE NEW ANCHORS WITHIN THE PARK*

*PROMOTE EUSTIS AS A WATERFRONT DESTINATION*

*FERRAN PARK- WATERFRONT ACTIVATION*

## 5.2 CONNECT DOWNTOWN

*CONNECT*

*EXPAND A WALKABLE DOWNTOWN CHARACTER AND CHARM*

*STREET TYPOLOGIES*

*UPON STATE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS/SAFE CROSSINGS*

*PARKING*

## 5.3 EXPAND DOWNTOWN

*CREATE ANCHORS DOWNTOWN*

*THE WATERMAN SITE*

## EXISTING WATERFRONT ASSETS/ OPPORTUNITIES

Eustis’s waterfront is a gateway poised to unlock regional potential. A tapestry of existing assets presents an opportunity for capital projects, both CRA and city-funded, to weave a new economic and recreational fabric, drawing visitors from across the county and beyond.

Capital projects are key. With strategic investing in infrastructure and amenities, the waterfront can transform into a magnet for investment and tourism. Studies have shown that park-adjacent CBD developments enjoy significant advantages. Leases fill faster, rents climb higher, and downturns sting less when nestled alongside vibrant green spaces and dynamic waterfronts.

Eustis’s existing assets are the threads, its capital projects the loom, and its regional potential the vibrant tapestry waiting to be woven.



*Ferran Park and Bandshell*



*Lake Walk*

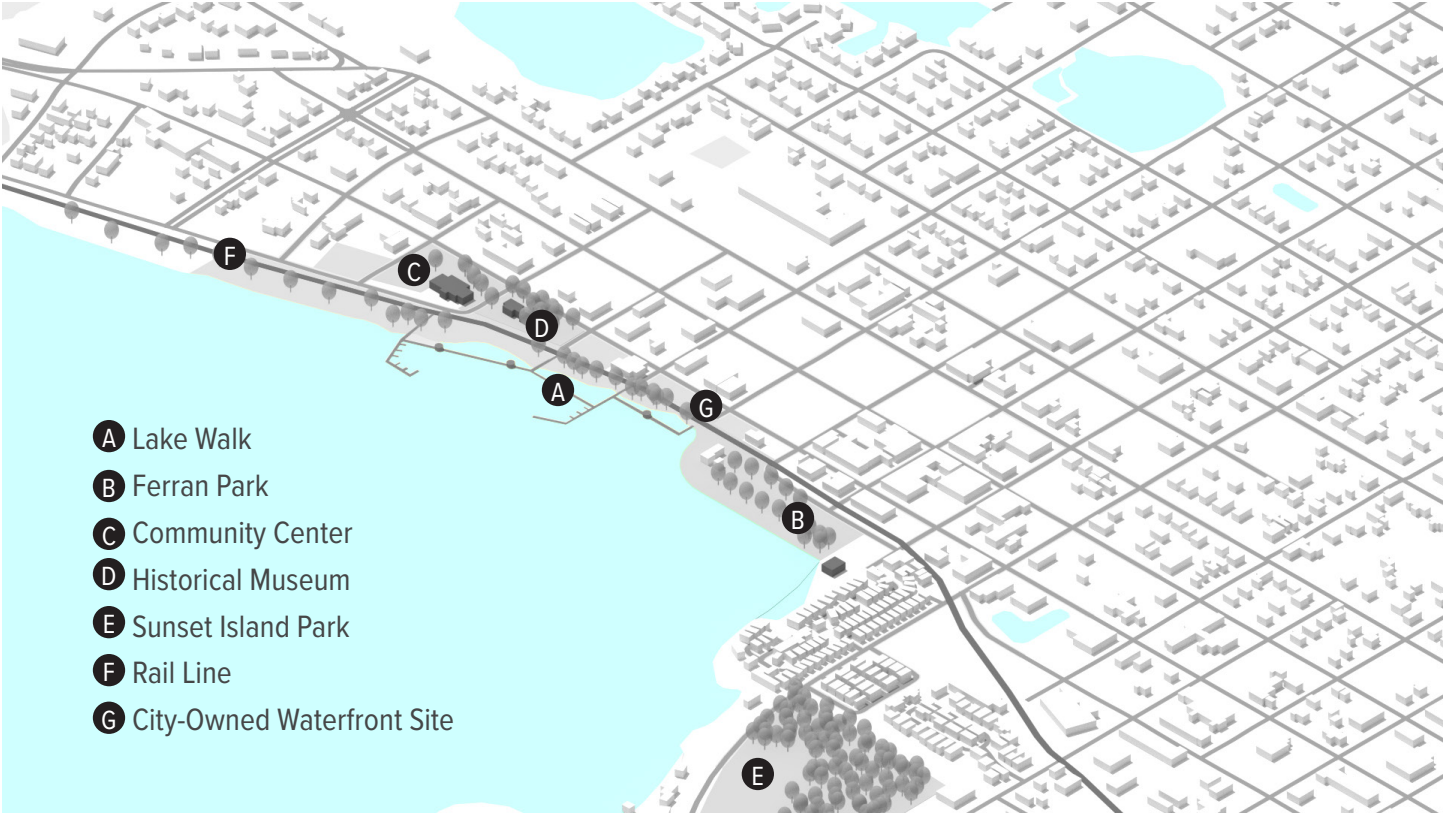


*Historical Museum and Waterfront*



*Waterfront Promenade*





# **5.1 EXTEND THE WATERFRONT**

## LAKE EUSTIS WATERFRONT: A CATALYST FOR GROWTH

The waterfront of Lake Eustis stands as an inherent asset poised to drive significant transformation and prosperity for the city. A strategic approach in harnessing this resource presents an opportunity to create a vibrant urban landscape that amalgamates social, economic, and environmental benefits.

Socially, the envisioned development and continued improvement to Ferran Park and the open spaces that front Lake Eustis will foster a sense of community and belonging among residents. These planned improvements will birth a vital destination, not just for recreation but for cultural exchange, events, and communal gatherings, nurturing a cohesive and inclusive urban fabric.

Economically, the optimized utilization of the Lake Eustis waterfront holds promise in invigorating local commerce. The strategic design of these spaces will attract businesses, residents, and visitors alike, generating increased foot traffic and supporting the growth of adjacent commercial districts. This catalytic effect is anticipated to elevate retail activity, bolster restaurant and entertainment venues, and enhance property values, thereby igniting economic vitality in the region.

Furthermore, the proposed development initiatives embrace environmental sustainability by incorporating green infrastructure along the lakefront. These plans will counter the urban heat island effect, enhance air quality, and preserve the natural ecosystem, promoting a harmonious coexistence between urban development and nature.

The Lake Eustis waterfront presents an invaluable opportunity to reinvigorate the cityscape, transforming it into a thriving, resilient, and sustainable urban center. Implementation of thoughtful planning strategies and community-driven initiatives will harness the full potential of this waterfront, making it a cornerstone for city growth and prosperity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In reimagining Eustis' lakefront, the “Extend the Waterfront” section stands as a pivotal chapter in our Master Plan, transcending mere expansion to redefine the city's public realm. Through strategic land consolidation, reduced single-use parking areas, enhanced programming, and meticulous streetscape development, our vision crafts a pedestrian-friendly waterfront haven. This initiative focuses on creating an accessible public space with new furnishings, innovative lighting, and an extended lake walk, complemented by a converted rail-to-trail corridor and robust programming supported by CRA funds.

These enhancements resonate along Bay Street, where retail and commercial activities seamlessly complement the park, creating a dynamic waterfront destination. “Extend the Waterfront” orchestrates Eustis' lakefront into a hub of community engagement, commerce, and recreation – a strategic vision explored in detail throughout this section.

1. Establish flexible zoning and design guidelines that encourage innovation and adaptation. Examining the approaches of cities like Portland and Seattle can provide insights into regulatory frameworks that support dynamic waterfront development.
2. Integrate public art installations and sculptures that contribute to the aesthetic appeal and cultural richness of the waterfront.
3. Prioritize flood resilience and water management strategies, as seen in cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Sustainable waterfronts account for potential climate challenges, ensuring long-term viability.
4. Preserve and integrate historical and cultural assets adding character and authenticity to the waterfront.
5. Explore effective public-private partnerships, like Boston and Pittsburgh, to spur successful waterfront revitalization.
6. Focus on connectivity and accessibility to improve access and encourage exploration of the waterfront.
7. Prioritize green infrastructure and sustainable design principles to support environmental conservation and improve community well-being.
8. Embrace a diverse range of cultural and recreational programming. Learning from cities like San Antonio and Providence, a dynamic events calendar enhances community interaction and attracts visitors.





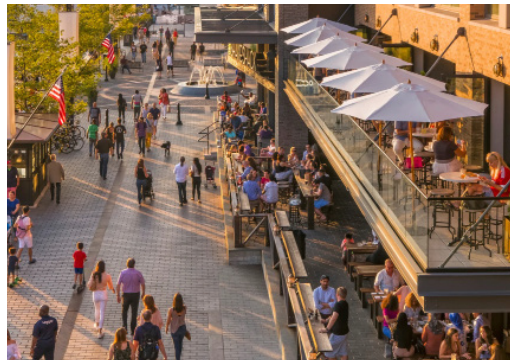
## CREATE A CONTINUOUS WATERFRONT PROMENADE

Imagine a revitalized waterfront buzzing with activity, not just within its own borders, but radiating throughout the city and beyond. Picture the buzz of a vibrant, expanded Ferran Park, its playgrounds overflowing with laughter, its boat docks a hub for aquatic adventures, and its green spaces echoing with the melodies of open-air concerts.

Expansive green-ways passing through historic sites, their stories whispered by captivating exhibits in a revitalized museum. Envision a network of pedestrian and cycling paths seamlessly connecting to a bustling rail corridor, its re-purposed cars transformed into mobile cafes and art galleries. Imagine festivals spilling onto the lake walk, drawing crowds with their music and merriment. Picture boat rentals departing from Ferran Park, weaving tales of Eustis’s past and present, their engines humming with economic opportunity.



*Granville Island, Vancouver, BC Canada*



*The Wharf, Washington DC*



*St. Pete Pier, St Petersburg, FL*



*Riverwalk, Chicago, IL*



## REIMAGINE AN ACTIVE RAIL PROMENADE

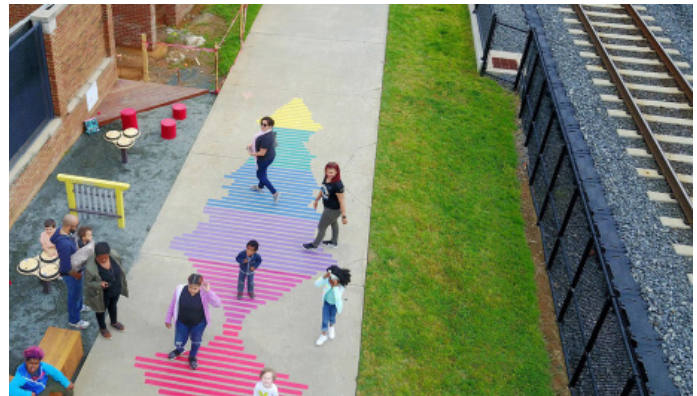
A reimagined rail corridor as a multi-use path offers Eustis a chance to:

- **Connect:** Bridge neighborhoods, stitch together waterfront parcels, and create a seamless flow for pedestrians, cyclists, and even future light-rail.
- **Thrive:** Spark new businesses alongside the path, from waterfront cafes to art galleries, boosting the local economy.
- **Breathe:** Transform concrete into a nature corridor, offering a green escape and a vital link to Lake Eustis.
- **Express:** Provide a canvas for community art and events, fostering a unique identity for the waterfront.

This isn't just a path; it's a declaration of Eustis's commitment to vibrant living, economic growth, and ecological consciousness.



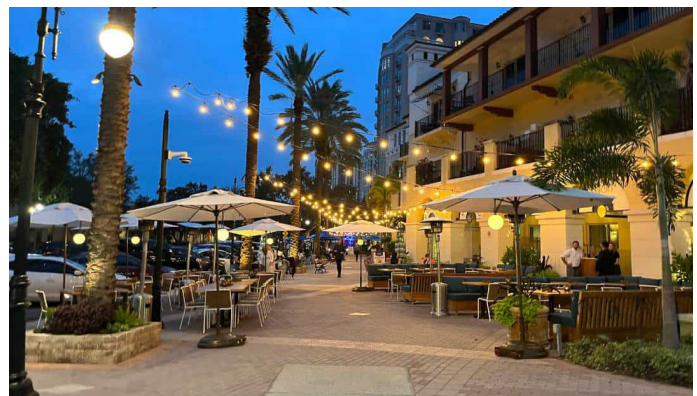
*Shared-use pathways encourage use by all users due to their inviting and safe width and treatment.*



*Art, music, and places to rest encourage use and interest along this multi-modal network.*



*Flexible Space*



*Destination Dining*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### EXISTING FERRAN PARK LAKEFRONT

Ferran Park is the heart of the Downtown Eustis' lakefront. The park provides access to the waterfront along the western edge with a brick walkway. Additionally, the park is accessible via boat with several docks for disembarking. Boat Parking is available at the nearby marina along the Lake Eustis Walk and is connected to Ferran Park via a string of elevated boardwalks. Further connections to other lakefront assets, such as Sunset Park and the Community Center are limited along the waterfront. A continuous lakefront pedestrian and bike path would provide greater connections across the wealth of experiences Eustis offers along its lakefront.



*Existing Walkway at Ferran Park*



## WATERFRONT PROMENADE

The creation of an expanded waterfront promenade would accommodate increased pedestrian traffic, provide more places to touch the waters of Lake Eustis, and preserve the historic nature of Ferran Park. Adding another walkway beyond the seawall of Ferran park provides the opportunity to bypass the Eustis Aquatic Center and create a continuous connection between the Lake Eustis Lake Walk and the Open Air Market at the south end of Ferran Park and Sunset Park beyond.



*Artist Impression - Continuous Waterfront Promenade and Lakewalk*



**EXISTING CSX THROUGH DOWNTOWN EUSTIS**

A multi-use path along or adjacent to the existing CSX rail line can provide a critical bicycle network link that is safe and pleasant for all bicyclists, pedestrians, and other users. The path could ultimately connect the waterfront to residents and neighborhoods on the east side of Downtown via Bates and McDonald Avenue improvements, and ultimately provide a unique linkage to both Mount Dora, Tavares and other multi-use regional trails identified and planned as part of the Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan.



*Existing Ferran Park Entry at Magnolia Avenue*



## REIMAGINED RAIL TRAIL

The existing rail corridor is an ideal route for all levels of bike riders. Proximity to both Ferran Park and Bay Street encourage an agreeable and inviting experience for users. This multi-use path could also be activated with commercial and retail experiences through downtown, creating both resident amenity and economic development through tourism - a unique waterfront destination easily accessible by mobilities beyond the automobile. The image below illustrates how the path could look and feel.



*Artist Impression - Rail Trail Corridor at Magnolia Avenue*



## CREATE NEW ANCHORS WITHIN THE PARK

The development of several new anchor shops, along the waterfront, will help integrate an expanded Ferran Park into the existing downtown fabric. These new establishments will create key access points to the waterfront. On the south end, a new open-air marketplace/food hall could provide a gateway from Orange Avenue. At the north end of the waterfront an expanded community center campus, including a new marina and boathouse would invite entry to downtown.

### OPEN-AIR MARKETPLACE/ FOOD HALL - (FERRAN PARK/ORANGE AVENUE TERMINUS)

The western terminus to Orange Avenue is automobile-oriented (parking at all building frontage, lack of sidewalks and medians interspaced with trees. The former bank building that sits prominently at this intersection is vacant. With the cooperation of private landowners, this property could be redeveloped into a marketplace/food hall, or food incubator that would provide startup space for small food service businesses and a unique community gathering place that is different from the resource platform that exists today. Food carts and trucks can be paired with mini-restaurants and shops to provide a variety of offerings within one relatively small site. Parking would be located within Ferran Park and nearby parking lots. A rail trail could connect directly to this location. A refurbished and reconfigured parking lot within Ferran Park, along with some additional landscaping could provide buffering/mitigation of traffic noise and provide a greener gateway to Ferran Park. It is recommended that the space be open-air but shaded overhead.

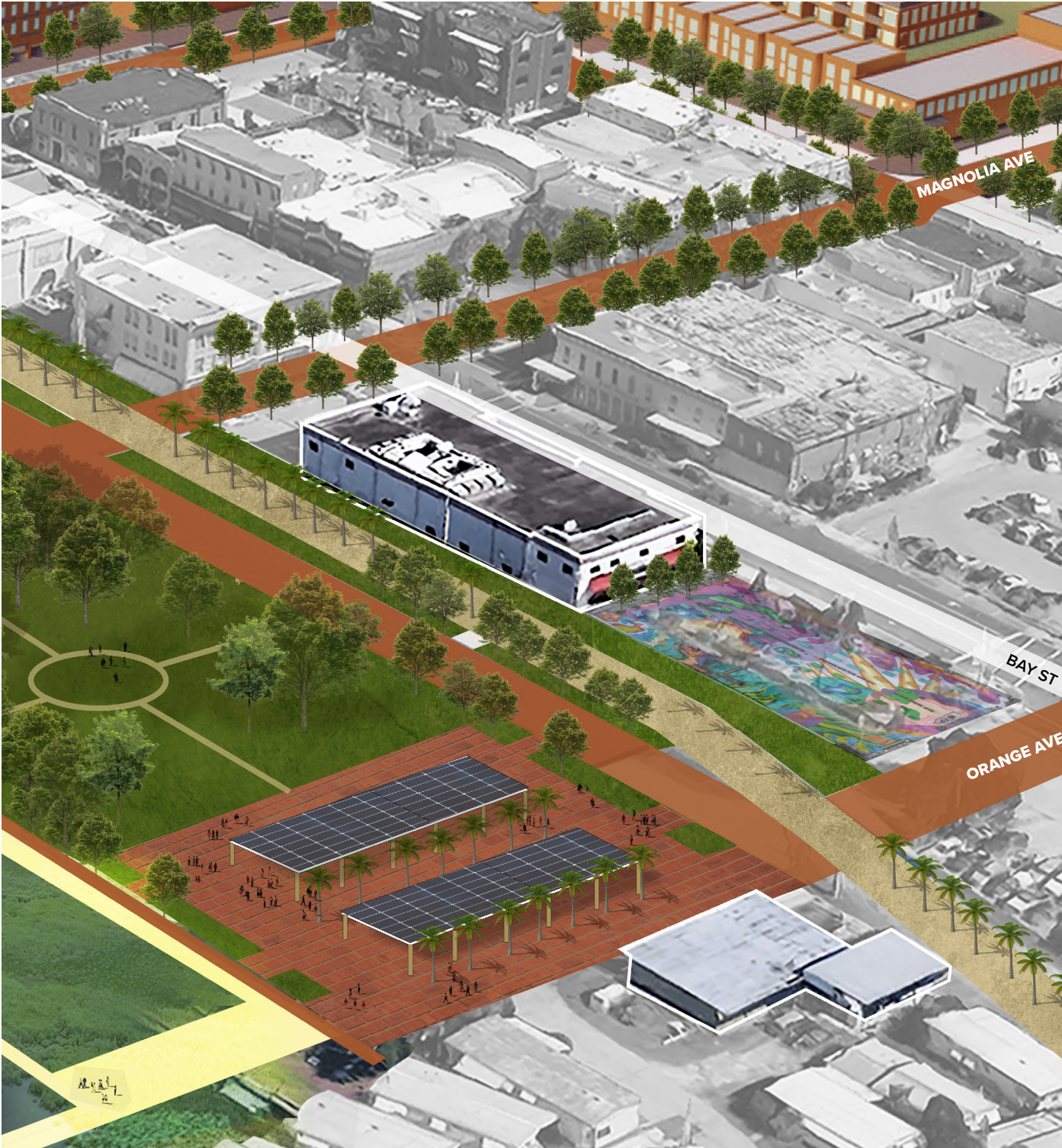


Conversion of surface parking to food-truck and dining space.



Park pavilions bring power and shade to market/artisan vendors.





Artist rendering of reconfigured Ferran Park Parking Lot as flexible market and parking lot



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### EXISTING PARK ENTRY AT ORANGE AVENUE

Orange Avenue (County Road 44) is a major gateway for Downtown Eustis that terminates at Highway 19. As it enters downtown, Highway 19 splits into two one-way roadways. Grove Street proceeds from South to North, and Bay Street proceeds North to South. The uninviting terminus to Orange Avenue at Highway 19 does not reinforce the character of downtown, or the entrance to Ferran Park. Emphasizing the character and charm of Downtown Eustis to commuters in the treatment of major gateways and view corridors will provide a sense of place that reinforces the downtown district.

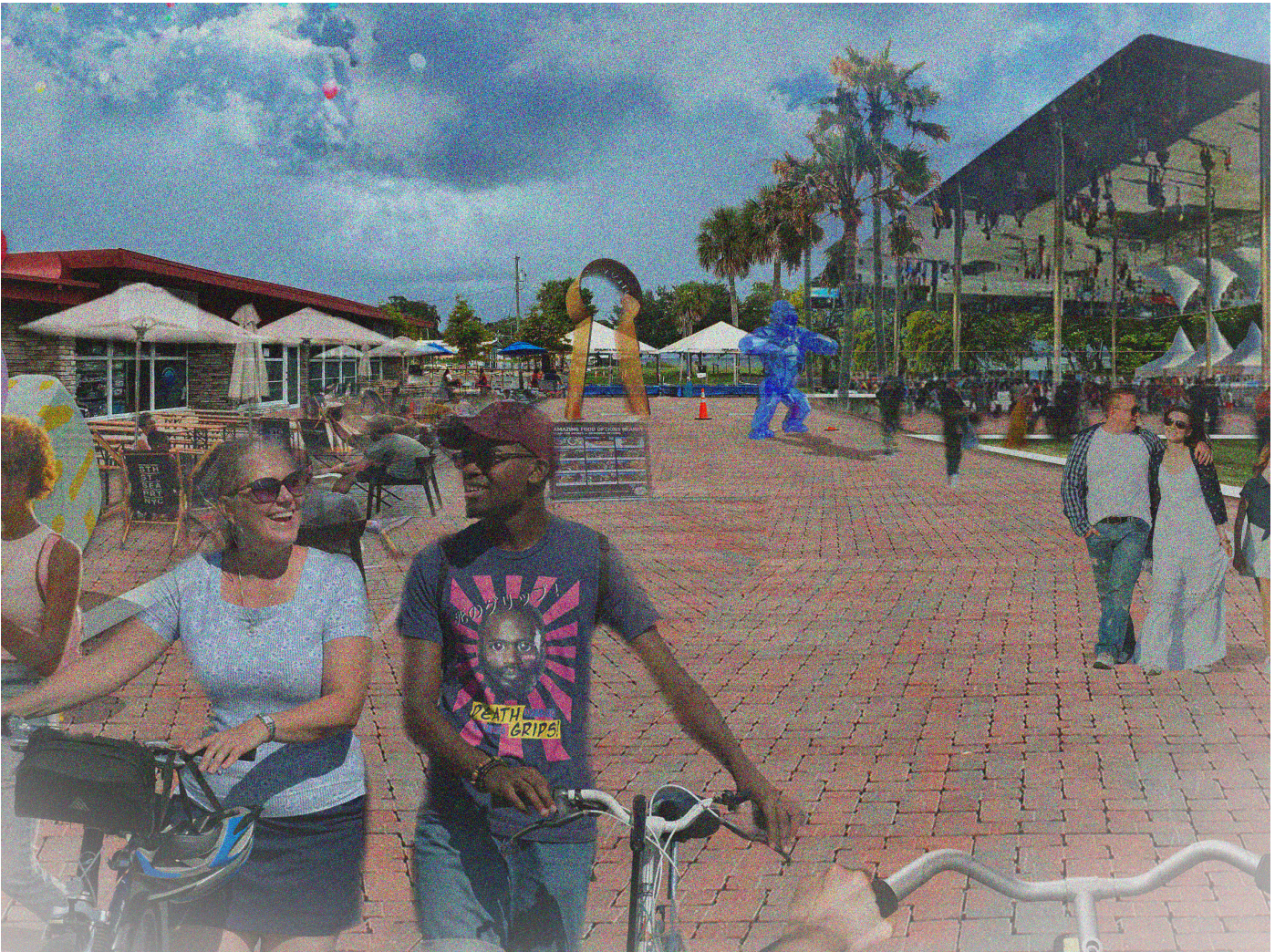


*Existing Ferran Park Entry at Orange Avenue*



### **OPEN-AIR MARKETPLACE/ FOOD HALL - (FERRAN PARK/ORANGE AVENUE TERMINUS)**

Converting the Orange Avenue terminus at Highway 19 into a public, flexible open-air market and brick-paved parking lot will showcase the character of both Ferran Park and Downtown Eustis and provide flexible programming space along the water. Activating the south end of Ferran Park will create another anchor along the waterfront. Both sides of the CSX RED LINE should be incorporated into the gateway, ensuring that the public space extends from Bay Street to the waterfront.



*Artist Impression - Ferran Park Market*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### COMMUNITY CENTER / BOAT HOUSE / MARINA

The existing community center is under-sized, limiting it's use to events of certain sizes. Parking separates the facility from the waterfront and access to the lake walk. Feedback received throughout Online and in-person engagement with the community was positive and supportive of facilities and program that would generate active use of the waterfront.

Relocation of parking adjacent to Bay Street could serve an expanded community precinct to this end of an expanded Ferran Park. With this relocation and expansion of parking, a reduction in driveway and pedestrianized street improvements such as modular and/or permeable paving could be provided with expanded landscaping and previous surfaces. Integration of a converted rail trail, connections to and upgrades and reprogramming of the Historical Museum, and the integration of a marina and supporting facilities (retail/commercial/food and beverage) could bring introduce a significant bookend to the downtown core. Future extension of the lake walk is imagined.

Infrastructure improvements and corridor connections could bring direct connection to the East neighborhood along Bates Avenue, terminating at this lake front destination.



*Boat storage and Flexible Park Programming/Event Space. Brooklyn, NY*



*Boat pavilion and storage. Beacon, NY*





Net Loft, Granville Island, Vancouver, BC



False Creek Community Center, Vancouver, BC

## PROMOTE EUSTIS AS A WATERFRONT DESTINATION

Benefits of a revitalized and expanded waterfront park extend beyond the waterfront itself. Eustis has the potential to become a textbook example of a thriving city center and a premier destination for county residents seeking a vibrant escape, weekend warriors drawn to its recreational riches, and even national and international tourists eager to experience “America’s Hometown” and the Waterfront Community of Eustis.



*Flexible Space*



*Play / Promenade / Flexible Program*



*Destination Dining*



*Water Views*





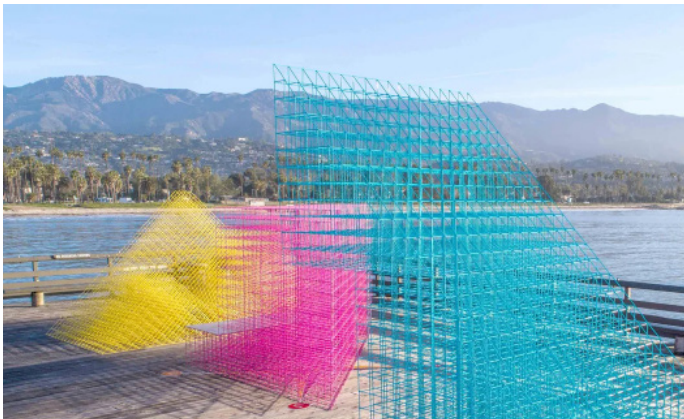
Artist rendering of new waterfront public space with active recreation and park space



## FERRAN PARK - WATERFRONT ACTIVATION

The parking lots to the West of Bay Street provide much needed parking for visitors and residents downtown. They also occupy an otherwise narrow segment of the park that could be expanded to include other community amenities such as food and drink services, playground/active recreation space, landscaping, cycle trail, and seamless waterfront access.

The following are suggested modifications and/or activations that could be executed to test behavioral changes for more permanent capital investment.



*“takepart | makeart: arte para todos” in Santa Barbara adds vibrant temporary sculptures in bold colors to California’s waterfront.*



*An annual Harmony Arts Festival in West Vancouver, BC is a community-oriented celebration of the visual, culinary, performing, and literary arts.*

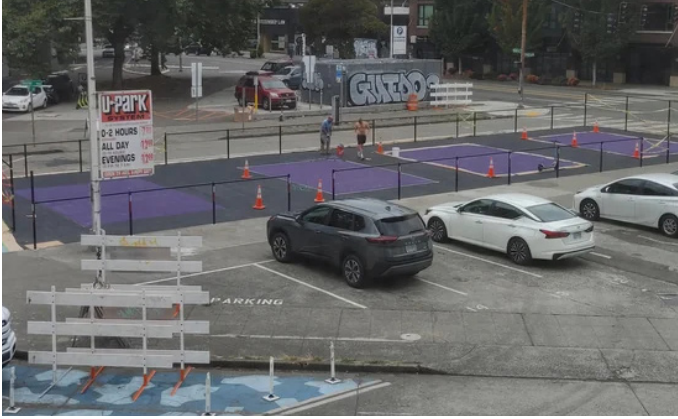


*Kilburn Live and Brookfield Properties are paying rents to occupy underutilized parking space.*



*Community Garden Builders in Vancouver bridge landowners and community members to convert land waiting development.*





Pickleball tournament. Seattle WA



Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) grant program animates and energizes underutilized public spaces Downtown.



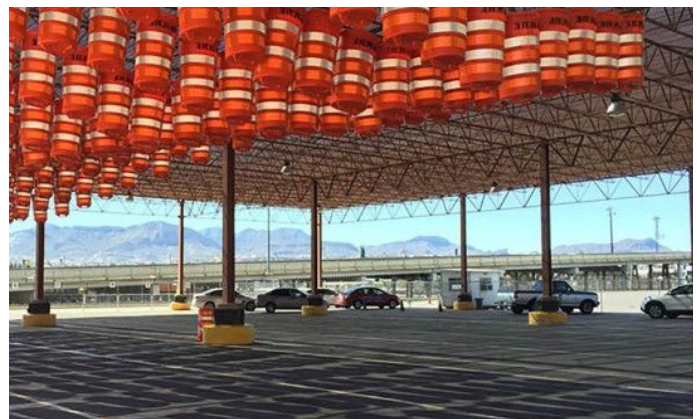
#Rendezvous. Toronto ON Canada.



Support parking closures to expand active recreation opportunities.



A temporary pop-up park - Greensboro Green - in Tyson VA.



Public Art "Flash Installation" reactivates a public space in El Paso TX







*The illustrative plan offers a vision for a connected waterfront that supports and strengthens the success of a mixed-use development of the Waterman site; a consolidated seed to a rebirth of downtown Eustis.*



## **5.2 CONNECT DOWNTOWN**



## **A UNIFIED DOWNTOWN: WEAVING THE WATERFRONT AND DOWNTOWN TOGETHER**

Downtown Eustis's walkable and charming character is the seed of a vibrant American Hometown. Leveraging its existing character will foster tangible connections between the waterfront, downtown, and the neighborhoods beyond.

The existing downtown character is defined by brick-lined streets and sidewalks, regular street tree planting, and cafe style seating along the street. This character is currently limited to Magnolia Avenue, between Bay and Grove Street, and Eustis Street between Orange and McDonald Avenues. Planned improvements throughout downtown will help to spur development through the creation of an attractive, walkable public realm.

Bolstering connectivity between Downtown Eustis and the Lake Eustis waterfront is tantamount to fostering a thriving waterfront community. Ongoing traffic calming measures led by the City of Eustis Public Works will improve pedestrian safety when crossing Bay Street. Building on these improvements with visual connections to the water will further weave downtown and the waterfront together in a cohesive, expanded downtown district.

The success of creating a walkable, thriving downtown district turns on its connection to adjacent amenities and neighborhoods. Improving linkages between East Eustis neighborhoods and Downtown Eustis is a crucial public realm improvement. Downtown should be expanded to include the Eustis Memorial Library along McDonald Avenue. The creation of bike routes throughout Downtown Eustis should be extended to the East along Bates and McDonald Avenue to tie into East Eustis civic anchors, Palmetto Plaza and the Curtright Campus.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Downtown improvements play an important role in fostering a pedestrian and cyclist-friendly atmosphere while providing alternatives to the LakeXpress public transportation. Throughout public engagement sessions, the significance of parking as a crucial amenity has been consistently underscored. Resident's concerns over downtown parking availability can be alleviated by expanding on the existing bike and pedestrian network to create a walkable, bikeable Downtown Eustis.

Considering existing development patterns within the City and the region, parking remains an essential aspect of Downtown's functionality. The forthcoming recommendations on this matter are delineated below, delving into key concepts further elaborated in subsequent sections.

1. Prioritize universally accessible pedestrian infrastructure on all Downtown streets, alleys, and public spaces with appropriate widths and safety improvements such as sufficient lighting.
2. Bicycles and other multi-modal options should be prioritized and expanded along key corridors.
3. Complete a network of bicycle facilities that are safe and comfortable, especially routes that connect to larger bike/trail networks regionally.
4. Allow for micro mobility options such as scooters in Downtown to provide first/ final mile options to/from downtown.
5. Implement and pursue necessary land acquisition or pedestrian easement opportunities for a continuous waterfront walkway.
6. Provide transit access and improved transit stop amenities in Downtown, especially along Bay, Grove, Orange and McDonald Streets.
7. Provide adequate parking to support existing uses and projected growth in Downtown. New parking should be implemented using on-street parking or structured garages.
8. Establish a parking benefit district to generate revenue and utilize this revenue to implement recommendations of this Downtown Master Plan.
9. Ensure adequate traffic flow for vehicles in Downtown while slowing down traffic to prioritize other modes of transportation.





## CONNECT

### PUTTING “LAKE” BACK IN THE “CITY OF EUSTIS”

In charting the course for Eustis’ future, our focus centers on uniting Downtown Eustis with the picturesque waterfront of Lake Eustis. This connection isn’t just about physical pathways; it’s a catalyst for comprehensive growth, community solidarity, and urban synergy within our city.

At the heart of this proposal lies its economic potential. The fusion of Downtown Eustis with Lake Eustis’ serene waterfront foresees an economic renaissance. This connection is primed to draw businesses, invigorate tourism, and beckon investments, shaping a thriving economic landscape for our city.

Yet, beyond its economic prowess, this envisioned linkage aims to be a communal nexus. It’s more than a pathway—it’s an inclusive space fostering social gatherings, cultural celebrations, and recreational activities. By creating accessible venues, it seeks to knit together unity and pride among residents and visitors, weaving a shared identity for our city.

Ultimately, the integration of Downtown Eustis with Lake Eustis’ waterfront heralds a transformative chapter. It embodies a vision transcending infrastructure, paving the way for economic dynamism, cultural vibrancy, and a resilient community spirit that defines Eustis, Florida.





*McDonald Ave. at Ferran Park Entrance*

## EXPAND A WALKABLE DOWNTOWN CHARACTER AND CHARM

Downtown Eustis has a strong downtown core, spanning the area between Bay and Grove Streets along Magnolia Avenue, and between Orange and McDonald Avenues along Eustis Street. The core has a consistent character defined by brick-lined streets and sidewalks with regular tree planting and planted areas. Eustis’s vibrant character should be expanded north and south along Eustis Street, and added along McDonald Avenue to define the extents of Downtown Eustis.



*Eustis Street Parking*



*Magnolia Avenue Crossing*

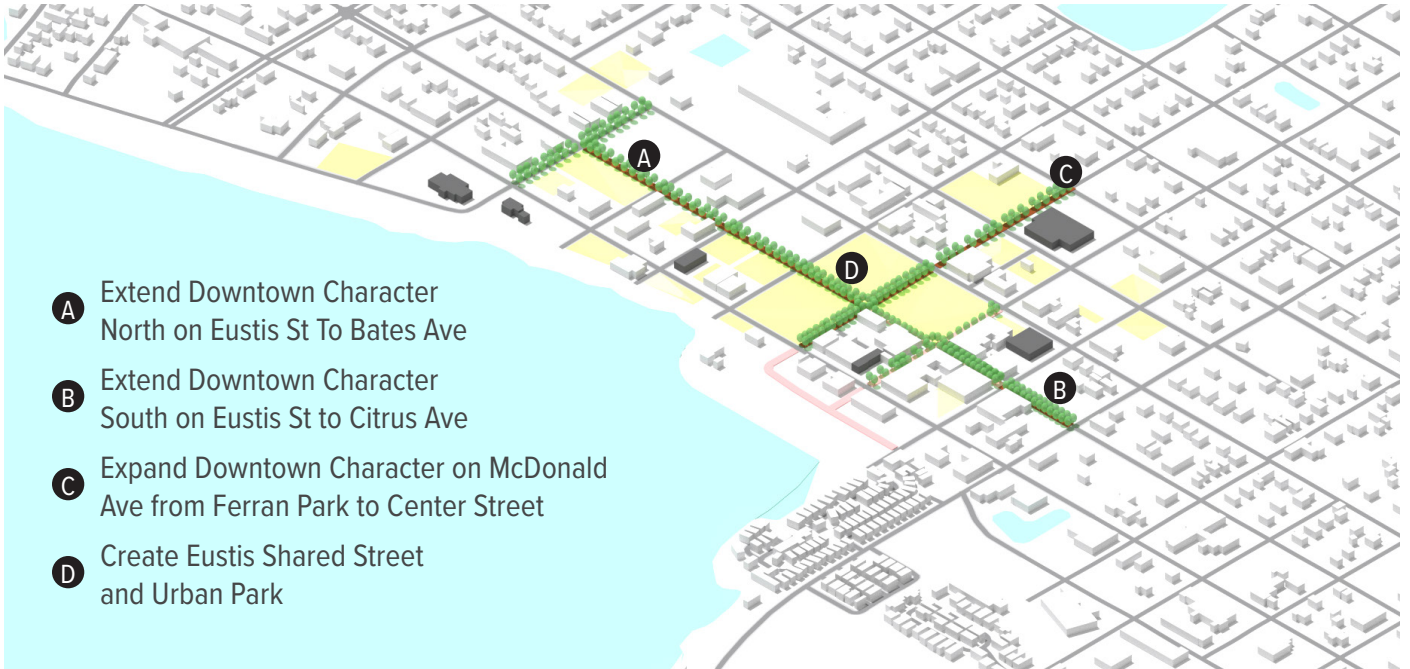


*Magnolia Avenue Streetscape*



*Magnolia Avenue Sidewalk*





McCullouchs Alley - Mid-Block Connection



## **PRIORITY STREETScape /INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

Streetscapes and public infrastructure are the lifeblood of Downtown Eustis, offering the primary stage for residents and visitors to experience its pulse. Spanning a quarter to a third of the downtown, they hold immense potential to shape the downtown experience and realize its aspirations, transforming automobile-oriented corridors into more economically vibrant, equitable, and sustainable places that support the people who live, work, and travel along them.

The following pages outline and elaborate several recommendations.

## SHARED STREETS

With modifications, Eustis Street is a good candidate for an expansion of its operation as a shared street given its narrow right-of-way, proximity to the waterfront, origins within the Commercial Historic District and adjacency to active businesses, lighter vehicle traffic, and lack of transit routes.

Designed to slow traffic and treat all users equally while providing safe, shared, active space, shared streets can be easily closed to cars to accommodate events and prioritize pedestrians, while allowing for more resiliency and flexibility over time than a permanent pedestrian mall.

Eustis Street could allow for the expansion of existing events downtown or allow for overflow into the street with easy closure for additional capacity for block parties, community and cultural festivals, and pop-up events. Key design elements of flexible streets include: movable furnishings and planters, retractable or removable safety bollards, enhanced paving materials, unique lighting, access to power, and in some cases, a raised and/or curbless street with center drainage.

Segments could be closed together or block-by-block, depending on the size of the event.



*Fashion Shows / Art Parade*



*Example of existing street closure in Eustis - First Fridays*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### FLEXIBLE/FESTIVAL STREETS

Successful festival or event streets should prioritize smooth traffic flow for both pedestrians and vehicles, embracing accessibility with wide pathways and facilities for everyone. To ensure a vibrant, safe, and inclusive experience requires a blend of aesthetics and functionality. Flexible and decorative lighting, clear separated modes of mobility, and generous and shaded sidewalks for observers set the stage. Comfortable amenities like seating, proximity to public restrooms, and hydration stations ensure attendee comfort during events. Sufficient / designated areas for the strategic placement of vendors and food stalls prevents overcrowding. These streets have a mutually beneficial arrangement when planned on streets/avenues with vibrant retail and commercial offerings. From live performances to interactive activities, engaging programming by the City, CRA, or local Chamber can foster a sense of community engagement, amplifying local talent and culture, and promoting the city.

With lengths that both span and bound the downtown, their generous Right-of-Ways, Bay and Grove make ideal streets for such events independently or together. Bay Street's proximity to Ferran Park and the lakefront give it additional support and reverence while Grove Street's access to green open spaces along its corridor could allow for an expansion of Downtown's social, recreational, and green infrastructure systems.



*Closure and Occupation*



*Parades and Large Events*



**DOWNTOWN STREETS**

Typical Rights-of-Way on the major downtown streets are 65’ from lot-line to lot-line. Two-way traffic is typical for all but Bay Street and Grove Street. These are likely to remain under state jurisdiction for the foreseeable future. With FDOT improvements imminent, this Master Plan recommends prioritizing conversion of the parking and striped lanes on either side of each street while negotiations and coordination remain in progress.

The following pages denote cross-sections to highlight a goal to improve public realm infrastructure in conjunction with, and to support strategic land development.



*Legible and Inviting - A Clear Path to the Water*



*Safe Crossings*



*Clifford Avenue East of Grove*



*Existing Bay Street at Bates Avenue*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### EXISTING DOWNTOWN STREET

The existing downtown streets are largely car dominated, with significant amounts of on-street parking lining both sides of the street. Lanes are wider than is recommended by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for split highways, and narrow pedestrian sidewalks limit walkability throughout Downtown Eustis. Some streets have significant shade cover, a crucial aspect of walkability given Florida’s hot climate.



*Existing Bay Street approaching Bates Avenue*



### PEDESTRIANIZED STREET WITH BIKE LANE

Several key pedestrian-focused improvements can improve the overall walkability of Downtown Eustis, slow traffic speeds, and provide beautification throughout downtown. Adding designated bike lanes throughout downtown will alleviate parking stresses and provide a buffer from fast moving traffic for pedestrian areas. Expanded planting areas will create an additional buffer, provide shade trees for sidewalks, and increase stormwater catchment areas within the downtown area.



*Artist Impression - Bike Lane. Sidewalk Bulb-out. Expanded sidewalk parking treatment. Landscaping. Northshore Drive conversion.*



## **BUILD UPON STATE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS / SAFE CROSSINGS**

Safety and Resurfacing projects funded by the FDOT on both Bay and Grove Streets are planned and will provide traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvements including corridor lighting, raised crossings, in-road lighting, sidewalk improvements, stripping and resurfacing.

Where possible, active or planned capital projects should be prioritized at locations where connections to the waterfront are being upgraded.

## **INTERSECTIONS**

It is recommended that the City evaluate safety and streetscape improvements for unique conditions in the street network such as the connections between wide and narrow streets and a unique short-block crossing between the tracks and Bay Street on Lakeshore Boulevard.

Improvements to these intersections, in addition to those currently planned by State DOT, can increase safety for all modes while contributing to Downtown placemaking. Further refinements to priority intersections should be made as future public works or transportation projects are installed or as issues are identified by traffic and police departments.

### **ORANGE AVENUE AT BAY AND GROVE STREETS**

Priorities should be made for crossing improvements at these two intersections to demarcate points of entry/exit to downtown and the Commercial Historic District for vehicles traveling West. The extension of Eustis' surface treatments across Orange will serve to slow traffic for pedestrians crossing at this location.

### **CITRUS AVENUE AT BAY STREET, EUSTIS STREET, AND GROVE STREET**

Priorities should be made for crossing improvements at these three intersections to designate entry to the Commercial Historic District and Downtown for vehicles traveling East.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **BAY STREET AT MCDONALD AVENUE AND CLIFFORD AVENUE**

This intersection is a major connection from the eastern neighborhoods to Downtown, and is a particularly crucial intersection for traveling to the waterfront. This intersection can be improved by:

- Raised intersection to slow traffic.
- Marked crosswalks.
- Permanent, landscaped curb extensions to shorten crossings.
- Unique paving materials.

### **GROVE STREET AT MCDONALD AVENUE AND CLIFFORD AVENUE**

These intersections are a major entrance to the downtown core and the waterfront. They can be improved by:

- Permanent, landscaped curb extensions/bulb-outs to shorten crossings for pedestrians.
- Extension of the curb and removal of parking lane between the two Avenues to incorporate treed boulevard planting and/or green infrastructure.
- Unique crossing paving.
- Painted mural in the intersection or unique paving materials.

### **NORTHSHORE DRIVE BETWEEN PARK AVENUE AND BATES AVENUE**

This intersection is a major entrance to the waterfront and the community center. To fully integrate proposed extensions of Bates Avenue to the East and ensure connectivity throughout, this intersection can be improved by:

- Permanent, landscaped curb extensions/bulb-outs to shorten crossings for pedestrians.
- Incorporate bus shelter and amenities at lengthened curb extension at SW corner to increase pedestrian priority at this location.
- Unique crossing paving.
- Reduced drive aisle width and removal of street parking, and surface paving treatments on Northshore Drive, through to Park Avenue.





*Pavement Surface Coatings*



*Anti-Slip Pavement Surface Coatings*



*Shared Street and Crossing*



*Artful Curb Extension / Removal of Parking*



*Shared Street Crossing*



*Rain Garden Bulb-Outs*

## PARKING

A comprehensive and strategic approach to managing parking in Downtown Eustis is a persistent topic of conversation. An overall shortage is noted particularly during monthly and special events. This plan attempts to address near and long-term concerns and desired parking characteristics: convenient, inexpensive, and sufficient. The plan provides strategies to balance those objectives and includes the following action items for Eustis' Downtown parking. These are categorized and listed below, based on feedback from the Downtown Master Plan process.

### TOP PRIORITIES

- Create & Empower Parking Management Organization
- Establish Parking Benefit District
- Manage On-Street Parking More Efficiently
- Connect Parking Management & Economic Development
- Embrace Parking as Mobility Management

### ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS

- Invest in Technology for Parking Management I
- Seek Opportunities to Expand and Consolidate Parking Supply
- Program Branding & Marketing
- Develop Staff Parking Management Expertise
- Continuous Improvement in Parking Enforcement
- Establish Mobility Management Enterprise Fund

## ON-STREET PAID PARKING PROGRAM

An On-Street Paid Parking Program Implementation Plan is currently under discussion. It provides guidance to the City for how to move forward with the phased implementation of paid parking recommendations from the Parking Program Framework Plan.

Implementation recommendations to explore include:

- Shared Parking
- Paid hours
- Time limits
- Meter costs
- Utilization studies
- Advisory Group
- Residential permits
- Technology (e.g. cell phone app)
- A phased implementation timeline
- Parking benefit district

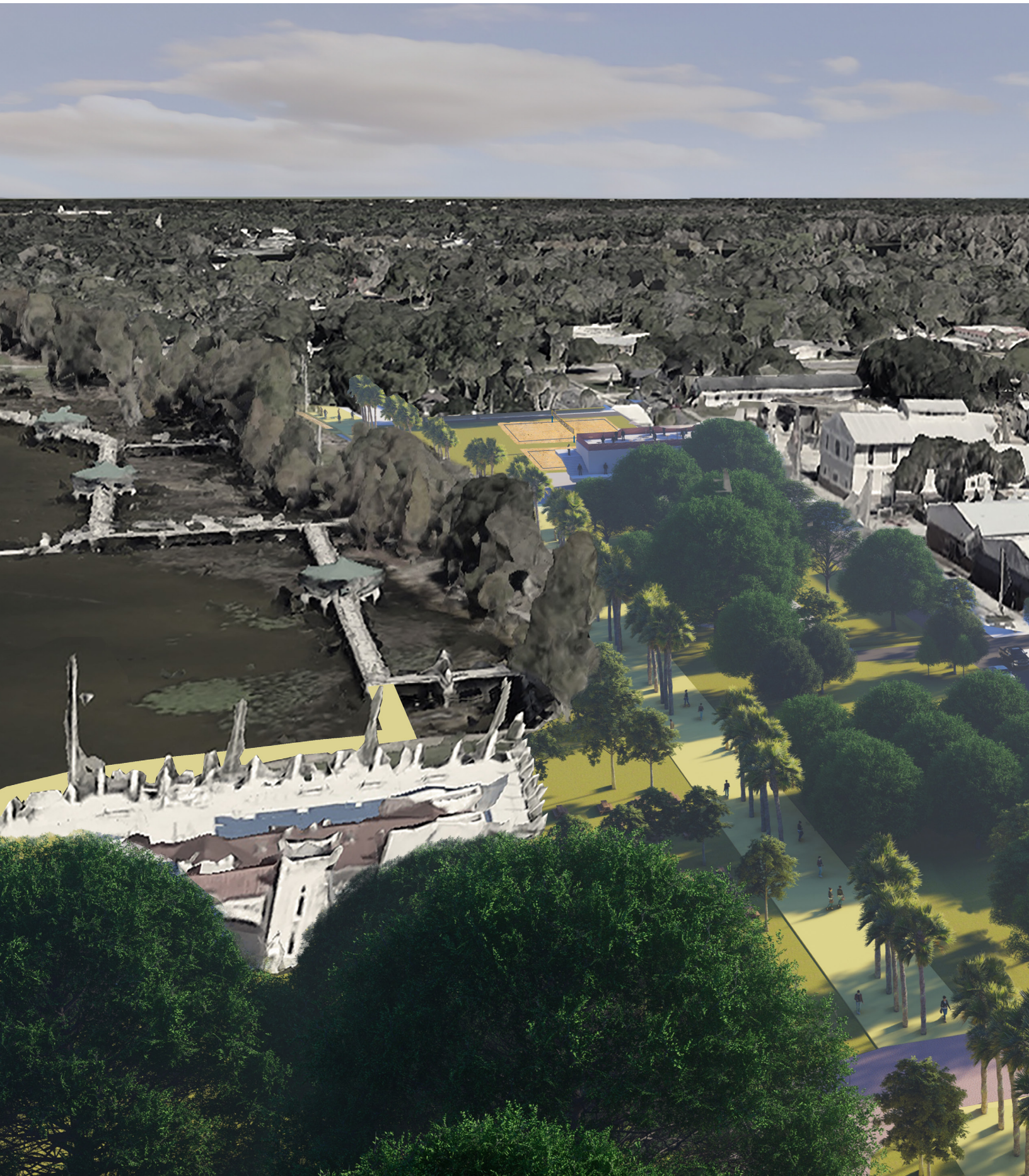


*Mixed-Use Garage. Denver CO*



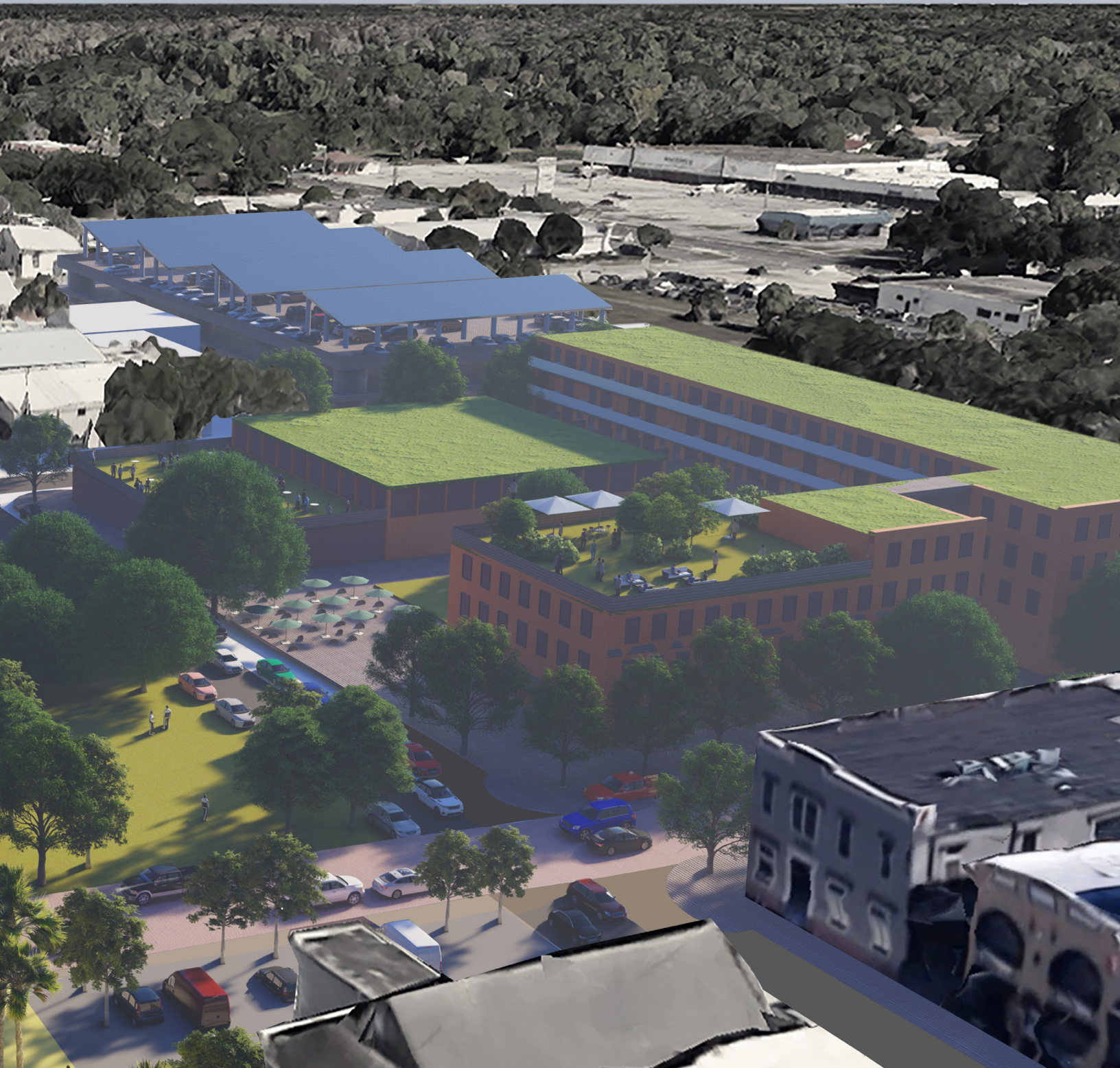
*Solar Powered Parking Structure. Santa Monica CA*







*The illustrative image offers a vision for a green waterfront park - connected by a shared rail trail and extended lake walk, supporting a vibrant Bay St. streetscape, and anchored by a mixed-use development on block 1 of the Waterman site. A new multi-story city-owned parking structure north of the site unlocks the potential redevelopment of this area.*



*Illustrative Aerial View*

## **5.3 EXPAND DOWNTOWN**



## **EXPANDING DOWNTOWN EUSTIS: A VISION FOR VIBRANT GROWTH**

We envision a transformed downtown—a place where commerce, culture, and community converge. Our proposal extends the current four-block footprint to nine blocks, breaking down perceived limits. Anchored by the Waterman Site and Ferran Park, this expansion promises economic vibrancy.

### **ANCHORS OF VIBRANCY**

By redeveloping the Waterman site, this historic location can breathe new life into the city. Boutique shops, wellness centers, offices, and community spaces will become a renewed focal point for residents and visitors alike.

Beyond its scenic beauty, Ferran Park will become an increasingly vibrant stage for community life. Concerts, picnics, and lakeside cafés—here, nature and urbanity harmonize, giving new life to its historic band-shell, rejuvenated Museum, and active waterfront promenade and park.

### **EXPANDING THE CHARACTER**

Streetscape enhancements such as new and wider sidewalks, public art, and outdoor seating redefine the streets. These improvements encourage more people and more foot traffic and create linger-worthy moments. Activation of McDonald and Clifford Avenues, along with an expanded Eustis shared street, help bridge existing blocks, offering pedestrian-friendly pathways that link destinations seamlessly.

### **A WATERFRONT IDENTITY**

The waterfront and downtown need not remain separate. By expanding the downtown core, we create a shared waterfront identity. Imagine lakeside restaurants, kayak rentals, and sunset promenades—a harmonious ecosystem that has re-established its reputation as America’s “best family-friendly waterfront community.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Waterman site comprises approximately 4.8 acres adjacent City Hall and the Commercial Historic District. It's recent infrastructure improvements have brought measurable success to both retail and commercial enterprises that, in aggregate, make up the current "downtown" proper.

With the Waterman site development opportunity lies an opportunity to expand the critical mass required to increase street life, resident population, and tax base to the heart of downtown. This opportunity should be leveraged to expand both public and private infrastructure throughout the CBD, simultaneously building upon and creating new investment in the public realm.

Below, and presented on the following pages, we outline and elaborate several recommendations.

1. Redevelop the Waterman site beginning with the block on Bay Street and across from the park.
2. Focus on the bookends to an extended waterfront park - Ferran Park, "the Porch", the Historical Museum, and the Community Center - integrating program and infrastructure, beginning with quick wins to promote placemaking and interest downtown.
3. Focus on a comfortable and walkable downtown experience in terms of public realm amenities and infrastructure.
4. Promote temporary activation and use of existing vacant lots and infrastructure. Strike working partnerships with business/land owners to test quick ideas and programs.







## CREATE ANCHORS DOWNTOWN

### **BUILD A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AT THE WATERMAN SITE**

The proposal for the redevelopment of the Waterman site in Downtown Eustis marks a pivotal moment in the city’s urban evolution. A proposed comprehensive initiative integrates a diverse blend of development, including mixed-use, office spaces, commercial and retail zones, and a prominent hotel. Beyond mere infrastructure, this plan envisions a dynamic epicenter designed to invigorate the downtown area.

Simultaneously complementing this core investment is the expansion and revitalization of the waterfront. This strategic enhancement isn’t solely about physical changes; it’s a deliberate effort to foster a sense of community. A reimagined waterfront, seamlessly connected to the bustling downtown, will serve as a catalyst for social cohesion and cultural vibrancy, offering an inviting space for leisure, events, and communal gatherings.

This combined effort isn’t solely an economic strategy; it’s an endeavor aimed at transforming the very fabric of the city. Melding vibrant urban spaces with a rejuvenated waterfront, our proposal sets the stage for a reinvigorated Downtown Eustis—a place where people live, work, and engage in a thriving community that encapsulates the essence of a dynamic and interconnected urban waterfront destination.



A Waterfront, Downtown



Waterman Site Market Supported Development Concept

## THE WATERMAN SITE

The focus of this planning effort recognizes the tremendous opportunity of the Waterman Site to seed a transformation of downtown Eustis. To ensure it's success, the Master Plan efforts herein help to place the outcomes of this site as contingent upon the simultaneous successes in improvement to its context downtown. The following are intended to help guide this development of the 3-block Waterman site.

### GOALS

- Promote a family-friendly, walkable, and well-connected downtown.
- Offer a vibrant mix of uses and building character.
- Expand and enhance the existing character of Magnolia and Eustis streetscape improvements.
- Create active comfortable streets at ground level.
- Connect the waterman site and downtown with the waterfront.

### STRATEGIES

- Facilitate connections throughout and around the neighboring blocks.
- Provide no net-loss of parking on site.
- Use existing topography as an asset.
- Build on imminent traffic improvements at Bay and Grove Streets.
- Preserve existing mature shade trees.
- Avoid costly geotechnical constraints.
- Mitigate heavy traffic on Grove and Bay Street with wider sidewalks and landscaping.

### DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Maximize views of the lake.
- The new development should blend into the existing informal structure of the blocks, that are built up of different pieces, usually over time.
- Block faces should not be uniform, but rather appear to be built as separate buildings. This can be articulated through massing and materials.
- Building height and roof profile should vary within a block.
- Set buildings well back from existing trees and protect them during construction.
- Active uses with interface to the street should occupy over 50% of the block face.
- The system of “alley streets” should be integrated into the development to again
- Extend the informal system of pedestrian walkways.
- A portion of the site could be left open for public use of approximately 20,000 sf.





*Illustrative Site Plan of the Waterman site.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### WATERMAN SITE - RESIDENTIAL

The open spaces currently located on the three blocks that span Magnolia Avenue to Clifford Avenue, and Bay Street to Grove Street are underutilized and almost wholly dedicated to surface parking.

The community has a need for additional housing types that provide options for single-family homes and apartments. This location could fit a significant amount of housing with convenient and central access to the waterfront and the rest of Downtown.

The bedrock depth of the Northwest block, shown below, is unknown, limiting the potential for multistory housing on this block. The proposed layout for this block features an open green space along the most geologically uncertain portion of the site, while providing mixed use developments along Eustis St and Magnolia Ave.

In the below illustrative drawing yellow indicates residential and orange retail/office.

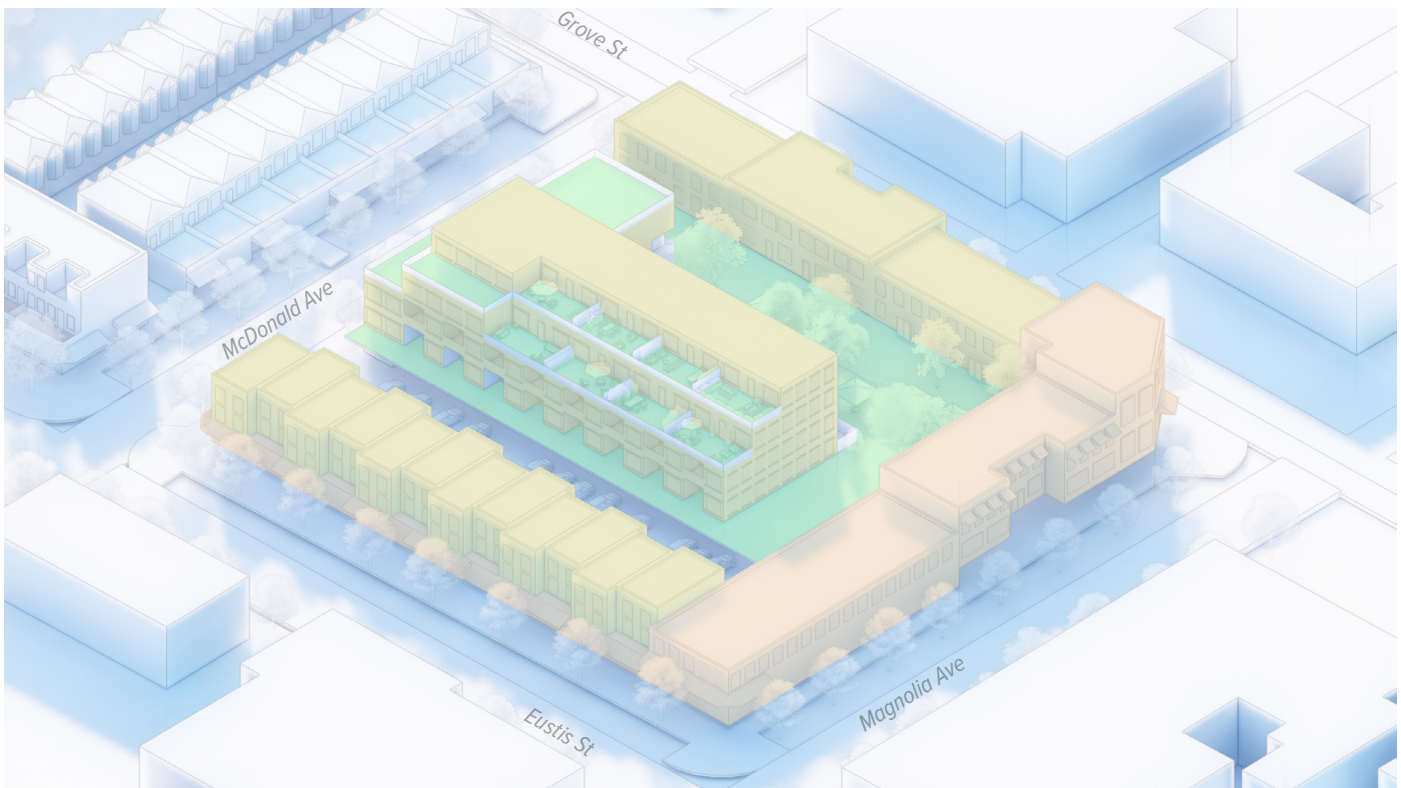


Waterman Site - Block 2

### WATERMAN SITE - MIXED-USE

Blocks 2 and 3 of the Waterman site are currently located between Eustis and Grove Streets between Magnolia and Clifford Avenues. Given their proximity to the Commercial Historic District and existing commercial/retail core of downtown, this development has the opportunity to provide additional amenities at the ground floor attracting people into Downtown. A public plaza along Clifford Avenue and/or Eustis Street could serve as an inviting gateway and destination for both residents and visitors.

In the below illustrative drawing yellow indicates residential and orange retail/office.



Waterman Site - Block 3



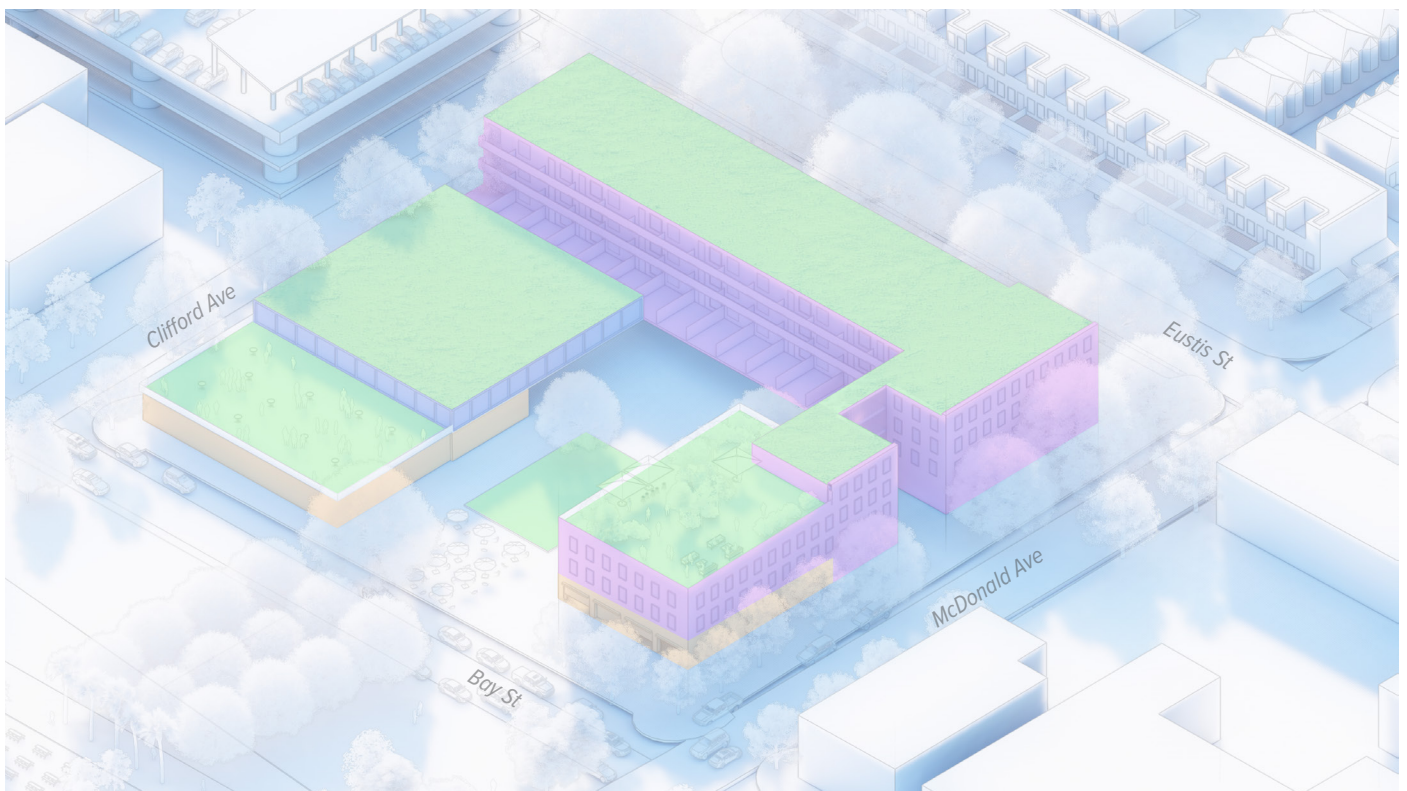
## RECOMMENDATIONS

### WATERMAN SITE - HOTEL

There is currently no hospitality accommodations and/or event space downtown. Community feedback and market supported analysis suggest this location could fit a significant hotel offering with convenient and central access to the waterfront and the rest of Downtown.

Block 1 of the Waterman site is currently a parking lot and is located along Bay Street between Clifford and McDonald Avenues, across from Ferran Park. Given the close proximity to the Lake, this development has the opportunity to provide community amenities at the ground floor and attract people into Downtown. A public plaza along Clifford Avenue and/or Eustis Street could serve as an inviting gateway for both residents and visitors.

In the below illustrative drawing orange indicates retail/office, blue event space, and purple hotel.



*Waterman Site - Block 1*









*This illustrative image offers a vision for a connected waterfront downtown. Looking north on an expanded Eustis Street, the Waterman site presents a bold vision for what an expanded downtown core could soon become. This mixed-use development, and combined hotel and event facilities attract new residents and visitors to downtown. These new stewards, and all Eustis residents benefit from investment in an expanded core that is walkable, vibrant, and full of life.*



*Artist Impression - Looking North through Waterman site on Eustis Street*





- 1 ROOFTOP EVENT TERRACE
- 2 BAY ST COURTYARD
- 3 HOTEL ROOF TERRACE
- 4 60 AT-GRADE PARKING SPACES
- 5 MIDBLOCK ALLEYWAY
- 6 EUSTIS SHARED STREET
- 7 MIDBLOCK ALLEYWAY
- 8 "FOUNTAIN GREEN"
- 9 RETAIL STREET
- 10 160 AT-GRADE PARKING SPACES
- 11 AMENITY (PRIVATE) ROOF DECK
- 12 COMMERCIAL STREET







EVENT SPACE

HOTEL

MIXED USE

TOWN HOMES

TOWNHOMES

MIXED USE

MIXED USE

MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

MIXED USE

MIXED USE

4

6

7

8

5

9

12

10

11

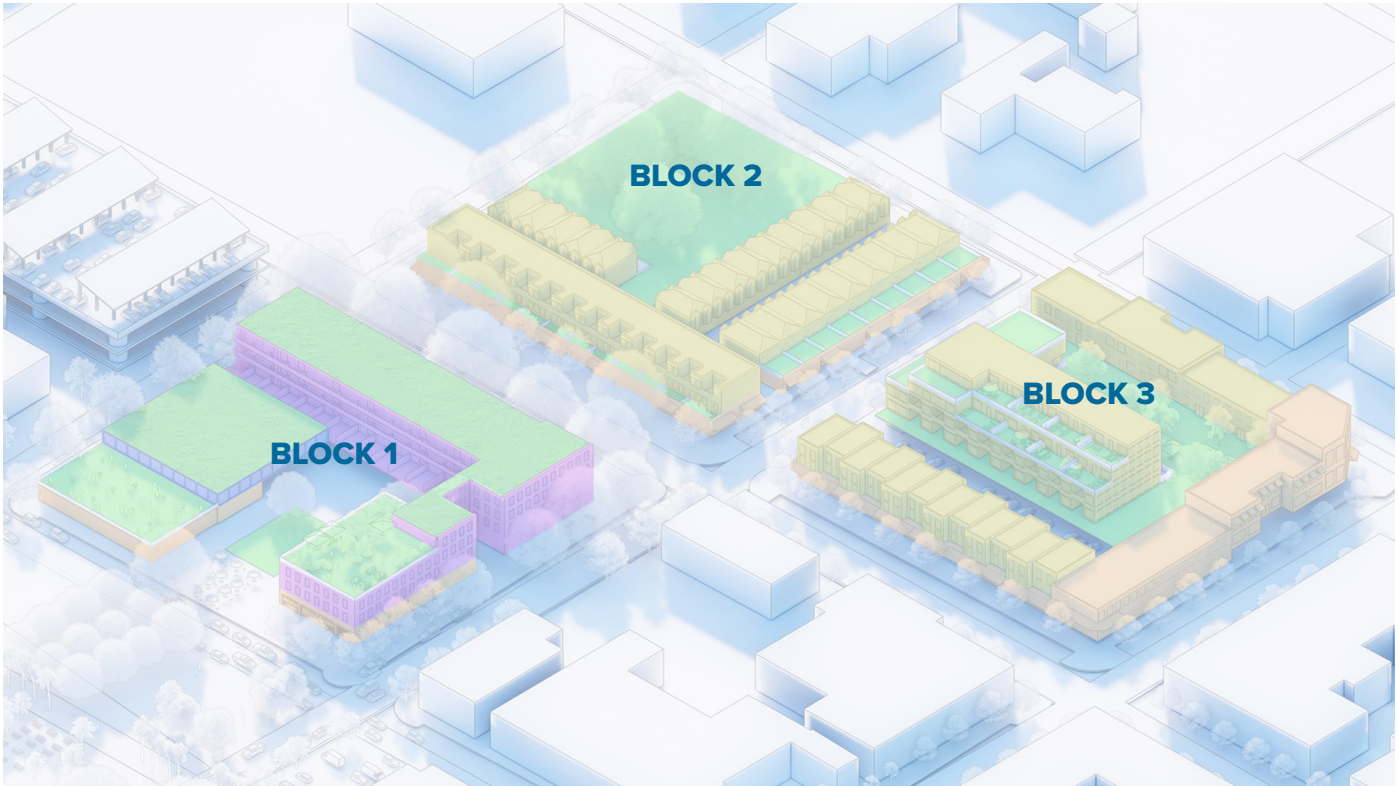


## WATERMAN SITE - PROPOSED PROGRAM

The illustrated development on the Waterman Site will effectively double the size of Downtown Eustis from 3 blocks to 6 blocks. This iteration of the Waterman Site development is a test of the amount of program that will fit on the three blocks in Downtown Eustis. It is not reflective of the final built scheme.

The planning process revealed that the Waterman Site is able to house all of the Market Supported Development that Eustis can absorb at the time of the report. The illustrated development shows that a Hotel with Event Space, 85 new housing units, 20,000 SF of office space, and over 55,000 SF of retail space can fit on the Waterman Site. Parking associated with the illustrated programs also provides an additional 30 parking spaces over what is available today.

<b>EVENT / RECREATIONAL / CULTURAL</b>	<b>HOTEL</b>	<b>MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING</b>
Market Supported Today	Market Supported Today	Market Supported Today
<b>15,000 SF</b>	<b>60-80 ROOMS / 50,000 SF</b>	<b>14-93 UNITS</b>
Block 1 <b>16,000 SF</b>	Block 1 <b>84-112 ROOMS / 70,000 SF</b>	Block 1 <b>NA</b>
Block 2 <b>NA</b>	Block 2 <b>NA</b>	Block 2 <b>35 UNITS</b>
Block 3 <b>NA</b>	Block 3 <b>NA</b>	Block 3 <b>42 UNITS</b>
Full Buildout	Full Buildout	Full Buildout
<b>16,000 SF</b>	<b>84-112 ROOMS / 70,000 SF</b>	<b>77 UNITS</b>



Waterman Site Market Supported Development Concept

**RETAIL / RESTAURANTS**

**(PROFESSIONAL) OFFICE**

**PARKING**

Market Supported Today

Market Supported Today

Existing Parking on Waterman Site

**18,000 SF**

**9,200 SF**

**190 SPACES**

Block 1  
**18,000 SF**

Block 1  
**NA**

Block 1  
**60 SPACES**

Block 2  
**13,400 SF**

Block 2  
**NA**

Block 2  
**20 SPACES**

Block 3  
**17,000 SF**

Block 3  
**20,000 SF**

Block 3  
**140 SPACES**

Full Buildout

Full Buildout

Full Buildout

**55,400 SF**

**20,000 SF**

**220 SPACES**

6

**SUPPORTING  
STRATEGIES**



A number of strategies and tactics could be deployed to spur both interest in and promotion of downtown Eustis. These strategies, of course, come with timelines that reflect accompanying public engagement but also funding streams, capital budgets, public and political support, and impacts to the community and environment.

The following are intended to support the concurrent work of larger catalyst or priority projects for downtown, and apply to areas throughout the waterfront, the CBD, and the greater downtown area. Some even apply to work the city may currently be engaged in with other consultants related to branding and market that will garner international and regional interest in downtown Eustis as Lake County's newest waterfront destination.







## 6.1 PUBLIC SPACE AND AMENITIES

*SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SPACES* 148

*POTENTIAL NEW PARKS* 150

## 6.2 HISTORIC LEGACY AND SIGNAGE

*DOWNTOWN CITRUS TRAIL* 154

## 6.3 GATEWAYS

*DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS* 160

## 6.4 BRANDING AND MARKETING

*PROJECT BRANDING* 168

## 6.5 IMPROVED CONNECTIVITY

*BUILD MULTI-MODAL NETWORKS AND MOBILITY LOOPS* 174

*MOBILITY LOOPS* 176

*ALLEYWAYS AND MIDBLOCK CONNECTIONS* 178

*IMPROVE BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS* 180

*SIDEWALKS* 182

*REGIONAL CITY TRANSIT* 184

## 6.6 DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

*INFILL DEVELOPMENT* 190

*DOWNTOWN HOUSING* 192

## 6.7 GROUND FLOOR ACTIVATION

*INVITING BUILDINGS* 196

*OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL* 198

*VACANT STOREFRONT/BUILDING ACTIVATION PROGRAM* 200



# **6.1 PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A major asset of Downtown is its adjacency to Lake Eustis and the waterfront at Ferran Park. Better connections between these areas would help improve the vitality and appeal of Downtown. Public space within Downtown is somewhat limited to public rights-of-way, Fountain Green, and Ferran Park. Public spaces can be improved throughout Downtown with additional amenities, space, and sustainable infrastructure. Overarching recommendations for this topic are outlined below, with key concepts explored in more detail on the following pages.

1. Inventory and expand Downtown's tree canopy in order to provide shade for pedestrians and a more pleasant outdoor experience with adequate space, soil, and native species/ planting considerations that are appropriate to drought, stormwater, and groundwater conditions.
2. In places where additional trees may not be feasible, prioritize additional building elements that provide shade such as canopies, awnings, or other creative artistic sculptures including solar powered roof coverings.
3. Prioritize sustainability with supplemental educational information in public spaces, streetscapes, and private spaces as feasible through permeable pavements, nature-based solutions.
4. Better connect Downtown to the waterfront through east-west Avenue connections using a combination of art, signage and wayfinding, pedestrianized infrastructure, and landscaping.
5. Consider new amenities, programming, and/or a redesign of Fountain Green as part of the Waterman Site to support the community's desired amenities beyond passive lawn space.
6. Study the potential for new parks throughout Downtown to serve current and future Downtown residents, on City-owned property and right-of-way, purchased property, or through publicly accessible plaza space.
7. Prioritize existing park improvements in and around Ferran Park to promote the cultural and historical stories of the area and to align with recommendations for a unified, expanded, and connected waterfront experience.

## SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SPACES

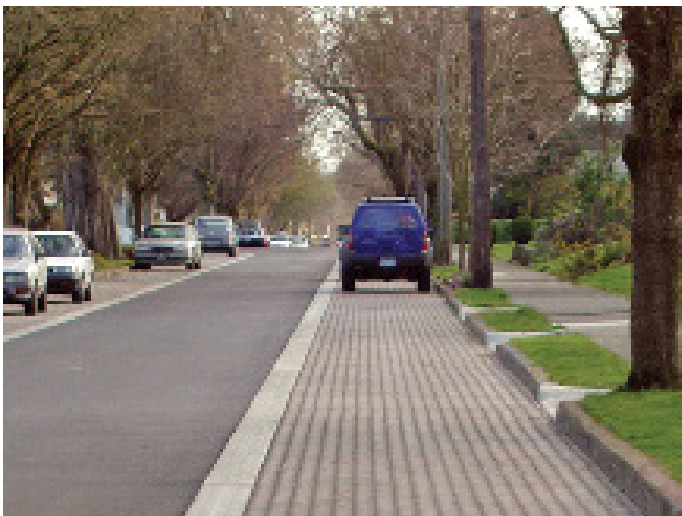
Downtown Eustis has a unique ecosystem with specific challenges. It's gentle sloping topography and adjacency to a perimeter of Lakes, including Lake Eustis, necessitates stormwater management to maintain water quality. Water quality ensures that polluted water does not flow through Downtown's streets and into these sensitive bodies. Eustis will continue to experience, even see an increase in significant storm events.

Low Impact Development (LID) is a stormwater management strategy that works to replicate the predevelopment hydrologic processes and reduce harmful impacts of urban runoff. LID techniques have been shown to improve water quality, reduce localized flooding and, when incorporated into a project's design early in the process, reduce overall costs. The use of permeable pavements and rain gardens, as recommended below, are two ways we can implement LID in Downtown Eustis.

Additional techniques such as silva (soil) cells, blue roofs, sub-surface storage, and additional sustainable stormwater technologies should be implemented and evaluated as they emerge. A management strategy for maintenance of sustainable green infrastructure and pavements should also be created.

### PERMEABLE PAVEMENTS

Permeable pavements can provide for stormwater drainage and filtration, rather than direct runoff into the City's stormwater system. These options may be most appropriate for pedestrian walkways, alleys, parking lots, and low-traffic roadways.



*Permeable Street Parking*



*Permeable Shared Street*



## PERMEABLE PRECAST CONCRETE OR BRICK PAVEMENTS

Ideal use for light traffic low use roads (alleys), local roads, and parking lots.

### Pros

- Attractive - high quality appearance, unique character.
- Versatile - can be arranged in varying patterns.
- Heat Island Mitigation with high albedo colors.
- Reduction in stormwater runoff.
- Traffic noise reduction.
- Easily replaced/repaired.

### Cons

- Clogging of previous material and increased maintenance.
- Sensitivity to chemical exposure or heavy use.



*Grass paver shoulders*



*Modular Brick Pavement Parking*

## POTENTIAL NEW PARK(S)

While Downtown has some great existing parks that serve the community well, there are also opportunities to improve park access and install priority amenities through the creation of new parks. The community expressed a desire for downtown to be a place for families and kids.

Improvements to existing parks would do well to consider these needs through the introduction of pocket parks and plazas. These are small public spaces built in places often underutilized. Typically, they are less expensive and easier to locate such as within a parking space, in front of a building, in a parking lot, alley, or behind a building. They're intended to serve residents and visitors within close proximity, and can provide amenities not being offered nearby. These spaces can be provided by the City, in partnership with a private property owner, or required with new development. These spaces could serve the needs of the community in a cost-effective manner.

### THEATER PLAZA

Explore a partnership with the State Theater to better integrate theater programming with the space immediately adjacent.

### GOTTSCHKE / CLIFFORD AVE PARK ENTRY PLAZAS

These street ends and points of entry to the waterfront offer opportunities for congestion and mingling while providing clear points of arrival to the waterfront. Spray pads, seating, and shade offer backdrop to formal and informal program.

### PALMETTO PLAZA/PARK

To enhance Palmetto Plaza and create a dynamic hub for children and youth, consider expanding city-owned space by acquiring adjacent parcels. Here's a comprehensive proposal:

#### 1. Park Expansion:

- Acquire adjacent parcels to expand Palmetto Plaza, creating more space for diverse activities.
- Develop green spaces, picnic areas, and additional walking paths for families and community gatherings.

#### 2. Community Gardens with a Purpose:

- Invest in additional community gardens as a city initiative, providing opportunities

for education and community engagement.

- Program the gardens to support the Lake Cares Food Pantry, fostering a sustainable and impactful partnership.

### 3. Cultural and Recreational Events:

- Promote and host a variety of events, festivals, and performances throughout the year to attract diverse age groups and demographics.
- Collaborate with local organizations and artists to curate events that celebrate the community's culture and talents.

### 4. Youth Empowerment Programs:

- Establish youth empowerment programs, partnering with local organizations and schools to offer educational and recreational opportunities.
- Develop mentorship programs, workshops, and skill-building activities to nurture leadership and personal growth.

### 5. Sustainable Practices:

- Integrate eco-friendly features, such as water-saving technologies and solar-powered amenities, aligning with the community's commitment to sustainability.

### 6. Community Engagement Initiatives:

- Conduct regular town hall meetings to gather input from residents on the park's development and programming.
- Establish a volunteer program to involve community members in maintaining and beautifying the park.

### 7. Collaborate with Local Businesses:

- Encourage local businesses to sponsor events or adopt specific areas within the park, fostering a sense of ownership and community pride.

### 8. Outdoor Learning Spaces:

- Designate areas for outdoor learning spaces, encouraging educational activities, workshops, and interactive installations.



## **6.2 HISTORIC LEGACY AND SIGNAGE**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Downtown Eustis has an extensive history and is rich with culture that could be integrated in the fabric of Downtown. Information on the arts is communicated on a variety of platforms and websites, social media platforms, and outreach from local arts groups. These assets should be further elevated to contribute to a unique and genuine experience in Downtown. Overarching recommendations for this topic are outlined below, with key concepts explored in more detail on the following pages.

1. Continue to encourage public art throughout Downtown of various mediums, by local artists, students, and other creatives.
2. Preserve and enhance the holdings of the Historical Art Museum while integrating the Chamber of Commerce in its new permanent location.
3. Activate Downtown's art scene, support Eustis' artists, and make art accessible for all through events, programming, interpretive signage, and public funding support for art galleries.
4. Enhance the existing Citrus Label Tour website and maps to interact with the built environment, existing and proposed bike routes, and provide additional interpretive opportunities that link pedestrians at a location to online information.
5. Collaborate with the University of Central Florida, University of Florida, and Florida State University to better connect Downtown residents, visitors, and businesses with the University's students, art programs, and performing arts center by developing a coordinated communication effort and exploring opportunities to partner on history, art, and culture initiatives.

## **DOWNTOWN CITRUS TRAIL**

Downtown Eustis is full of rich history and unique public art that showcases local culture and identity. These assets are not well identified or clearly connected today. An art trail, a history trail, digital information, and mobile maps would help locals and visitors alike navigate Downtown to learn about these sites and amenities. The Art Walk shown below, could be mentioned on the existing Eustis Art Map website, and the route and identification features can be updated as public art features shift and add over time. The Eustis Art Map website is also intended to be updated and show more information about each public art location, including an artist biography, history of the piece, and other interesting facts. Wayfinding signs would be featured along the routes to identify history, art, and cultural assets, provide maps and directional signage, and QR codes linking to a mobile interface. Painted physical markers on the ground would help identify the walking path routes and catch the attention of pedestrians.





Citrus Label - Eustis



Citrus Label Tour / Heritage Trail

## LEVERAGE THE CITY'S CULTURAL AND NATURAL ASSETS

The city of Eustis has numerous cultural and natural assets, such as those listed below, that can be further built upon to strengthen Eustis as a regional and local attraction for visitors and residents alike

- Lake Eustis Waterfront
- Ferran Park
- Trout Lake:
- Palmetto Point:
- Eustis High School:
- Lakeshore Drive:

Families bike to nature, explore art, sip in plazas. Tourists savor each gem, woven into the city's verdant fabric. Beyond leisure, the greenway ignites local businesses, fuels student learning, whispers history through Citrus Label murals.

No longer an island, Eustis embraces its riches. The "green weave" stitches a tapestry of nature, culture, and history, transforming Eustis into a shimmering jewel, open to all.



*Trout Lake Canal*



*Trout Lake Nature Center*



*Lake Gracie*



*Citrus Label Tour*





## **6.3 GATEWAYS**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

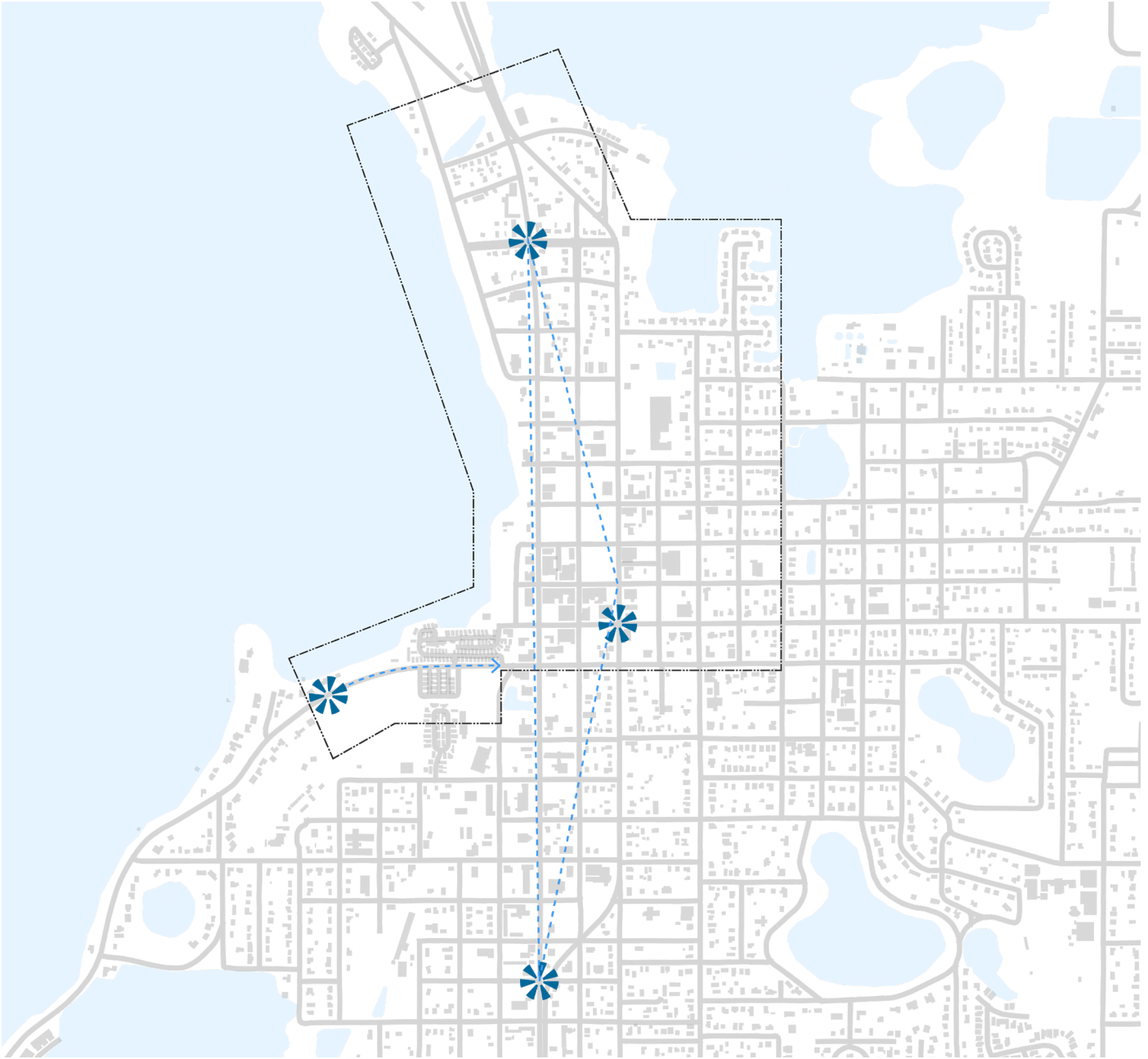
Revitalizing the downtown of our Central Florida city requires a strategic approach to transform its uninviting entries into vibrant gateways, celebrating the essence of the “best family-friendly waterfront downtown.” Here are concise recommendations spanning short to long-term and varying investment scales:

1. Pedestrian-Friendly Sidewalks (Short Term): Prioritize creating and enhancing pedestrian-friendly sidewalks to immediately improve walkability.
2. Green Streetscapes (Short Term): Introduce street trees and green spaces along sidewalks for shade and a visually appealing environment.
3. Public Art (Short to Medium Term): Commission family-friendly public art installations at key entry points to foster community pride.
4. Streetscape Redesign (Medium Term): Collaborate on redesigning streetscapes with raised crosswalks and pedestrian plazas for safety.
5. Gateway Monuments (Medium Term): Install iconic gateway monuments and signage at strategic points for a marked transition.
6. Bay Street Sculptural Roundabout (Short Term): Implement a sculptural roundabout at the intersection of Bay Street and Grove Street, providing a distinctive and visually appealing landmark for drivers and pedestrians.
7. Eustis Arts Alley (Short to Medium Term): Establish an arts-focused entry corridor along Eustis Street, showcasing local creativity with public art installations, murals, and unique wayfinding. This could also be done through the extension of McCulloughs Alley as it continues through development North.
8. Commercial Historic District Welcoming Arch (Medium Term): Enhance the gateway to the Commercial Historic District with welcoming totems and/or arch on Orange Avenue, incorporating historical elements and creating a sense of arrival.
9. Lake Eustis Waterfront Plaza (Long Term): Develop a waterfront plaza at Clifford Ave, featuring scenic views, recreational spaces, and a focal point amphitheater for community events, marking the downtown’s waterfront entry.

## **DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS**

A gateway can be designed in many different ways and serves as a landmark that tells you that you've arrived in a new place while expressing the identity of that place. Examples of include, but are not limited to, a sign, landscaping, a park, monument or public art piece, or a park or distinctive architecture within an area. Improvements to private property adjacent to gateways is also important to show invested residents and businesses. The map below illustrates potential locations for gateway elements into Downtown Eustis by mode of travel that would improve the sense of arrival for visitors and residents alike.





*Proposed Gateway Locations*

### VEHICULAR GATEWAYS

Vehicular gateways provide a quick first impression and lets drivers know they are entering a distinct place. These can often include larger signs adjacent to or above streets.

### MULTI-MODAL GATEWAYS

Multi-modal gateways are meant to be experienced by pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and users of other modes. The images on the right show how both signage and pavement treatments can be used to let people know they are entering a distinct place.

### PEDESTRIAN GATEWAYS

Pedestrian gateways have the opportunity to be more interactive since people walking are moving slower and can stop more easily. Public art can be a creative way to announce an entrance to a destination. The sculptures shown here serve as a landmark gateway and provides shade for pedestrians. Wayfinding signage including maps and walking distances to major destinations can be used for navigating through a portion of a city.

### LANDSCAPE AS GATEWAY

The experience of landscape itself can acknowledge transition and/or travel through a particular district or place. Lakeshore Boulevard is a scenic drive and could be a wonderfully lush point of arrival to Downtown Eustis, distinct from other points North and East.



Current Arrival Experience. Lakeshore Blvd. Traveling East.



Artist impression of proposed street tree improvements to ROW





*Vehicular Gateways*



*Multi-modal Gateways*



*Pedestrian Gateways*





# **6.4 BRANDING AND MARKETING**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A project name, identity, logo, and key messaging were developed with the City and presented to the public. Unanimous support for the selected platform is shown here. A branding and marketing strategy should be developed to further strengthen and tie together Downtown with the city and the region. The marketing and branding strategies for Downtown are intended to provide a cohesive and recognizable experience through innovative approaches. With elements tailored to existing and potential Downtown employers, employees, residents, and visitors, the marketing strategy should tie into existing programs and events and serve as the basis for new ones.

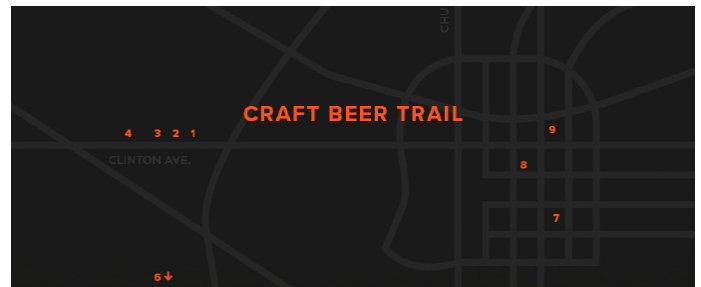
1. Revisit the Downtown geography and brand to affirm or reposition the identity of the area.
2. Reconsider the “Downtown” designation and focus on the area as a unique extension or sub-district of downtown.
3. Explore the establishment of more identifiable sub-districts within the larger Downtown area over time.
4. Highlight the unique character of Downtown in Eustis and Lake County.
5. Buildings, public spaces, and amenities with “quaint” and “charming,” authentic character.
6. Emphasis on local, artisan (non-chain) retail, restaurants, and entertainment.
7. Establish Downtown as a premier walkable waterfront destination for recreation, dining, and arts/culture.
8. Celebrate and promote an “Industrial Chic” brand in Downtown, particularly related to Agricultural research and development and historical innovation.
9. Increase the frequency and breadth of art-related uses, events, and festivals to attract children, young adults, amateur artists, professional artists, and patrons of all types.
10. Collaborate to develop artist lofts, live-work spaces, and mini-galleries Downtown.
11. Work with the Chamber and diverse community stakeholders to promote the historical museum to reposition the City’s past as the “Citrus Capital.”
12. Advance the brand and logo for Downtown and incorporate into marketing materials for Downtown, and the greater Eustis area.
13. Continue to work with the Chamber, private, and non-profit partners to develop and promote a “Downtown App”, calendar, and interactive map that showcases landmarks, destinations, amenities, and programming.

## SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

14. Ensure urban design elements contribute to a sense of place and identity Downtown.
15. Establish a coordinated and potentially customized streetscape furnishings palette.
16. Explore the creation of a Business Improvement District Downtown.
17. Establish a “clean and safe” program to provide supplemental sanitary and patrolling services for the Downtown Core and parks.
18. Support and promote businesses through the development of promotional programs, events, and festivals.
19. Assist in the recruitment and retention of public and private development interests in Downtown.



Chattanooga's "Chatype." Chattanooga MO



Downtown Huntsville AB

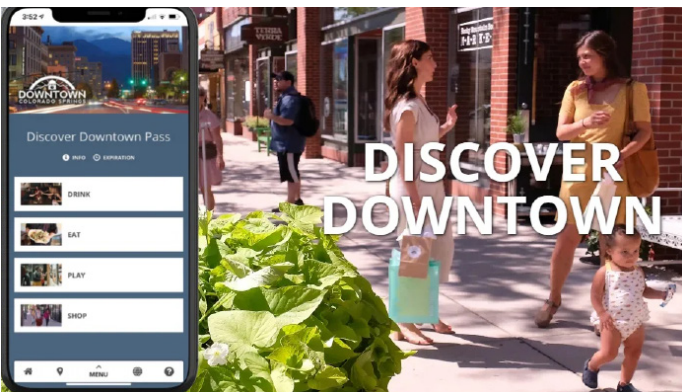




Flower Festival. Meatpacking District NYC



Downtown Sound Series. Pittsburgh PA



Colorado Springs Downtown App. Denver CO



"Park After Dark." Tempe AZ



Sandwich Boards and Seating. Cobble Hill, Brooklyn NY



Industrial Chic. Seattle WA

## PROJECT BRANDING

Informing the creation of a logo, a vision for Downtown involved familiarization with the destination and its planned offerings/experiences. Focused planning discussions, desk research, public engagement and interviews with client-identified stakeholders helped align the vision for the Downtown, identifying important considerations, and exploring the right expressions for the brand from tonal and visual perspectives.

This information helped us define audience personas, giving us clarity on who the Downtown is for, and what exactly they are looking for. As part of the City's upcoming efforts in developing a marketing strategy, we would suggest an evaluation of the proposed:

### Brand Positioning

- To help humanize the brand and reveal its unique characteristics, identifying specifics that will resonate with the audience within a competitive market.

### Brand Personality

- To help elicit an emotional reaction from the intended audience by shaping the way they feel about its product.

A tailoring of downtown Eustis' brand messaging is also important and will help create an emotional connection that is insightful, distinctive, and meaningful. This messaging should be tailored to different audiences including stakeholders, residents, and visitors. The story and key messages will support communications and positioning of Downtown Eustis through different channels and engagement points.

Any adjustments to the logo should be made at this time.

## LOGO

The Downtown Master Plan logo takes its inspiration from the sculpture by Doug Hays that is prominently displayed at downtown Eustis' historic Ferran Park. The same sculpture is also featured in the logo for City of Eustis. Since its installation it has become a community icon and favorite photo spot. Located on the waterfront it is a celebration of family, heritage and art as it is a destination for the community to share the beautiful sunsets unique to the city. The Master plan is focused on ensuring that these ideas are embraced and incorporated into the future of Eustis.



*Downtown Eustis Logo*



*Downtown Eustis Master plan Logo*



**LOGO APPLICATIONS**

Potential branding applications are illustrated here to suggest opportunities for messaging and story through a variety of channels and mediums - local and beyond. Consult the style guide for instructions on use and deployment.



*Artist Impressions - Logo/Branding Applications*



*Artist Impressions - Logo/Branding Applications*

# 6.5 IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Safety, comfort, and legibility all emerged as themes during the master Planning process through engagement with the public, design team observation, and discussions with stakeholder groups. A desire for a more walkable and cycle-friendly downtown were evident as well as the desire for connection with the outdoors.

The disconnection felt between downtown and the waterfront is not new and efforts by the City and FDOT should be acknowledged to improve the safety of crossing at Grove and Bay Streets. With that said, there are a number of other improvements that can be made as part of capially funded projects or as part of regularly scheduled maintenance and operations. These recommendations include connectivity throughout downtown but also recommended strategies for connectivity of downtown with the City of Eustis, adjacent towns of Mt. Dora and Tavares, as well as the great Lake County.

1. Consider zoning changes to support and promote vibrant alleys and mid-block throughways.
2. Seek grants and collaborative partnerships to plan for capital improvements for recreational trails to connect to the Trout Lake Nature Center, expansion, promotion, and mapping of the Citrus Label Trail, and other regional natural assets.
3. Focus capital improvement efforts on creating walkable and cycle-friendly connections between downtown and the East.
4. Allocated funding for priority and future sidewalk expansion and implementation throughout downtown.
5. Plan for extension and completion of a continuous waterfront lake walk from the Sailing Club to Sunset Island and Park.
6. Implement the first segment of a broader rail trail downtown within the existing CSX alignment.
7. Conduct a City-wide bicycle/greenway master plan, identifying and implementing a continuous loop that connects the city with downtown and the waterfront.
8. Prioritize the relocation of parking from the waterfront between Clifford and Bates Avenues to better connect downtown with the waterfront.

## BUILD MULTI-MODAL NETWORKS AND MOBILITY LOOPS

Bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and other micromobility users should have priority within Downtown Eustis. In order for these modes to be utilized, the networks need to be complete and provide for direct, safe, and comfortable travel between destinations. Pedestrians should be prioritized on all streets. Cyclists should be prioritized on specific streets. The map identifies priority routes for new/improved bike facilities.

Priority routes are focused on initiating a bicycle network rather than exist on all streets. Shared lanes/sharrows are appropriate on all other minor streets.



*Conservation / Recreation Trail*



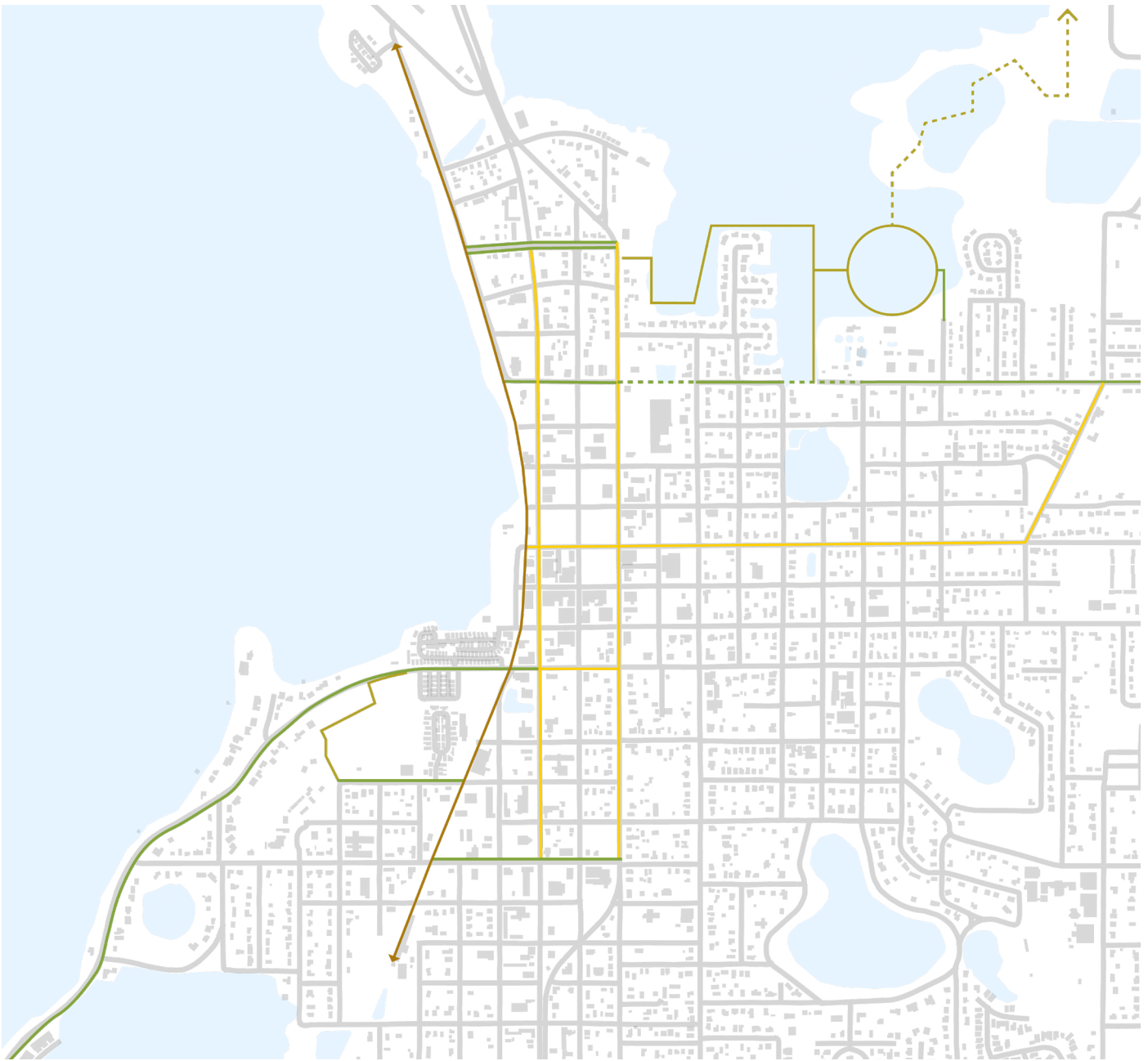
*Rail trail.*



*On-street bike lane.*



*Two-way protected bike lane.*



Multi-Modal Mobility Map



## MOBILITY LOOPS

An extended Lake Walk and Rail Trail, along the existing CSX corridor would create a destination loop along the waterfront downtown of approximately 1 mile.

Extending the Lake Walk further to connect with Sunset Island Park, as well as completing the sidewalk from Waterfront Grill to Bay Street could add an additional 0.5 mile distance to this loop.

Extending the Rail Trail to the existing sailing club would add an additional 0.5 miles to this circuit as a shared pathway.

As a gesture towards creating a link with the Trout Lake Nature Center, a 1.5 mile loop could be created throughout the wetland and forested areas surrounding Orchid Lake and Trout Lake. Additional connections are proposed in the framework Plan.



*Trout Lake Canal*



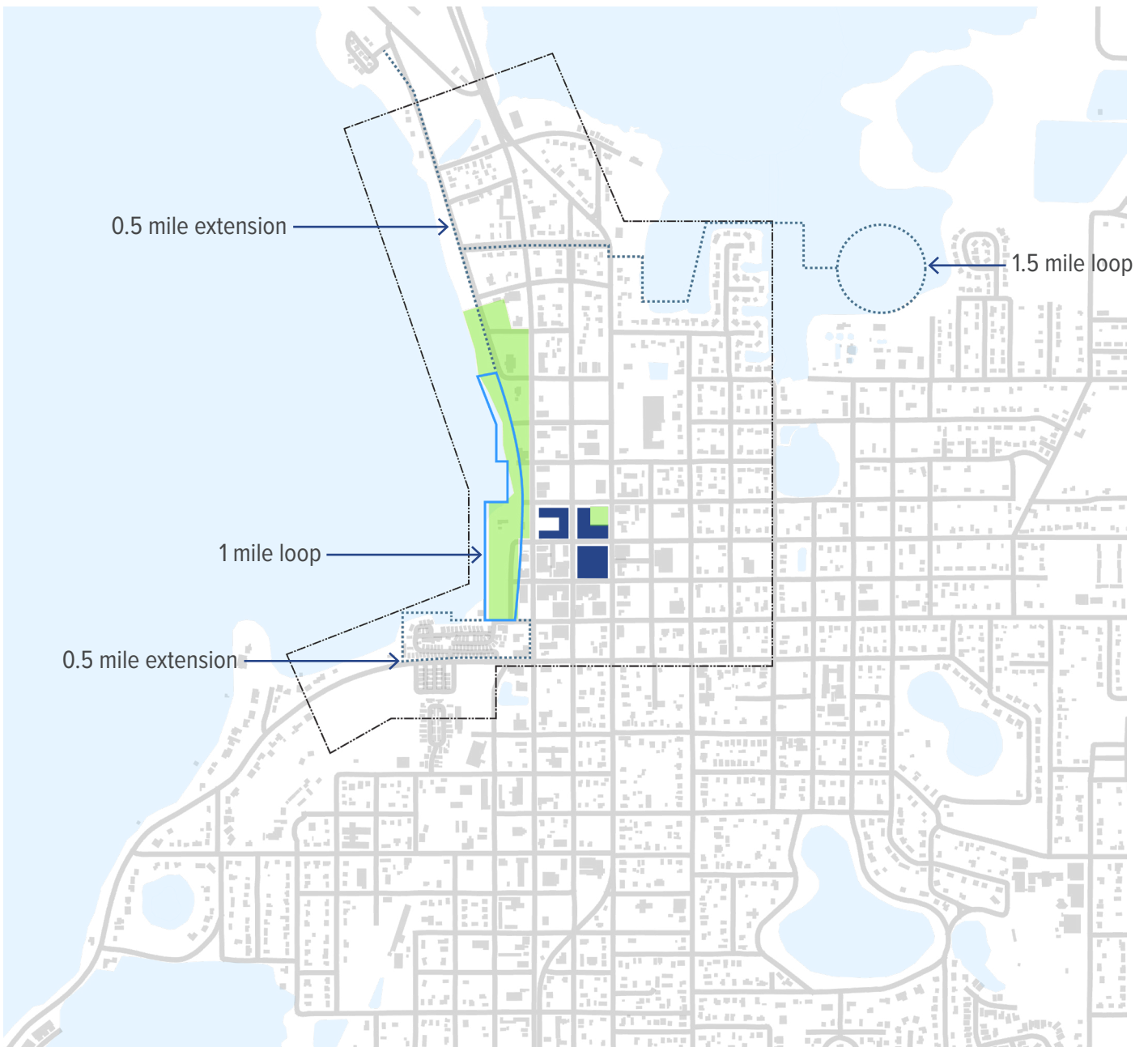
*Trout Lake Nature Center*



*Elevated Boardwalk, [Burolandschap, Belgium](#)*



*Elevated Boardwalk, [Burolandschap, Belgium](#)*



Mobility Loops

## ALLEYWAYS AND MID-BLOCK CONNECTIONS

Alleyways offer substantial advantages when strategically integrated into city design. These spaces act as alternative pedestrian routes, easing congestion on main streets and enhancing urban connectivity.

Revitalizing alleyways through art installations and creative interventions can foster community engagement and pride, and encourage stewardship among residents and owners.

Including sustainable initiatives like green spaces or stormwater management as part of the design of these spaces contributes to environmental sustainability and will help mitigate infrastructure challenges and climate impacts in the future.

### PRIORITY FUTURE GREEN ALLEYS

McCullochs Alley is a charming and inviting through-block connection that offers opportunities for local businesses, fostering economic growth and preserving neighborhood character.

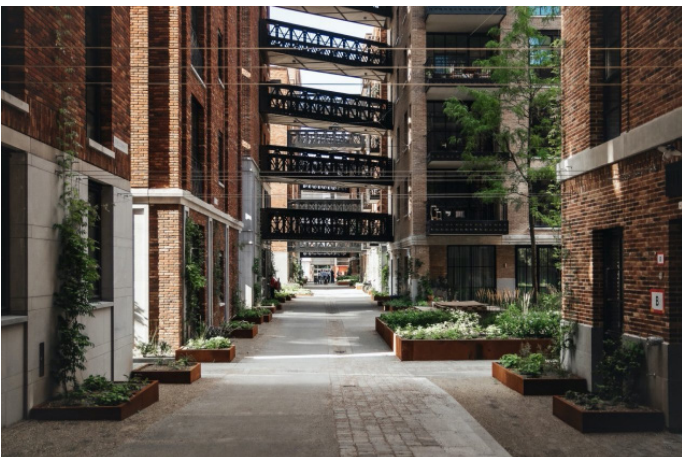
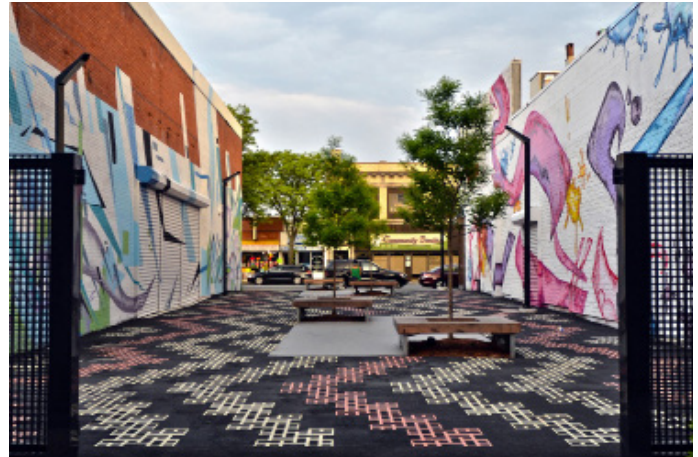
McCullochs Alley was identified as priority alleys for enhancement as a first phase of a Green Alley initiative. Such improvements should be evaluated based on timing of CIP funding or other utility projects. Additional alleys may be considered for enhancement pending detailed evaluation and availability of funding sources.

### KEY OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER IN GREEN ALLEYS IMPLEMENTATION

- Placemaking assets such as unique paving/pavers (stamped colored concrete), art, seating, and other furnishings and amenities.
- Green infrastructure such as stormwater drainage, water quality enhancement, permeable surfaces, and storm drain connectivity.
- Multi-modal access for pedestrians, bikes, commercial deliveries, municipal services, and parking/building connections
- Rear-building access, welcoming back doors, and back patios
- Nighttime lighting and visibility
- Landscaping, native plants and trees, and raised planters
- Co-locating and screening dumpsters/ compactors for the block or half block with consolidated pick-up dates
- Oil reclamation from restaurants
- “Undergrounding” of overhead utility lines
- One-way or yield vehicular traffic



- Alley identification and interpretive signage
- Adjacent property enhancements
- Events and programming
- Creation of a joint/shared/public parking off of alleys using permeable pavement treatments
- Potential for pre-designed spaces for grease traps or other building code needs to allow buildings to transition
- Potential to embed local history
- Maintenance costs associated with improvements and strategies for maintenance management.



## IMPROVE BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

A major challenge for revitalization of the downtown area is the quality, comfort, and safety of pedestrian and micromobility connections where they exist. Improved connectivity for all modes of transportation (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and motor vehicles) will be instrumental in the success of the Downtown Master Plan development of catalytic projects. The following provides an overview of recommended strategies for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connectivity and parking in Downtown.



*On-Street Rural/Suburban*



*On-Street Separated*

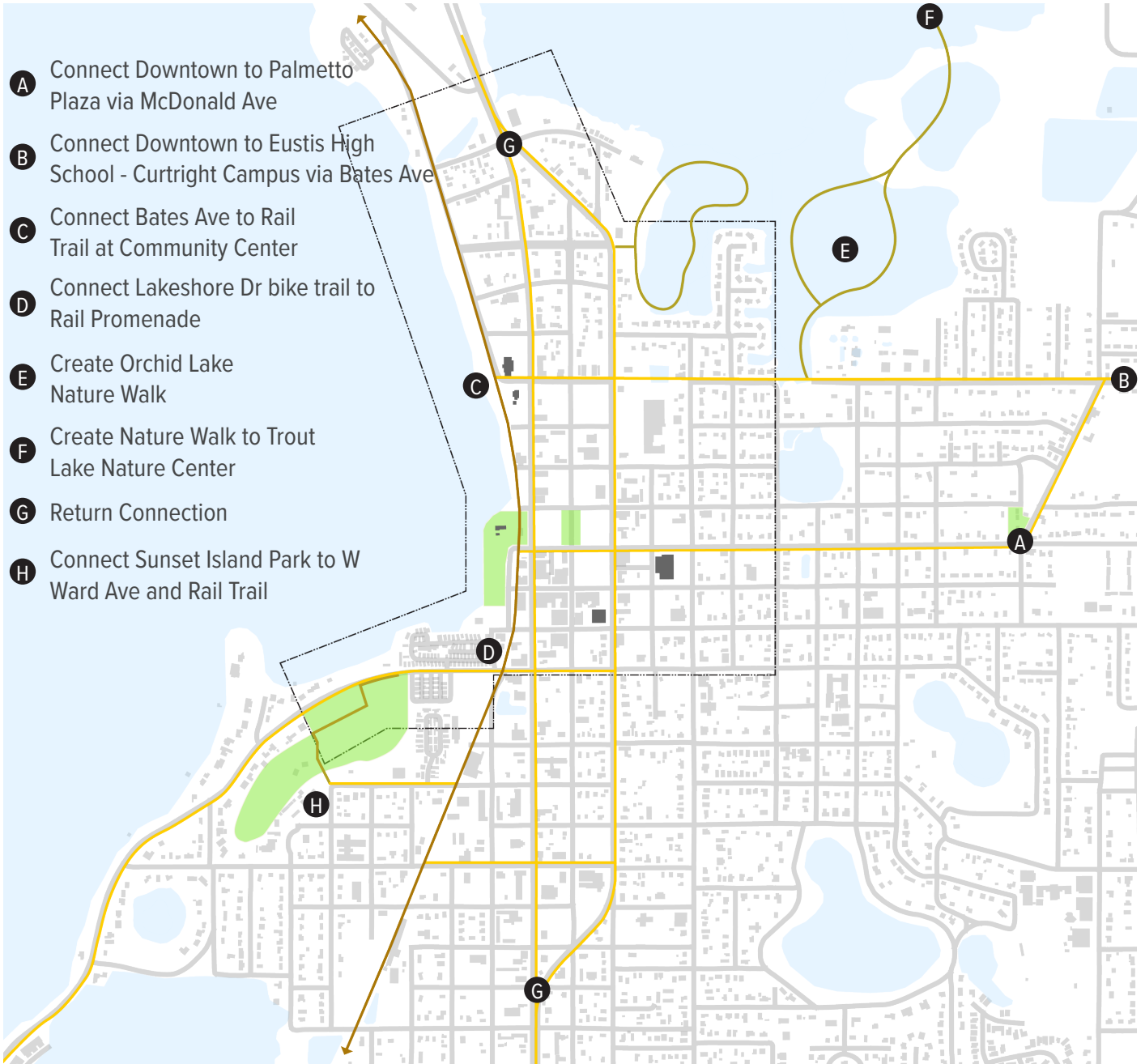


*Shaded / Inviting Walkways*



*Complete Street / Cultural Trail*





- A** Connect Downtown to Palmetto Plaza via McDonald Ave
- B** Connect Downtown to Eustis High School - Curtright Campus via Bates Ave
- C** Connect Bates Ave to Rail Trail at Community Center
- D** Connect Lakeshore Dr bike trail to Rail Promenade
- E** Create Orchid Lake Nature Walk
- F** Create Nature Walk to Trout Lake Nature Center
- G** Return Connection
- H** Connect Sunset Island Park to W Ward Ave and Rail Trail

*The Beginnings of a connected Bike Network*



## SIDEWALKS

The map on the next page illustrates priority streets for new and improved sidewalks and other gaps in the sidewalk network the Project Management Team recommends be filled. This suggestion anticipates the City working with Lake County, acquiring necessary right of ways, completing projects on its Mobility Improvement List , and its ADA priority sidewalks list. Priority improvements are focused on areas where sidewalks are missing, inaccessible, or inconsistent on both sides of the road. Sidewalks are also prioritized for completion/improvements near parks. Sidewalk construction and design should incorporate existing zoning code requirements related to their construction, including larger widths to allow for significant pedestrian traffic and sidewalk amenities, and tree or landscaping buffers between the sidewalk and street to increase pedestrian comfort and safety.

Priority sidewalks are proposed for the following Streets/Avenues as shown on the map.

- Gottsche Avenue between Grove and Bay Streets.
- Clifford Avenue between Grove and Bay Street.
- Orange Avenue between Bay Street and Ferran Park.
- Lakeshore Drive from Bay Street to Sunset Island.



*Orange Avenue between Bay Street and Ferran Park.*



*Two-way protected bike lane.*



*Priority Sidewalk Repairs and Implementation*

## REGIONAL AND CITY TRANSIT

Transit facilities are an important service to encourage access downtown from other parts of the community without having to drive, or for those who do not own a car. These facilities should be convenient and comfortable for all users. Stops that service the downtown are detailed in the diagram to the right with adjusted locations/improvements as noted.

Most stops located downtown lack weather protection and basic amenities that encourage ridership. Sidewalk bulb-outs help mitigate speeding and provide space for waiting passengers, shelters and furnishings, bike parking, and other amenities. Additional opportunities for locating transit stops should be considered as downtown develops or to coordinate with infrastructure projects.

### TRANSIT STOPS ON GROVE STREET

- Orange Ave: Convenient transit access is not provided immediately adjacent to City Hall in the heart of Downtown. Conceptual design could include bulb-outs that enables buses to stop without merging in and out of traffic.
- Clifford Ave: Conceptual design could include bulb-outs.
- Hazzard Ave: Move location north toward Bates Ave and introduce bulb-outs.
- South of Floral Ave: Move location north to just south of Pendleton Ave. Provide bulb-outs.

### TRANSIT STOPS ON BAY STREET (PRIORITIZATION)

- Northshore Drive: Conceptual design could include bulb-outs. Amenities would improve this stop as a future waterfront destination.
- Hazzard Ave: Move stop south of Gottsche and include bulb-outs.
- McDonald Ave: This strategic location could be improved with bulb-outs for transit shelter, amenities, and in-lane stop.
- Orange Ave: Provide additional location at this key park entry point. Include bulb-outs.

### TRANSIT STOPS ON MCDONALD AVENUE

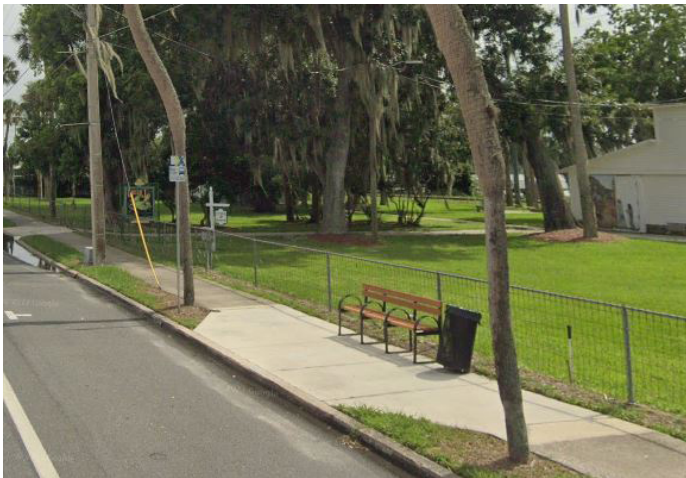
- Consideration of a change in route could be considered to extend ridership East on McDonald to Palmetto Street in lieu of going North on N Prescott Street. This could coincide with a re-activation of Palmetto Plaza, and expansion of park, recreation, and mobility/cycle facilities at this location.





### TRANSIT STOP SHELTER DESIGNS AND AMENITIES

Transit stops in Downtown Eustis lack legibility, amenities, and shade. It is recommended that transit stops within the study area be enhanced with shelters, route information, and other improvements that would improve comfort and convenience for transit riders as indicated below. Priority locations are proposed along McDonald Avenue, Grove and Bay Streets, particularly adjacent the Downtown Commercial Historic District and include opportunities for embedding history, art, and thoughtful design.



*Bench seating at Museum Bus Stop*



*Typical Eustis Bus Stop*





*Solar powered and conditioned.*



*Multi-modal shelters.*



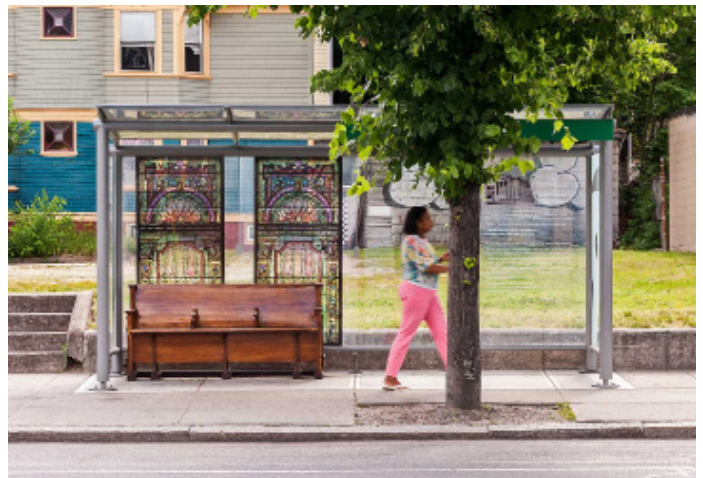
*Digital signage with real-time arrival information and lighting*



*Showcasing local community history.*



*Transit infrastructure as public art*



*Shelter with artistic bench and historic materials*



# **6.6 DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

All residents of Eustis should have options if they desire to live Downtown, and a diverse Downtown population is part of what will facilitate a vibrant and thriving lake front community. Downtown residents support local businesses, attend events, and add liveliness throughout the day and week; more than patrons alone. The City could support this population by encouraging development of diverse, affordable housing types and making Downtown an enriched place to live.

Overarching recommendations for this topic are outlined below, with key concepts explored in more detail on the following pages.

1. Promote a high quality of life for Downtown residents through the provision of daily community amenities, goods, and services which support a complete neighborhood.
2. Complete an updated Downtown housing inventory to gather a complete understanding of the Downtown housing supply to assist in making policy decisions.
3. Support the development of multi-family and mixed-use housing products within Downtown designed for all demographics and all stages of life to provide contextually appropriate density and affordability.
4. On the outer edges of Downtown and adjacent to existing neighborhoods support “missing middle” housing types to provide diverse housing options and affordability.
5. Incentivize affordable for sale- and rental housing units.
6. Reduce development barriers to housing development through streamlined development processes and development code amendments for recommended housing types.
7. Pursue strategies to increase home ownership opportunities in Downtown for diverse income levels.
8. Conduct a Downtown resident or visitor travel survey, to measure any increase in non-car travel as housing opportunities increase Downtown.

## INFILL DEVELOPMENT

During the Master Plan, an interest has been expressed for new types of development that currently don't exist or are lacking in Downtown. These include housing options, small business startup/incubator spaces, additional restaurants and retail, and mixed-use buildings. We vision better utilization of privately-owned vacant properties in Downtown while providing development types desired by the community. Ideas shown are purely conceptual and would require further conversations and study prior to implementation.

### Attracting Desired Development:

While these conceptual development ideas are located on private property, there are tools the City can use to attract the development that is envisioned. These strategies include:

- Provide interested developers with these visions to provide predictability of public sentiment and streamline development process
- Refine the vision for these sites in partnership with existing property owners
- City purchase of properties and then either donating land or selling land at a reduced cost in exchange for developer commitment to implementing the vision
- Provide incentives for property owners or developers interested in implementing concept (i.e.: expedited permitting, reduced fees, modified site/zoning requirements, etc.)





## DOWNTOWN HOUSING

All residents of Eustis should have options if they desire to live Downtown, and a diverse Downtown population is part of what will facilitate a vibrant and thriving lake front community. Downtown residents support local businesses, attend events, and add liveliness throughout the day and week; more than patrons alone. The City could support this population by encouraging development of diverse, affordable housing types and making Downtown an enriched place to live. Recommendations for downtown housing are outlined below:

1. Promote a high quality of life for Downtown residents through the provision of daily community amenities, goods, and services which support a complete neighborhood.
2. Complete an updated Downtown housing inventory to gather a complete understanding of the Downtown housing supply to assist in making policy decisions.
3. Support the development of multi-family and mixed-use housing products within Downtown designed for all demographics and all stages of life to provide contextually appropriate density and affordability.
4. On the outer edges of Downtown and adjacent to existing neighborhoods support “missing middle” housing types to provide diverse housing options and affordability.
5. Incentivize affordable for sale- and rental housing units.
6. Reduce development barriers to housing development through streamlined development processes and development code amendments for recommended housing types.
7. Pursue strategies to increase home ownership opportunities in Downtown for diverse income levels.
8. Conduct a Downtown resident or visitor travel survey, to measure any increase in non-car travel as housing opportunities increase Downtown.

### Key Design Elements

- Entryways and windows elevated by minimum 1/2 story
- Small front porches, patios, and front lawns
- Maintained landscaping
- Address demarcation
- Lighting
- Quality paving materials







# **6.7 GROUND FLOOR ACTIVATION**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Numerous opportunities for infill development and redevelopment persist downtown. Vacant buildings/lots, surface parking lots, and parcels of City-owned land represent the primary prospects for further enhancement.

Future developments should aim to enrich the Downtown ambiance, bolster the local economy, and fortify the area's character strengths. The recommendations pertaining to this matter are delineated below, with elucidation of key concepts available in subsequent sections.

1. Update Development standards/guidelines to ensure that ground floors are designed to contribute to an active pedestrian realm.
2. Pursue strategies to activate vacant storefronts in the near-term and reduce vacancies in the long-term, especially through the arts and in collaboration with existing tenants.
3. Attract catalytic development desired by the community, removal of development barriers, or other strategic partnerships with property owners.
4. Encourage incremental development along Eustis, Bay, and Grove Streets that promotes desirable land uses, building design, streetscape, and sustainability improvements to celebrate the relationship between downtown and the lake.
5. Attract a downtown hotel offering that provides multiple economic benefits and assets to Downtown and serves visitors to Eustis and Lake County.
6. Continue to utilize/refine architectural design standards and guidelines for buildings in downtown. Allow for flexibility while maintaining quality and compatibility with existing downtown buildings.
7. Encourage rooftop activation using landscaped or intensive green roofs and publicly accessible patios.
8. Incentivize green and well-building techniques and update development codes, building codes, or energy codes to encourage and implement sustainable practices.
9. Continue to replace aerial electric and telecommunications lines downtown for underground services.
10. Consider vacancy abatement strategies through ordinance updates such as a vacant building registration or minimum standards of care and vacancy fees.

## INVITING BUILDINGS

Successful retail environments contribute to the Downtown economy, energy, and experience. The street level design of buildings are essential to ensure a positive retail environment.

### Key Design Elements

- Structural improvements such as building articulation, transparency/ windows, door aesthetics, seasonal flexibility, and accessibility
- Facade enhancements such as color, varied materials, lighting, awnings, historic restoration
- Amenities outside the storefront such as signage, art, seating, lighting, landscaping, and outdoor displays





## OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL

Office/professional uses can utilize many of the same techniques as inviting storefronts, despite having fewer customers/ visitors.

### Key Design Elements

- Structural improvements such as building articulation, transparency/ windows, and door aesthetics
- Visually interesting screening to provide privacy as needed
- Facade enhancements such as color, varied materials, lighting, awnings, historic restoration
- Amenities outside the entrance such as signage, art, seating, lighting, and landscaping.







## VACANT STOREFRONT / BUILDING ACTIVATION PROGRAM

Vacant storefronts can have a negative impact on the public’s perception of a town’s vitality. It is important to program and revitalize these spaces, even in temporary turnover periods, through creative municipal and non-profit strategies. Eustis would benefit from considering the following activation strategies for existing vacant storefronts, to promote economic viability and community investment in the Downtown.

- Provide temporary-use retail permits through a Pop-Up Retail Ordinance
- Generate public interest in vacant storefronts by allowing local artists to showcase work.
- Create a pilot program for grant funding. Businesses can apply for grants through the City to fund the construction and lease of pop-up shops.
- Encourage/ work with Florida State University, University of Florida, and University of Central Florida and the existing incubator program to encourage student start-up and minority and woman-owned businesses downtown.
- Partner with non-profit resources to provide services such as relieving tenants from the first three months of their rent in an effort to boost them into a successful long-term lease.
- Alleviate temporary retail insurance woes by facilitating partnerships between shops and firms providing insurance.
- Seek academic, corporate sponsorships, and strategic retail partnerships to fund business counseling services and subsidize upgrades.



*Raleigh NC retail space and incubator program gives tenants access to high visibility retail and business counseling..*



*Seattle’s Office of Economic Development launched “Seattle Restored” program to activate vacant storefronts.*



*Related created the Box Shops in Chicago, providing local start-ups access to an area they otherwise may not have been able to afford, while also bringing retail into parts of the city where it's currently lacking.*



*CultureHouse Harvard created a space for gathering for unhoused and housed folks.*



*Melbourne revitalized vacant storefronts with a \$2.6 million dollar grant program for local businesses and artists.*



*SpaceUs partners with local officials and landlords to transform vacant spaces for community and art.*



## FUTURE LAND USE ZONING AND REGULATIONS

The Core of Downtown Eustis is within the Central Business District (CBD) future land use district. The Central Business District allows for a maximum height of 74' (6 stories) and a maximum FAR of 3.0 (SEC 109-3). In addition to Future Land Use, the City of Eustis also defines Design Districts, which qualify which types of building types and programs are allowable within each Design District. The Core of Downtown Eustis is within the Urban Center Design District.

With these two overlays we can determine which proposed uses are permitted under the current future land use regulations (SEC 190-4):

- Multi-Family Housing (Permitted)
- Live/Work (Permitted)
- Single Family Attached (Not Permitted)
- Commercial (Permitted)
- Hotel (Permitted)
- Restaurant, no drive-thru (Permitted)
- Professional services and general office (Permitted)

Additionally, while W+MIG is not defining the individual lots for the 3 blocks of the Waterman Site, in order to save some mature existing trees maximum street setbacks might need to be adjusted in several key locations throughout the Waterman Site and downtown.

Recommendations:

1. Allow Single-Family Attached buildings within the CBD along micro-grid adjacent lots
  - With the recommended extension of the microgrid (existing within the block North of Magnolia and Bay) the street frontage can be preserved for mixed-use/retail building uses, while the interior of the block can be developed with more residential uses in mind.

AND/OR

Create special zoning project for three Waterman Blocks

- A special zoning project for the three Waterman blocks could serve as a test project for potential changes to the larger zoning district.
2. Create provision where maximum allowable building setbacks can be adjusted to preserve existing downtown tree stock.





*Existing Zoning Regulation(s)*



*Proposed Zoning Regulation(s) Adjustments*





“

*Ferran Park should be prioritized and protected ... Public spaces, especially green public spaces provide citizens with a sense of comfort and pride as well as offer an expanded sense of living space*

*(Eustis Resident)*

”







**7**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The following pages are intended to facilitate implementation of the plan's key recommendations. Suggested actions are prioritized to build momentum and anticipate funding streams in support of realization of an expanded downtown core.

Funding strategies, sources, and financing and taxing mechanisms, are identified within each project - where applicable, and are expanded upon in the master plans appendix for further reading.

Dedicated staff to support implementation of the downtown Master Plan will be key to identifying and confirming critical funding, as well as assisting with negotiations, procurement, and implementation of the ideas outlined in this report.





COFFEE CO.

Taxi

P

337-777-1111



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The below processes should be considered when pursuing the implementation of projects and their recommendations.

1. Hire a consultant to manage redevelopment negotiations on behalf of the city.
2. Regularly analyze potential funding sources including, Federal and State Transportation Funding (CAMPO), DOT (RAISE) discretionary grants, Local (CIP Projects), developer contributions, and additional funding sources as they arise.
3. Determine management strategy and provide appropriate staff updates for downtown to ensure overarching management of project priorities, use of CRA funds, CIP and other funding sources, and tracking of implementation/action items.
4. Coordinate plan recommendations with on-going and future master plan policy documents such as Marketing Strategy, Transportation/Bike Master plan, Arts Master plan, economic development strategies, and other strategic initiatives.
5. Coordinate with City departments, development partners, business owners and the community to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations on an incremental scale. Examples of coordination opportunities include roadway re-striping, private development on individual parcels, procurement and/or sale of city property, public art installations, and chamber of commerce programming.
6. Convene regular meetings between the City of Eustis and the University of Central Florida, University of Florida, and Florida State University to coordinate partnership efforts.
7. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and the CRA in finding community, corporate, and media sponsors to support Eustis' aspirations for festivals and events worthy of promoting its unparalleled setting.

Note: Four principal kinds of revenue are available to open space development efforts, in amounts and varieties that depend on local context and park mission. These include:

- Public (through taxation and financing) - General Fund-Bond / Special Levy
- Value Capture - BID Charge / TIF / POPS / RE Proceeds
- Earned income (through park programming and amenities) - FB / Event-Promotions / Parking Fees
- Private (contributed) - Philanthropy / Corporate Sponsorships

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY**

The Downtown Eustis Master Plan is a tool to increase the vibrancy of Eustis' downtown. Vibrancy in a downtown space ultimately translates to economic development. Thus, the recommendations in the Master Plan – whether directly or indirectly – are intended to promote economic development in downtown. The following highlights the key economic development-related recommendations and accompanying strategies in the Plan and how they will combine to spur business growth, job creation, and investment in Downtown Eustis.

### **WATERMAN SITE REDEVELOPMENT**

The Waterman site is strategically found near City Hall and the Commercial Historic District. Recent infrastructure improvements have led to measurable success for retail and commercial enterprises within the existing downtown core. Developing the Waterman Site offers a unique opportunity to add more people and uses downtown. This will help to enhance street life, increase the resident population, and boost the tax base of downtown. A redeveloped Waterman site will create a vibrant hub that attracts businesses, residents, and visitors with a mix of retail, office, housing, and lodging.

### **INTEGRATED WATERFRONT EXPANSION**

The Extended Waterfront Park is framed by two significant bookends. Ferran Park, acting as a central gathering space, serves as a gateway to the waterfront, fostering community engagement. As an event space and a destination, Ferran Park is an economic development tool that increases visitation downtown. On the northern end lies “The Porch”, flanked by the Historical Museum and Community Center to the north, and the Aquatic Center to the south. Integrating programmatic elements and infrastructure will elevate the overall waterfront experience. Quick wins should include public art installations, comfortable seating areas, and temporary activations. Cultivating an attractive and inviting environment will draw people downtown, support local businesses, and stimulate economic growth.

## COMFORTABLE AND WALKABLE DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

A comfortable and walkable downtown serve as the cornerstone for boosting business growth, fostering job opportunities, and attracting investment. Key recommendations in this category include:

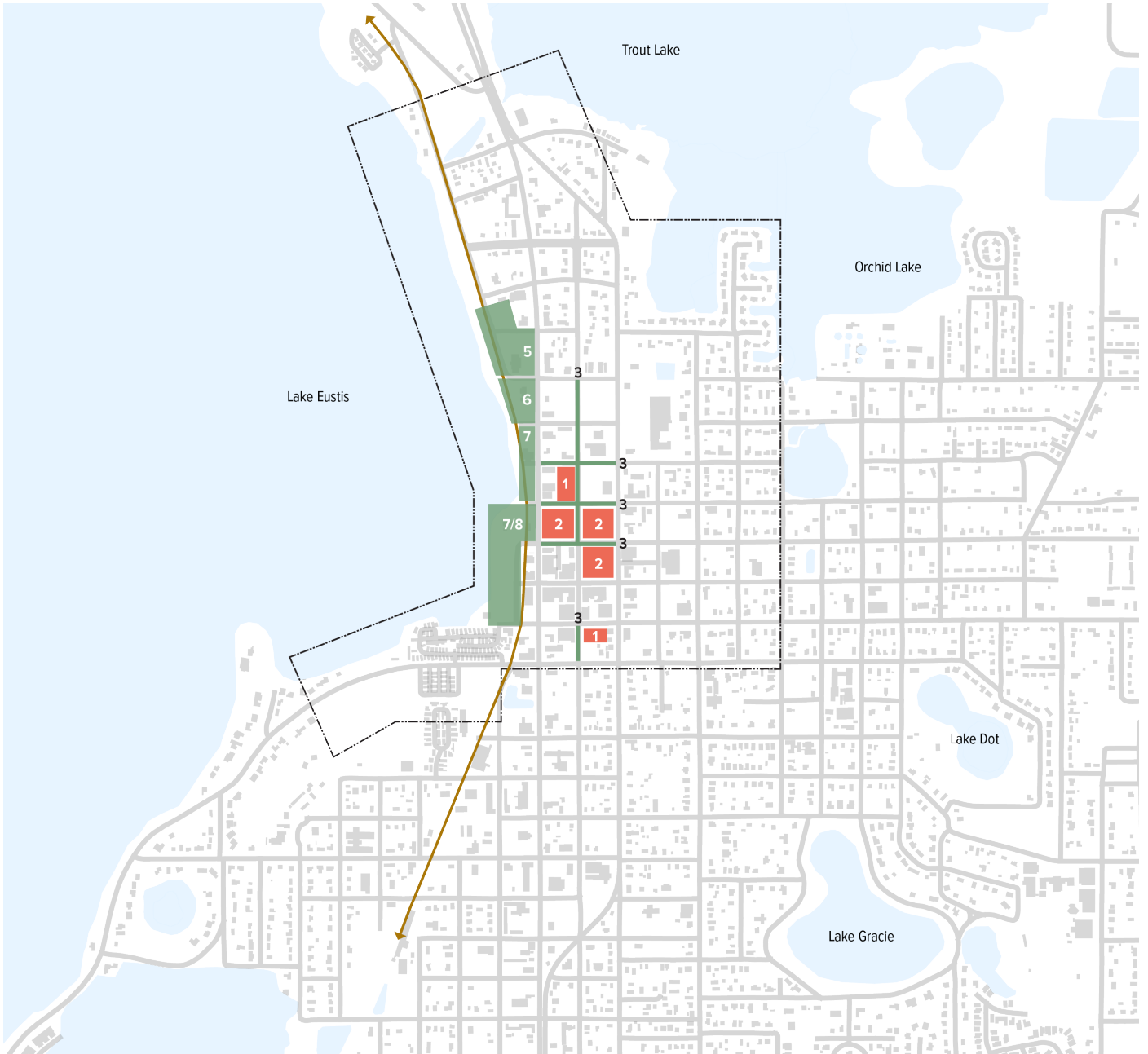
- **Public Realm Amenities:** By prioritizing universally accessible pedestrian infrastructure, well-lit streets, and attractive gateways, the downtown environment becomes more inviting. This encourages foot traffic, which can lead to increased patronage of local businesses. Safe and appealing public spaces also attract potential investors.
- **Multi-Modal Options:** Completing a network of safe bicycle facilities and exploring micro-mobility options enhances connectivity. Commuters and visitors can easily access downtown, fostering economic activity. A robust multi-modal system also positions the area as forward-thinking, appealing to businesses seeking a vibrant location, and youth seeking new destinations from which to “live, work, [and] play.”
- **Temporary Activation and Partnerships:** Using vacant lots for temporary activations creates buzz and excitement. Pop-up events, art installations, or markets draw crowds, helping local businesses. Collaborating with landowners and entrepreneurs fosters creativity and innovation, potentially attracting investors looking for dynamic opportunities that are “cheap and cheerful.” These are opportunities to evaluate programs without long-term commitment and, often, at minimal expense.

## INVESTMENT IN THE PUBLIC REALM

**Strategic Infrastructure Expansion:** Public infrastructure investments will be critical to facilitating private investment in the Waterman site and other revitalization projects downtown. Strategic investment in roads, utilities, and public spaces sets up the foundations of an environment that attracts new development, new and expanded businesses, new residents, and new visitors.



IMPLEMENTATION



Priority Projects Key Map

## PRIORITY PROJECTS

The following projects are prioritized in order of action intended to sequentially and, in some instances concurrently unlock subsequent transformation and redevelopment within downtown Eustis. A key map is provided to locate the general project boundaries associated with each project. Within each project, additional sub-projects are suggested as well as design intentions established.

### 1. *PARKING STRUCTURE*

Prioritize construction of a mixed-use paid structured parking facility North of Clifford between Bay Street and Eustis Ave.

Related projects include:

- i. Implement Parking Benefit District.
- ii. Convert existing city parking structure at Orange Avenue and Eustis Street to paid parking. Relocated City staff parking to adjacent lot.
- iii. Consider Eustis Street facing retail edge as leasable opportunity.
- iv. Connect parking management and economic development.
- v. Continue to seek ways to consolidate parking and/or look at short-term leasing of areas like Grove Square and other large downtown surface lots for event capacity.

Potential funding strategies/ tools:

- **City's General Fund/ Pay-As-You-Go-Financing, TIF (CRA), Grants**

### 2. *WATERMAN SITE*

Prioritize negotiations and partnership in the completion of the Waterman site - three blocks - as an anchor project for downtown.

Related projects include:

- i. Engage a consultant to assist in reaching agreement on the development terms for the design and construction of the Waterman site.
- ii. Actively engage the development consortium G3C2 to build on the momentum of the downtown Master Plan. Seek mediated negotiations to assist in finding amicable and timely solutions.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Potential funding strategies/ tools:

- **TIF (CRA), Opportunity Zone, Infrastructure Contribution, PPP (shared parking), Zoning, Community Benefit Agreement, Lake County TDC for cultural & tourism elements**

### 3. STREETS AND INTERSECTIONS

Prioritize the extension of Eustis Street from McDonald to Bates Avenue and Citrus Avenue, as well as McDonald, Clifford, and Gottsche Avenues between Bay Street and Grove Street.

Related projects include:

- Create a shared street and flexible urban park on Eustis Street between McDonald and Clifford Avenues (City of Eustis). This could coincide with and/or support an agreement on development of the Waterman site.
- Complete additional identified intersection improvements to all prioritized Avenues crossing Bay Street. (See also “Gateways”).
- Extend streetscape and sidewalk improvements east on McDonald Avenue, from Ferran Park to Center Street, connecting the library and Women’s Club with downtown.
- Complete sidewalk gaps throughout downtown, prioritizing Orange Avenue, from Bay Street to Ferran Park, and from Sunset Island to Bay Street along Lakeshore Drive.
- Consider pedestrian / cycle bridge connections and street improvements through Bates Ave to complete the connection to downtown from the East.
- Expand sidewalk/boulevard treatment to Bay and Grove Streets b/w Citrus and Bates Avenues, integrating bike lanes.

Potential funding strategies/ tools:

- **City’s General Fund, City’s Street Improvement Fund, TIF (CRA - depending on capacity)**

Secondary projects to consider:

- Provide street trees and continuous road-edge landscaping to Lakeshore Drive East of the bridge to Bay Street.
- Implement pedestrian improvements including widened sidewalks and street tree improvements to Orange Avenue.
- Expand the implementation of intersection improvements to acknowledge



identified gateway entrances and key crossings downtown.

- x. Study the feasibility of and consult with FDOT on a roundabout and entry feature at Laurel Oak Drive to announce entry to downtown Eustis and facilitate safe circulation on Grove and Bay Streets.
- xi. Bury all power and data cabling underground with all new streetscape and/or capital improvement projects where possible.

Potential funding strategies/ tools:

- **City's General Fund, City's Street Improvement Fund, TIF (CRA - depending on capacity), PACE**

#### **4. DOWNTOWN RAIL TRAIL**

Construct a dedicated downtown segment of the Rail Trail from Lake Eustis Sailing Club to Ward Avenue.

Considerations for success:

- i. Hire a design consultant to design the rail trail segment.
- ii. Provide shaded mixed-use path adjacent and/or within rail ROW.
- iii. Integrate a variety of seating, paved rest areas, points of interest, artwork, lighting, and historical/educational signage and wayfinding.
- iv. Look for active promotion and support for and from local businesses and owners that front the trail.

Potential funding strategies/ tools:

- **Lake County TDC, Lake County Parks & Recreation Department, State programs, Public-Private-Partnerships, Grant Programs, Foundations/ Non-Profit Organizations**

## 5. COMMUNITY CENTER

Focus on the redesign of the Community Center site, transforming it into a revitalized waterfront precinct for boating.

- i. Hire a consultant to redesign the community center site.
- ii. Remove the playground and provide flexible event space and gardens to the existing community center grounds.
- iii. Relocate waterfront parking on Northshore Drive to new lot at Bay Street adjacent community center.
- iv. Expand the Community Center Precinct with added event/commercial space to support long-term boat storage and moorage, marina, and launch at Park Avenue.
- v. Expand the waterfront park and pedestrianize Northshore Drive West of Bay Street and South of Park Ave.
- vi. Provide connection with Historical Museum and grounds.
- vii. Seek funding sources for habitat restoration and re-creation of public beach(es) between Bates and Wilt Avenues.

Potential funding strategies/ tools:

- **General Obligation Bonds, Grant Programs, Foundations/ Non-Profit Organizations, Lake County TDC (if marketing strategy includes conventions and conferences)**

## 6. HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Hire a consultant to renovate and design an expanded historical museum and grounds.

To do this:

- i. Prioritize shaded garden, seating and amenities, and flexible art spaces to the Museum landscape. Improve access and visibility to the museum and integrate it with an expanded waterfront park and rail trail.
- ii. Combine and update the Museum's collection and engage in active cross-promotion with the Chamber of Commerce.

Potential funding strategies/ tools:

- **Lake County TDC, Public-Private-Partnerships, Grant Programs (including State programs, such as Enterprise FL), Foundations/ Non-Profit Organizations, ARPA Funds**

## 7. EXTEND FERRAN PARK

Provide a design to complete the south end of Ferran Park to Bay Street. Integrate with lake walk extension and promenade improvements.

- i. Hire a consultant to provide a park design that consolidates and extends Ferran Park all the way to the historic museum and community center.
- ii. Reconfigure/redesign parking lot to incorporate shade/vendor pavilions complete with PV for solar power of vendors and/or electric car parking.
- iii. Demo existing Chamber of Commerce building and integrate space with Ferran Park promenade and lake walk extension.
- iv. Create pier at terminus of Orange Avenue.
- v. Provide temporary day parking/tie-ups for boat visitors at Ferran Park.
- vi. Provide accessible and shaded (where possible) sidewalk connection from Bay Street to Park.
- vii. Consider green infrastructure to parking lot, maintaining space for flexible events.
- viii. Hire a consultant to evaluate and recommend upgrades to the existing bandshell and/or staging grounds to accommodate more frequent and updated programming.
- ix. Hire a consultant and/or dedicate staff to increase programming and events at the bandshell. Focus on youth engagement, development and opportunity of local talent, and varied performance types - music, theater, film, art.

Potential funding strategies/ tools:

- **Lake County TDC, Public-Private-Partnerships, Grant Programs, Foundations/ Non-Profit Organizations**



## IMPLEMENTATION

“The Porch” can be treated as a unique project that looks to bridge the south and north ends of an extended Ferran (waterfront) Park. Beyond the temporary and planning/design phases of this waterfront segment, the following are envisioned:

- x. Stay open to the option of negotiations with owners of waterfront owner’s/tenants to acquire necessary lands for a continuous waterfront park.
- xi. Convert parking blocks between McDonald and Hazzard Ave to waterfront park/trail.
- xii. Reduce parking lot at Crazy Gator between Gottsche and Hazzard Avenue to extend green space and accommodate rail trail.
- xiii. Consolidate Park amenities and retail in a newly developed commercial/retail opportunity with public facilities at the Gottsche Avenue entrance (currently Crazy Gator). Consider open rooftop for leased tenant space.
- xiv. Integrate beach volleyball and other waterfront focused active recreation areas north of the Crazy Gator that can be serviced and supported by new park amenities/commercial building.
- xv. Extend turf lawn and flexible shaded park space to Bay Street, integrating space for variety of public seating and flexible active/passive recreation space.

Potential funding strategies/ tools:

- **Lake County TDC, Public-Private-Partnerships, Grant Programs, Foundations/ Non-Profit Organizations, ARPA Funds**

### **8. CONTINUOUS WATERFRONT LAKE WALK AND PROMENADE**

Complete a continuous lake walk from Bates Avenue to Sunset Island Park. This could take a phased approach as outlined below.

- i. Repair/extend seawall. Incorporate extension of promenade to end of Ferran Park and provide accessible connection to commercial edge at south of parking lot and to Bay Street.
- ii. Extend the lake walk from Clifford Avenue to Orange Avenue. Integrate with the existing promenade to allow for improved interaction with the water.
- iii. Extend the lake walk to Sunset Island from Orange Avenue.
- iv. Extend the lake walk from Park Avenue and connect with the Marina.

Potential funding strategies/ tools:

- **Lake County TDC, Public-Private-Partnerships, Grant Programs, Foundations/ Non-Profit Organizations, ARPA Funds**

## IMMEDIATE AND TEMPORARY WATERFRONT ACTIVATION

Promote and provide temporary activation(s) and use of existing vacant lots and infrastructure, striking working relationships with business/landowners to test quick ideas and programs. This should occur throughout downtown but is prioritized for parking lots and city-owned public spaces along the waterfront.

- Activation of waterfront parking lots - “the Porch” and Ferran Park Parking Lots - could include beach volleyball, basketball, court games, food trucks, and public art projects, including murals. Many of these activations are grant-funded through Bloomberg Philanthropies and/or DOT initiatives.
- Prioritize upgrades to restrooms and pool and other facilities including increased policing if necessary.
- Provide added (portable) comfort stations on a short-term basis as needed to support expansion of activation and/or seasonal demand.
- Coordinate and promote regular two times weekly artisan/green market with tents on the existing parking lot.
- Engage landowners of Bank building and adjacent parking lot to encourage development, sale, or adaptive reuse for permanent market space and cross-promotion of waterfront program and activation.
- Prioritize activation with a focus on youth programming and active recreation.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR CIVIC IMPROVEMENTS AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- Consider land swap and/or sale of city-owned parking lot at corner of Orange Avenue and Bay Street.
- Consider land-swap and/or sale of city lot adjacent city hall. Relocate existing parking to city lot on Eustis Street at Citrus Avenue.
- Consider combining the library site with other civic programs into an expanded public facility – recreation center and/or park space.
- Consider locating a new Fire Hall with expanded recreation at city-owned parking lot between Bates and Hazzard Avenues.
- Prioritize sustainability and the implementation of green infrastructure in all capital projects. Provide supplemental educational information with these works online and in-situ.
- Consider procurement of existing mobile home site – Sharp’s Park – for extended waterfront park and expanded green space.
- Prioritize acquisition of Right-of-Way to connect Bates Avenue through from North Grove Street to North Prescott Street.

## POLICY, REGULATIONS, AND PLANNING

- Implement proposed zoning changes for downtown and the CBD related to land-use, parking, and building standards.
- Complete Marketing Strategy and begin active promotion of Eustis' renewed vision and identity as a premier waterfront destination.
- Consider putting out a call for a city-wide bicycle master plan.
- Implement an urban forestry program to track and monitor green infrastructure improvements to downtown, prioritizing best practices to increase soil capacity, adequate spacing for street trees, and long-term survival that maximizes shade and carbon sequestration.
- Implement regular coordination meetings between City communications personnel and Chamber of Commerce to ensure regular waterfront activation and programming. Consider expanded uses of the bandshell to include hip-hop contests, live events, and other youth programming.
- Prioritize arts funding and/or grants to facilitate a public art master plan for downtown and the waterfront.
- Implement a "percentage for public art" program, or similar, for development related funding of public art procurement, curation, and implementation throughout downtown and the waterfront.





STOP

MACDONALD AVE

Chicken Tenders Pretzels

TICKETS

ONES



# FAMILY COMMUNITY HERITAGE

**EUSTIS**  
WATERFRONT DOWNTOWN









