

CIVIC MASTER PLAN



FARTHER, TOGETHER

CIVIC MASTER PLAN

DOVER, KOHL & PARTNERS
town planning

GMC

HPE
Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

WELCOME
BACK!

crystalrivercivicmasterplan.com

**ALL THE WORK SHOWN IN THIS
PRESENTATION IS DRAFT.**

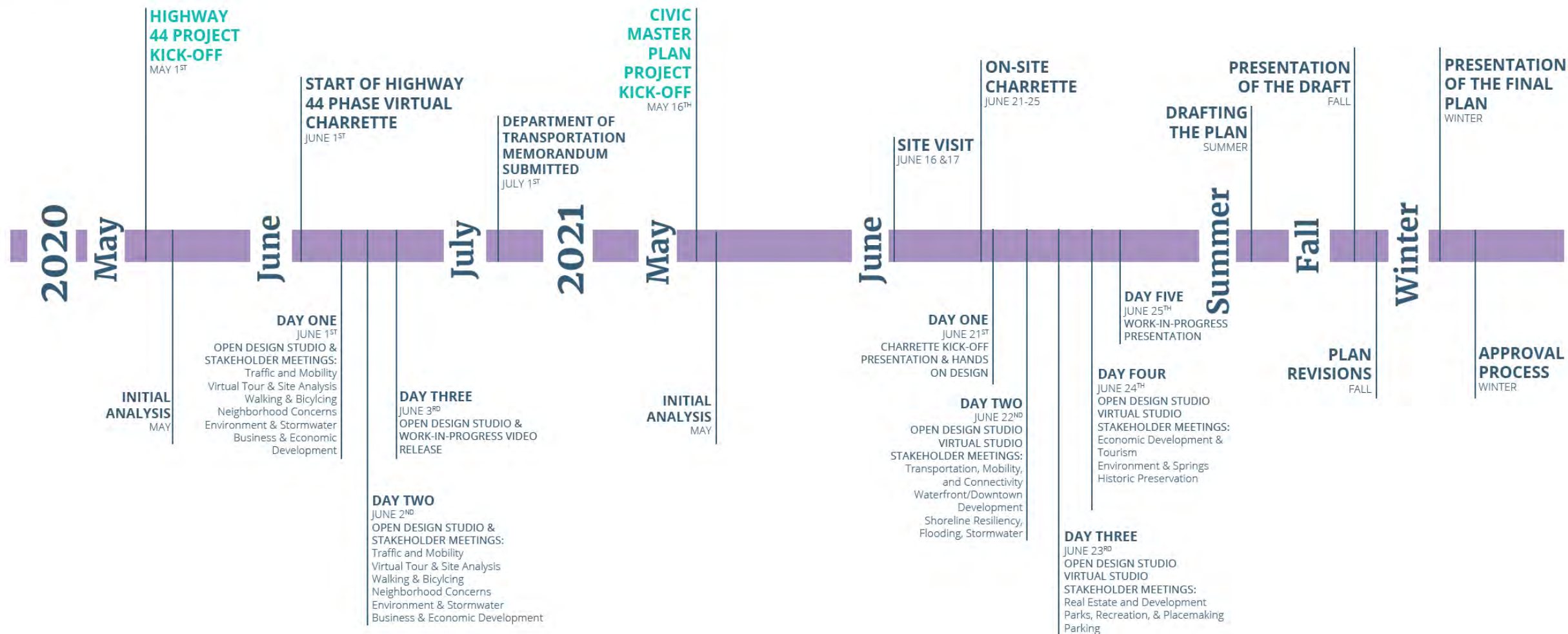
**THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
FOR YOU TO SHARE YOUR
THOUGHTS IS OPEN FOR THE
NEXT THREE WEEKS.**

OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Where the Plan Ideas Came From

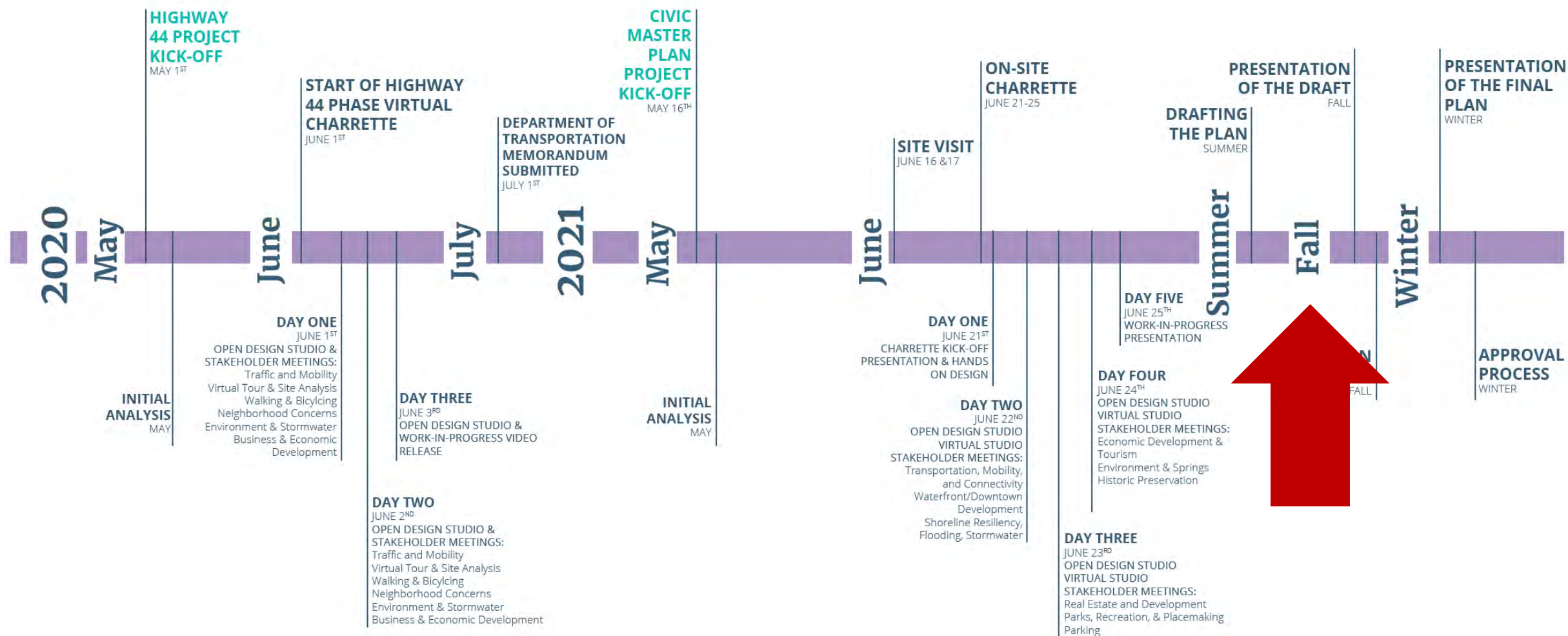
PROJECT TIMELINE

Dover, Kohl & Partners' work in Crystal River was completed in two phases. Phase one was focused on Highway 44; the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) was moving forward with a resurfacing project and the City wanted to get the public's opinion on the changes before implementation. The Highway 44 phase was a virtual charrette that was completed in June 2020. After the work on Highway 44 in 2020, the team continued their work on the Civic Master Plan with phase two beginning in June 2021. The Civic Master Plan phase two was an on-site five day charrette that incorporated virtual components. Phase two encompasses all of Crystal River with specific focus on the downtown, Highway 19 plazas and the Crystal River Mall. Throughout the planning process DK&P worked closely with the planning team consisting of City Council Steering Committee, Hall Planning & Engineering (HPE), and Goodwin Mills Cawood (GMC).



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PROJECT TIMELINE





450+ PEOPLE SO FAR

**HANDS-ON PARTICIPANTS, MEETING ATTENDEES,
VIRTUAL ATTENDEES,
OPEN HOUSE DROP-INS, ONLINE SURVEYS**

Highway 44 Virtual Charrette

June 2020

QUICK POLLS

Do you think the beautification of Highway 44 is worth local investment?

Beautification could involve investments like the planting of trees and shrubs or the addition of a welcome sign and banners.



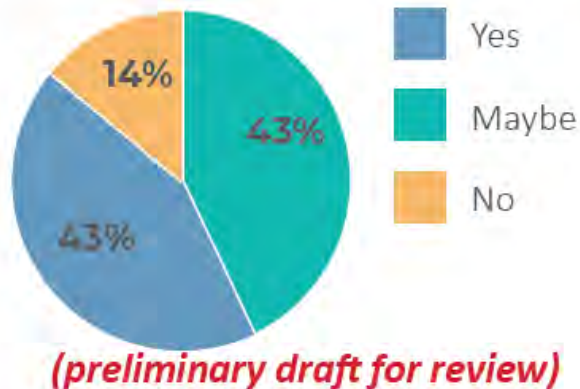
The FDOT resurfacing plan closes every north/south connection at 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th in the interest of decreasing crashes.

If you are traveling north/south and crossing Highway 44 which road are you most likely to take?



This response identifies a preference to keep 8th Avenue open to through traffic, with other intersections as less of a priority.

Would you be willing to pay more in taxes and fees in order to see Highway 44 elevated to be more resilient in the future as seas rise and street flooding becomes more prevalent?



Civic Master Plan Charrette

June 2021

ONE WORD ABOUT CRYSTAL RIVER

NOW



ONE WORD ABOUT CRYSTAL RIVER

IN THE FUTURE



Sample of community responses from the Project Kick-off presentation Survey:

Do people have what they need in the area? What else could be needed?

"Connected
bike paths."

"Apartments."

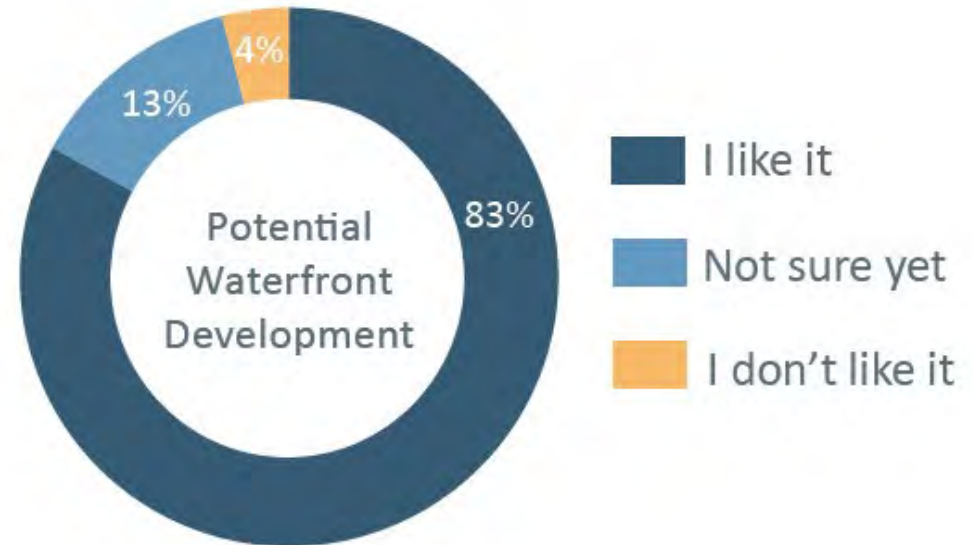
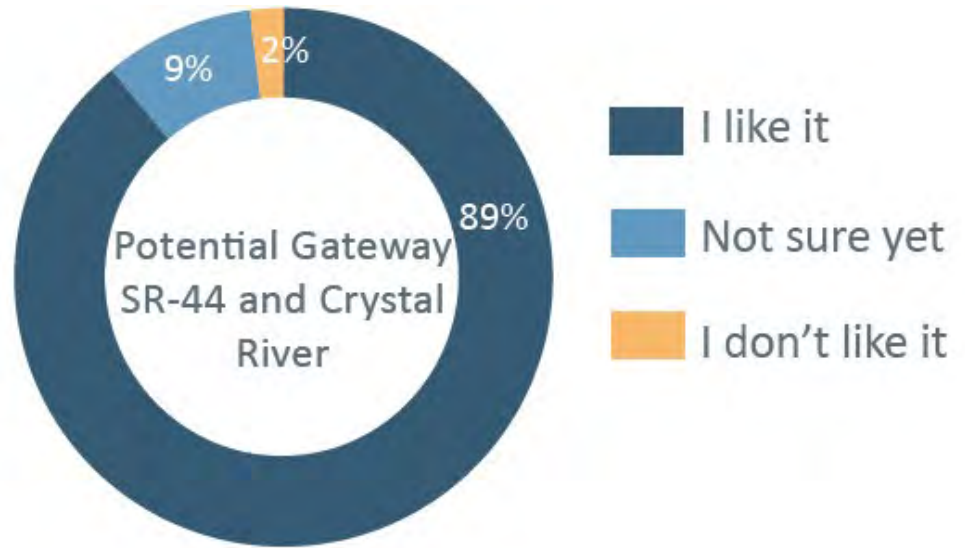
"More waterfront
access."

"More activities
for children."

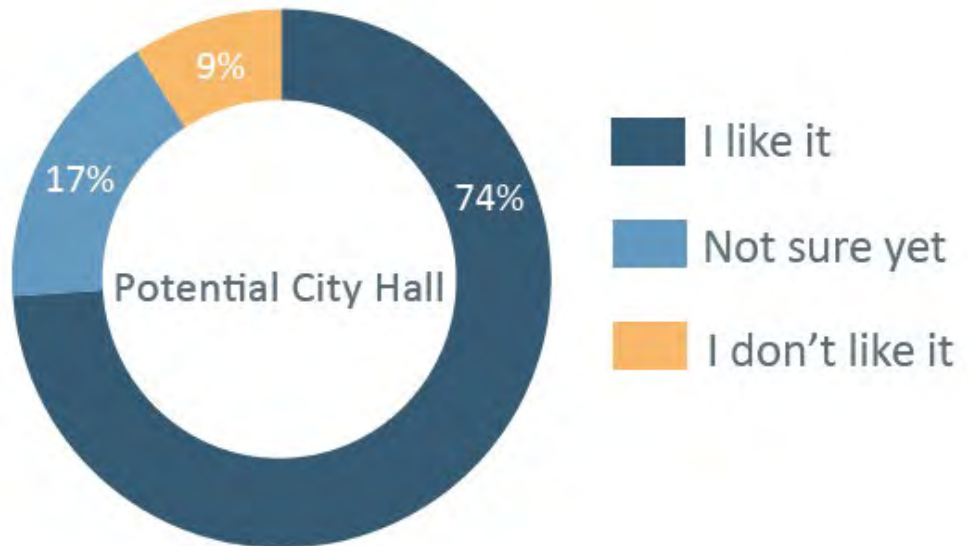
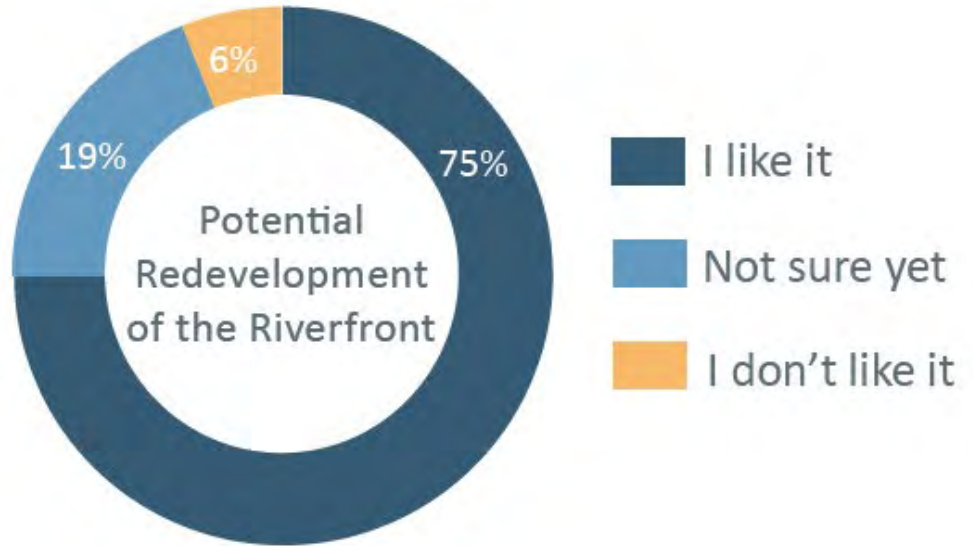
"Less
big box shops,
more unique
places."

"Nightlife."

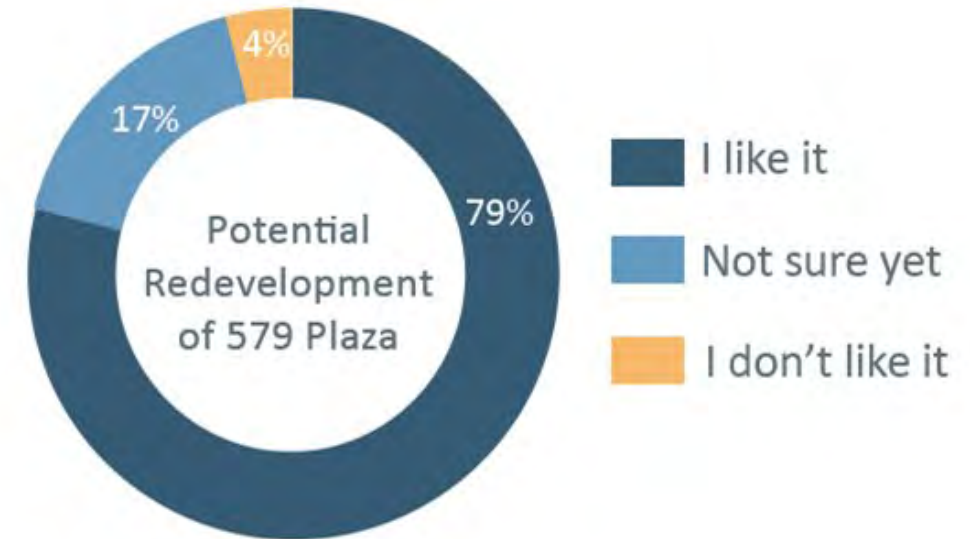
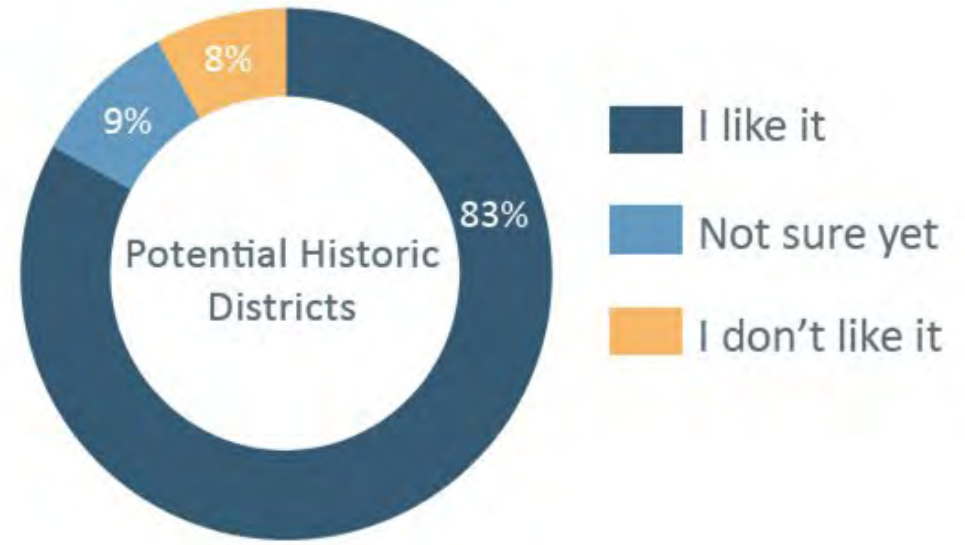
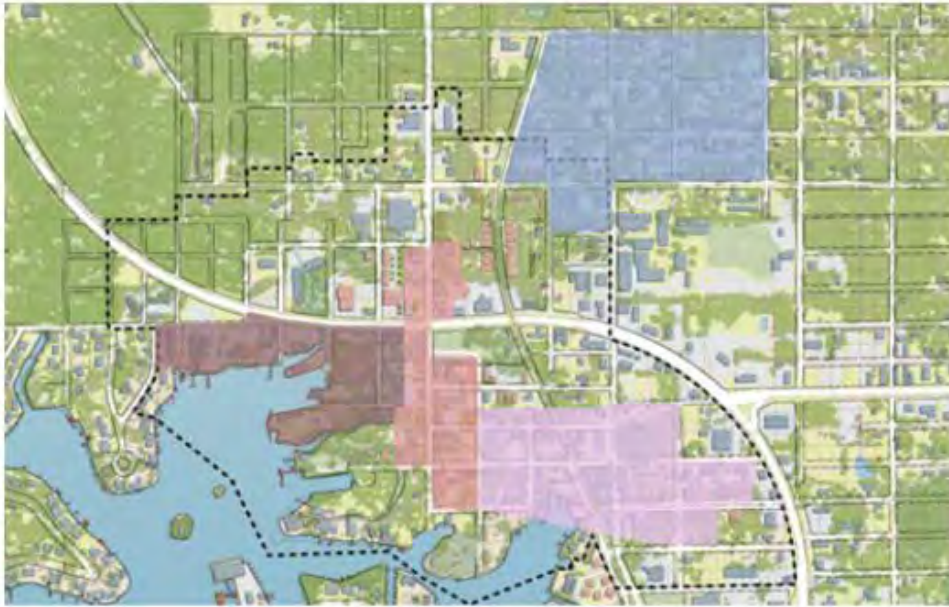
"Affordable
housing."



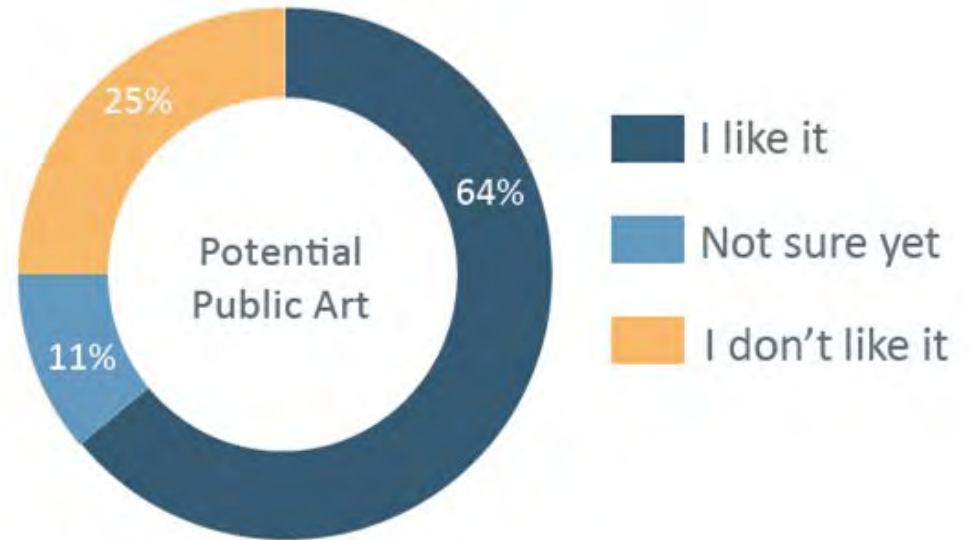
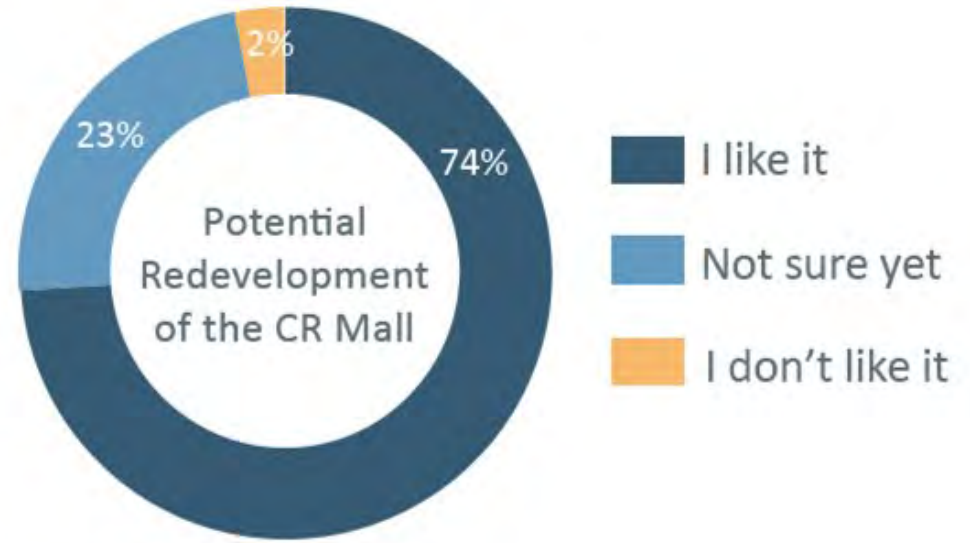
At the Work-in-Progress Presentation



At the Work-in-Progress Presentation



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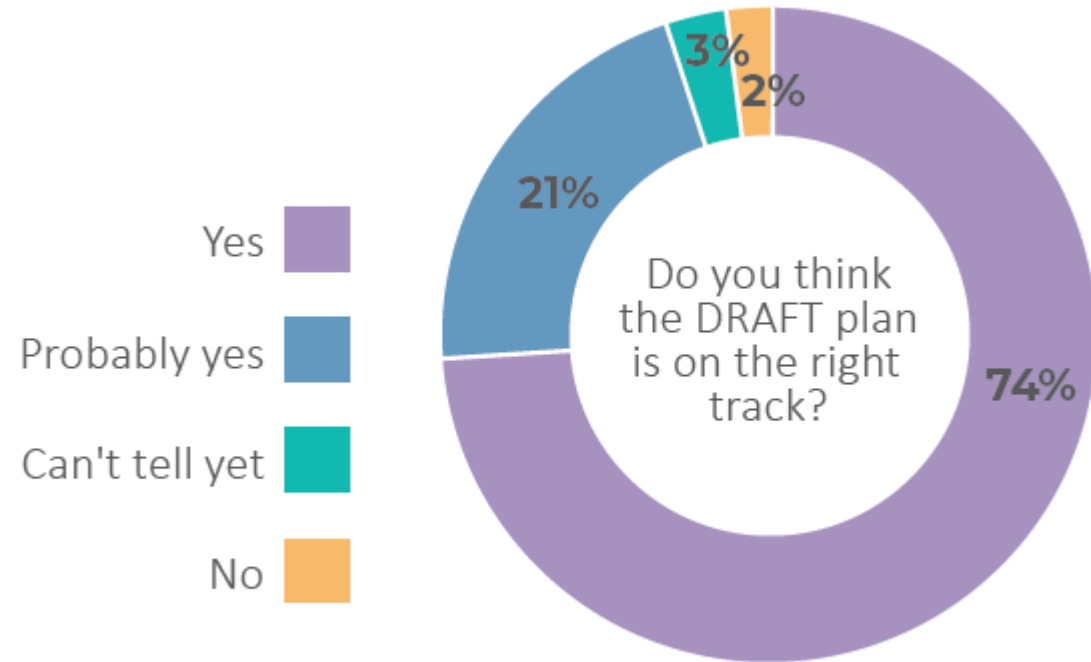


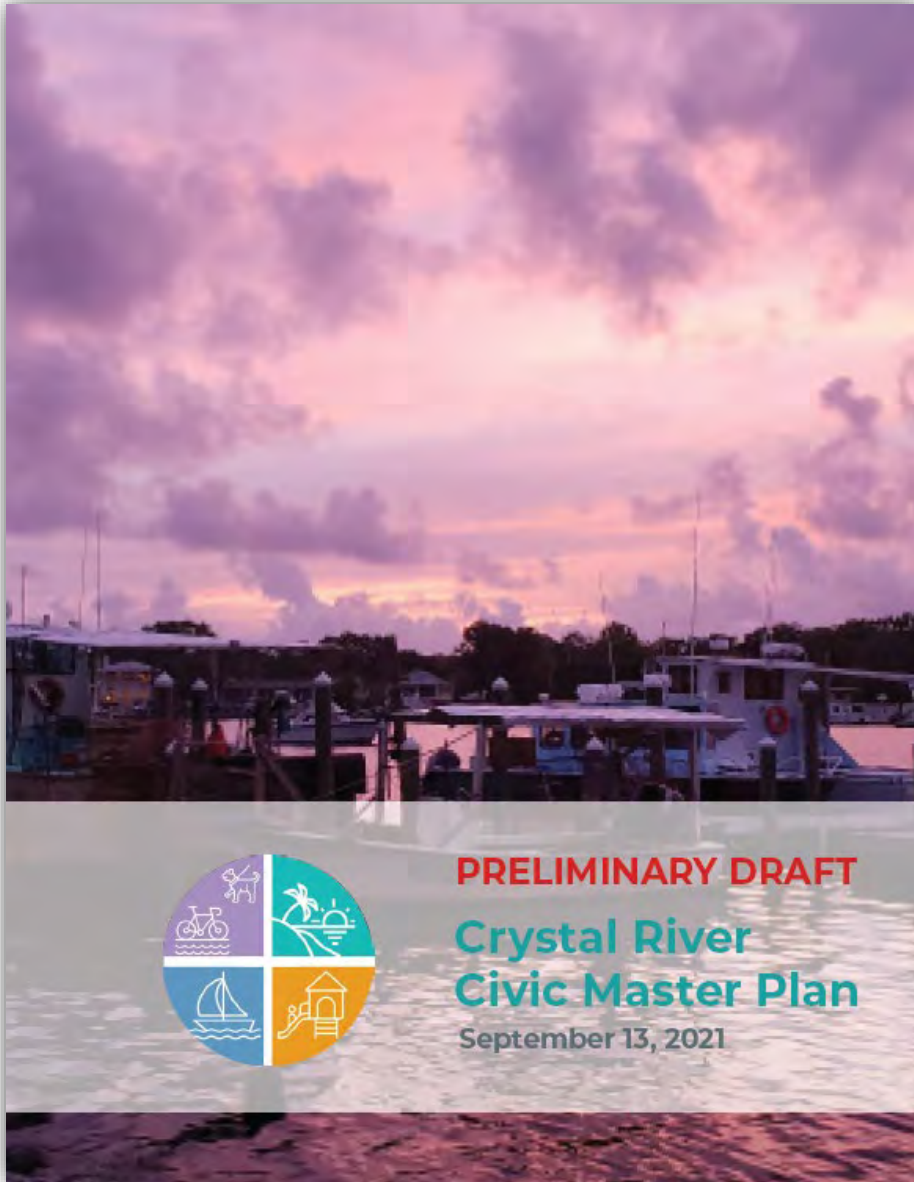
At the Work-in-Progress Presentation

At the Work-in-Progress Presentation:

Based on what you heard tonight, do you think the DRAFT plan is on the right track?

**95% OF ATTENDEES
RESPONDED "YES" OR
"PROBABLY YES" THAT THE
PLAN WAS ON THE RIGHT
TRACK.**





PROJECT TEAM

DOVER, KOHL & PARTNERS <i>Town Planning</i> Jyson King, AICP, CNU-A, Principal Robert Platkowski, AICP James Dougherty, AICP, CNU-A Pamela Stacy King, CNU-A Kenneth Garcia, AICP, CNU-A Xu Zhang, PLA, ASLA Elyse Dallas Andre Leon Jackson	HALL PLANNING & ENGINEERING <i>Transportation & Mobility</i> Richard Hall, P.E., Principal Hannah Rubottom GOODWYN MILLS CAWOOD <i>Stormwater Engineering & Resilience</i> Brandon Bias, AICP, LEED Green Associate Robert Brown, Ph.D., P.E.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CITY OF CRYSTAL RIVER Joe Meek, Mayor Robert Holmes, Vice-Mayor/Council Member Cindi Guy, Council Member Ken Brown, Council Member Patrick Fitzpatrick, Council Member Ken Frink, City Manager Jack Dumas, Assistant City Manager Leslie Bollin, Events & Marketing Director Brian Hermann, Planning and Community Development Services Director Jenette Collins, Urban Planner	STEERING COMMITTEE CHARLENE BOSTICK CHUCK DIXON DAN GRANNAN ROBERT HOLMES AL HOPKINS JEFF KINNARD DAVE LAMBO GERRY MULLIGAN LISA VANDEBGE JOSH WOOTEN
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...and hundreds of participants from the
Crystal River community!

(Preliminary draft for review)

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND
2. PLANNING & PUBLIC PROCESS
3. CIVIC FRAMEWORK
4. THE VISION
5. GETTING THERE

(Preliminary draft for review)

FOCUS AREAS

DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT / CRA

The CRA is characterized by the downtown waterfront, main street shops, City Hall, traditional neighborhoods, and several civic spaces. Centered on the city’s new Town Square at the intersection of Highway 19 (a high-intensity FDOT thoroughfare) and Citrus Avenue (the city’s “main street”), the district extends outward nearly ½ mile in all directions. City Council recently adopted a Form Based Code for the area that utilizes “building types” as its primary organizing principle.

COPELAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

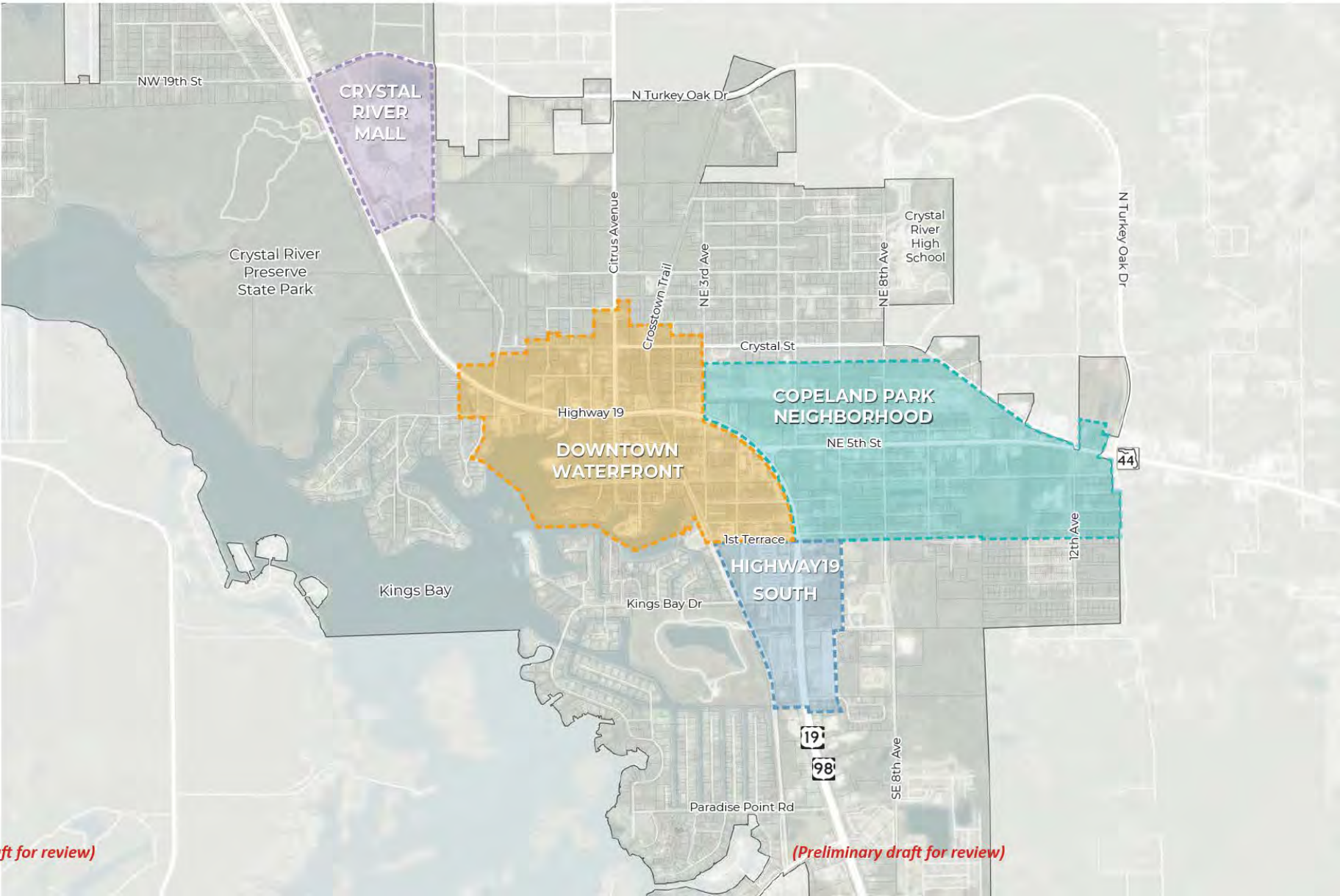
This area, which is characterized by residential neighborhoods, Crystal River Elementary School, and two well-used parks is centered on the intersection of Highway 44 (an intense commercial thoroughfare) and NE 8th Avenue (a neighborhood street), and extends for approximately ⅓ of a mile in each directions. Highway 44 bisects the neighborhood’s otherwise traditional grid of streets, dividing the community in two and creating a rather significant barrier for pedestrians.

CRYSTAL RIVER MALL

Following national trends, the Crystal River Mall has seen a decline in retail demand and has begun a transformation to expand mall uses beyond retail and into experiences that cannot be had online, including many independent stores, a growing variety of entertainment options, and small offices. The Crystal River Mall is in a good location and has a large area of land, including surface parking lots and vacant out parcels. This location presents an opportunity to re-use previously developed land for new, more productive uses without having to expand into the city’s natural lands.

HIGHWAY 19 SOUTH

A number of areas along Highway 19 are characterized by first generation, low intensity, auto-oriented, suburban retail centers at or near the end of their lifespan. Retail centers contain infrastructure and, in some cases, front existing neighborhoods, making them ideal for new “tax-positive”, multi-modal, mixed-use infill development.



The 5 Big Ideas:

Five “Big Ideas” form the key recommendations of this Plan. The five ideas came from conversations held with residents, businesses, and stakeholders. Although specific details may change as the plan is implemented, the “Big Ideas” should remain intact.

CONTINUE TO MAKE DOWNTOWN A VIBRANT DESTINATION

Add art galleries, residences, maker spaces, and museums as well as attractive entry points. Create places local want to go while staying artistic, chic, authentic, and affordable. Extend the CRA boundary. Increase concerts and programming of Town Square and other downtown parks. Add short-term rentals in select places Downtown. Add more art including paint and asphalt art with CDBG monies. Update and refine architectural and landscaping standards. Place overhead wires underground or in mid-block locations.

REVITALIZE AGING RETAIL CENTERS & INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Utilize adaptive reuse and redevelopment when possible, especially throughout the Downtown. Design and invest in Copeland Park. Connect east and west sides of town by reinventing aging corridors. Allow lots to densify by up-zoning and by implementing ADU's, as currently allowed by ordinance. Add assisted living centers and allow cottage courts (pocket neighborhoods) to house people affordably. New development of compact, walkable, mixed-use centers of activity should be encouraged. Allow industrial and residential at the mall site. Encourage economic development and build the town's tax base. Beautification.

BUILD SAFE, COMFORTABLE, & INTERESTING STREETS

Enable pedestrians and cyclists to use the ROW safely and comfortably. Make Highway 19 safer to cross with four-way zebra crosswalk crossings. Provide bike infrastructure (especially for those who cannot afford to drive), bike routes for recreation. More bike stations and shared bikes. Bike parking sculptures as art installations. More wheelchair paths and ADA accessibility throughout the Downtown. More golf cart connections across arterials. Three Sisters Street should become a beautiful landscaped entry with lights in the trees.

PROTECT & RESTORE HISTORIC PLACES

Protect historic structures that aren't within local historic districts. Do not tear-down historic structures to build surface parking. Fix and repurpose existing buildings. Empower code enforcement. Investigate an anti-blight ordinance. Use both local historic districts and national historic districts.

INCREASE ACCESS TO NATURE & BUILD RESILIENCE

Protect the environment, particularly the bay and river water quality. Enact a stormwater master plan that promotes storm sewers in new development areas and includes district-wide stormwater systems. Clean ditches to allow stormwater to flow. Add swales to new streets. Create a cohesive trail system. Use permeable pavement. Install edible gardens along the Kings Bay Riverwalk. Electric vehicles: establish a municipal fleet goals, transit provider goals, and charging station goals (both public and private). Invest in Yeoman's Park. Economic resilience: focus on aviation businesses and education at CR airport. Add tech space. Increase the quality of tourism. Stock Kings Bay with bass and fish.

Big Idea 1

CONTINUE TO MAKE DOWNTOWN A VIBRANT DESTINATION

Crystal River is an international destination for people seeking experiences of nature and wildlife, but the City is also working to become a destination for shopping, dining, working, and living. At the same time, Crystal River residents seek to grow in a way that protects and enhances the high quality of life they currently enjoy.

"Downtown" is centered on Citrus Avenue at the new Town Square and includes the growing Riverwalk. Importantly, these amenities are as much for locals as for visitors. New additions to the Downtown should continue to focus on local needs and recreation and involve a balanced mix of uses, including large and small homes, retail spaces, workplaces, civic buildings, and amenities. Economic development builds the tax base which supports Crystal River's high quality of life.

Crystal River has begun investing in itself and it has proven that people can expect big returns from public investment. There is a new town square in Crystal River on Citrus Avenue, the city's main street. The town square is home to a fountain, statuary, manicured green grass, and public bathrooms. The square's sidewalks are shaded by newly planted oaks and is fronted by historic buildings and murals. A splash pad and wetland trail are located on the square's eastern edge. Public spaces like this are almost never created today: It is centrally located as if it was planned from the city's founding. It is well defined by buildings on two edges and forest on another. And it is versatile enough to host any of the town's numerous Downtown events.

KEY PRIORITIES AS ILLUSTRATED BELOW:

- 1 Complete the Kings Bay Riverwalk
- 2 Add new waterfront developments that engage the Riverwalk and complement existing waterfront uses
- 3 Increase opportunities for boater-friendly destinations, such as restaurants.
- 4 Reimagine city hall as civic building anchoring Downtown and incorporating a resilient design in response to flooding and sea level rise.
- 5 Transform Highway 19 into a safer, more beautiful street that is easier to cross.
- 6 Provide enough parking on-street and in mid-block locations to not disrupt the walkability and character of the Downtown.



Aerial view of the waterfront vision

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Aerial view of the waterfront vision

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & POLICIES

PROMOTE A MIX OF USES

The Downtown should seek to add additional uses and build an active street life. *The key to active street life is to create a place of diverse activity including living, working, schooling, shopping, recreating, and socializing.* The Downtown is off to a great start but residents that participated in the Charrette noted several uses that may be lacking including waterfront restaurants and drinking establishments, variety stores, gourmet coffeehouses, pubs, juice shops, offices, light industrial, and artisan shops. Multiple opportunity sites were identified and conceptually designed as part of the Illustrative Master Plan. The Plan shows these uses located within street-oriented buildings like corner stores, “Main Street” shops, and multi-story mixed-use buildings in accordance with the City’s form-based code.

People also wanted more programmed activities and beautification that would bring people Downtown more regularly. Examples include: concerts, art, entry features that announce one’s arrival into the City, safe and complete streets, and additions to neighborhood parks in communities that are adjacent to the Downtown.

CREATE DOWNTOWN LIVING OPTIONS

Downtowns offer a lifestyle with living, dining, and recreation only a short walk away from ones home. Residential units also provide a built-in customer base for businesses. *Homeownership and long-term renters bring both economic and social stability.* Residents participate in public meetings and look after the places they live. Local residents add less traffic to strained transportation systems because they are more likely to walk or bike than to drive for short trips.

CHERISH THE WATERFRONT

Crystal River’s waterfront has been going through exciting changes and improvements. *Vacant properties around the bay provide opportunities for new mixed-use developments and boater-friendly destinations that cater to both locals and visitors.*

Due to the hard work and dedication of local community groups, including Save Crystal River, the water quality in Kings Bay has improved over recent years. *Investments in Downtown infrastructure, streets and buildings should reduce the amount of untreated stormwater entering the bay and contribute towards improving the bay’s health.*

Complete the Riverwalk and Integrate it with Surrounding Uses

Phase I of the Kings Bay Riverwalk is complete and future phases will create a comprehensive and connected pedestrian network along the waterfront. The riverwalk provides public access to Kings Bay, allowing all an opportunity to enjoy this wonderful natural amenity. *In its current state, the Riverwalk is already a way to access multiple parks, restaurants, live music, parking areas, natural areas, fishing opportunities, charter boat rentals, and scenic overlooks for stunning sunsets across the bay.* Properties and buildings along the Riverwalk should directly connect and engage with this amenity.

CONTINUE TO BUILD CITRUS AVENUE AND NORTHEAST 5TH STREET AS LOCAL MAIN STREETS

Downtowns need more than just one “postcard worthy” street like Citrus Avenue. *As development continues in the Downtown, it should be constructed in a way that adds to the walkable fabric of the historic center.* Contemporary development can compliment historic development by obeying the rules of the City’s form-based code. Build-to-lines and attention to the fronts-and-backs of buildings are essential.

MAKE DOWNTOWN A COMPLETE, COMPACT, AND CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOOD:

Complete: Possessing the greatest variety of uses possible.

Compact: Host a population density that is high enough to support the desired uses.

Connected: Connected internally with streets and pedestrian pathways, and connected to surrounding neighborhoods by streets, bicycle infrastructure, parkway and trail connections, and transit.

STRIVE TO “BUILD UP” AND “NOT OUT”

Many of the businesses in Downtown are popular and have a loyal client base, yet many buildings remain underutilized. *Some underutilized properties in Downtown that are vacant or have only parking could have buildings appropriate to the Downtown added.* A variety of building types should be added to the Downtown mix, including rowhouses, live-work units, and mixed-use buildings with shopfronts on the ground floor.

STUDY AND ADOPT PARKING STRATEGIES TO MANAGE AND MAXIMIZE PARKING

While parking may seem like a simple issue, its impacts have far reaching effects on the ability of Downtown to become the vibrant center envisioned. Ensuring there is an adequate supply of parking throughout the Downtown was a key takeaway from the Charrette. This includes parking for local businesses, events, and trailer parking. However, an over abundance of concentrated parking can degrade the walkability and charm of Downtown, creating gaps in the street wall that make it less likely that people will walk. Parking lots also take away space from beneficial and tax paying uses, such as businesses and homes. *A series of parking strategies should be implemented, beginning with reducing the need for parking, followed by careful parking placement, shared-parking, and utilizing sites outside of Downtown to provide parking for larger events.*

A NEW CITY HALL

Crystal River’s City Hall, located at the corner of Highway 19 (North Suncoast Blvd) and NW 2nd Avenue, houses a broad range of municipal facilities of crucial importance to the community. *The aging building complex is, however, in need of refurbishment and resilience upgrades to lift it out of the floodplain.*

Upgrading City Hall could have additional benefits including a configuration that creates a greater civic architectural presence along with improvements to Little Springs Park and the Creative Playground.

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE CRA

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) funds important activities including local festivals and events. The CRA administers a grant program to improve commercial and residential facades. It helps pay for attractive signage, landscaping, sidewalks, and crosswalk improvements. The CRA commissions pole banners and street amenities. *The continuation and expansion of these programs relies on additional funding in the form of new investment within the Downtown and CRA boundaries.*

EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The community identified the Downtown as a location for new workplaces. Offices, light manufacturing, and artisan uses should be considered. Offices located above stores, live/work buildings, and shopfront buildings should all be designed to fit the Downtown context. *Temporary uses should be encouraged as a way to incubate new businesses that may not be able to afford commercial rents but could still help the City add enough uses to become a regional destination.*

ENCOURAGE LOCAL OWNERSHIP

People want to visit and live in authentic places. *People will choose independently owned establishments like breweries, barbers, bistros, and bike shops because of a connection felt with the business owner or operator.* People want to express their appreciation, get a glimpse of an expert doing what they are good at, hear their story, be part of it, and support their vision.

A locally-owned business is more likely to express a unique vision and less likely to adopt uniform aesthetic that are currently in vogue. Unlike corporate chains, small businesses retain control.

Beyond authenticity, micro-chain and family-operated businesses are key to the resilience of the local economy. While chain and corporate establishments are the first to leave when economies slow, local businesses struggle through the economic ups and downs.

Local owners are also more likely to get involved and help solve urban problems at their doorstep. Organizations like the Crystal River Main Street reinforce local businesses commitment to the City and to each other.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & POLICIES

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Complete the Riverwalk and Integrate it with

Surrounding Uses

Phase I of the Kings Bay phases will create a complete pedestrian network along the waterfront. This provides public access to the waterfront and opportunity to enjoy the bay. *In its current state, the waterfront provides access to multiple parks, recreational areas, natural areas, fishing, rentals, and scenic views of the bay.* Properties and should directly connect.

CONTINUE TO BUILD AND NORTHEAST MAIN STREETS

Downtowns need more street like Citrus Avenue. *In the Downtown, it should be that adds to the walkability.* Contemporary development by obeying the form-based code. Build-to-line backs of buildings are essential.

MAKE DOWNTOWN COMPACT, AND NEIGHBORHOODS CONNECTED

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Big Idea 2

REVITALIZE AGING RETAIL CENTERS AND INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Crystal River seeks to reinvent aging properties along its commercial corridors with new compact, walkable, mixed-use centers of activity. Growth that redevelops sites where public infrastructure funding and private development have already been made will have the greatest economic, environmental, and social benefit. New development which requires new infrastructure and is located in environmentally sensitive areas degrades the environment and costs the taxpayer.

THE COPELAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

The historic Copeland Park neighborhood is the first part of Crystal River one reaches when arriving from the east. While Highway 44 brings visitors and travelers to and through Crystal River, the road cuts the Copeland Park neighborhood in half. **Correcting past mistakes begins with transforming Highway 44 into a street that helps to bring together instead of further dividing this neighborhood.** Investment in the neighborhood should add to businesses and uses needed by the community, a range of housing types, and improvements to parks, sidewalks, and trails.

HIGHWAY 19

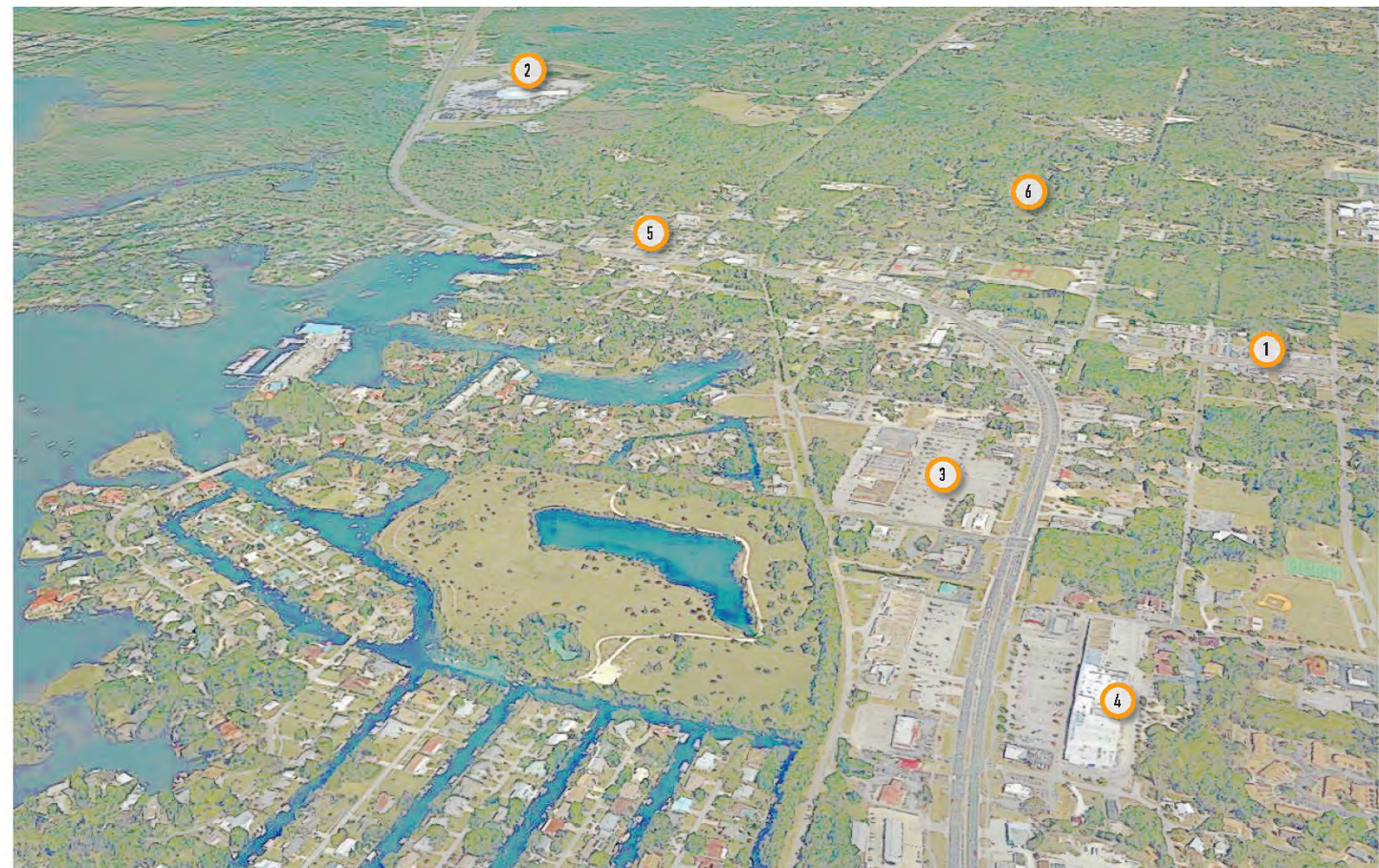
Along Highway 19, Kings Bay Plaza and Crystal Center are doing well economically and host valued local businesses but could be optimized with a greater addition of uses. Crystal Square is currently vacant. **In time the corridor could become a good candidate for mixed-use development.**

CRYSTAL RIVER MALL

The Crystal River Mall is in need of reinvestment. The Mall is home to the kind of stores one usually finds on local main streets like an independent bookstore and antique shop. However, the Mall is also home to hallways with dozens of closed shops. At the time of the Charrette, Crystal River Mall's 435,000 square feet was only at 50% capacity. This area can be reinvisioned as a new neighborhood and job center.

KEY PRIORITIES AS ILLUSTRATED BELOW:

- 1 Reconnect and invest in the Copeland Park Neighborhood
- 2 Reimagine the Crystal River Mall as a new regional center utilizing the existing large buildings.
- 3 Diversify centers with a balanced mix of housing, work space, shopping, and recreation.
- 4 Create a new center for the surrounding neighborhood with walkable mixed-use, street-oriented urbanism.
- 5 Repurpose smaller shopping centers to fit within their context and support today's uses and activities
- 6 Redevelop when possible to limit the development of greenfields and forested areas.



Aerial view of Crystal River with Highway 19 and it's surrounding development clearly visible

Big Idea 2

REVITALIZE AGING RETAIL CENTERS AND INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Crystal River seeks to reinvent aging properties along its commercial corridors with new compact, walkable, mixed-use centers of activity. Growth that redevelops sites where public infrastructure funding and private development have already been made will have the greatest economic, environmental, and social benefit. New development which requires new infrastructure and is located in environmentally sensitive areas degrades the environment and costs the taxpayer.

THE COPELAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

The historic Copeland Park neighborhood is the first part of Crystal River one reaches when arriving from the east. While Highway 44 brings visitors and travelers to and through Crystal River, the road cuts the Copeland Park neighborhood in half. *Correcting past mistakes begins with transforming Highway 44 into a street that helps to bring together instead of further dividing this neighborhood.* Investment in the neighborhood should add to businesses and uses needed by the community, a range of housing types, and improvements to parks, sidewalks, and trails.

HIGHWAY 19

Along Highway 19, Kings Bay Plaza and Crystal Center are doing well economically and host valued local businesses but could be optimized with a greater addition of uses. Crystal Square is currently vacant. *In time the corridor could become a good candidate for mixed-use development.*

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Aerial view of Crystal River with Highway 19 and it's surrounding development clearly visible

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & POLICIES

BUILD UPON THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK OF THE CITY

A connected network of streets and regular blocks form the framework of Crystal River's historic neighborhoods. These mostly residential neighborhoods are separated from one another by large retail shopping centers and state highways, breaking up the street network and isolating neighborhoods from one another. The Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods also have a high number of vacant lots.

The City should utilize this existing framework for great, walkable neighborhoods to accommodate the growing population and visitors while limiting development further from the Downtown.

CREATE NEW CENTERS FOR CRYSTAL RIVER'S NEIGHBORHOODS

Crystal River, following national trends, has existing demand for walkable neighborhoods and neighborhood centers, destinations that can define a community and offer a variety of uses, activities, and housing in one location. *There is value in the convenience and proximity to services and amenities offered by neighborhood centers, as demonstrated in the Downtown along Citrus Avenue.*

In addition to supporting the Downtown, new neighborhood centers should be created in coordination with the surrounding communities. Neighborhood centers come in a variety of shapes and sizes. They can range from a single neighborhood store to several blocks. *Crystal River should create centers of a variety of sizes, from larger regional centers to small four corner intersections, or neighborhood crossroads.*

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

- Include a balanced mix of housing, work space, shopping, and recreation.
- Defined with street-oriented urbanism

Redevelop Vacant Shopping Centers

Traveling south on Highway 19 from Downtown, large retail shopping centers dominate the scene. These shopping centers generally consist of large single story buildings set far back from the street with fields of parking. Some of these shopping centers are home to valued local businesses and important stores for daily needs. Others are completely vacant.

Large, vacant shopping centers provide an opportunity for creating new mixed-use neighborhood centers with housing, businesses, open space, parking and other desirable amenities. A network of blocks and streets can integrate the neighborhood center into the surrounding community and provide more options for accessing the site and its destinations.

The current shopping centers are almost completely covered by impervious surfaces, either asphalt or buildings. New designs can increase the amount of impervious surfaces and green space, creating neighborhood amenities while also reducing the impact of stormwater runoff.

Add New uses to Existing Shopping Centers

Other shopping centers are still actively used and serving the community. *However, the large size of these properties affords an opportunity to add new uses and create a center on what is currently underutilized parking or vacant buildings. Diversifying the uses by adding residential, office, or other community services makes for a more resilient investment and can attract more customers looking for an experience unique to Crystal River.*

Repurpose Small Retail Centers

Smaller shopping centers are located along the entire length of Highway 19 and Highway 44 in Crystal River. Many are home to local businesses that reflect Crystal River. *Small retail centers can be enhanced with new landscaping and upgraded facades that help create more street-oriented design.* Small interventions can move an area towards street-oriented design without requiring completely rebuilding.

Create New, Crossroads Centers

Small crossroads centers with commercial uses catering to local residents' daily needs are vital elements of walkable, sustainable neighborhoods. They may simply consist of several mixed-use, street-oriented buildings at an intersection. *A prime opportunity for such a center is at Highway 44 and 8th Avenue where a crossroads center can introduce a walkable destination and in-town character to the otherwise suburban strip.*

REIMAGINE CRYSTAL RIVER MALL AS A NEW REGIONAL CENTER

The Crystal River Mall is located at the intersection of North Turkey Oak Drive and Highway 19 and consist of a large existing investment in infrastructure and buildings. *Like regional malls nationwide, decreasing retail demand has left nearly half of the mall empty, creating an opportunity to reimagine the site. Possibilities range from utilizing the existing large buildings to starting over from scratch, although a scenario in the middle is much more likely.* The Mall provides potential space for new large anchors like an Amazon fulfillment center, a call center, or a satellite campus for a local university. At the same time, the soundest strategy for the vast mall property would be to convert it to a diversity of uses including residential uses, assisted living centers, or hotel uses.

RECONNECT AND INVEST IN THE COPELAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

The historic Copeland Park neighborhood extends eastward from Downtown towards the city's boundary. Over the past decades, the neighborhood has been divided in half by Highway 44 widenings and dis-invested in. *Reconnecting the neighborhood entails redesigning Highway 44 into a safer street that is easier to cross.*

Investment in the neighborhood includes helping homeowners and businesses renovate their properties, creating new homes on vacant lots, upgrading parks, providing sidewalks, and encouraging walkable centers with community-serving businesses and organizations. Zoning and development regulations should be revised to support and restore this neighborhood.

PRIORITIZE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Mixed-use development is a type of urban development that blends residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or entertainment uses into one place. Ideally, those functions are to some degree physically and functionally integrated, and provide pedestrian connections and open spaces.

Mixed-use, multi-story buildings can also adapt better to a changing market than large, single-story, single-use buildings because of the wider range of potential tenants and the ability to include multiple tenants who provide a mix of goods and services.

IMPROVE GATEWAYS & MAIN CORRIDORS

Crystal River is served by several main thoroughfares that provide access to and through the city. These corridors serve as gateways to the city, providing the first impressions of Crystal River. In particular, Highway 44 and Highway 19 are currently not as welcoming as residents desire and do not reflect the city's image. The city should reimagine the Highway 44 gateway as a mixed-use center, hinting at the historic downtown ahead while also providing needed amenities for the surrounding neighborhood.

CONTROL SIZE AND SCALE ALONG HIGHWAY 19 AND HIGHWAY 44

Commercial, office and residential development should not be consumed in single, massive complexes, they should be developed at numerous multiple mixed-use centers. Development must be encouraged along major intersections first, to create walkable centers where each new reinvestment will encourage the next. Any intersection that achieves redevelopment on all four sides will have the feel of a complete place and become a magnet for new investment. *It is essential that new development respect the existing neighborhood and appropriately transition from larger mixed-use buildings to residentially-scaled development closer to the community's homes. This can be achieved by expanding the city's form-based regulations which employ metrics that respect the community's vision for the corridor.*

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & POLICIES

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The current shopping centers are covered by impervious surfaces and buildings. New designs of impervious surfaces and neighborhood amenities can integrate the surrounding community and provide access to the site and parking.

Add New uses to Existing Buildings
Other shopping centers in the community. However, these properties afford an opportunity to add new uses and create a center on parking or vacant buildings. *Adding residential, office, and retail makes for a more resilient community and more customers looking for services in Crystal River.*

Repurpose Small Retail Centers
Smaller shopping centers along Highway 19 are home to local businesses. Many are home to local businesses. *Small retail centers can be repurposed with landscaping and upgraded to more street-oriented developments, moving an area towards a more walkable environment requiring completely redeveloped.*

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Big Idea 3

BUILD SAFE, COMFORTABLE AND INTERESTING STREETS

Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to prioritize safety, comfort, and access to destinations for all people who use the street, including older adults, people living with disabilities, and people who cannot afford or do not have access to a car. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, jobs, and schools, bicycle to work, and move actively with assistive devices.

Features of Complete Streets policies include inclusive roadway design, lane striping, bicycle lanes, paved shoulders suitable for bicyclists, pedestrian safety signs, crosswalks, pedestrian control signals, bus pull-outs, curb cuts, raised crosswalks, ramps, and traffic calming measures.

Creating Complete Streets means transportation agencies like the Florida Department of Transportation must change their approach to community roads.

By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to prioritize safer slower speeds for all people who use the road, over high speeds for motor vehicles. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for people walking, biking, driving, and riding transit.

KEY PRIORITIES AS ILLUSTRATED BELOW:

- 1 Implement context sensitive street design principles to create streets that support the surrounding community.
- 2 Provide safe locations for bicycling, such as separated bike lanes, where possible.
- 3 Include sidewalks that are wide enough for people to pass one another and that are separated from the pavement by a planting strip.
- 4 Pay attention to the design of intersections. Utilize high visibility crosswalks
- 5 Plant street trees help to shape the space of the street, bring nature into the city, provide shade for pedestrians, and buffer pedestrians from passing cars.
- 6 Line main streets with a variety of buildings and uses located next to the sidewalk.



Highway 44 reimagined as a Complete Street at the intersection with NE 9th Ave

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PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & POLICIES

IMPROVE THE HIGHWAY 19 CORRIDOR

The current practice of “one size fits all” street design along the length of the Highway 19 corridor, regardless of whether the road is passing through the rural countryside or through downtowns like Crystal River needs to be rethought because it presents problems for the walkability and livability of its host communities. A more vibrant, walkable Highway 19 Corridor would require tailored street designs to support the urban context. *When passing through Crystal River’s Downtown the right-of-way for Highway 19 must be redesigned to provide a true balance of transportation modes, supporting pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks, as well as automobiles.*

As Highway 19 passes through walkable centers, the street should adapt to an urban context. The street must be safe to cross and provide a welcoming arrival at key intersections. The travel lanes should be narrow, there should be on-street parking, and wide sidewalks should extend between street-fronting buildings and the parallel parking spaces. Street trees should be closely-spaced and regularly planted along the sidewalk in tree grates.

TRANSFORM HIGHWAY 44 INTO A COMPLETE STREET & RECONNECT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Similar to Highway 19, Highway 44 is a regional facility with five lanes of fast moving traffic. The highway splits the historic Copeland Park neighborhood in half and offers no safe way to cross. Transforming Highway 44 into a more vibrant, walkable complete street through Crystal River will help to achieve many of the neighborhood’s goals including reconnecting the neighborhood with Highway 44 as a seam instead of a barrier, offering a more beautiful and welcoming experience along the street, providing a more inviting place to walk, and supporting a neighborhood center with mixed-use development.

DESIGN CITRUS AVENUE AS A UNIFIED WHOLE

Citrus Avenue is the City’s “Main Street” and in its current form it works for both residents and visitors. Upgrades are possible however. *An essential distinction of vibrant, pedestrian-oriented streets is that the whole*

public space which businesses front is designed as an ensemble, including auto elements (such as travel lanes, parking and curbs), public components (such as trees, sidewalks and lighting) and private elements (shopfronts and buildings). These elements should be coordinated to create a unified outdoor location, just as a room is designed to achieve a unified, comfortable space.

Pedestrian safety could be increased by providing parallel parking along the sidewalk wherever it doesn’t exist, creating a physical buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles. Outdoor dining and casual strolling become safer behind the on-street, vehicular buffer.

Pedestrian comfort is enhanced with wide sidewalks for walking and outdoor dining, as well as a canopy of street trees and awnings on buildings to provide shelter from the sun and rain. Street furniture such as benches could provide an opportunity for pedestrians to sit. Trash receptacles help keep the public realm clean. Pedestrian interest is held with human-scaled facades, shopfronts and signage. Street-oriented architecture would present doors, windows, balconies, and porches which face the street.

CREATE SAFER CROSSINGS ON HIGHWAY 44 AND HIGHWAY 19

High-speed streets and oversized intersections make it difficult for people to cross safely and restrict access for some neighborhoods to community assets and facilities, including schools. *Intersection and trail crossing improvements should be made across the city and are outlined in the Recommended Bicycle & Pedestrian Improvements Map.* Intersection improvements may include completely redesigned intersections, high visibility crosswalks, signage, signalization, and pedestrian beacons, among other interventions.

ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

The City of Crystal River should adopt a Complete Streets resolution followed by policies and standards to implement that resolution. Streets within the Downtown and Traditional Future Character Areas, Neighborhood Centers, and along school routes should be prioritized for complete streets treatments.

SIDEWALK INVENTORY AND MASTER PLAN

As part of the Complete Streets Program the city should establish a plan to identify locations for sidewalks and a priority for implementation. *Establish priority locations for sidewalks, sidewalk repairs, and sidewalk improvements in areas with high or potentially high levels of pedestrian activity such as near schools, parks, and within the downtown waterfront.* Some small, local residential streets with low traffic volumes may not require sidewalks, or can be a lower priority.

COMPLETE THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL TRAIL NETWORKS

In Crystal River today, there are two shared-use paths – the Crosstown Trail and a trail along Highway 19 from West Fort Island Trail to NE 1st Terrace. *The Hernando/Citrus MPO’s Bikeways and Trails Master Plan envisions an ambitious expansion of the County’s bikeways and trail facilities connecting to regional and statewide networks. Additional trails are proposed in this plan to increase connectivity within the core of Crystal River and to complement the existing and previously proposed trail networks, as shown in the figure later in this section.* The trails should connect Downtown to Three Sisters Springs, Yeomans Park, proposed mixed-use development along Highway 19 and Highway 44, and Fort Island Beach. Trail facilities can provide a viable alternative for travel, provide a recreational experience for residents, attract bicycle tourism, and help facilitate new development.

EXPAND AND ENHANCE THE BIKE NETWORK

Designing and implementing a bikeway network that is appropriate for the surrounding context should be strongly correlated to land use characteristics and to the desired development or preservation goals for each neighborhood in Crystal River as outlined by the Future Character Areas in Chapter 4. The proposed network should be further fine-tuned at the scale of the block. *This can occur through a Bicycle Master Plan that incorporates existing Crystal River multi-use trails, proposed bikeways and the latest advancements in bicycle planning.*

As planning for trails and bikeways continues, alternate routes may be easier to implement or may better meet the needs and concerns of the community. The Recommended Bicycle Network Map recommends a minimum grid and vision bicycle network, based on the Hernando/Citrus MPO’s Bikeways and Trails Master Plan and on recommendations established in the Civic Master Plan.

In addition to a bikeway network, numerous design countermeasures may be applied to streets to increase the visibility and safety of existing and proposed bikeways. These include bicycle boxes, bicycle detection and signal heads, wayfinding and informational signs, bicycle refuge islands, and ongoing bicycle safety campaigns.

IMPLEMENT CONTEXT SENSITIVE STREET DESIGN

Context based street design recognizes that the design of a street should correspond to the type of place that it passes through and that the design of the street can reinforce the community’s vision.

State Roads

Work with FDOT to adopt a new Context Classification Map for state roads within Crystal River based on the envisioned land use and development patterns in the Civic Master Plan and future updates to zoning.

Create a Local Classification of Street Types to Guide Improvements on City Streets

Just as context classification can help design state roads that correspond to the areas they pass through, the same classification for local streets can provide clear direction to city agencies on the appropriate design standards and dimensions for different streets across the city.

Update Street Design Standards and Public Works Standards

The city’s street design and public works standards should be updated to match and support the local context-based approach to street design that prioritizes pedestrian safety and comfort and incorporates green infrastructure.

MAKE TURKEY OAK DRIVE INTO A TRUCK ROUTE BYPASS

The city should work with FDOT to reduce truck traffic on Highway 44 and along Highway 19 through the downtown by designating Turkey Oak Drive as the primary truck route.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & POLICIES

IMPROVE THE HIGHWAY 19 CORRIDOR

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TRANSFORM HIGHWAY 44 INTO A COMPLETE STREET & RECONNECT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

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CREATE SAFER CROSSINGS FOR HIGHWAY 44 AND HIGHWAY 19

High-speed streets and difficult for people to cross. In some neighborhoods that include schools. *Intermodal improvements should be outlined in the Recommended Improvements Map.* Intermodal improvements include completely redesigned visibility crosswalks, signalized crosswalks, and other measures, among other things.

ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

The City of Crystal River’s resolution follows the lead of other cities to implement that resolution and Traditional Future Centers, and along school corridors, complete streets treatment

SIDEWALK INVENTORY AND MASTER PLAN

As part of the Complete Streets Program the city should establish a plan to identify locations for sidewalks and a priority for implementation. *Establish priority locations for sidewalks, sidewalk repairs, and sidewalk improvements in areas with high or potentially high levels of pedestrian activity such as near schools, parks, and within the downtown waterfront.* Some small, local residential streets with low traffic volumes may not require sidewalks, or can be a lower priority.

COMPLETE THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL TRAIL NETWORKS

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Update Street Design Standards and Public Works Standards

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TAKE TURKEY OAK DRIVE INTO A TRUCK ROUTE BYPASS

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Big Idea 4

PROTECT AND RESTORE HISTORIC PLACES

Crystal River has a number of buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As a result, the city's residents have expressed interest in creating a Local Historic District, a National Historic District, or possibly both.

Many historic buildings, designed according to earlier regulations, cannot meet contemporary code requirements at a reasonable cost. Since improvements often result in noncompliance they are allowed to deteriorate. Those that are renovated are forced to comply with the latest building and floodplain codes. As a result, the historic character of the building is lost. However, if a historic district is in place the same buildings are provided greater flexibility and latitude from both building and floodplain codes and additional funding sources become available. As a result, this leads to renovation.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & POLICIES

CREATE LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The City of Crystal River needs to work with the private sector, independent organizations, and citizens to protect and enhance the City's historic resources. This should include the creation of local historic districts before deterioration of the city's historic assets create an insurmountable burden for the community and property owners. Local Historic Districts provide the strongest protections of the historic resources that contribute to the quality of life, remind us about our past, and provide a stimulus to economic vitality and tourism.

ADOPT A PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE

A formal property maintenance code can provide the city and property owners with clearer requirements on building and property maintenance requirements and clear up any ambiguity as to what is enforced. Several models for enforcement of such a code are explored to help achieve a cooperative approach to maintaining safe and compliant properties.

BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION DISTRICTS TYPICALLY INCLUDE:

- 1 Exemption from FEMA regulations
- 2 Increased property values
- 3 Credits for rehabilitation of historic structures
- 4 Prevention of historic building teardowns
- 5 Incentivize economic development



The old Crystal River City Hall building. Built in 1939 by WPA labor and now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Big Idea 4

PROTECT AND RESTORE HISTORIC PLACES

Crystal River has a number of buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As a result, the city's residents have expressed interest in creating a Local Historic District, a National Historic District, or possibly both.

Many historic buildings, designed according to earlier regulations, cannot meet contemporary code requirements at a reasonable cost. Since improvements often result in noncompliance they are allowed to deteriorate. Those that are renovated are forced to comply with the latest building and floodplain codes. As a result, the historic character of the building is lost. However, if a historic district is in place the same buildings are provided greater flexibility and latitude from both building and floodplain codes and additional funding sources become available. As a result, this leads to renovation.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & POLICIES

CREATE LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

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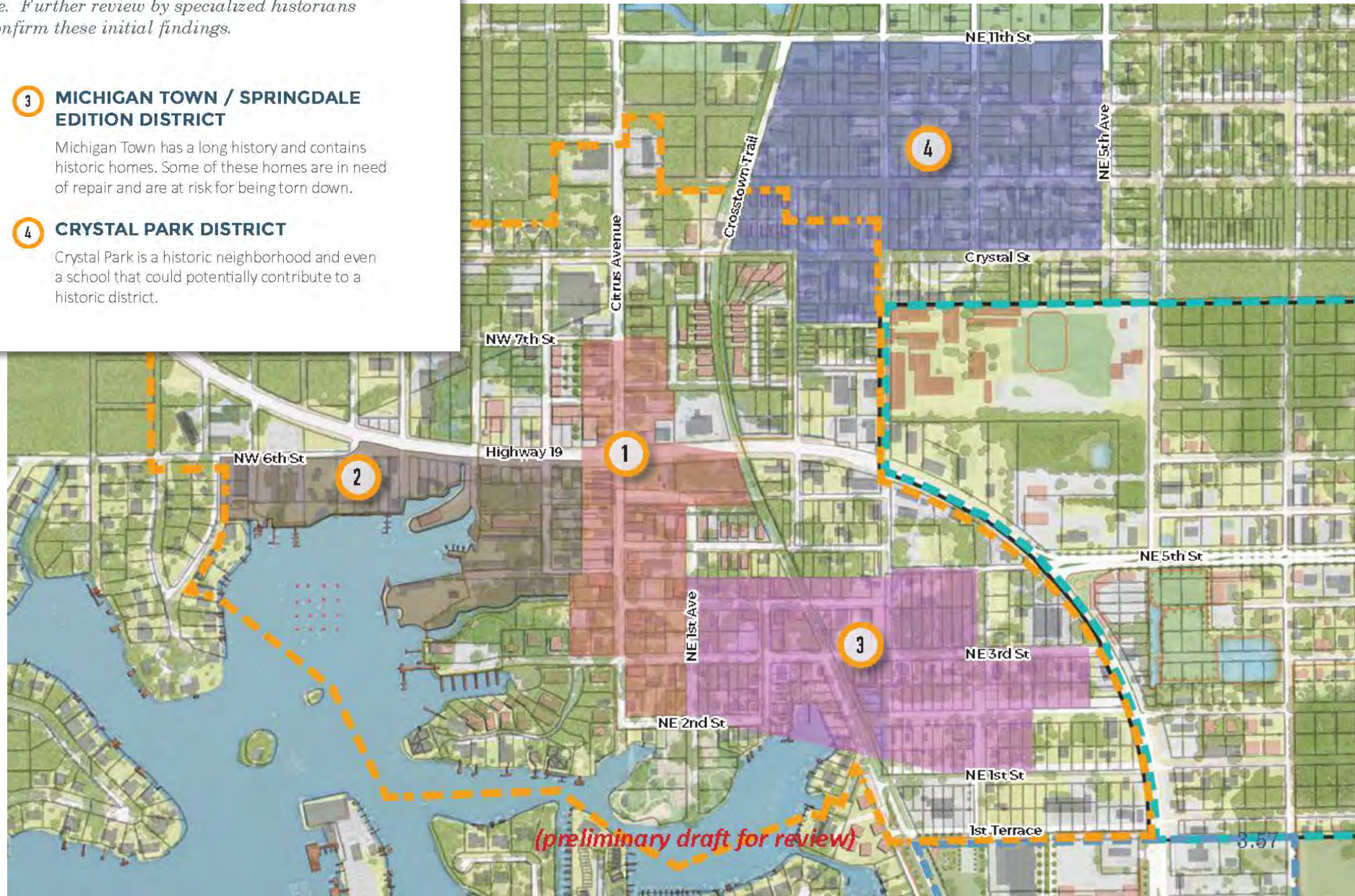
A preliminary analysis demonstrates that there are four areas in Crystal River with potential to be designated as historic districts. These areas consist of multiple buildings constructed before 1950 with architectural or historical significance. Further review by specialized historians would be required to certify the buildings and confirm these initial findings.

Citrus Ave has many different historic buildings all within close proximity. This area would be the first priority because it would set precedence for the other areas.

The waterfront contains historic buildings that add to the character of Kings bay.

Michigan Town has a long history and contains historic homes. Some of these homes are in need of repair and are at risk for being torn down.

Crystal Park is a historic neighborhood and even a school that could potentially contribute to a historic district.



Big Idea 5

INCREASE ACCESS TO NATURE AND BUILD RESILIENCE

Charrette participants said that they were proud of the natural beauty and sport offered by Crystal River's bays and rivers and expressed a desire to see even greater public access. The most choiceworthy communities do more than simply preserve their natural features; they celebrate them. At the same time residents wish to protect major natural features. In addition to their ecological benefits, there are many reasons to preserve the landscape. Natural features provide a sense of local character which contributes to property values.

Crystal River's natural beauty is accompanied by the risks of flooding and sea level rise while also necessitating a high level of stormwater management to protect the bay and springs. Both existing and new development will require changes to protect properties from flooding events.

New FEMA requirements necessitate elevating or raising buildings to 12 or 13 feet above sea level, posing a challenge to creating infill development and street-oriented architecture. New strategies and design standards for stormwater and FEMA requirements are needed to support the city's goals for a vibrant walkable downtown and new neighborhood centers.

KEY PRIORITIES AS ILLUSTRATED BELOW:

- 1 Adopt standards for elevated and floodproofed buildings meeting FEMA requirements.
- 2 Utilize low impact development and green infrastructure in public and private projects to improve water quality and reduce stormwater runoff.
- 3 Plant and maintain proper street trees.
- 4 Coordinate stormwater, FEMA, and parking requirements to support infill development.
- 5 Create district-wide stormwater systems in downtown and neighborhood centers to reduce the burden on individual lots to promote infill development.



An extension of downtown's "main street" along 5th st, illustrating sustainable and resilient design.

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PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & POLICIES

INCREASE ACCESS TO THE BAY

Increasing people's access to nature, especially Kings Bay, builds a local environmental ethic. *The City's Riverwalk and its adjacent public and private destinations give residents and visitors a respect for the Bay.* At the same time, overdevelopment can affect the health of the bay and surrounding wetlands.

PROTECT WETLANDS

Wetlands are found throughout Crystal River and include both coastal and tidal wetlands and inland and nontidal wetlands. Tidal wetlands are largely comprised of coastal salt and brackish marshes, mudflats, mangrove, and other swamps subjected to periodic tidal influence. Nontidal wetlands principally include freshwater marshes, ponds, shrub and wooded swamps, and bogs. Nontidal wetlands represent a complex assemblage of inland wet environments.

Wetlands in their natural state perform ecological functions, which are vitally important to the environment and economic health of the City and impossible or costly to replace. Wetlands protect the quality of surface waters by slowing the erosive forces of moving water. They provide a natural means of flood control providing damage protection by reducing flood peaks, thereby protecting against the loss of life and property. Wetlands improve water quality by intercepting and filtering out waterborne sediments, excess nutrients, heavy metals and other pollutants.

Wetlands are also sources of food, shelter, essential breeding, spawning, nesting and wintering habitats for fish and wildlife. These include migratory birds, endangered species and commercially and recreationally important species. Wetlands need to be recognized as part of a complex, interrelated, hydrologic system.

In recent decades, a number of federal, state and local government programs have been developed for preserving wetlands. Citizens and local, state and federal officials are frequently involved in conflicts over proposed wetland conversions and the management of surrounding land uses which threaten to degrade or destroy nearby wetlands.

The City must continue to:

- *Regulate human-controlled activities which cause adverse impacts to wetlands;*
- *Provide protection for isolated wetlands;*
- *Strengthen the biological component of the permitting process by recognizing the value of wetlands for wildlife habitat; and*
- *Provide incentives to encourage landowners to protect existing wetlands.*

PLANT AND MAINTAIN PROPER URBAN STREET TREES

Trees improve property values, and establish a sense of place. *Urban street trees in Downtown Crystal River should be planted in aligned rows, with regular spacing, using consistent species. Proper, formal tree placement shapes public space, produces shade continuous enough to make walking viable, and has a calming effect on traffic.*

Typically, urban design plans recommend that trees should be native species which are pollution tolerant and do not produce seeds or fruit which stain and litter the sidewalk. However, in Crystal River there was a strong interest in planting fruit trees and shrubs. Crystal River is in a Plant Hardiness Zone of 9A according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Zone 9 is a bit too chilly for many of the fruits recommended (mango, banana, and papaya for example), but several tropical fruits are hardy enough to tolerate the area's cool temperatures. They include: avocado, starfruit, passion fruit, kiwi fruit, and all varieties of citrus (the county's namesake fruit). Other fruit varieties include several hardy varieties of apples, apricots, peaches, and other orchard favorites that thrive without long chilling periods.

ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a worldwide environmental event with enormous consequences. The long-range impacts of that change will have major implications for coastal communities like Crystal River, especially. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change describes the impacts the community faces:

- Coastal and low-lying inundation
- Severe health impacts from extreme heat and air quality deterioration
- Endangerment of life and property through extreme weather events

The City must adapt swiftly, intelligently, and equitably to their negative consequences. This will require coordination with builders, engineers, architects, environmentalists, policy makers, scientists, and the general public, and may also aid in advancing the climate goals of other organizations, private and public. *The City must work to achieve net-zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions and prepare for the negative effects of climate change going forward. The City should consider climate-related issues in all policies and actions that guide development and redevelopment. The City must re-consider emergency management and evacuation plans and develop resiliency plans.*

CREATE NEW PARKS AND INVEST IN AND EXPAND EXISTING ONES

Crystal River has a great park system including several highly utilized waterfront park's showcasing the beauty of Kings Bay. *The city should continue to invest in expanding its park system in critical locations and invest in existing parks across the community to ensure that all parks have high quality amenities that serve their neighborhoods.*

UTILIZE LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID) TECHNIQUES

Low impact development (LID), or green infrastructure, uses vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage stormwater and create healthier built environments with fewer negative impacts on surrounding green space and wildlife habitat. *This infrastructure can be installed along streets, in public spaces, and on private properties and can be small scale and cost effective.* Increased use of LID treatments throughout can help improve stormwater runoff quality before it reaches the bay.

CREATE DISTRICT-WIDE STORMWATER SYSTEMS

Current stormwater requirements for commercial, mixed-use and some multi-family development require stormwater to be managed on-site, posing a challenge to new infill development. *Instead of requiring each property in downtown or along highway 44 to use a portion of its site for stormwater management, the city should explore district-wide stormwater strategies for areas where mixed-use and infill development is desired.*

A district-wide approach crosses property lines and creates a centralized location to capture, treat and hold stormwater runoff. The centralized location (preliminary draft for review)

of biofiltration basins and underground storage tanks, creating a new public space in addition.

EXPAND THE SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

Continue to build out the sanitary sewer system to improve water quality.

CONTINUE TO INVEST IN THE BAY'S HEALTH AND THE KING'S BAY RESTORATION PROJECT

In recent years, Kings Bay has seen dramatic improvements in water quality thanks to the efforts of the Kings Bay Restoration Project, Save Crystal River, and other community groups. *The city should continue supporting these groups to continue to improve water quality in the bay, remove Lyngbya, and plant eelgrass.* A healthy bay is essential not only for the environmental benefits, but for supporting the natural amenities that attract residents and visitors to the city.

ADOPT DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ELEVATED BUILDINGS

The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) adopted in 2021 expanded the land classified as being in the AE Flood Zone because the BFEs increased from 8 feet to 11 or 12 feet. New construction or substantially improved structures are now required to be elevated or floodproofed to 1 foot above BFE, making the street-oriented architecture described in this plan for walkable places, challenging. *The city should adopt building standards to ensure that buildings meeting the new FEMA regulations and maintain street-oriented architecture.*

COORDINATE PARKING, FEMA, AND STORMWATER REGULATIONS

The construction of infill development and new mixed-use development will depend on coordinating the interrelated regulations of parking, FEMA flood zones, and stormwater. Each of these regulations necessitates portions of a site to be devoted to non-revenue generating uses and increases construction costs. *Within the downtown CRA and new mixed-use centers, the city should coordinate reduced parking requirements, expanded on-street and centralized parking, district-wide stormwater systems, historic designations, and design standards for elevated and floodproofed buildings, as appropriate, to encourage the development envisioned in this plan.*

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Crystal River Illustrative Plan

The illustrative plan depicts the community vision for the future of Crystal River based on the concepts of the Five Big Ideas

LEGEND

Crystal River City Boundary

Blocks

Lots

Buildings - Civic

Buildings - Existing

Buildings - Proposed

Parks & Schoolyards

Wetlands

Water

Trail

Trees

(preliminary draft for review)

FUTURE CHARACTER AREAS

FUTURE CHARACTER AREAS MAP

The Future Character Areas Map categorizes the city into six Character Area types, largely based on existing development patterns and logical extensions into the future. The purpose of this Map is to guide future development to help ensure that it is compatible with existing development and the city's vision. The areas have been defined such that they can be further subdivided into more specific place types and transect zones.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS & CROSSROADS

Some of Crystal River's neighborhoods have commercial uses along the major streets crossing otherwise predominantly residential areas. These commercial areas come in a variety of sizes and forms, many of which are suburban in nature.

The Future Character Areas Map shows these as Neighborhood Centers and Neighborhood Crossroads. Reinvigorating these areas and reinventing them as walkable, mixed-use places is a key focus of this plan as Neighborhood Crossroads and Centers promote community and are a vital element of walkable neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood Centers are larger, covering one or more blocks, with a 1/4-mile pedestrian shed. Buildings in the focal point are two to three stories in height and contain a mix of uses with active ground floor commercial spaces.

Neighborhood Crossroads

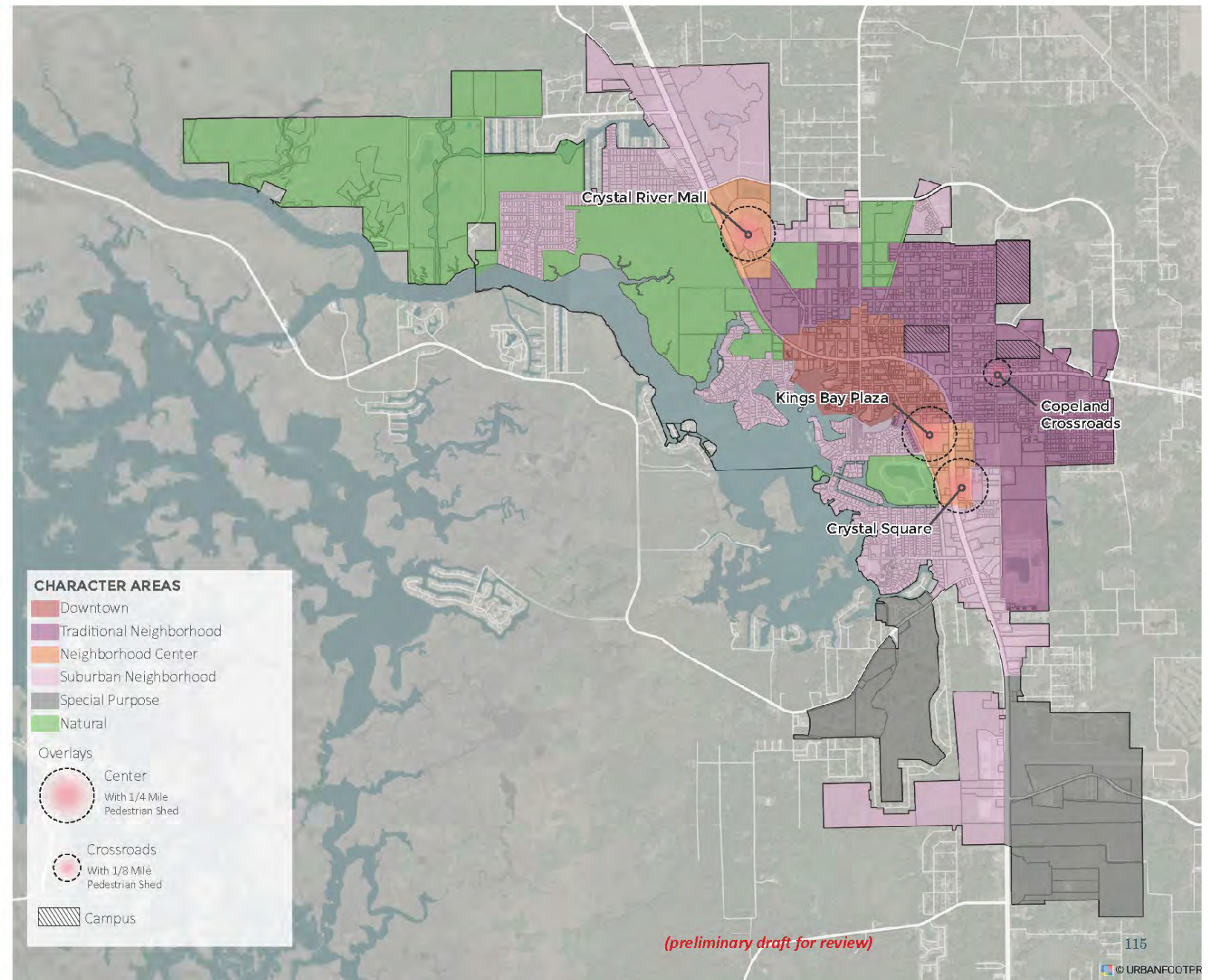
Neighborhood Crossroads are just one or two small buildings serving as a community hub at the intersection of two neighborhood streets. They are composed of a mix of uses including commercial shopfronts and live-work units that are typically one to two stories in height.

CAMPUS OVERLAY

Certain uses take a campus form and warrant special consideration based on their unique development patterns and special needs that differ considerably from the typical Character Areas in which they are located. These uses serve as economic drivers and catalysts for further growth and development that are vital to the City's overall wellbeing. Overlay Districts are accordingly assigned to these uses to accommodate their unique uses, character, and form. The campus overlays include the following:

Schools

These are major activity centers for students, teachers, families, and staff. This district includes Crystal River high School, Middle School, and Primary School. This kind of district is comprised of large amounts of land with buildings dispersed amongst lawns, sports fields, and parking.



OVERVIEW OF CHARACTER AREAS

← LESS INTENSE			MORE INTENSE →						
SPECIAL PURPOSE		NATURAL	SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD	TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD		NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER	DOWNTOWN		
									
INTENT STATEMENT	The Special Purpose Character Area covers areas of the city that are unique from the standard development patterns. This includes the golf course and the airport and surrounding land. The area adjacent to the airport is a prime location for industrial and similar activities that could benefit from proximity to the airport.		The Natural Future Character Area consists of protected land that is, for the most part, in a natural and unimproved state, though it can also include public parks and recreation areas. City regulations and policy decisions should help keep these lands in their natural state for drainage, natural habitat, and scenic protection. Hiking, biking, boating, and fishing may occur in this area. This area also features protected waterfront and wetland areas.		The Suburban Neighborhood areas are generally the more recently developed portions. The design of these neighborhoods necessitates the use of automobiles as individual buildings are spread farther apart with few pedestrian facilities. These neighborhoods are defined by single-family houses and low-rise isolated apartments. Office, retail, and mixed-use buildings can be built at key intersections, at neighborhood centers, and along main corridors. Civic buildings should respect the character of a primarily residential neighborhood, but can also be used as landmarks.		These neighborhoods are typically older and primarily residential. They are defined by a unique mix of single-family and multi-family housing types such as duplexes, fourplexes, and small apartment buildings, the latter of which are designed to blend cohesively with smaller single-family homes. Some commercial and civic uses are mixed in, particularly in neighborhood gateways or nodes or in special overlay districts where conditions are slightly denser. Thoughtfully designed small office, retail, and mixed-use buildings can be built at key intersections and along main corridors to provide neighborhood amenities.	Following the principles of traditional neighborhood design, new neighborhood centers can be located on vacant or retrofitted suburban areas at strategic locations to create new gateways in the City and to provide neighborhood-serving commercial to meet daily needs of local residents close to where they live. This is especially important for areas that are currently not well served with commercial uses. Neighborhood centers feature walkable and well-connected streets with public spaces and active ground floor uses. Height and bulk in these areas will be greater than the surrounding residential context.	Downtown describes the historic and most diverse urban development in the City. At times, it may be less intense than neighborhood centers. As a social gathering place for many events, downtown serves an important role for both the city's economy and culture. It includes historic single and multi-story mixed-use buildings with commercial, office, and residential uses. Larger development sites have the potential to unlock community benefits like public waterfront amenities. Multifamily residential buildings and attached townhouses are appropriate for infill.
	Lot Width Medium-to-Large		Lot Width NA		Lot Width Medium-to-Large		Lot Width Narrow-to-Medium	Lot Width Narrow-to-Large	Lot Width Narrow-to-Block
	Footprint Medium-to-Large		Footprint NA		Footprint Medium-to-Large		Footprint Small-to-Medium	Footprint Small-to-Large	Footprint Small-to-Large
	Front / Side Setback Varies		Front / Side Setback NA		Front / Side Setback 12 Feet Minimum		Front / Side Setback 0-20 Feet	Front / Side Setback 0-15 Feet	Front / Side Setback 0-10 Feet
	Height 1 story		Height varies (landscape elements)		Height 1-2 stories		Height 1-3 stories	Intensity 1-3 stories	Height 1-4 stories
BUILDING FORM	Frontages Varies		Frontages NA		Frontages Dooryard, Porch, Terrace, Forecourt		Frontages Dooryard, Stoop, Porch, Shopfront, Gallery, Arcade	Frontages Stoop, Porch, Forecourt, Shopfront, Gallery, Arcade	Frontages Stoop, Porch, Forecourt, Shopfront, Gallery, Arcade
	Golf Course, Airport, Industrial		Parks, playgrounds, recreation, agricultural, and nature preserve/ environmental conservation		Primarily residential with some commercial and civic uses (library, day care, house of worship, community center, hotel)		Primarily single-family detached, townhouses, duplexes, fourplexes, small apartments, and some shared office and mixed-use.	Multi-story mixed-use, non-residential ground floors at corners and along main corridors	historic commercial buildings, multi-story mixed-use apartments, attached townhouses, hotels, office, cultural & entertainment uses, and some single-family detached
USES									

INVESTMENT SECTORS

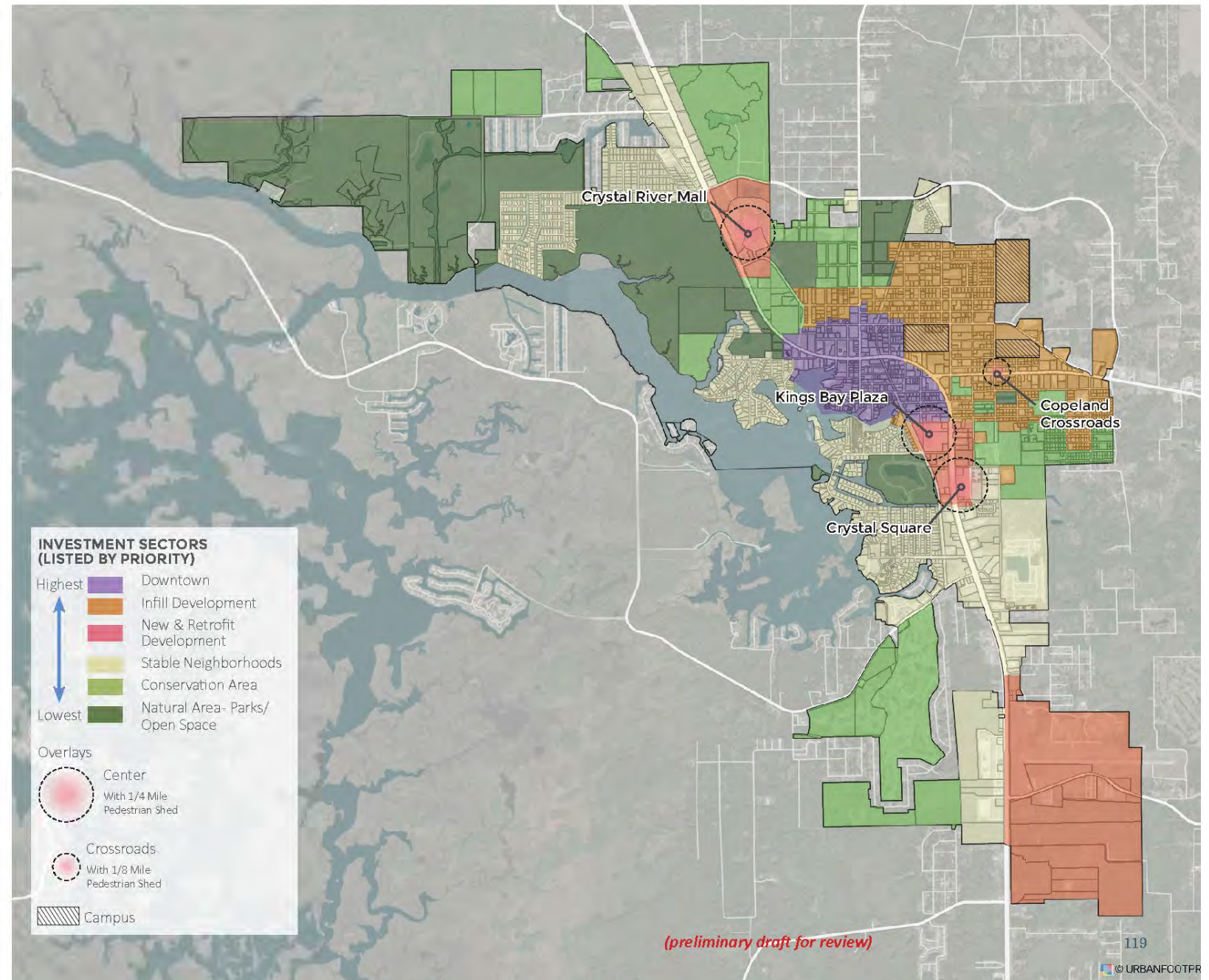
PRIORITIZING INVESTMENT

The Investment Sector Map defines a prioritization of lands for development that maximizes the public investment already made on roads, utilities and services. This map is not a zoning map, but is intended to guide local decisions concerning zoning, the subdivision of land, infrastructure investment, and the provision of services in coordination with the Future Character Areas Map. The sectors identify prime locations for downtown development, infill development, new & retrofit development, stable neighborhoods, conservation, and natural zones. The type and form of the resulting development should be based on the underlying Future Character Area as defined in the Future Character Areas Map.

A STRATEGY FOR GROWTH

Development should occur first where there has already been significant public investment, where there is already a framework in place for walkable neighborhoods consisting of pedestrian-scaled lots, blocks, and streets, and where the citywide community can benefit the most (Downtown). The next level of priority should be placed where there has been substantial investment and where there is already a framework in place for walkable neighborhoods, but where there are still a lot of “missing teeth” in the urban and suburban fabric (Infill Development). These areas are concentrated in the Copeland Park neighborhoods. The third level of investment is for areas of the city where there are large redevelopment and retrofit opportunity sites as well as opportunities adjacent to the airport for workplaces. These areas have had substantial investments made previously and have access to public infrastructure already in place, but follow a suburban development pattern, are single use, and may be in economic decline. New development patterns here could improve the economic viability of the sites while better serving the surrounding communities and city as a whole (Retrofit & Redevelopment).

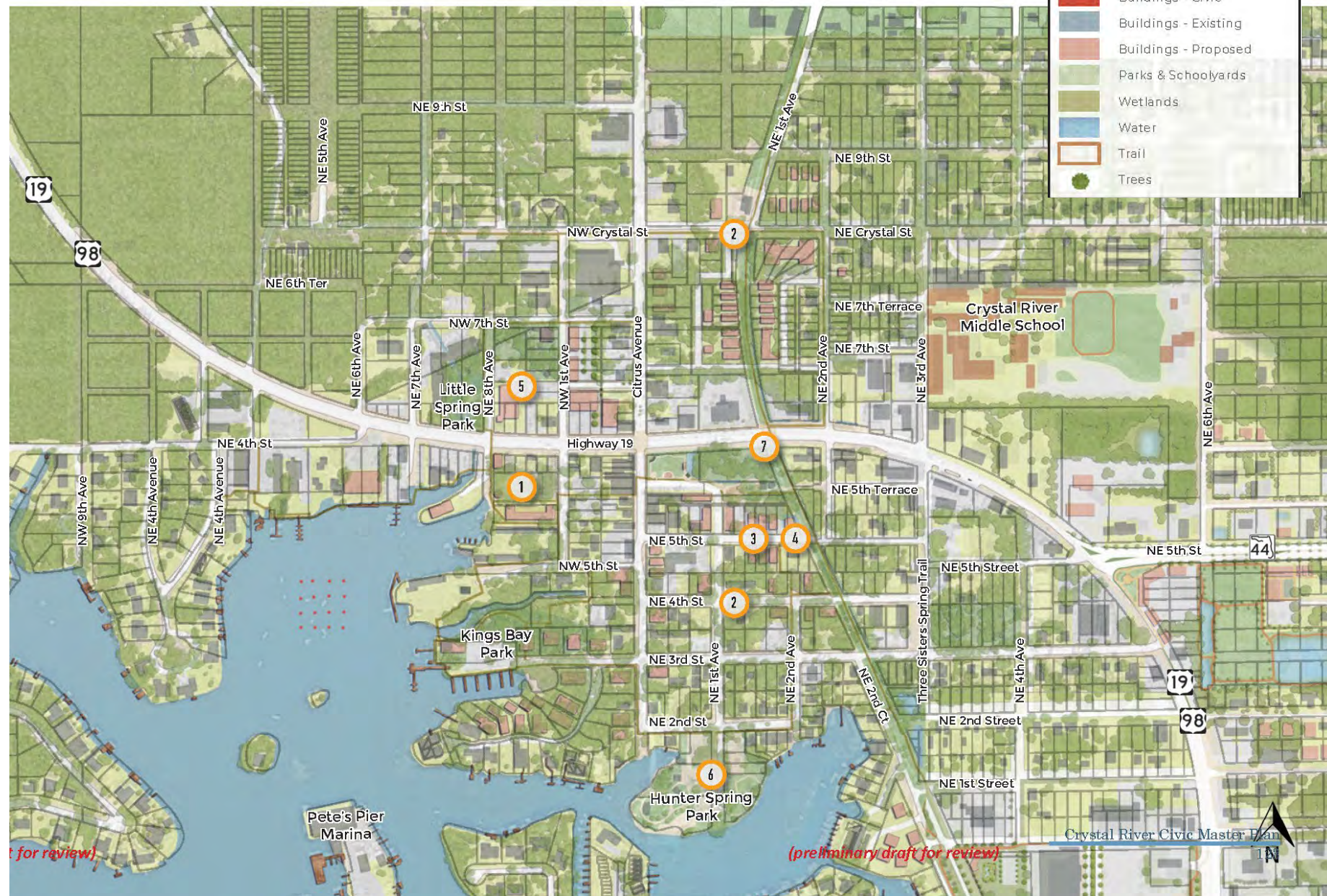
In the Stable Neighborhoods, new development and redevelopment is welcome, yet the city should prioritize investments in infrastructure and services in the other areas to maintain the city’s compact form and character. Finally, development should be discouraged in some areas that perform important ecosystem services or could be beneficial for recreational purposes (Conservation Areas). By satisfying market needs with infill development, densities that could support vibrant neighborhood centers are expected in time while natural areas can be preserved.



Downtown and the Waterfront

KEY ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BIG 5 IDEAS IN DOWNTOWN AND ALONG THE WATERFRONT:

- 1 Identify opportunity sites for catalytic development to help meet city goals and establish expectations for future development.
- 2 Promote strategies for infill residential and mixed-use development that acknowledges the challenges posed by FEMA requirements.
- 3 Redesign key streets in downtown to include on-street parking and green infrastructure.
- 4 Extend the vibrancy of Citrus Avenue along 5th Street with an expanded “main street.”
- 5 Build a new City Hall that becomes a focal spot of downtown, is resilient towards flooding and sea level rise, and incorporates the adjacent park and playground.
- 6 Enhance and expand parks in the downtown and increase access to the waterfront, especially at Hunter Springs Park.
- 7 Create a gateway feature to downtown along the Crosstown Trail.



1. IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITY SITES FOR CATALYTIC DEVELOPMENT TO HELP MEET CITY GOALS AND ESTABLISH EXPECTATIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The lot next to King's Bay Lodge facing the King's Bay on NW 1st avenue is a vacant site. The location great opportunities for boutique lodging, event venues and mixed-use development. The ground floor of future building structure in this area needs to be raised for about eight feet to reach based flood elevation. To create a more pedestrian friendly façade, the ground floor can be activated with temporary uses such as cafes, vendors, and outdoor seating.

The site has some existing majestic mature oak trees. Small cottage buildings can be built among the grove to preserve the integrity of the landscape. A raise walkway can provide ADA access to the shops that not only satisfy the FEMA flood requirements but also minimize impact on the existing trees.

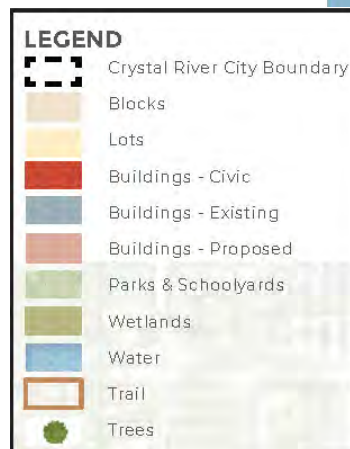
- 1 Small mixed-use cottage buildings on raised walk
- 2 New mixed use development
- 3 Temporary ground floor uses small shops and seating
- 4 Food trucks and street vendors



Highway 19 Shopping Centers

KEY ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BIG 5 IDEAS IN NEW NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS ALONG HIGHWAY 19 SOUTH OF DOWNTOWN:

- 1 Identify sections of shopping centers that should remain and those that could be repurposed.
- 2 Utilize excess surface parking for initial phases of new development following a plan for full build-out.
- 3 Incorporate central green spaces, such as squares and plazas, lined with active ground floor uses.
- 4 Utilize low impact development techniques and districtwide stormwater management systems.
- 5 Enhance and connect to shared-use paths and trails.
- 6 Improve Highway 19 crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, especially at the intersection with Kings Bay Drive.
- 7 Create a network of walkable streets and blocks, including connections to adjacent streets and future development.



The Crystal River Mall

KEY ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BIG 5 IDEAS AT THE CRYSTAL RIVER MALL

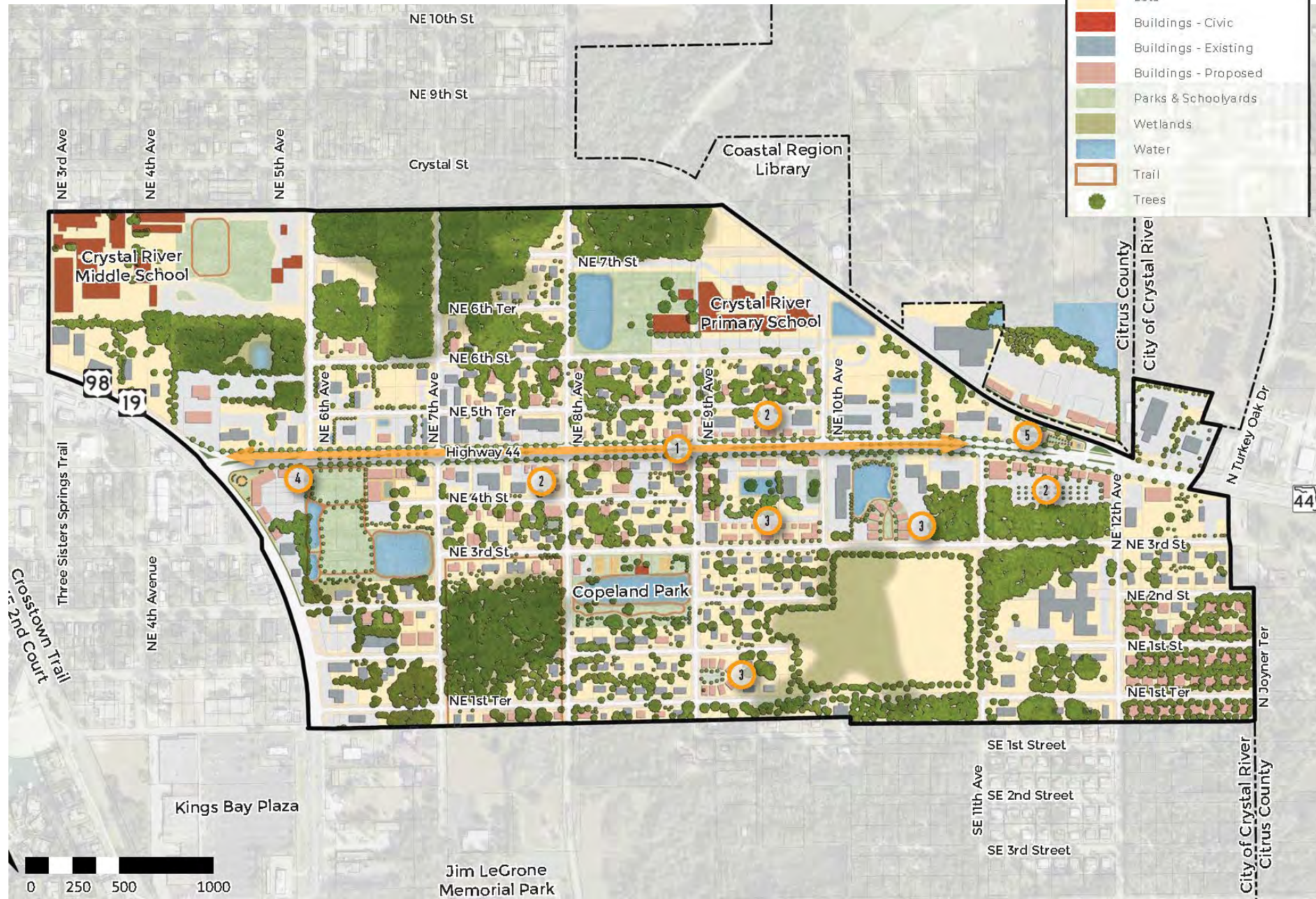
- 1 Identify sections of the mall that can remain and those that could be repurposed.
- 2 Create a network of walkable streets and blocks
- 3 Incorporate central squares lined with active ground floor uses.
- 4 Locate parking on-street and in mid-block locations.
- 5 Ensure at least one block can accommodate a structured parking garage lined with buildings on all sides.
- 6 Utilize low impact development techniques and districtwide stormwater management systems.
- 7 Create a pedestrian friendly frontage street along Highway 19 with street-oriented architecture.
- 8 Include a plaza area for smaller vendors and shops.



The Copeland Park Neighborhood

KEY ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BIG 5 IDEAS IN THE COPELAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD:

- 1 Transform Highway 44 into a Complete Street & Reconnect the Neighborhood
- 2 Add Mixed-Use Buildings Along Highway 44 & Create a Neighborhood Center
- 3 Infill a Variety of Housing Types in the Neighborhoods
- 4 Create Welcoming Gateways and Public Spaces that also help Address Stormwater
- 5 Create a Feeling of Arrival Along Highway 44



2. ADD MIXED-USE BUILDINGS ALONG HIGHWAY 44 & CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

FOUR CORNERS INTERSECTION

Even just a couple well-designed and well-placed buildings at the corners of a single intersection can denote a special place. The transformation of SR 44 really begins to take shape around the intersection with 8th Avenue.

At the center of the Highway 44 Neighborhood is the intersection of SR 44 with NE 8th Avenue. Located just a few blocks from Highway 19 / Suncoast Boulevard and downtown, the intersection is well within the city and is a key crossroads for the local neighborhood. From the intersection with North Turkey Oak Drive to the intersection with Highway 19, there are no traffic signals at any of the intersections. Over the course of the approximately one mile between these intersections, there are only two other marked crosswalks, at 8th and 9th Avenues, and neither has any added safety features. Yet there are businesses and residences in the neighborhoods on either side. There is also a school zone for much of the length of Highway 44 between NE 7th Ave and NE 10th Ave, with Crystal River Primary School located just two blocks north of Highway 44.

By focusing development at this intersection and installing a traffic signal, a further sense of arrival in the city can be created, traffic slowed, and a safe way to cross Highway 44 provided.

A New Neighborhood Center: A strong intersection with lively buildings can spark pride and investment in the neighborhood.



Illustration of a traffic signal and crosswalks at the intersection of Highway 44 with NE 8th Avenue. New mixed-use buildings following the anatomy of a shopfront design guidelines help to define the space.

(preliminary draft for review)

(preliminary draft for review)

5. *Getting There*

This chapter provides the detailed steps on how to “get there,” and implement the plan’s ideas. The chapter lays out specific activities which the City of Crystal River can undertake in the coming years to address community concerns and priorities. This includes activities, programs, ordinances, and administrative systems to be put in place to implement the plan.

1. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

2. IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

1. CONTINUE TO MAKE DOWNTOWN A VIBRANT DESTINATION

Strategy / Activity	Lead Agency	Timeframe
Strategy 1.1: Promote A Mix of Uses		
Action 1.1.1	Adopt the Future Character Areas Map as a way to ensure that all zoning and land-use regulation revisions serve to implement the desired future character of the city.	City Immediate
Action 1.1.2	Adopt the Investment Sector Map to inform public and private investment priorities, as well as stable areas that should be preserved.	City Immediate
Action 1.1.3	Update city regulations to allow food trucks and vendors for special events within the downtown/CRA.	City Immediate
Action 1.1.4	Continue to support events and festivals in downtown Crystal River.	Crystal River Main Street Ongoing
Action 1.1.5	Create a local developer capacity building program.	City Citrus County Chamber of Commerce Near-Term
Action 1.1.6	Ensure that updates to the zoning code and land development regulations remove any regulatory barriers to building viable commercial and mixed-use projects.	City Immediate
Action 1.1.7	Streamline the approval process for mixed-use developments in the downtown/CRA that help to achieve established city goals.	City Near-Term
Action 1.1.8	Review, coordinate, and modify stormwater, FEMA, and parking requirements to ensure desired building types can be constructed on existing lots.	City Immediate
Action 1.1.9	Redevelop city-owned vacant or surface parking lots in downtown through an RFP process where the city leases the land and requires specific development types and uses to achieve city goals.	City Long-Term
Strategy 1.2: Create Downtown Living Options		
Action 1.2.1	Ensure that residential density controls and land uses are calibrated to allow for missing middle housing types including townhomes, duplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, and small apartment buildings.	City Immediate
Action 1.2.2	Provide a tax/fee rebate program for residential projects that include a certain number of affordable and workforce housing units.	City Near-Term

Strategy / Activity	Lead Agency	Timeframe
Strategy 1.3: Cherish the Waterfront		
Action 1.3.1	Complete the Kings Bay Riverwalk	City Near-Term
Action 1.3.2	Update development regulations and zoning (CRA overlay code) within the downtown / CRA to incentivize/require developments to front the riverwalk with active-uses and street-oriented architecture.	City Immediate
Action 1.3.3	Encourage the development of mixed-use and boater-friendly properties on vacant lots around the bay.	City Ongoing
Strategy 1.5: Study and Adopt Parking Strategies to Manage and Maximize Parking		
Action 1.5.1	Review existing parking regulations and modify, if needed, to support the vision outlined in this plan.	City Immediate
Action 1.5.2	Allow and require shared parking within the downtown/CRA and other plan focus areas.	City Near-Term
Action 1.5.3	Expand public centralized shared parking facilities within the downtown/CRA in mid-block locations to be funded in-part through a fee-in-lieu program.	City Mid-Term
Action 1.5.4	Establish a fee-in-lieu program for development within the downtown/CRA to support centralized public parking and reduce the number of surface spaces required on each lot.	City Mid-Term
Action 1.5.5	Improve parking and mobility wayfinding across the city, directing residents and visitors to public parking locations.	City Near-Term
Action 1.5.6	Establish employee parking locations in the downtown/CRA, such as designated spaces in public parking lots, so on-street parking spaces remain for customers.	City Near-Term
Action 1.5.7	Create formal remote parking locations through agreements with private entities or making use of city-owned land to help meet temporarily high demand for parking.	City Near-Term
Action 1.5.8	Establish minimum secured bicycle parking requirements for new development within form-based code areas of the city.	City Near-Term
Action 1.5.9	Provide public use bike racks within the downtown/CRA and at key destinations across the city.	City Near-Term
Action 1.5.10	Implement a parking time limit of 2-hours for on-street parking on commercial/retail blocks within the downtown/CRA along with increased enforcement.	City Near-Term
Action 1.5.11	Consider implementing metered parking on commercial/retail blocks within the downtown/CRA if the implementation of enforced parking time limits does not produce the desired turnover.	City Long-Term
Action 1.5.12	Study the feasibility of a progressive pricing model for downtown parking in the long-term to incentivize better utilization of all parking options.	City Long-Term

The public comment period begins on October 11th with a presentation of the Draft Plan at the City Council Meeting at 5:30 PM

HOME ABOUT AREAS EVENTS ENGAGE



Welcome to the Crystal River Civic Master Plan project website. This is an exciting time for Crystal River. A new Town Square has recently been built and plans are underway to develop a Riverwalk along the waterfront and several new developments are planned or are under construction.

This project will focus on helping the town maximize its potential, while at the same time making sure the town continues to be the place residents want it to be.

The project is divided into three geographic-topic areas, and the opportunities and challenges of each area are described under

SIGN UP To receive event and project updates!

Participate

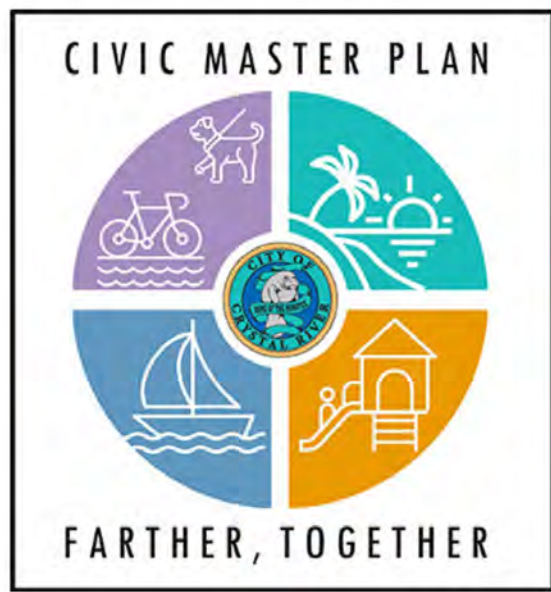
THE THREE-WEEK PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ON THE DRAFT CRYSTAL RIVER CIVIC MASTER PLAN WILL BEGIN ON OCTOBER 11TH AT 5:30PM. AT THAT TIME, THE DRAFT PLAN WILL BECOME AVAILABLE ON THIS WEBSITE.

THE DRAFT PLAN WILL ALSO BE PRESENTED AT THE OCTOBER 11TH

CONTACT US

The public comment period begins on October 11th with a presentation of the Draft Plan at the City Council Meeting at 5:30 PM

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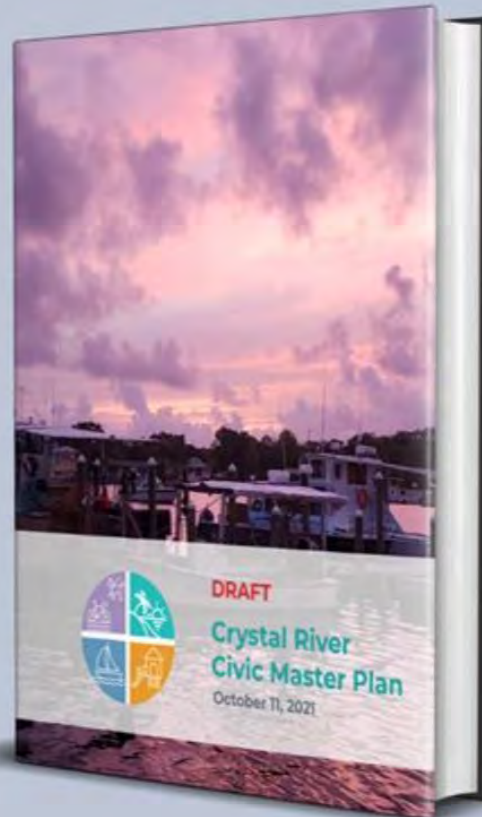
DRAFT REPORT



THE CIVIC MASTER PLAN DRAFT IS READY FOR REVIEW!

Draft Report

The first draft is ready for review! Download it using the link below and leave your comments here



[Download the report](#)

Name *

First Name

Last Name

Email *

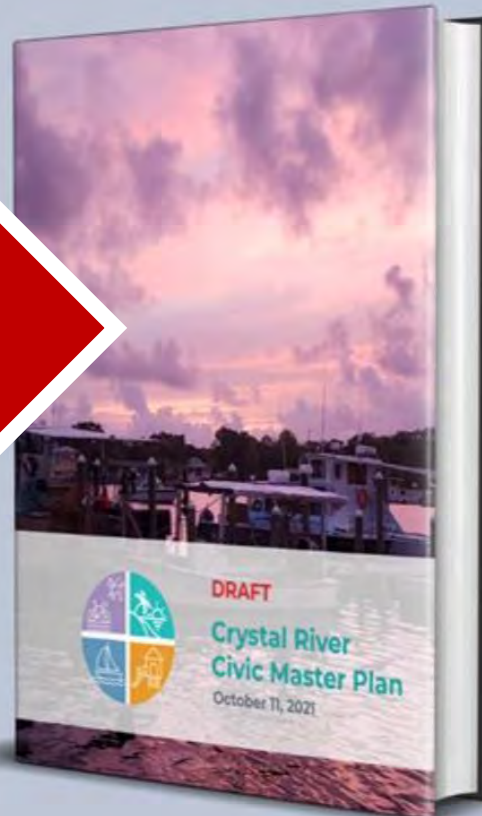
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First Name

Last Name

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CIVIC MASTER PLAN



FARTHER, TOGETHER

CIVIC MASTER PLAN

DOVER, KOHL & PARTNERS
town planning

GMC

HPE
Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

QUESTIONS!

crystalrivercivicmasterplan.com

PROJECT TIMELINE



PUBLIC CHARRETTE

JUNE 21 – JUNE 25



PRESENTATION
OF THE
FINAL PLAN

WINTER 2021

PRESENTATION
OF THE
DRAFT PLAN

OCTOBER 11

PLAN
REVISIONS

APPROVAL
PROCESS



INITIAL
ANALYSIS

JUNE 16 & 17
SITE VISIT

DRAFTING
THE PLAN

Key Findings:

The knowledge gained from both the site analysis in Chapter 1 and the public input in Chapter 2 are summarized here as the key findings for the Civic Master Plan that serve as the foundation for the Vision chapter.

WALKING & CYCLING SAFETY:

Pedestrian and cyclist safety needs improvement especially along Highway 19 and Highway 44. This includes better crossings at intersections and the Crosstown Trail.

PLACEMAKING:

Create a sense of arrival to Crystal River and the Nature Coast. Improve the look of existing commercial and industrial areas in order to make the area more attractive for new families and housing. Keep a Florida coastal aesthetic in terms of architecture standards and street tree species. Continue to make downtown an attractive area by adding new amenities including art galleries, museums, maker spaces and more. Maintain a cohesive aesthetic look. The Copeland Park neighborhood, "is really one neighborhood"...that has been divided by the highway and will be further divided by closing all intersections.

TOURISM:

Balance tourist and resident needs, keeping the area attractive to residents while still maintaining a high level of tourism. Build eco-tourism to help maintain the local economy. More activities for tourists would help keep visitors in the area for longer vacations.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION:

Throughout Crystal River are historic homes that add to the character of the area. These homes need to be protected to maintain the history and character of the city.

ENVIRONMENT & STORMWATER:

Develop a stormwater management strategy in response to increased flooding and to facilitate new development. FEMA has new regulations requiring buildings to be higher in elevation; a strategy for design is needed.

MOBILITY:

Prioritizing other modes of transportation will reduce the demand for parking. Improvements to the trail system could include safer crossings, extending the trails and adding amenities along them. The number of driveways on Highway 44 increases the potential for both auto and pedestrian collisions.

LOCAL BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

There needs to be affordable housing for young families close to the schools. A public parking strategy is needed for downtown and along Highway 44.

Which housing types would serve Crystal River the best? Are any types of housing missing from this discussion? Are any of these not appropriate for Crystal River?

More affordable housing in Crystal River, but issues with flooding are always a problem.

Single Family housing.

Bungalows and cottage-type town houses would be lovely.

Don't destroy the city's strength- its small town character without the ugly and heavy development in south Florida.

Spacing between homes, well kept lawns, sidewalks, preserve the older homes that are able to be saved.

3. INFILL A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

HOUSING CHOICES

A mix of residential building types creates neighborhoods which allow a diversity of ages and incomes, and permit residents to trade up or downsize their homes without having to move away. Multi-generational and life-cycle neighborhoods create strong social networks, avoid concentrations of poverty or wealth, and lead to safer communities. A large variety and scale of housing choices can be found between the conventional single-family home and multi-family apartment complex. Here are just some of the building types that could meet those needs:



1 MIXED USE BUILDING



2 LIVE-WORK/MAKE UNIT



3 TOWNHOUSE



4 APARTMENT BUILDING



5 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT



6 DUPLEX



7 COTTAGE



8 COTTAGE COURT



9 HOUSE



