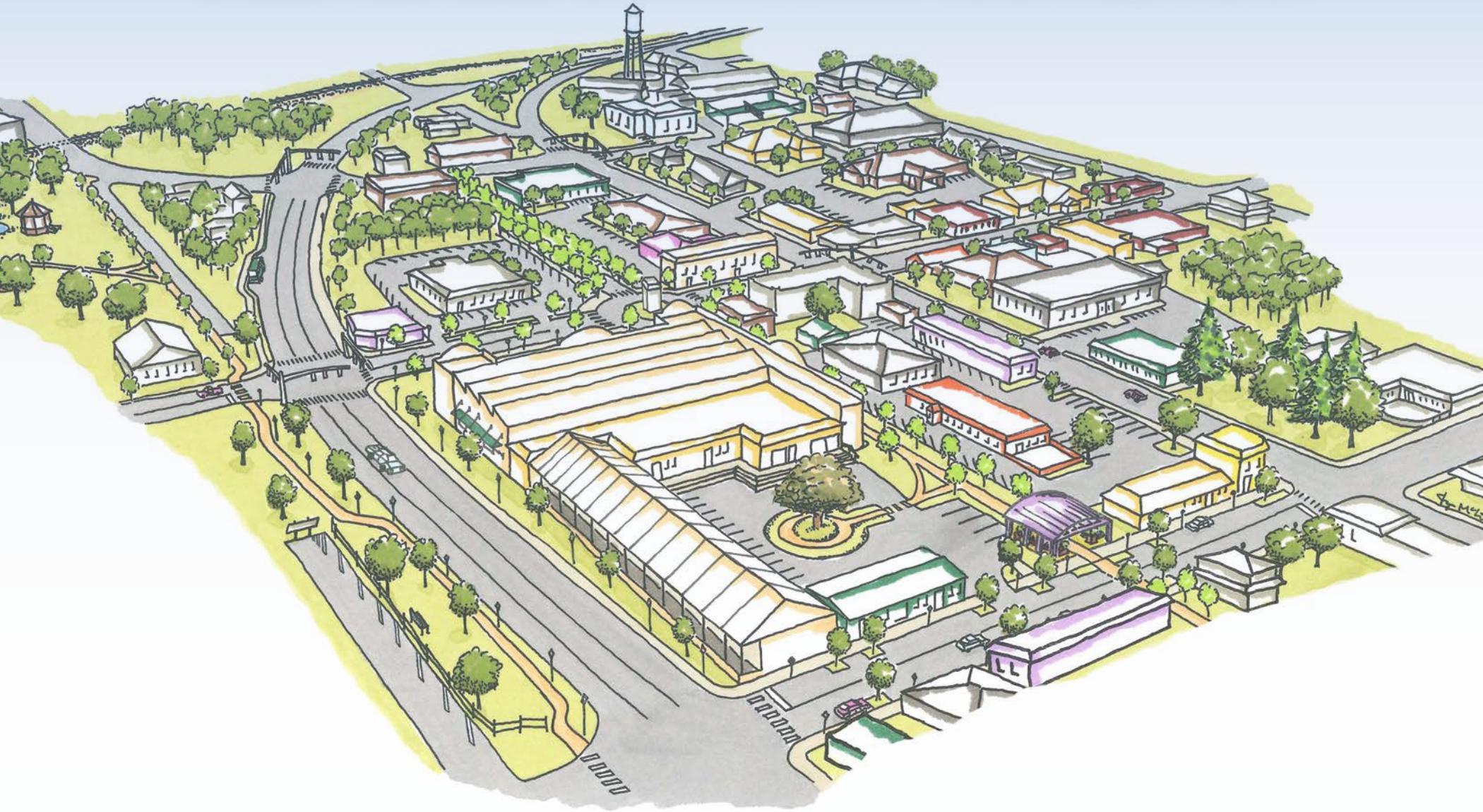


LAKE ALFRED DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN



Downtown Lake Alfred will be a pedestrian-friendly destination for residents and visitors providing a variety of opportunities to live, work, shop, and play in a community with small town charm.

Adopted - January 22, 2013

Special thanks to all of the City of Lake Alfred City Commissioners, Planning Board members, administrative staff, residents, business community members, and stakeholders that contributed to the preparation of this document.

CITY COMMISSIONERS

Jack C. Dearman, Mayor
Nancy Z. Daley, Vice Mayor
Albertus Maultsby
Charles Lake
John Duncan

And

All City Commissioners, 2011-2013

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS

All Members, 2011-2013

CITY ADMINISTRATION

Ryan Leavengood, City Manager
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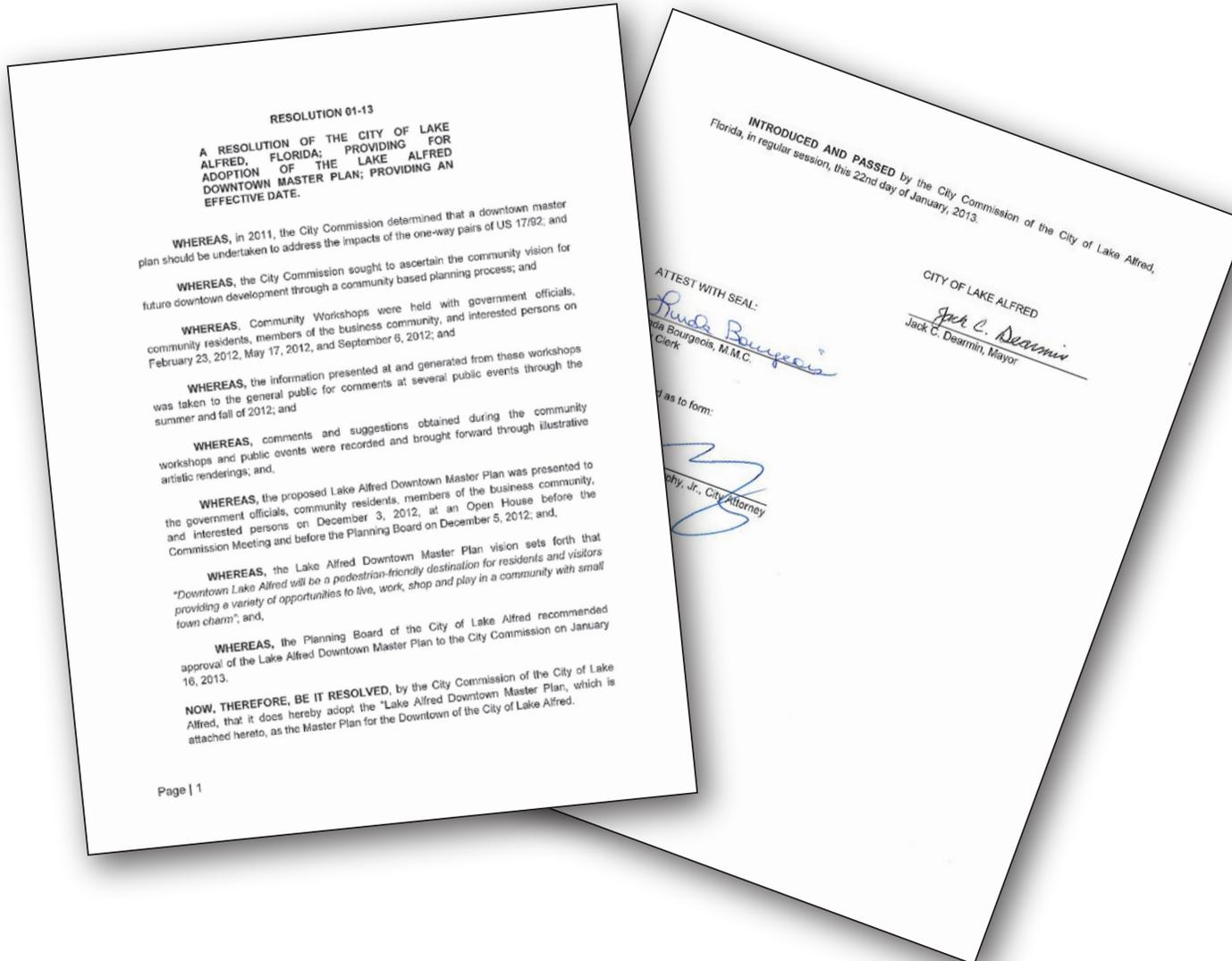
PREPARED BY:



Central Florida Regional Planning Council



The Lake Alfred Downtown Master Plan was adopted by Resolution 01-13 by the City Commission of the City of Lake Alfred on the 22nd day of January, 2013.

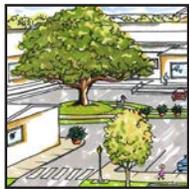




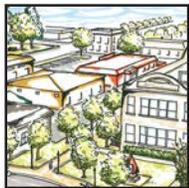
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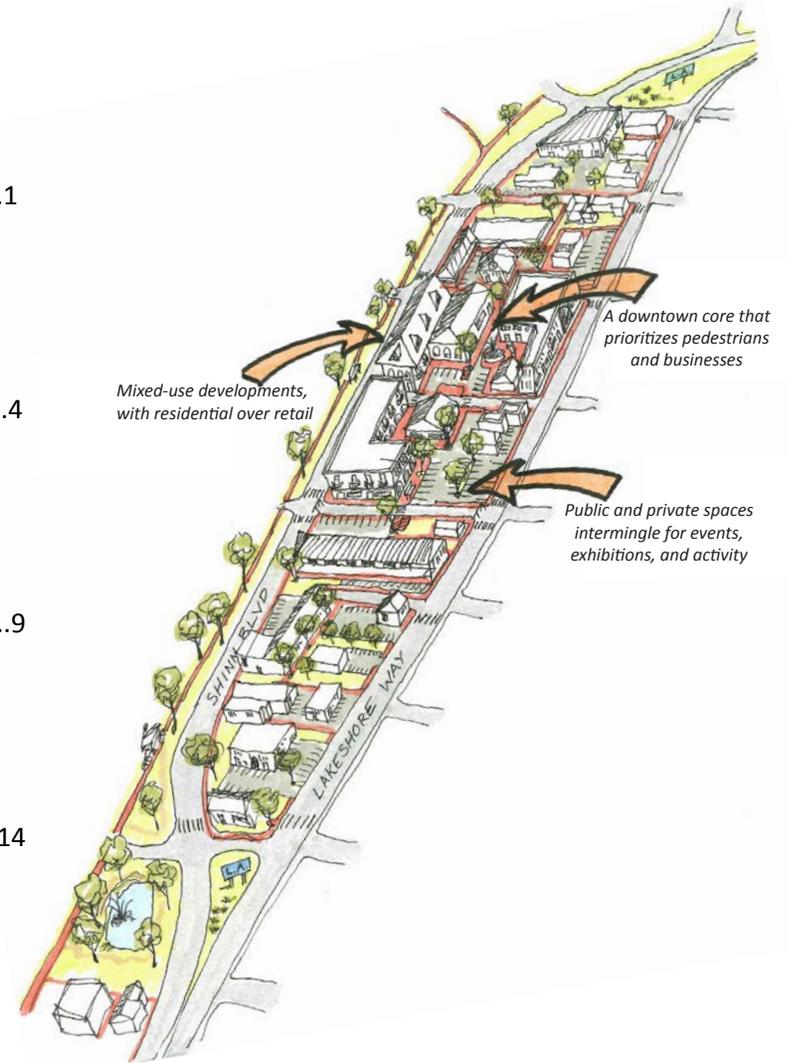


APPENDICES

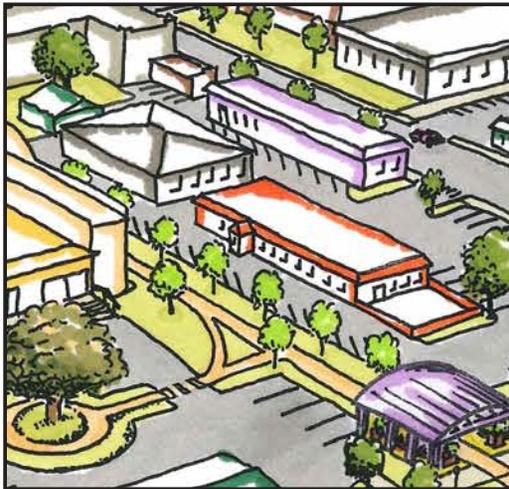
APPENDIX A: Funding Capacity and Priorities

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Executive Summary



- Master Plan Purpose
- Community Priorities
- Planning Principles
- Project Implementation

Master Plan Purpose

In the fall of 2011, the City of Lake Alfred City Commission unanimously voted to develop a Downtown Master Plan for the City. The goal of the Downtown Master Plan is to provide for: a strong economy; a livable, healthy community; pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connectivity; and continuation of the community’s small town character. The impetus to developing the Downtown Master Plan has been the reconfiguration of the US Highway 17/92 corridor into three-lane one way pairs that divided the downtown area.

This Downtown Master Plan has been designed by the Lake Alfred Community including, residents and businesses, through a series of community workshops and outreach activities. As part of that process, the Community developed a statement to harness their vision of the future of Downtown Lake Alfred.

“Downtown Lake Alfred will be a pedestrian-friendly destination for residents and visitors providing a variety of opportunities to live, work, shop and play in a community with small town charm.”



Community Priorities

The Community identified six priorities necessary for a viable and sustainable future for Downtown Lake Alfred.

- o Develop more retail including shops, major grocery store and pharmacy.
- o Improve and expand landscaping, streetscaping, crosswalks and street improvements in the Downtown Core.
- o Develop wayfinding signage and enhance gateways.
- o Promote business beautification in the Downtown Core.
- o Increase walkability in the Downtown Core through a new internal pedestrian boulevard.
- o Promote more festivals and events.

These key items have been captured in Vision Opportunity Areas and Identified Streetscaping Priorities.

Planning Principles

The guiding planning principles of the Master Plan include the following.

- Principle 1: Redevelop semi-vacant and underutilized properties.
- Principle 2: Promote new business downtown while providing equal focus on retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Principle 3: Create a more walkable and pedestrian-oriented atmosphere.

Principle 4: Make Downtown Lake Alfred a place where festivals and events naturally fit.

Principle 5: Enhance the appearance of the Downtown through business beautification and targeted streetscaping and landscaping projects.

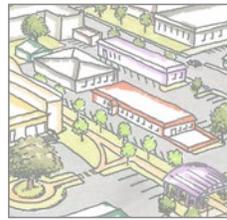
Principle 6: Enhance an atmosphere of collaboration among businesses, residents and the City.

Project Implementation

Projects identified to make the Master Plan a reality are divided into short term (projects to be accomplished in five years or less) and long term (projects to be accomplished in a time frame greater than five years). These projects, including economic development strategies, streetscaping, wayfinding as well as redevelopment of the Gray's Trucking Property and completion of a connected pedestrian system, are detailed in the Master Plan's Appendix A: Funding Capacity and Priorities.



Introduction



Why Vision?

The Community of Lake Alfred engaged in a vision process to develop a plan for a viable and sustainable future for Downtown Lake Alfred.

Purpose of a Master Plan

The Lake Alfred Downtown Master Plan provides a roadmap to achieve the community's vision for the future.

The goal of the Master Plan is to provide for:

- o A strong economy.
- o A livable, healthy community.
- o Pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connectivity.
- o Continuation of the community's small town character.

- Why Vision?
- Purpose of a Master Plan
- Community Input
- Identified Needs and Assets



Lake Alfred Entrance Sign



Community Input

This Master Plan has been developed through a series of community workshops and public input received at several public events during a 10-month period.

Community Workshop: February 23, 2012

- o Opportunities, challenges, and assets.
- o Downtown Core, Transitional and Gateway Areas.

Community Workshop: May 17, 2012

- o Downtown concepts.
- o Pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connectivity opportunities.

Community Workshop: September 6, 2012

- o Downtown opportunities.
- o Downtown investment priorities.
- o Downtown Vision Statement.



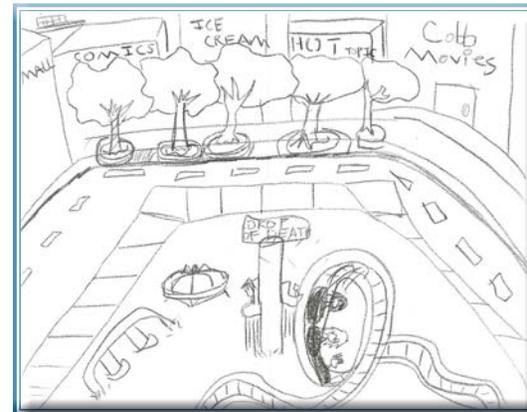
Community Outreach: Grillin' & Chillin'

Summer and Fall 2012 Community Events

- o Library Grand Opening
- o Lake Alfred Summer Camp
- o Downtown Showplace
- o Ground Breaking of Veterans' Memorial at Gardner Park
- o Grillin' & Chillin'



Community Workshop



Kids Workshop



Identified Needs and Assets

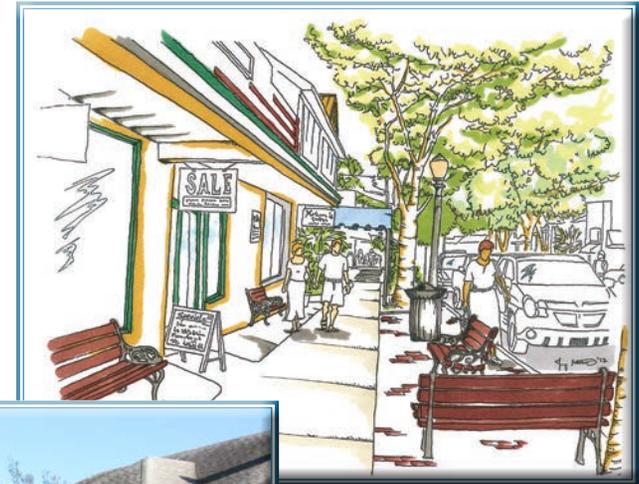
Community surveys were distributed at the Community Workshops and at the public events. Input received included the Community's identification of what the Community would like to see in the Downtown Area and what the Community likes best about Lake Alfred and wants to be preserved.

The Community would like to see:

- o More landscaping and streetscaping.
- o Greater walkability – more “walk-to” businesses.
- o More festivals and events.
- o Gathering place/community center/event center.
- o Business beautification in the Downtown.

The Community likes Lake Alfred because of the City's:

- o Small town character (quaint and friendly).
- o Public safety.
- o Parks, lakes, library and natural beauty.



Concept Rendering: Streetview



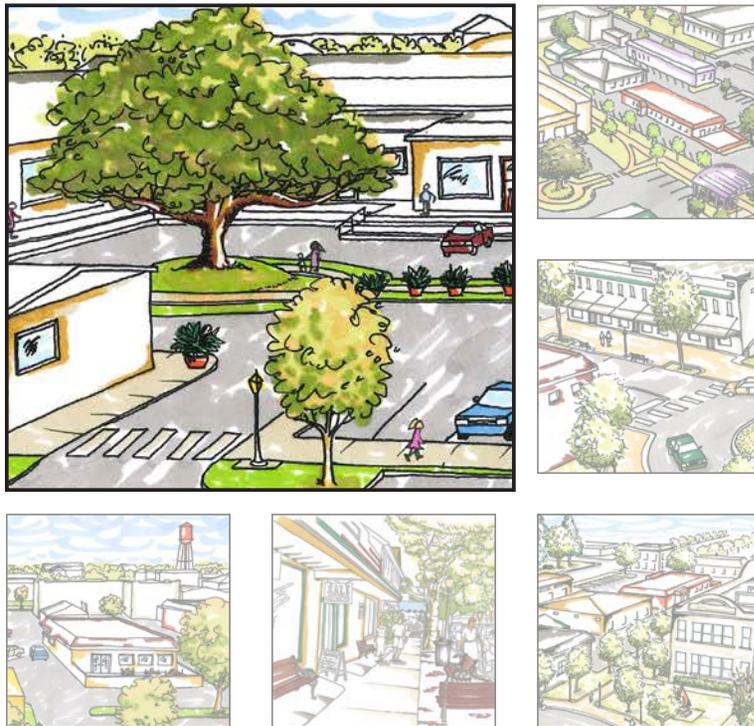
Lake Alfred Residence



Lake Rochelle



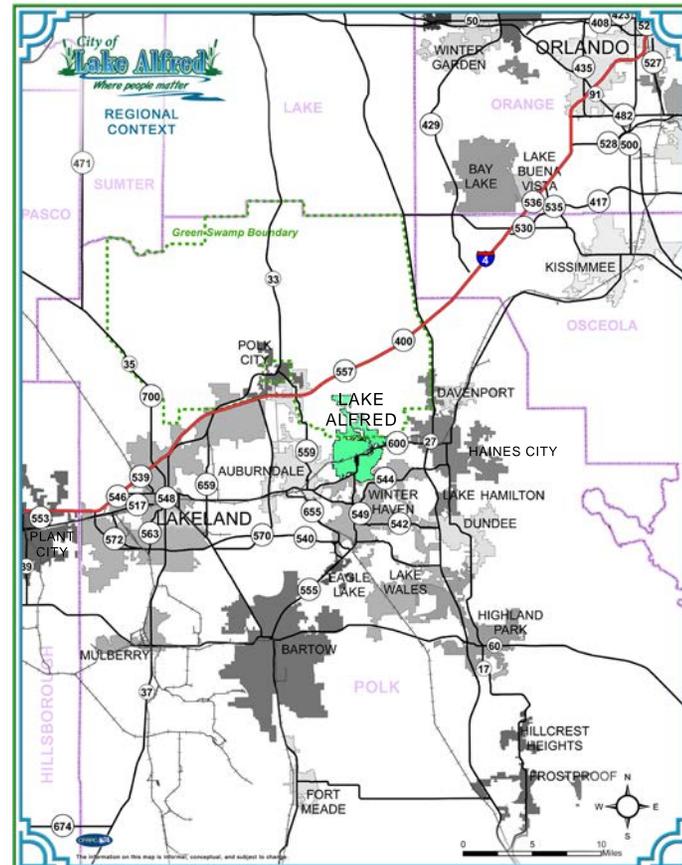
Downtown Analysis



- Lake Alfred Location
- Opportunities, Challenges and Assets
- One-Way Pairs
- Downtown Core, Transitional and Gateway Areas

Lake Alfred Location

Lake Alfred is near the employment centers of Lakeland to the west, Winter Haven to the south, and the metro Orlando area to the east, thereby providing the City's residents with access to big-city jobs and urban amenities.



Opportunities, Challenges, and Assets

Opportunities include:

- o The City is regionally connected and is near regional attractions and cultural and employment centers.
- o The Downtown Area is accessed by major roadways.
- o The City is far enough removed from larger urban areas to have a small-town charm that residents and visitors value.
- o The City has several natural lakes which attract a variety of water based recreation opportunities.

Challenges include:

- o The Downtown Area is divided by the US 17/92 one-way pairs.
- o Developing funding for identified improvements.

Assets include:

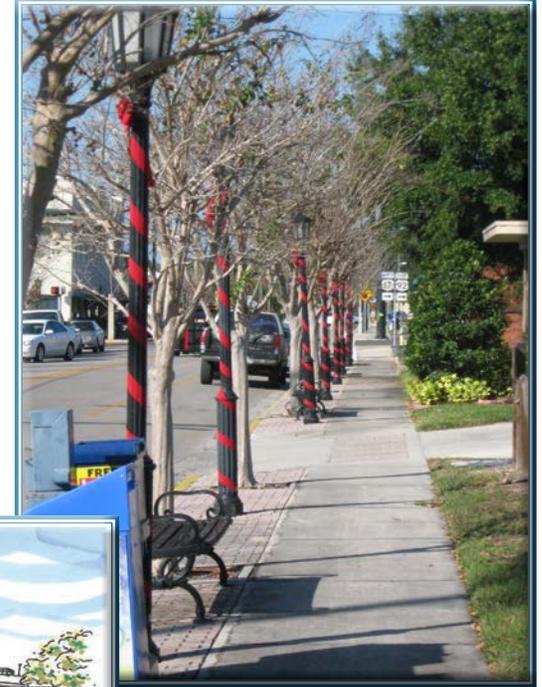
- o Community investment is readily apparent including:
 - ◆ The fountain at south entrance into Downtown.
 - ◆ Veterans' Memorial at Gardner Park.
 - ◆ Library
 - ◆ Future trail along the west side of Shinn Boulevard.
 - ◆ Landscaped medians along US 17/92.



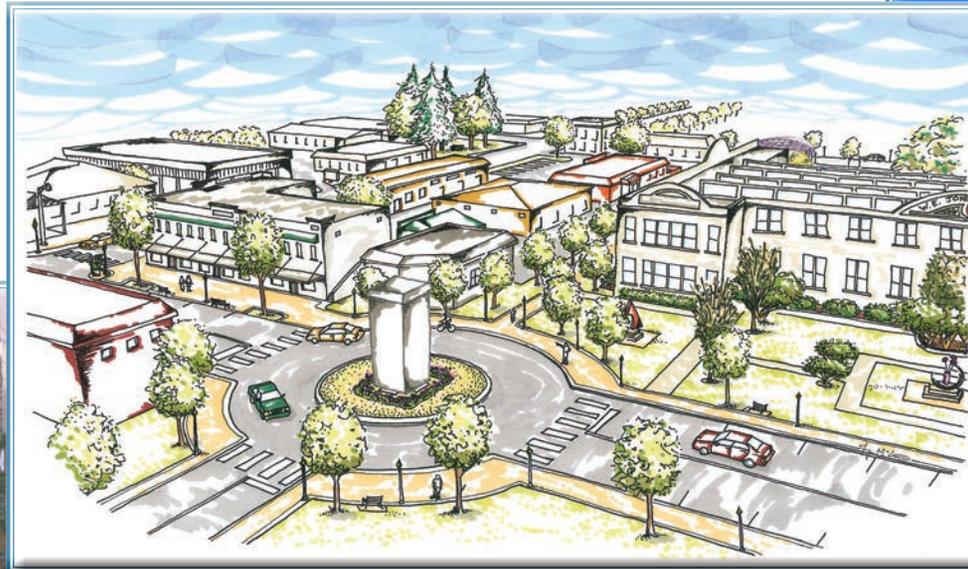
Downtown Core Area

The Downtown Core is where there is the greatest concentration of businesses, infrastructure, and public services. Uses and characteristics of this area include:

- o Businesses (Retail/Professional/Office).
- o Government facilities.
- o Key transportation corridors.
- o Existing infrastructure.
- o Pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular oriented facilities.



Streetscaping in Lake Alfred



Conceptual Rendering: Downtown Plaza



Haines Boulevard



Lake Shore Way & Haines Blvd

Downtown Transitional Area

The Downtown Transitional Area is where complimentary Downtown Core Area uses may occur. Such uses include:

- o Offices (converted homes/mixed use).
- o Multi-Family (Condominiums, Apartments).
- o Potential Future Expansion of the Downtown Core Area.



Residence converted to business



Multi-family

Downtown Gateway Areas

The four identified Downtown Gateway Areas are located at the entranceways into the Downtown Transitional and Core areas that provide a first impression of the City. These areas serve as the greeting to let visitors know they are arriving at a destination.

Characteristics of Gateways include:

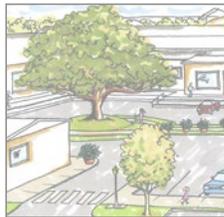
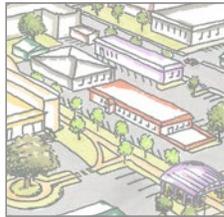
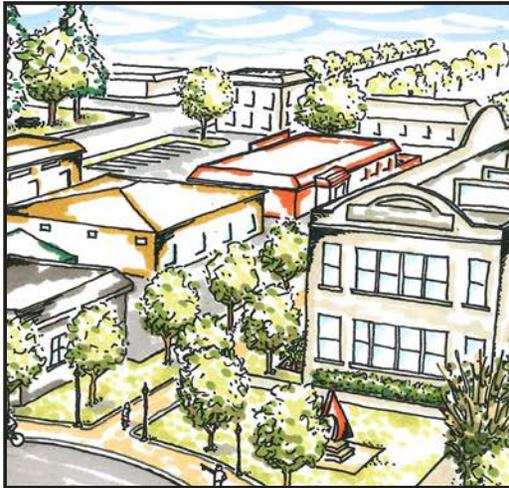
- o Identifiable images such as landscaping and streetscaping.
- o Enhanced development standards.



Conceptual Rendering: Enhanced Landscaping



Downtown Vision and Planning Principles



- **Community Vision and Priorities**
- **Vision Opportunity Areas**
- **Crosswalk Improvements and Streetscaping**
- **Planning Principles**

Community Vision and Priorities

Downtown Vision Statement

The Community developed a statement to harness their vision of the future of Downtown Lake Alfred.

“Downtown Lake Alfred will be a pedestrian-friendly destination for residents and visitors providing a variety of opportunities to live, work, shop and play in a community with small town charm.”

Community Priorities

Through community input received at the public workshops, at various community events, and via surveys, the Community identified six priorities necessary for a viable and sustainable future for Downtown Lake Alfred.

- o Develop more retail including shops, major grocery store and pharmacy.
- o Improve and expand landscaping, streetscaping, crosswalks and street improvements in the Downtown Core.
- o Develop wayfinding signage and enhance gateways.
- o Promote business beautification in the Downtown Core.
- o Increase walkability in the Downtown Core through a new internal pedestrian boulevard.
- o Promote more festivals and events.

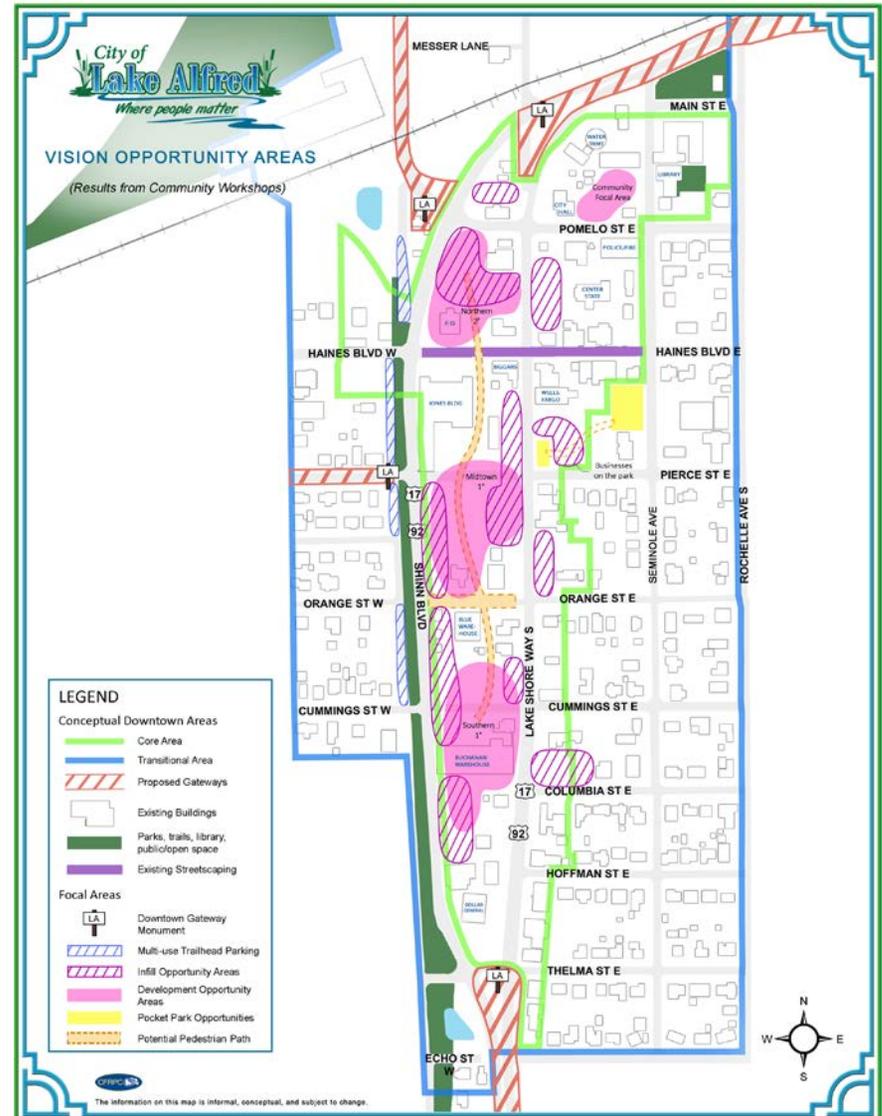


Vision Opportunity Areas

The Community identified areas that present significant development opportunities and redevelopment in the Downtown Core as indicated on the Vision Opportunities Map.

Opportunity Areas include:

- o Three major areas for redevelopment. These areas are identified as:
 - ◆ Northern Area
 - ◆ Midtown Area
 - ◆ Southern Area
- o The Community sees these three areas as opportunities for such future uses as a grocery store, pharmacy and community focal points for festivals and events.
- o Linkage of the anchor areas with an Internal Pedestrian Boulevard allowing for safe, convenient access.
- o A Community Focal Area identified includes :
 - ◆ Area west of the new library.
- o Gateways are identified as entranceways from the north, south and west of the Downtown Core Area.



Crosswalk Improvements and Streetscaping

The Community identified several needed roadway improvements to facilitate a viable and sustainable future for Lake Alfred’s Downtown.

Crosswalk improvements in order of Community-identified priority include:

Crosswalk First Priorities:

- » Shinn Boulevard and Haines Boulevard West.
- » Lake Shore Way and Cummings Street East.
- » Shinn Boulevard and Cummings Street East.

Crosswalk Second Priorities:

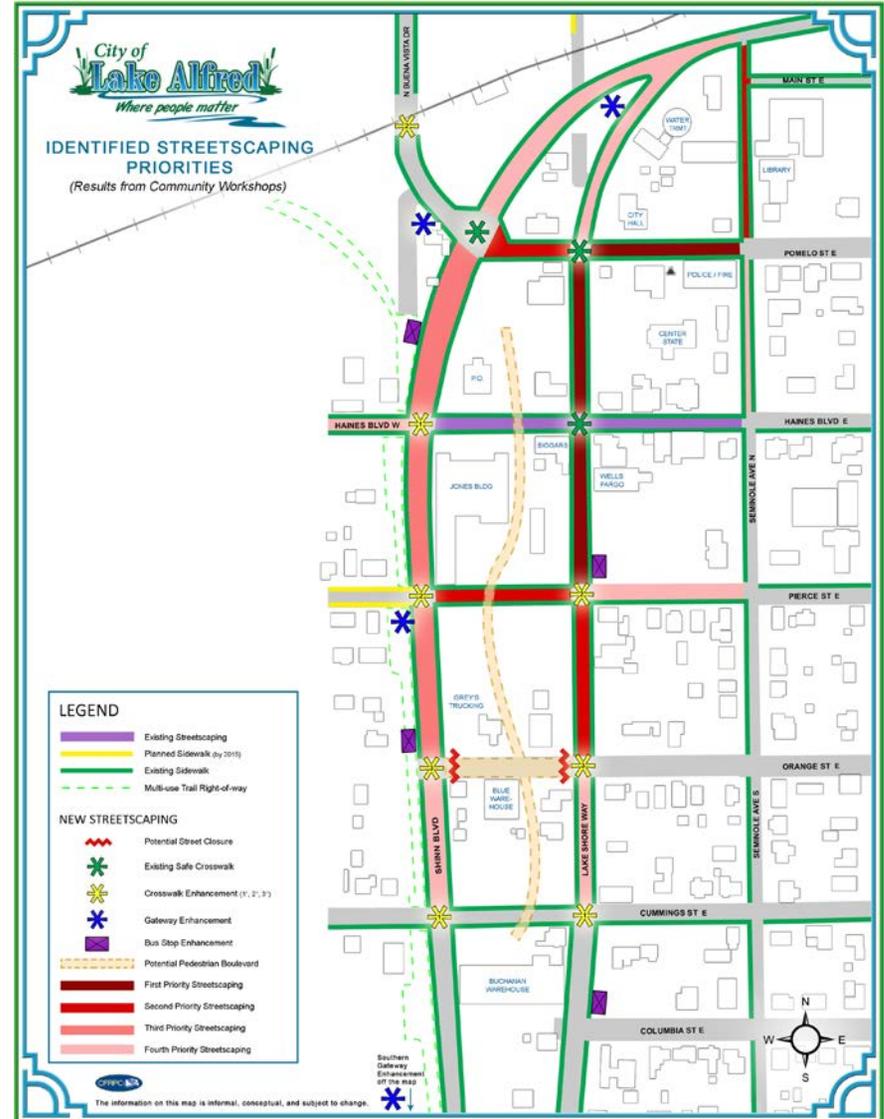
- » North Buena Vista Drive and the Railroad tracks.
- » Lake Shore Way and Pierce Street East.
- » Shinn Boulevard and Pierce Street East.

Crosswalk Third Priorities

- » Lake Shore Way and Orange Street.
- » Shinn Boulevard and Orange Street.

Gateway enhancements are identified for:

- » The northbound beginning of the one way pairs, west of Seminole Avenue.
- » North Buena Vista Drive, south of the railroad tracks.
- » Pierce Street East and Shinn Boulevard.
- » The southbound beginning of the one way pairs, south of Thelma Street.



Streetscaping Priorities in order of Community-identified priority include:

Streetscaping First Priorities:

- » Pomelo Street East between Lake Shore Way and Seminole Avenue.
- » Lake Shore Way between Pierce Street East and Pomelo Street East.

Streetscaping Second Priorities:

- » Pomelo Street East between Shinn Boulevard and Lake Shore Way.
- » Pierce Street East between Shinn Boulevard and Lake Shore Way.
- » Lake Shore Way between Orange Street East and Pierce Street East.
- » Seminole Avenue North from Pomelo Street East to US 17/92.



Streetscaping example

Streetscaping Third Priorities

- » Shinn Boulevard between Orange Street East and Pomelo Street East.

Streetscaping Fourth Priorities

- » Shinn Boulevard and Lake Shore Way between Pomelo Street East and Seminole Avenue East.
- » Shinn Boulevard and Lake Shore Way between Cummings Street East and Orange Street East.
- » Pierce Street East between Lake Shore Way and Seminole Avenue East.
- » Haines Boulevard West, west of Shinn Boulevard.



Streetscaping example



Planning Principles

The Downtown Vision forms a Master Plan based on several planning principles.

Principle 1:

Redevelop semi-vacant and underutilized properties.

Principle 2:

Promote new business downtown while providing equal focus on retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Principle 3:

Create a more walkable and pedestrian-oriented atmosphere.

Principle 4:

Make Downtown Lake Alfred a place where festivals and events naturally fit.

Principle 5:

Enhance the appearance of the Downtown through business beautification and targeted streetscaping and landscaping projects.

Principle 6:

Enhance an atmosphere of collaboration among businesses, residents and the City.



Conceptual Rendering: Mid-town Plaza



Master Plan to Reality: Project Implementation



- Identified Projects – Short Term and Long Term
- Implementation Tools and Funding Opportunities
- Community Contributions

Identified Projects - Short Term and Long Term

The projects identified by the community as needed improvements to achieve the future vision include:

- o Development of retail and neighborhood commercial uses.
- o Improved and expanded landscaping and streetscaping, crosswalks and street improvements.
- o Development of wayfinding signage and gateway enhancement.
- o Business beautification.
- o Increased walkability.
- o Festivals and events.

The implementation strategy to providing for these improvements includes identifying projects that can be accomplished or moved forward in a “short term” (five years or less) time frame versus a “long term” time frame which may be greater than five years.



Short Term Projects (5-years or less)

Projects identified that can potentially be moved forward in the short term time frame include:

- o Provide a redevelopment plan for Gray's Trucking Property.
- o Continued work with grocery store chains.
- o Develop a business beautification program.
- o Begin streetscaping projects based on community prioritization.
- o Begin crosswalk improvements based on community prioritization.
- o Develop wayfinding signage program.
- o Begin work on establishing pocket parks.
- o Begin work on festivals and events.

Conceptual Rendering: Redevelopment and Business Beautification



Before



After



Conceptual Rendering: Enhanced Streetscaping on Lake Shore Way



Before

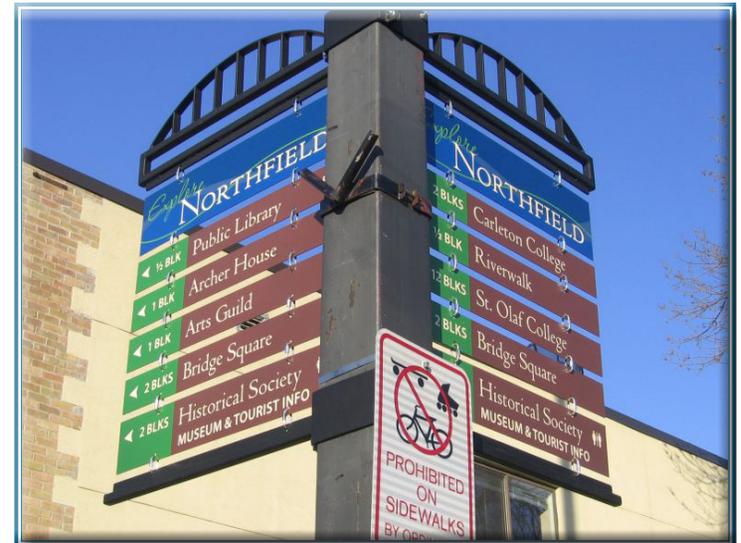


After

Wayfinding Examples



Conceptual Wayfinding Example



Wayfinding Example



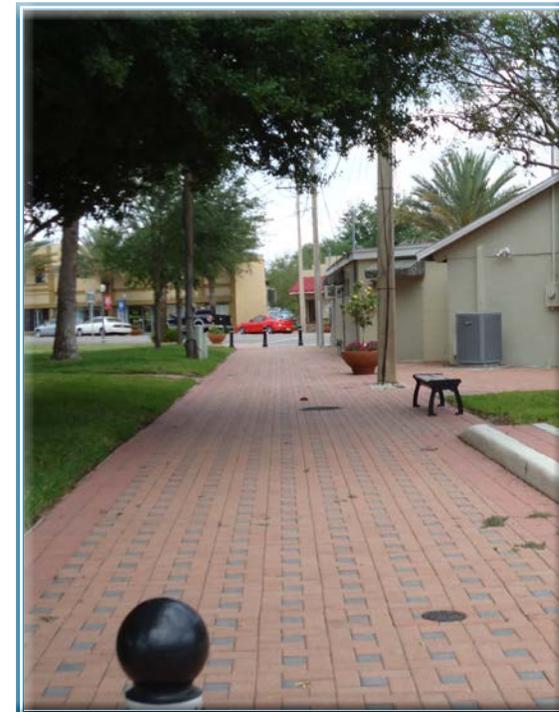
Long Term Projects (greater than five years)

Projects identified that can potentially be moved forward in the long term time frame include:

- o Redevelopment of Gray's Trucking site.
- o Completion of a connected pedestrian system.
- o A completed pedestrian corridor.



Conceptual Rendering: Enhanced Streetscaping



Pedestrian Boulevard Example

Implementation Tools and Funding Opportunities

Appendix A of this Master Plan provides Implementation Project Sheets for each project identified in the Plan. Details of each of the types of implementation tools and funding opportunities listed below are also included in Appendix A.

- o Neighborhood Improvement District
- o Core Improvement Area
- o Community Redevelopment Area
- o Enterprise Zone
- o City General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund Revenues
- o City Enterprise Funds
- o User Fees
- o Impact Fees
- o Projects Undertaken by Other Governmental Entities
- o Federal and State Grants
- o Florida's PACE Program
- o New Private Development
- o Reuse and Maintenance of Existing Private Development
- o Donors
- o Foundations and Private Organizations
- o Incentives

Community Contributions

It is very clear that in Lake Alfred, the saying, "It takes a Community" is really true and many members of the community are putting forward efforts to continue to enhance the City.

Recent events include the dedication of the Veterans' Memorial at Gardner Park as well as the opening the City's new library.



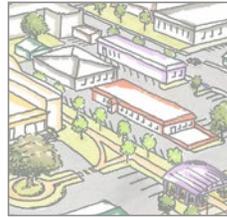
Veteran's Memorial Groundbreaking



New Library in Lake Alfred



Appendices



- **Appendix A: Funding Capacity and Priorities**
- **Appendix B: Wayfinding**
- **Appendix C: Design Guidelines**

The Appendices A through C compliment the Lake Alfred Downtown Master Plan.

Appendix A: Funding Capacities and Priorities

Appendix A provides Funding Capacity and Priorities based on the Community's identified projects by short term and long range time frames.

Appendix B: Wayfinding

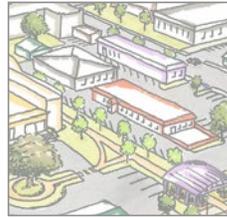
Appendix B provides an overview regarding Wayfinding.

Appendix C: Design Guidelines

Appendix C provides Design Guidelines as a reference for the community and developers as the Downtown Master Plan is implemented. The guidelines have been created from the vision plan developed by the community.



Appendix A: Funding Capacity & Priorities



Implementation Project Sheets

The identified projects to implement the short and long term priorities as set forth in the Downtown Master Plan are provided on the following tables.

For each project listed, information is provided including:

- o Project identification and logical implementation actions.
- o Needed stakeholder participation in implementation.
- o Potential funding sources.

- **Implementation Project Sheets**
- **Implementation Tools & Funding Opportunities**



Project Name: Business Beautification Program

Project Type: Short-term

Objective: Develop a business beautification program to encourage businesses in the Downtown Core to enhance their facilities through updated maintenance, landscaping and streetscaping.

Stakeholders: City of Lake Alfred, Business Community.

Priority:
 Highest Priority
 High Priority
 Low Priority

Estimated Cost:
 High Cost (over \$500,000)
 Mid Cost
 Low Cost

Comments:

ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
o Develop a business beautification committee.	Immediate
o Work with business owners to identify opportunities for beautification and enhancement.	Short-term
o Work with business owners to take action toward beautification.	Short-term

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- o Private contributions
- o Private/Public Partnership
- o Business Community effort
- o Grants



Project Name: Streetscaping Projects

Project Type: Short-term and Long-Term

Objective: Begin implementing streetscaping priorities identified in the Master Plan.

Stakeholders: City of Lake Alfred, Florida Department of Transportation, Business Community.

Priority:

- Highest Priority
- ✓ High Priority
- Low Priority

Estimated Cost:

- High Cost (over \$500,000)
- ✓ Mid Cost
- Low Cost

Comments:

ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
o Establish a streetscaping committee to coordinate with business owners on types of plantings and design.	Short-term
o Develop detailed landscaping plan for streetscaping and other improvements.	Short-term
o Begin improvements.	Short-term

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- o Municipal General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund Revenues
- o Neighborhood Improvement District
- o Private/Public Partnership



Project Name: Crosswalk improvements

Project Type: Short-term

Objective: Begin implementing crosswalk improvement priorities identified in the Master Plan.

Stakeholders: City of Lake Alfred, Florida Department of Transportation.

Priority:

- Highest Priority
- ✓ High Priority
- Low Priority

Estimated Cost:

- High Cost (over \$500,000)
- ✓ Mid Cost
- Low Cost

Comments:

ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
o Coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation regarding crosswalk safety priorities.	Immediate
o Work toward detailed crosswalk improvement plan.	Short-term
o Implement crosswalk improvement plan.	Short-term

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- o Projects undertaken by other governmental entities
- o Municipal General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund Revenues
- o Neighborhood Improvement District



Project Name:	Wayfinding
Project Type:	Short-term
Objective:	Develop wayfinding program within the Downtown Core and Transitional areas.
Stakeholders:	City of Lake Alfred, Florida Department of Transportation, Business Community.
Priority:	<p>Highest Priority</p> <p>✓ High Priority</p> <p>Low Priority</p>
Estimated Cost:	<p>High Cost (over \$500,000)</p> <p>✓ Mid Cost</p> <p>Low Cost</p>
Comments:	

ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
o Reach consensus regarding Wayfinding Program (Appendix B)	Immediate
o Coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation for approval of wayfinding program.	Short-term
o Install wayfinding signage.	Short-term

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- o Municipal General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund Revenues



Project Name: Redevelopment Plan for Gray's Trucking Property

Project Type: Short-term

Objective: Complete a feasible redevelopment plan for the Gray's Trucking Property.

Stakeholders: City of Lake Alfred, Business Community, City Residents.

Priority:
 Highest Priority
 High Priority
 Low Priority

Estimated Cost:
 High Cost (over \$500,000)
 Mid Cost
 Low Cost

Comments:

ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
o Complete due diligence on the property (Brownfield, etc)	Immediate
o Negotiate with property owner.	Short-term
o Work with Lake Alfred Community to develop a redevelopment for the property consistent with the goals of the Downtown Master Plan.	Short-term

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- o Municipal General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund Revenues
- o Neighborhood Improvement District
- o Private/Public Partnership



Project Name:	Redevelopment of Gray's Trucking Property
Project Type:	Long-term
Objective:	Implement redevelopment plan for the property consistent with the Downtown Master Plan.
Stakeholders:	City of Lake Alfred, Business and residential Community.
Priority:	<p>Highest Priority</p> <p>✓ High Priority</p> <p>Low Priority</p>
Estimated Cost:	<p>✓ High Cost (over \$500,000)</p> <p>Mid Cost</p> <p>Low Cost</p>
Comments:	

ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
o City or public/private partnership to purchase property.	Mid-term
o Work with the community and the private sector to redevelop the property consistent with the Downtown Master Plan.	Long-term

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- o Municipal General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund Revenues
- o Public/Private Partnerships
- o Federal and State Grants



Project Name:	Connected Pedestrian System
Project Type:	Long-term
Objective:	Implement walkability goal of the Downtown Master Plan in conjunction with street improvement and crosswalk priorities as well as streetscaping and redevelopment.
Stakeholders:	City of Lake Alfred, Business Community, new development.
Priority:	<p>Highest Priority</p> <p>✓ High Priority</p> <p>Low Priority</p>
Estimated Cost:	<p>✓ High Cost (over \$500,000)</p> <p>Mid Cost</p> <p>Low Cost</p>
Comments:	

ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
o Continue to coordinate detailed plan of improvements to facilitate a connected walkable plan.	Short-term
o Update land development regulations to encourage improvements. Work with property owners to achieve pedestrian easements.	Short-term and mid-term

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- o Municipal General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund Revenues
- o Public/Private Partnerships
- o Federal and State Grants



Implementation Tools and Funding Opportunities

It is impossible to implement all projects identified immediately, or even over the next ten years. Full implementation of this vision will take many years to occur. The goal of this current effort is to identify the community's top priorities, balance priorities with their cost, and to determine which five to seven projects will be the first to tackle. It may be that some of the highest priority projects are deferred to a later time when more funding is available. They will remain highest priority items, but may not be included in the first set of projects to undertake.

In order to address the ambitious list of projects and action steps that make up this plan, the Lake Alfred community will need to draw from a wide range of resources. Because resources will always be in short supply, it is necessary to rank among many competing priorities – both among competing projects within the downtown, and among needs of the general community versus downtown. This allocation of scarce resources (money and man power) requires a strategic, yet flexible approach to ensure that all resources are used to the best advantage of the community.

For the most part, resources needed for implementation of the projects and vision contained within the document will fall into two categories: those dependent upon volunteers and those dependent on funding.

A great deal can be accomplished when a community is impassioned behind a common goal. The success of this plan will rely on having a group of champions to organize the work on individual projects. People skilled in organizing and leading groups, in overcoming obstacles, and in some cases raising funds will bring about change and measurable progress towards implementing this plan.

Some projects identified in this plan closely align to the roles and responsibilities of certain governmental services, but others go beyond the traditional scope of local government. For this reason, as well as the lack of sufficient funds for all desired improvements, implementation of many of the projects included within this document will require private sector involvement and potentially funding. Consequently, the implementation of this plan will rely heavily on finding creative ways to pool resources to accomplish individual projects, and implementation will be on-going.

The following sources of funding are potential sources to be used to carry out the objectives of the Lake Alfred Downtown Master Development Plan. An analysis of the feasibility and/or the advisability of utilizing or attempting to obtain the funding source is also included.

Neighborhood Improvement Districts

Neighborhood Improvement Districts are geographical areas within a municipality that are designated by the governing body to which assessments are made for the purpose of making improvements (FS 163.511). These districts are generally formed to finance infrastructure improvements. The powers of the Neighborhood Improvement Districts are defined in Florida Statutes 163.514 and include powers related to (as established in its creation): purchase or management of property; applying for and accepting grants; controlling funds; promotion and advertisement; improvement of lighting, parks streets, drainage, and utilizes; undertaking innovative approaches to secure neighborhood from crime; privatize, close, vacate, plan, or replan streets with the concurrence of the local government and FDOT, if necessary; eminent domain. The neighborhood improvement district is established through referendum approval and any special assessment (up to 2 mils) is also approved through referendum.



Core Improvement Areas (CIAs)

In adopting Polk County Ordinance 07-018, The Amended, Restated and Consolidated Comprehensive Impact Fee Ordinance, the Board of County Commissioners approved an exemption from impact fees for the construction, alteration, or expansion of any structure within a “Core Improvement Area” that has been formally recognized and designated in an Interlocal Agreement between the City and the County. This exemption is conditioned upon the City also waiving impact fees, other than water and sewer utility impact fees, within that area.

The City of Lake Alfred adopted a CIA in 2009. The current CIA boundary does not fully incorporate the Core and the Transitional areas of the Downtown. The City should evaluate the benefits of adjusting the current CIA boundary to include all of the Core and/or the Transitional boundary. The CIA cannot include more than six percent of the City’s land area. Therefore, to incorporate all of the Core and Transitional areas, portions of the existing CIA would have to lose the CIA designation.

Community Redevelopment Agencies

Community Redevelopment Areas and Agencies (CRAs) are created through the determination of blight and/or slum by a Finding of Necessity Study, adoption of a Community Redevelopment Plan, and authorization of the tax increment financing. CRAs are a dependent special district, but not a taxing authority. CRAs are a separate government agency and generally incur additional operating costs including staffing, additional public meetings, publications, and an annual independent audit. A CRA is a long term commitment to redevelopment to alleviate the blight conditions documented in the Finding of Necessity. The City completed a Finding of Necessity

Study in 2006 at which time the economy, including property values, was in a decline.

Enterprise Zones

An Enterprise Zone is a specific geographic area targeted for economic revitalization. Enterprise Zones encourage economic growth and investment in distressed areas by offering tax advantages and incentives to businesses locating within the zone boundaries. A Enterprise Zone can only be created through an act of legislation initiated by the Florida Legislature.

City General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund Revenues

The City Commission exercises discretion in the budgeting of City monies for a wide range of services and activities. However, these funds are primarily committed to paying for City-wide services or recurring capital projects. Consequently, they may not be available for new purposes without affecting some other service the City is already providing.

On a limited basis, certain Master Plan actions may be able to utilize the time and talents of City staff on special projects without requiring a major, permanent reallocation of City resources to a new mission. Some Plan actions may even fit within the normal scope of work of some City departments. Examples may include downtown zoning enforcement, traffic and parking enforcement, routine maintenance or clean-up initiatives, collaboration with other governmental entities and private groups to bring about downtown progress (including administrative support to the overall Master Plan implementation), preparation of the various narrow focus plans and policies called for in the Master Plan, revision and administration of development codes, support of cultural events and festivals, public safety efforts, and others.



City Enterprise Funds

Many cities carry out functions which operate in a manner similar to private businesses, in that a user fee is charged for a service and the fees are used to provide the service. These are typically services offered City-wide, for which it is possible to clearly identify the service user and how much of the service they are using (such as water or sewer). Occasionally the mission and purposes associated with these enterprise funds may overlap with downtown strategies and actions. Upsizing of water, sewer, or electrical lines to serve new office and residential buildings downtown (the costs of which would ultimately be borne by the developers of these buildings or their eventual utility-using tenants) would fall into this category, especially to the extent that improvements would also benefit the flow, efficiency, peak period capacity, etc., of citywide systems.

User Fees

Some City operations which are not enterprise funds may nonetheless charge individual users for services they provide. This happens commonly with the use of some parks and recreation facilities and attendance at some City-sponsored cultural events. User fees may be employed to offset the costs of events called for in the Plan. User fees offer several benefits. When properly applied, user fees provide a fair and equitable method for assessing service charges between users, while generating necessary revenues to support operations and maintenance.

Impact Fees

Impact fees are one-time fees charged to new development to ensure that new development is charged its fair share of the additional capital facilities required by the growth that is occurring. Impact fees are based on a proportionate share analysis that relates

the fee charged to the benefit received by the development. Impact fees are not seen as having a significant role in funding projects for the downtown area because most of the area is already built out. Therefore, most activity in the downtown area is redevelopment or rehabilitation, rather than new construction. However, if the City initiates a development incentive program, the waiving of impact fees for redevelopment or new development downtown, will negate the role impact fees will play in funding improvement projects in the downtown area.

Projects Undertaken by Other Governmental Entities

To the extent that the State of Florida, Polk County, the Polk County School District, and other levels of government have responsibility for certain services and facilities, their interests will sometimes be aligned with downtown priorities. Two major downtown streets, Lake Shore Way South and Shinn Blvd (the north and south portions of the US 17/92 one way pairs), are State highways, and therefore also a State responsibility. Consequently, in situations where the State of Florida is making decisions regarding the future of these roads it is vitally important for the City to state its interests clearly.

Future additions to public school programs and school building decisions and other actions by public entities may bring institutions into the downtown, which are an important part of the downtown vision. Ensuring that coordination occurs to encourage these project investments in downtown is critical.

Federal and State Grants

There may be opportunities to obtain assistance from other levels of government for specific plan actions. The City has had some success in the past in obtaining state assistance with trail development and sidewalks, and this may continue on a limited basis in the future.



- o Federal Grants – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has many grants that it distributes to state, county, and city governments as well as non-government organizations throughout the U.S. The Office of Community Development through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) focuses on urban renewal and development.
- o State and Local Grants – some grants are distributed through state, county, and local governments. Some examples include the Affordable Housing Catalyst Program, Brownfields Economic Development Initiative, Center for Building Better Communities, Community and Economic Development Program, Economic Development Administration Loans/ Grants, Financial Assistance for Research and Development Projects, Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant, and Urban Design, Town Planning and Redevelopment Initiatives. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides a variety of grants for areas with fewer than 20,000 residents to finance revitalization projects or to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population.

PACE Program

Florida's PACE legislation allows individual residential and commercial property owners to voluntarily seek financing for certain energy or wind resistant improvements in the form of a special assessment though their local government with payback occurring over a period of years and collected on the same bill as property taxes.

New Private Development

Lake Alfred's initiative to revitalize the Downtown area will be

bolstered by private investment from local businesses. For example, the redevelopment of existing buildings, updating of existing facades, or new building construction can improve downtown activity and variety. The manner in which this new investment is deployed will be critically important for the development of Downtown. High-quality and well-maintained landscaping, well-designed new outdoor gathering places, and building designs which are both sustainable and complementary of the traditional, unique Haines Boulevard are among the implementation projects where new private-sector development will likely be a key partnership in the success and revitalization of this area.

Re-Use and Maintenance of Existing Private Development

So much of what makes downtown Lake Alfred a unique, interesting district is attributable to downtown's decades-old buildings, the businesses which occupy them, and the residential areas that surround the business district. These should be recognized as resources to be marshaled in fulfilling this vision. Private investment will be needed to enhance their quality. Government does not have all the resources necessary to fulfill all plan objectives (nor would that be desirable). Just as new private development is crucial to downtown success, so also is investment in the maintenance and imaginative re-use of existing buildings by their private-sector owners and tenants the key to achieving the downtown vision.



Donors

Certain actions identified in this plan lend themselves particularly well to funding by private donors, either large or small. Water features, outdoor gathering places, public art, and gateway features can be difficult for local government to fund, but are great rallying opportunities for donors. Sponsoring items such as memorial trees, benches, or a paving brick which memorializes a person's name in a new plaza or walkway has become a popular way to attract many small donors to participate in a large project and can help to build community interest and ownership in changes taking place in a downtown. Lake Alfred is home to many companies that would be ideal community partners.

Foundations and Private Organizations

A variety of private foundations exist that seek projects to fund that help to carry out their particular priorities. Multiple private organizations and charities provide funding for urban renewal and development in Florida. Grants vary in their size and requirements. As fundraising proceeds for downtown Lake Alfred projects, the Project Champions should systematically survey foundations and private organizations to identify those that may be oriented to Downtown Lake Alfred vision objectives.

Incentives

The City can provide incentives in the form of waived review fees and shortened review timeframes to properties within the Downtown area if they are developing in conformance with the design guidelines. These incentives in the downtown make it easier and faster for businesses to get started in the downtown.



Appendix B: Wayfinding



- **Wayfinding**

Wayfinding

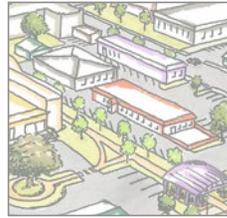
Wayfinding provides generic signs to help orient visitors and allow those unfamiliar with an area to orient themselves. It often involves directions to places such as public restrooms, parks, business districts (such as historic downtowns), public amenities (such as rec centers, libraries, or public pools), or public parking. Wayfinding does not generally provide signage for privately-owned businesses. In addition to some of the wayfinding subjects listed above, wayfinding in Lake Alfred would also focus on directing people to the Pedestrian Boulevard and to the downtown business district. It may also inform people how to get to the multi-use trail, City Hall, and/or transit stops. It is public signage to help people find their way around.

The City of Lake Alfred is currently working with the business community to develop a wayfinding and signage program.

Wayfinding Examples



Appendix C: Design Guidelines



- Pedestrian Boulevard
- Streetscaping (Functional & Decorative Hardscape)
- Gateways
- Landscaping
- Architectural Examples

Pedestrian Boulevard

The Pedestrian Boulevard is one of the guiding design elements of the future Downtown Lake Alfred. This pedestrian-oriented inner corridor will run north-to-south inside of the blocks that are between Lake Shore Way and Shinn Boulevard. The Pedestrian Boulevard will create a seamless transition between public and private spaces, while keeping pedestrian comfort and access to surrounding businesses. Visitors can park at public parking lots along the way, and patronize businesses without having to get back into their cars until they leave. The Pedestrian Boulevard will feel part linear, urban park and part open air pedestrian mall.

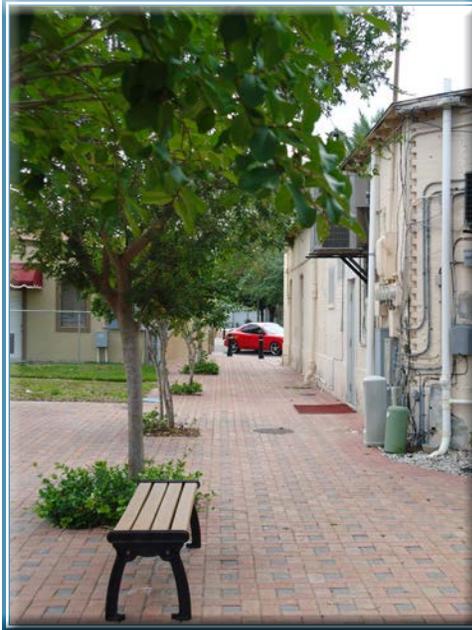


Pedestrian Boulevard Example



The Pedestrian Boulevard will have:

- o Brick or brick-colored pavers to differentiate it from other sidewalks in the city.
- o Quality streetscaping and landscaping, including planters and street trees, where appropriate.
- o Pedestrian-sized street lamps and lighting that will encourage safe nighttime patronage.
- o Well placed open-air and covered seating, trash cans, tables, and other pedestrian elements that will supplement the privately owned seating outside of businesses.
- o Seamless transition between public spaces and private business fronts that facilitates interaction between each.
- o Possibly some type of theme-scaping elements, or recurring themes, that are unique or significant to the Downtown Lake Alfred experience.
- o Easy access from the surrounding neighborhoods, transit stops, and the future multi-use trail system.
- o Provide space for periodic festivals and events.

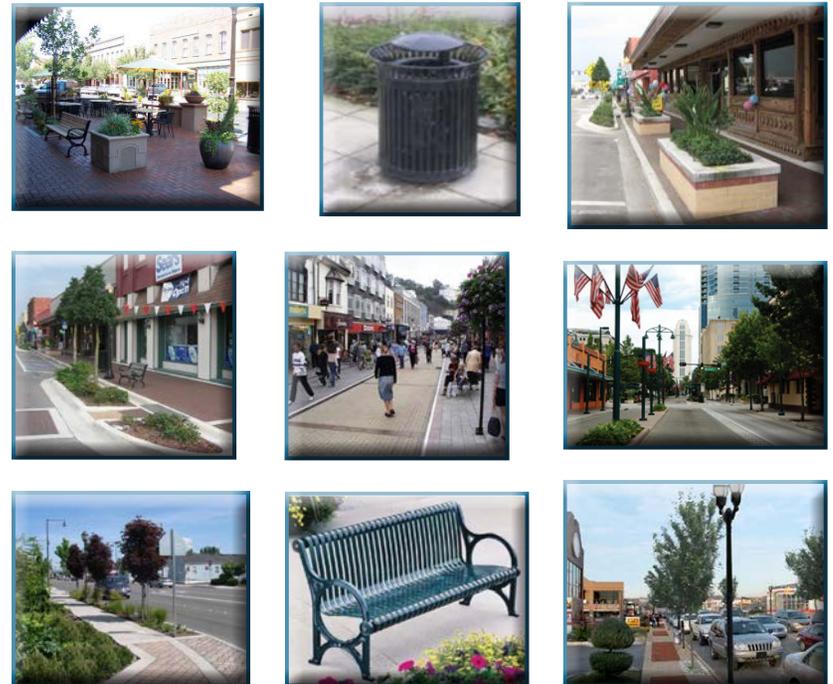


Pedestrian Boulevard Example

Streetscaping (Functional and Decorative Hardscape)

Streetscaping are functional, often decorative, elements of the landscape that create pedestrian comfort. Pavers, decorative trash receptacles, street lamps, decorative benches, public seating areas, and landscaping planters are all elements of streetscaping. Streetscaping can be generally distinguished from landscaping in that streetscaping elements are often hardscape or non-living. Photos of streetscaping examples are provided to indicate different concepts that can be incorporated into streetscaping within the Downtown Lake Alfred area.

Streetscaping Examples



Streetscaping is the functional and decorative hardscape (non-living) elements of the public realm in the downtown. They are often maintained by the City, but other arrangements may also be envisioned. Decorative benches, streetlamps, public seating and gathering areas, decorative landscaping planters, decorative tree grates, and decorative street pavers are all elements of streetscaping. Occasionally, some type of theme-scaping may also be part of the downtown experience.

In any streetscaping program, it is beneficial to maintain a consistent style throughout. Currently, the two blocks of Haines Boulevard on either side of Lake Shore Way are the only streetscaped blocks in Lake Alfred. The elements used in this block are appropriate to carry over



Lake Alfred Streetscaping

into other streetscaping throughout the City. However, types and spacing of trees should be considered on other streets as certain planting may block the view of business identification, etc. The Streetscaping Priorities map generated as part of the downtown visioning effort contains the priorities of the community for streetscaping projects, and should be used as a guideline for which areas should be streetscaped next.

Gateways

The four gateways were identified during public workshops as entrance features that would let visitors know when they had arrived in Downtown Lake Alfred. They occur on each of the four major entrance points as one enters the city. The gateway enhancements may be as simple as a small sign that says “Welcome to Downtown Lake Alfred” with a few decorative bushes behind a landscaping border, or as elaborate as an arch over the whole road. The Gateway serves the following purposes:

- o Lets visitors know that they have arrived in the downtown.
- o Creates a visual enhancement that starts to create the feeling of welcome and comfort in the downtown.
- o Sets Lake Alfred’s downtown apart from other areas of the city.

Gateway Examples



Landscaping and Street Tree Guidelines

Renderings and a table of potential street trees is provided. This landscaping is consistent with existing downtown atmosphere and types of plants that are appropriate for Lake Alfred.

The Potential Streetscaping Street Tree Alternatives Table presents a list of potential street trees that may be suitable for downtown Lake Alfred’s streetscaping and landscaping. This list is not exhaustive, but provides a starting point for the city. The trees in this list include: Winged Elm, Sweet Gum, Red Maple, Laurel Oak, Shumard Oak, Pecan, Cabbage or Sabal Palm, and Washington Palm. These trees were chosen based on criteria provided by residents through the community-input process. Primarily, these trees were selected because they fulfill the majority (or all) of the following criteria:

- o The maximum height at full maturity will not obstruct the view of business, first-floor windows, signage, particularly signs that might be above a business storefront.
- o The trees will provide a significant amount of shade, and will contribute to enhanced pedestrian comfort.
- o The trees are medium- to fast-growing species, and have the potential to quickly establish a lush downtown tree canopy.
- o The trees have good street tree potential, and are tolerant of urban air pollutants.
- o The trees are adaptable to sandy, well-drained soils.

The potential street trees for Downtown Lake Alfred are (in no particular order):

Winged Elm



Winged Elm Leaves



Winged Elm Whole

Sweet Gum



Sweet Gum Spiny Fruit



Sweet Gum Whole

Red Maple



Red Maple Leaves



Red Maple Whole



Laurel Oak



Laurel Oak Acorns



Laurel Oak Whole

Cabbage (Sabal) Palm



Sabal Palm Frond



Sabal Palm Whole

Shumard Oak



Shumard Oak Leaves



Shumard Oak Whole

Washington Palm



Washington Palm Fronds



Washington Palm Whole

Pecan Tree



Pecan Leaves



Pecan Whole

The current downtown streetscaping along Haines Boulevard includes well-maintained, healthy Crepe Myrtles, whose maximum height at maturity is between 10 to 20 feet. The Crepe Myrtles on the south side of Haines Boulevard have been planted underneath power lines, and must therefore be maintained below their maximum potential height. However, even if the plants reached their maximum height, it is likely that they may continue to block the visibility of business signs on the buildings behind them. It is therefore suggested that downtown street tree plantings be limited



to areas that are unhindered by overhead obstructions. For areas where overhead obstructions exist, streetscaping may consist of well-maintained planters. For areas where overhead obstructions do not exist, it is recommended to plant trees in areas that will enhance the urban tree canopy while maintaining business sign visibility once a tree reaches maturity. Relocating overhead power lines underground is suggested whenever possible, in order to enhance the urban tree canopy and pedestrian environment.

In addition to the creation of a list of potentially suitable street trees, a list of potentially unsuitable street trees has also been developed. These trees are somewhat common street trees, but are considered unsuitable or undesirable in the context of downtown Lake Alfred. These trees, and their reason for exclusion, include:

- o Live Oak – slow growing, and strong roots are known to buckle, or destroy pavement.
- o Holly Tree – sharp, spiky leaves, fruit dropping, and low overall growth height.
- o Crepe Myrtle – although this tree is beautiful, and the existing specimens in Lake Alfred are well-shaped, well-maintained, and healthy, the height at maturity of this tree has the potential to block business signage from pedestrian- and automobile-view.
- o Magnolia – slow growing, fruit dropping, and roots have the potential to buckle pavement.
- o All pine trees were excluded because they do not provide adequate shade.
- o Tree that need deep, moist, or fertile soils. These soils do not exist in the context of downtown Lake Alfred.

Many factors contribute to the establishment of a lush, healthy urban street tree canopy. One factor that contributes immensely to street tree health is soil compaction. Soils are often compacted in urban areas prior to laying the foundation for permanent structures such as roads, sidewalks, parking lots, and building foundations. Trees thrive best in uncompacted soils, and need a significant volume of uncompacted soil to reach their potential. A general rule of thumb is that trees need as much volume of uncompacted, fertile soil below ground as their full-grown canopy will be aboveground at maturity. The extent of this uncompacted soil should also mimic the footprint of the tree canopy in the horizontal plane. In urban environments, it may be necessary to rejuvenate the soil by “uncompacting” it, or by adding organic soil amendments. Furthermore, sub-surface structures may be necessary to ensure that soil remains uncompacted (such as the SilvaCell structure, or some similar arrangement). The addition of un-paved surface area surrounding trees is necessary to achieve water infiltration. Ancillary benefits to uncompacting the soil and allowing water infiltration include decreased stormwater runoff, and increased stormwater pollution filtering (in the soil). If proper measures are taken to account for this effect in the Land Development Regulations, the pore space in urban tree soil areas can be credited toward overall stormwater reduction (for more information research Low Impact Development strategies). Depending on the type of tree, stormwater runoff from the area underneath a street tree can be reduced by as much as 15% due to surface retention of water droplets on the vast surface area of the tree’s leaves.



Potential Streetscaping Street Tree Alternatives for Downtown Lake Alfred, Florida

Tree (common name)	Tree (botanical name)	Height at maturity (feet)	Description	Pros	Cons	Rate of growth	Remarks
Winged Elm	Ulmus alata	50 - 75'	A beautiful tree with an open, round-topped crown composed of short, straight branches from straight trunks. Deciduous.		Must initially be properly trained and pruned. Watch for Dutch elm disease.	Medium	An excellent specimen for street tree planting that has been overlooked in many areas.
Sweet Gum	Liquidambar styraciflua	60 - 80'	One of our finest native trees. Usually forms a tall straight trunk with conical crown. Perfectly cold hardy. Deciduous.	Adaptable to many environmental conditions.	Gum balls (fruits) can be a nuisance.	Fast	Found locally as far south as Ft. Myers and Okeechobee. Seed balls may be a nuisance in lawns.
Red Maple	Acer rubrum	50 - 60'	One of the few "northern" trees that is found in every county of the state. A tall tree with well developed trunk and spreading crown. Deciduous.	Beautiful, vibrant red, spring blooms.	Must initially be properly trained and pruned. Seed drop can be a nuisance. Medium- to low- wind resistance.	Fast	A beautiful tree which should be more widely used. Sensitive to wounding. Provides summer shade and fall color.
Laurel Oak	Quercus laurifolia	60 - 80'	Large tree with relatively smooth bark which on older trees becomes regularly furrowed. Deciduous.		Some people dislike this non-showy tree. Short-lived. Low wind resistance.	Fast	A beautiful shade tree which should be more widely planted.
Shumard Oak	Quercus shumardii	To over 100'	A large oak of the red oak group with dense, beautiful green foliage and striking fall color. Deciduous.	Nice foliage.		Medium	An excellent park or specimen tree that has been largely overlooked in landscaping.
Pecan	Carya illinoensis	75 - 100'	A large tree with an ascending, symmetrical crown. The bark is rough-scaly or flaky. Deciduous.	Nice, shady canopy.	Pests, such as tent worms, can be a problem. Seed drop can be messy. Low wind resistance.	Medium	Excellent energy-saving shade tree.
Cabbage Palm (Sabal)	Sabal palmetto	25 - 50'	The official tree of the State of Florida. This is the most common palm found growing in the state. Evergreen.	No coordinated annual leaf drop. Roots will not destroy pavement.	Little to no shade. Needs regular maintenance; amount depends on pruning regimen.	Very Slow	The heart of the bud is edible and commonly used as "swamp cabbage." Trunk diameter remains constant throughout lifespan. Avoiding over-pruning will increase effective lifespan and decrease maintenance costs.
Washington Palm	Washingtonia robusta	To 80'	A tall palm with fronds that tend to cling to the tree giving it a "bearded" appearance. Evergreen.	No coordinated annual leaf drop. Roots will not destroy pavement.	Little to no shade. Needs regular maintenance; amount depends on pruning regimen.	Slow	A picturesque palm widely used as an avenue tree in California. Trunk diameter remains constant throughout lifespan. Avoiding over-pruning will increase effective lifespan and decrease maintenance costs.



Architectural Examples

Throughout the visioning process, the community expressed that a standardized architectural style was not overly important to them, inasmuch as they did not want to restrict or discourage development or redevelopment. Instead, they expressed a desire for quality buildings that have well-kept facades and appearances. The community does not feel that taller buildings are necessarily a benefit at this time, and prefer, generally, that redevelopment stay below the current maximum height of 35 feet, corresponding roughly to three-story buildings. This height will ensure a pedestrian-friendly environment by keeping buildings sized appropriately for pedestrian comfort. Photos of various architectural styles are provided as it may become relevant to Lake Alfred in the future to define style guidelines for the downtown.

